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Educators' Experiences of Cooperative Learning In Adult GED Prep Classes on a College Campus

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Miriam M. Summers

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2019

Abstract

Educators' Experiences of Cooperative Learning
In Adult GED Prep Classes on a College Campus

by

Miriam M. Summers

MEd, Coppin State University, 2007

BHS, Bowie State University, 1994

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

August 2019

Abstract

Research shows that educators working in General Education Development (GED) preparation classes lack research-based instructional practice. Current research further implies that using research-based instructional practices is beneficial to adult learners. The location of this study was a local public community college and satellite locations in a U.S. state on the East Coast that did not assess whether educators were using the research-based cooperative learning methods in GED prep classes. There was no known information to identify research-based instructional practices in GED prep classes. Therefore, the types of instructions educators used and whether educators were producing successful outcomes were both sought to be researched. This qualitative study explored instructional practices and successful GED outcomes. Johnson, Johnson, and Smith's cooperative learning method served as the conceptual framework for this study. Research questions addressed educators' experiences in facilitating and integrating cooperative learning and their need for supports to improve GED outcomes. Purposeful sampling was used to select 8 educators experienced in GED prep class to participate in interview questionnaires. Five of the 8 participant also completed face-to-face interviews. Data were collected from interviews and documents to determine a plan to construct a research-based tool for educators. Qualitative data were coded manually to extract themes. Findings of the study showed that educators working with adult learners did not report standard use of cooperative learning methods in GED prep classes. A workshop was created in order to help educators redesign instructional practices and provide a research-based tool to enhance adult learners' participation and improve GED outcomes.

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Dedication

This doctoral study is dedicated to the following individuals: Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior who makes all things possible; my Husband, Ernie who kept my technology up to date; my parents, Mary and William who did not live to see this process materialize, but injected foresight to see my potential way before I ever did. To my cousin "Butch" retired school administrator, who saw budding possibilities and pushed me beyond the break (I am grateful). My colleagues, Selwyn C. (retired), Erthman N. (retired) Tyrone J. Jr. and Patricia J. my mentor (deceased), and who introduced me to field of counseling and education over 30 years ago. Special heavenly dedication to my son "OJ", "bonus" mother, Hazel, my big "sister" Willie G. may you all rest in peace. I continue to pray for a cure for the ugly disease called cancer. And lastly, I dedicate this study to the Almighty God, thank you for the guidance, power, and protection of mind, and strength of endurance.

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Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

Adult educators have significant challenges in GED classes. For example, one educator was working with adult learners who came with a range of learning levels and had many unsuccessful attempts to pass the GED. While managing these significant challenges, adult educators were expected to enhance participation and improve GED outcomes. Educators were also expected to engage adult learners in instructional practices to meet the required grade level to sit for the GED examination amid adult learners' many challenges. Therefore, this study focused on cooperative learning: the experiences of adult educators' facilitation of basic instructional practices that adult learners in GED prep classes benefit from.

Limited research revealed that cooperative learning improves the classroom environment, builds relationships, and increases academic achievement (Han, 2015). Cooperative learning, an instructional learning tool is a compilation of cooperative, competitive, and individual skills fused together, to achieve mutual goals and to increase learning (Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 2014). The cooperative learning method (CLM), which benefits adult learners in various educational settings, includes enhanced communication and interactions between educators and learners, as well as between learners (Kimmelman & Johannes, 2019). Activity planning and goal setting are other essential skills in cooperative learning.

Adult literacy programs are vital sub-components of the basic education program, where adult learners can enroll in such classes as GED prep classes. The history of GED prep classes is synonymous with adult literacy classes in some institutions that prepare adult learners

with the essential academic skills to test for a GED: math, reading and writing (General Equivalent Diploma; Steeds, 2001). According to the data coordinator at the time of this study, administrators at the local community college indicated that GED prep classes were becoming more popular and of the projected enrollment, 90% were predicted to participate (personal communication, February 11, 2013). The 2-year community college had satellite sites and provided GED prep classes at most locations. Its history dated back to the mid-1900's. The school continued to hold high status in the community and has a rich history dedicated to adult education.

The continuation of basic adult education programs, an essential component of local community colleges as adult learners gain knowledge to obtain a GED, was vital to sustaining the institution's rich history. However, the attainment of a GED is a shared obligation. As emphasized by Reynolds and Johnson (2014), adult learners must commit to fulfilling adult literacy program requirements, and adult educators must exhibit an overall commitment to enhancing classroom instruction to better support learners. Historically, low literacy skills had been persistent among adult learners enrolled in GED prep classes or for learners who are re-enrolling (MD State Department of Education, 2001). As with GED prep class programs across the region, Math and English are two of the required subjects in adult basic education programs; essential skills and basic knowledge in both are pertinent to the success of GED prep class. Regular classroom participation and successful completion of GED prep classes are also critical to obtaining a GED. It is imperative to assess the needs of adult educators' instructional

practices and to enhance learners' classroom participation and academic achievement (Gillies & Boyle, 2010).

Moreover, cooperative learning, a goal-centered interactive learning method is potentially suitable for use with GED prep programs. According to Tran (2013), cooperative learning has dramatically enhanced student learning compared with educators using basic facilitation styles. Suitable programs conducive to the learning needs of adult learners have helped to advance the results of many adult literacy programs (Cole, 2012). Using CLM promoted group interaction, as adult learners were involved in designing their knowledge base through peers and the educator's involvement (Tran, 2013). Moreover, assessing and uploading resources for learners to access and integrate into the learning process while enrolled in GED prep classes were beneficial (Sawchuk, 2010).

Participation in GED prep classes had seen marginal growth during the last four years, according to the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC, 2013). With uncertain program enrollment numbers, the lack of adult learners' participation, and with the push to increase successful outcomes, educators focused their attention on condensing classroom work to protect required hours. Instructional practices are not regulated in GED Prep classes. However, there are state mandated classroom hours in many adult literacy programs and educators cover much material as possible. Educators, as mentioned above disrupted the efficiency of instruction to learners, thus creating distractions and providing learners with an excuse to stop participating in classes and thereby hampering success.

According to the Department of Labor, License, and Regulation in State (MDLLR, 2013), they established several standards for successful GED prep classes program outcomes. Two standards ranked high on the list were (a) the development of instructional practices and (b) the structures of activities and their dissemination to learners in GED prep classes to promote skill building. Also, extending sensitivity to learners' needs and self-knowledge base would provide a positive environment for success and achievement (MDLLR, 2013). The activities in some GED prep classes could be described as follows: (a) instructor-focused teaching, meaning that the instructor prepares written drill on whiteboard with limited mutual engagement, (b) instructor-led teaching, meaning that the educator initiates all conversation with few options for dialogue, and (c) the demand for homework as the sole condition for measuring achievement. Considering, fluctuating enrollment and low-class participation will continue to rank in the debates between college administrators and stakeholders (personal communication, February 11, 2013).

Exploring educators' instructional practices gave some impetus to using cooperative learning and thus providing sound feedback to administrators and stakeholders, among other leaders. According to Chisman (2011), it was necessary to look at educators who lacked instructional practices that limit their ability to prepare learners for the GED using interactive learning methods. Emphasis on adult educators' overall classroom practices proved valuable not only to adult learners but also to administrators and stakeholders who have a major influence on decision-making and contributions to GED prep classes and other programs. Adult educators

did not realize they were lacking updated instructional practices, and that they needed to redesign existing instructional practices to enhance learners' skills by using other learning methods.

Further, marginal growth during a 4-year period appeared significant to GED prep class and programs where every learner who enrolls and commit to the program becomes closer to the goal of a GED. However, for those who lacked commitment remained further behind and widened the achievement gap between adult learners who obtained GEDs and their peers who were non-participants reflecting lack of skilled vocations, post-secondary education, and wage increases (Petty & Thomas, 2014). Making a commitment to school for an indefinite period overwhelms potential learners, and they shy away regardless of how high the need may be. For adult learners who have experienced adverse encounters with educators in previous literacy programs, they are reluctant to take the next step, fearing the uncertainty of what enrolling in a GED prep class holds. Finding a tool that provides support to both adult learners and educators is needed and cooperative learning a new strategy used in some educational settings may help. Cooperative learning is diverse and has several levels to use but has mainly been used in mostly K-12 grades (Tran, 2013).

Definition of Problems

Adult basic education programs do not require a consistent type of instructional practices. Thus, the problem addressed by this current study was the use of basic instructional

practices reason for learners who fail to participate and some others who fail to pass the GED examination. I chose this problem because cooperative learning in secondary and other educational settings has proven beneficial. Several reasons contributed to this problem. According to data, reports at a recent professional development meeting held on the college campus GED prep classes retention rates were reduced across all program levels (Personal communication, February 11, 2013). That did not hold steady for long. In an annual report, Schulz (2014) reported a trend of a declining number of adult learners taking the GED exam and passing it.

To address this problem, as the focus of the study was on educators facilitating instructional practices in GED prep classes. There should have been assistance from administrators, stakeholders, and staff to look at ways to improve the contents of instructional practices to increase successful program outcomes for each semester. With learners coming from diverse backgrounds, the average GED prep class took on the atmosphere of a sub-level learning environment, presenting other challenges and forcing educators to “think out of the box” to engage all learners. Learners from diverse backgrounds could lead to limited instructional practices by educators suitable to prepare adult learners in GED prep classes to meet the rigorous demands of the GED examination. Adults in this U. S. state on the East Coast in 2017, requiring adult education and literacy services were between 750,000 and 810,000 (MAEFS, 2017). Adult learners’ enrollment in the same jurisdiction shows a 10% decline annually from FY2009 to FY2012 (MHEC, 2013).

A local community college in a U.S. state on the East Coast was seeing a decline in adult learners enrolled in adult literacy programs (MHEC, 2013). At the beginning of the semester, the overall enrollment hovered around 90% of the anticipated number. Towards the seventh week of that semester, enrollment dropped to 30% (Personal communication, February 11, 2013). Staff collected and compiled data from each semester for distribution at the annual winter staff development training to administrators, stakeholders, and educators; it demonstrated inconsistent numbers. These yearly reports included some personal data, which suggested that learners have classroom-related issues, along with other challenges and left the program. Much more information is needed to understand educators' use of instructional practices and the decline of GED prep classes. Ross-Gordon (2011) concluded that the needs and type of adult learner have changed over the last ten years.

Although more and more adult learners were showing interest in obtaining GEDs, apparently, they had been unsuccessful in getting one. According to DeRenzis (2014), the demand for workplace skill-sets and the economy continued to evolve; therefore, obtaining a GED had become a much sought-after credential. Brannen (2011) acknowledged that some eager learners took it upon themselves to register and take the GED examination without completing GED prep classes and failed the exam. Schmidt (2013) stated that it is necessary for all stakeholders to seek new ways of developing programs and educational instruction that produce prepared GED prep classes learner. The need for groundbreaking classroom resources

supporting adult educators is pertinent to address the demand for rising needs of adult learners regardless of the educational setting or classroom group type (Schmidt, 2013).

According to Martin & Broadus (2013), some community colleges in the area were offering GED prep classes though it was up to the individual to seek out programs. Additionally, “Too few adult learners start the GED prep classes ever pass the exam” (p.1), moving further behind their peers educationally and economically. In many cases, a GED also known as a high school equivalent became necessary for educational training programs, and many employment opportunities were requiring a GED or equivalent. According to Heckman, Humphries, and Mader (2010), the lack of a GED or equivalent placed a strain on families and communities and influenced funding for college-based literacy programs failing to meet a certain percentage of standard GED outcomes.

Adult literacy programs that were not generating consistent progress in numerical results posed a threat to the programs’ funding, resources, and operations and thus imposing further barriers on prospective learners (Tolbert, 2005). During the earlier years, GED credentials did not pose much of a threat to the economic survival of individuals who did not possess them. Educators began to recognize some adult learners still interested in getting a GED. They began to provide basic instructional practices to engage adult learners in unlocking their fullest potential for learning during this educational evolution (Gwertz, 2011). Very little was required from educators during that period, and adult learners were eager to complete the class and move on with their lives. As the new for GED grew, educators were found not using

viable practices and engaging learners in interactive instructional methods to support the needs of struggling learners (Doherty, 2012).

Educators holding certificates and other types of training were not necessarily proficient in identifying the challenges that adult learners brought to the classroom. The traditional educator-to-learner interaction, an attempt to build a relationship, was no longer creating successful outcomes because adult learners were facing more problems in everyday life and preferred not to be bothered with attending GED prep classes (Ross-Gordon, 2011).

Adult educators were open to using new classroom techniques and tools and acknowledged the need to engage learners of all types. Educators who were traditionally good individuals, a role model or activist in the local community, previously met the primary requirement as educators. They are now held to higher standards. According to Ajaja and Eravwoke (2013), a shift towards educators who were effective at teaching influenced learners' learning and affected learners in the classroom and even after they left was becoming the standard. Educators who are seeking to establish mutual interactions and social responsiveness among adult learners are seen as important and bring an important component to help foster successful learning environment (Ajaja & Eravwoke, 2010). Educators using CLM to improve adult learners' academic performance became a model for GED programs in other community college settings.

Rationale

In the local institution in this study, there was no indication of redesigning current instructional practices for adult educators working in GED prep classes. Adult educators used traditional or basic instructional practices suited for K-12. During the end of semester staff development meetings, adult educators discussed classroom highlights and best practices in working with adult learners. Educators shared their interest in having a research-based instructional tool providing classroom instructions and better communication across the curriculum. Some of these educators are experienced Culturally Responsive Teachers using tools to strengthen adult learners culturally in credit classes (McKoy, MacLeod, Walter, Nolker, 2017). Other educators who had been working in adult literacy programs for several years had discussions about how to improve class participation and increase GED outcomes, but discussion of improvement rarely materialized due to educators being mostly part-time and alternating between institutions or else due to a lack of funding for necessary data inquiry.

Also, some part-time educators lack training in adult education methods, use lesson plans that are not organized and learning material basic in content (Martin & Broadus, 2013). Many adult learners enrolled in GED prep classes to obtain a GED, but still were not completing the program and were not receiving the GED. During a briefing at the local college, the interim administrator reminded educators and staff about the poor GED statistics from earlier data (Personal communication, May 12, 2014). During 2012, the area currently under study had the highest failure rate at 59% (StateStat, 2014; Sydner, 2012).

Although that was in 2012, numbers have increased in some local areas, a commitment from all who work in this department was seeking to improve the success of GED prep class learners at every level. Any significant change in the environment of the GED prep classes required considerable redesigning of educators' instructional practices, not only in GED prep classes but throughout adult basic education programming and various other educational settings. (Sawchuk, 2010). GED classes are held in religious settings, community-based organizations, and through online. Adult learners in pursuit of a GED can achieve their goal given a creative and enhanced learning environment formed by educators (Terry, 2009). The dilemma is that educators continued to use basic instructional practices in local GED prep classes to engage adult learners academically.

To resume viable adult literacy programs and increase the numbers of GED learners, a concentrated initiative to look at educators' instructional practices used amidst declining enrollment in a local adult literacy program was sought (Personal communication, February 11, 2013). Adult learners, who enrolled in GED prep classes to pursue their goals suddenly lost interest when overcome by feelings of intimidation and fear of pursuing a GED. In many cases, their feelings are unwarranted but solely based on past experiences in previous GED program. To improve positive outcomes in adult literacy programs, educators noted instructional practices that were slow to meet standards to increase positive outcomes in adult literacy programs and made an aggressive effort to change.

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

In the GED prep classes of this study's local community college, there was no indication of redesigning instructional practices and nor that consistency of practices were being used into GED prep classes. Adult educators' use of basic instructional practices in GED prep class continued as classroom participation continued to decline, and GED outcomes fell. Educators continued to have informal conversations on the methods of instructional practices used in GED prep classes and the possibility of them yielding poor GED outcomes. A report compiled by the secretary of a local state education agency encouraged stakeholders to look at educational practices and see if a change would affect GED outcomes.

The change occurred when GED prep class educators noticed the connection between adult learners' results and instructional practices. During the summer of 2005, a statewide professional development conference convened to discuss new methods and standards to meet the needs of the 21st-century learner (DLLR, 2013). Over 2-3 years, multiple instruction models were reviewed. A government-funded competency tool Pro-Net for adult literacy-based and a self-assessment tool was implemented to aid educators in examining current knowledge base and skills. Over 2-3 years, multiple instruction models were reviewed. The extensive review of instructional models allowed adult educators to evaluate adult literacy programs in other East Coast states and at local institutions (DLLR, 2013). Although the educators were involved in professional development training, self-assessment, and Pro-Net, they continued to fail to increase the successful outcomes of adult learners enrolled in a GED prep class. Seemingly,

educators who were nonassertive and disengaged from adult learners provided an excuse for them to discontinue studies. Learners who did not complete GED prep classes choose not to try again, thus adding to the growing numbers.

Thus, it was imperative to identify learners' challenges, which prohibited them from completing a GED prep class. Identifying learners' challenges helped to increase understanding of self-needs, which helps determine one's educational and occupational position (Flynn, Brown, Johnson, & Rodger, 2011). Once it was determined that educators benefited from instructional skill redesigning, a concerted effort to implement new instructional practices in GED prep classes began.

Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature

The idea that basic adult education programs do not use consistent instructional practices in GED prep class was problematic. There was no documentation or information to suggest that a research-based tool was being used in GED prep classes. Many factors contributed to adult learners' low GED prep class participation rates and poor academic outcomes. Smith (2010) noted that educators' quality of teaching adult learners was limited in the practices of facilitating academic skill subjects in GED prep classes. The purpose of this literature review was to (a) clarify the need for effective instructional practices, and for vigilance to augment adult learners' achievement in diverse settings; (b) discuss basic practices used in adult literacy programs; and (c) review the literature for continuous dissemination of interactive lessons for educators to use in adult literacy classrooms. A summary of the literature reviews

informed educators, and administrators about the effectiveness of CLM (Johnson & Johnson, 2013).

Getting the attention of educators and administrators by sharing summary of a summarized review of the literature may provide a voice to evoke discussions about the challenges and drawbacks of adult literacy programs creating a significant achievement gap. The closing of achievement gap of adult learners in literacy programs partially hinged on educators' facilitation of instructions. Educator's increasing their knowledge of interactive learning model's andragogy style enhances facilitation and making changes to classroom standards (Chisman, 2011). Intervention by local and state officials was the catalyst to advance current and future programming for adult learners in literacy programs who wanted a GED.

The number of residents 18 to 64 who resided in the area under study and who did not have a high school credential were around 445,000, out of an estimated state population of 6,000,000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Having necessary adult literacy skills is the foundation for obtaining a GED. This study laid the groundwork essential to address the needs of adult learners by redesigning instructional practices used in GED prep classes to a research-based tool.

Considering administrators are not always aware of educator's classroom challenges. Therefore, a collective effort among stakeholders and educators helped to foster a warm and supportive classroom environment. Additionally, providing adult learners with information and the benefits of prep classes (enhance learning) influenced them to enroll and complete GED prep classes (Patterson, 2016).

Helping educators to gain information about learners' challenges gave educators more understanding of learners' academic needs (Patterson, 2016). Moreover, the number of difficulties adult learners faced were endless. Hence, educators were willing to participate in the redesigning of basic practices in GED prep classes. Educators unwilling to evaluate traditional methods continued the downward path of declining participation and declining success of adult learners (Jolliffe, 2014). Evaluation of CLM, a leading tool in engaging adult learners to achieve successful academic outcomes practical (Gillies, 2014).

According to Xiaofan (2011), challenges to adult learners' participation and achievement in adult literacy programs included educators' lack of instructional practices and delivery of instruction. Xiaofan (2011) highlighted strategies such as expanding the scope of literacy programs for learners and using diverse resources to forge continuous learner participation and commitment. Adult educators' use of CLM helped in instructional practices to impart essential academic skills to learners, hence enhancing their skill-level and increasing GED prep class participation for GED achievement. Ways to improve successful outcomes in adult literacy programs was also explored through a further review of the literature on the use of cooperative learning.

Definitions of Terms

The following terms, used throughout this study, were defined as follows:

Adult educators: Teachers, facilitates the applications of andragogy to learners in an educational setting (Perry & Hart, 2012).

Adult learners: Students not enrolled in high school without high school diploma enrolled in an educational setting to gain academic skills to complete a comprehensive examination (GED) to obtain a diploma (Chao, 2009).

Andragogy: Techniques and methods to teach adults centering learning towards learner encapsulating ideas and experiences in the process (Knowles et al. 2011).

Basic instructional practices: an indecisive model of instructions compiled for reading for more than 50 years (Pearson & Kamil, 2007).

Challenges: Diversions adult learners encounter while attending adult literacy classes that may prevent them from remaining committed to the completion of adult literacy classes. Situational demographics, relationships break down, and inadequate preparation is deterrents to program completions (Chao, 2009).

Classroom practices: Educators undertaking skills, instructions, and curriculum in classrooms (Schleicher, 2012)

Classroom techniques: Skills driven by educators in adult literacy classes to support multiple categories of exercises such as problem solving or open discussion

<http://serc.carleton.edu/introgeo/cooperative/techniques.html>.

Cooperative learning method (CLM): an interactive goal-oriented instructional method uses in adult education to advance learning through reading, writing and thinking. D. W. Johnson, & Johnson, (2009).

General Educational Development (GED) A nationally recognized credential designed by the American Council of Education (ACE) consists of a series of test in five (5) subject areas: mathematics, writing, reading, social studies, and science. It is a credential mostly accepted as an equivalent to a high school diploma and accepted by most major institutions (Tyler, 2005).

GED Prep Class (s): Courses that prepare adults learners with the basic academic skills to include math, reading, and writing to test for a GED.

<http://www.literacycouncilmcmd.org/for-students/take-a-class/>

Instructional Practices: A compilation of teaching methods used in college classrooms to enhance learning (Karge, Phillips, Jesse & McCabe, 2011).

Literacy: "the ability to read, write, speak, and listen; to communicate effectively and understand written information."

http://www.edc.org/newsroom/articles/what_literacy.

Pedagogy Teaching: A teaching model used to develop content, method, timing, and evaluation when working with children Knowles et al. (2011).

Performance trends and project report: A report compiled by institutions executive staff to meet state and federal funding and achievement outcome (DLLR, NAAL, 2013).

Social Interdependence: a group of one or members who create common goals, and that the status or change of group members affect the status of other group members (Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 2013).

Significance of the Study

Adult educators' use of basic instructional practices in GED prep class remained an issue in some classes (MDLLR; PSTAE, 2010), for example, instructor-focused teaching (meaning that the instructor prepared written drill on whiteboard with limited mutual engagement), instructor-led instruction (meaning that the educator initiated all conversation with few options for dialogue), and the demand for homework as the sole condition for measuring achievement. Currently, the local community college uses standardized instructional practices in basic college courses but does not have a uniformed method to facilitate instructions in GED classes. For example, traditional

college courses generally applied to a degree or certificate; on the other hand, non-credit courses, such as the GED, are for personal enrichment or vocational training.

This project study was significant because it contributed to the pooling together a body of knowledge required to address adult educators' experience with the use of basic instructional instructions in GED classes, where low participation and low GED outcomes are common. Adult educators' continual use of basic instructional practices with adult learners potentially limited their opportunities for academic success. As the need for GED classes increased, according to Association for Adult Community and Continuing Education (2011) it became critical that educators evaluated their classroom practices, along with administrators and stakeholders to enhance classroom participation and increase learners' achievement. Administrators and stakeholders indirectly influenced the increasing number of learners' participation and GED achievement, by supporting the redesigning of educators' instructional practices.

Adult learners faced with multiple challenges continued to fail to complete adult literacy courses and acquire a GED (Garvey & Grobe, 2011). The need for additional interventions to support adult learners enrolled in GED classes at community colleges, and satellite locations remained evident, though reports demonstrated learners' resources and funding was moving towards the college-credit side of institutions (Ryder & Hagedorn, 2012). Educators considering new instructional practices activities for GED

prep classes sought to inspired boring learners to remain in class. Some learners had little incentive to complete courses without active involvement and encouragement from their educator. The interest and concerns came not only from educators, but also from administrators, stakeholders, and anyone who could effect change (Garvey & Grobe, 2011).

If educators continue to lack the initiative to connect with peers to gain insight into better practices to engage learning, many learners again will fail to achieve educational success leading towards a downward path of feeling disenchanting (Jolliffe, 2014). Challenges for some learners cut across culture and demographic lines, leaving learners in pursuit of educational and vocational goals feeling discouraged and dissatisfied. Other learners attempted to complete studies in private, and have requested the identity of class enrollment sealed, feared that a breach of confidentiality would cause embarrassment to the learner or family member. Learners failing to complete their course of study would significantly affect advancement in the workplace, educational progress, and economic growth.

Perry and Hart (2012) looked at how adult educators worked with diverse groups and found that the educators were prepared to work with learners and although some were certified, they lacked the essential instructional practices required to engage diverse learners. Perry and Hart (2012) also emphasized uncertainty among educators

and the many questions on the "what and how" to engage learners. Adult educators striving to serve adult learners faced a variety of challenges; however, the quest to connect with learners and promote academic achievement was paramount to successful GED outcomes (Hansman & Mott, 2010). Educators trained in CLM proved instrumental in increasing academic achievement. Perry and Hart (2012) stressed the importance of fully supporting both adult educators and learners to create a thriving environment for learning and accomplishments.

It is widely known that adult literacy learners' function at different levels and have multiple needs (Xiaofan, 2011). Besides, many learners seeking a GED were somewhat out of reach, that meaning due to various personal challenges, for example, family, or work, and seemingly at a disadvantage when attempting to attend school. Embracing adult learners' needs and valuing their efforts sustained their program participation, increased enrollment and produced successful learning outcomes. Using an interactive, goal-centered learning tool instead of traditional practices of outdated handouts, or the intimidating homework assignments, adult learners, will become energized and committed to participation in GED prep classes, seeking successful outcomes.

Research Questions

Past research on cooperative learning in the GED prep class has been limited; but research on other adult learners' academic courses have been significant for academic achievement (Slavin, 2014). Adult learners enrolled in GED prep classes were found to lack understanding of GED content materials to have lower participation and low academic outcomes (Turnball, 2010). Some research indicated educators chose group works, an element of cooperative learning, as a method to improve adult learners' performances (Slavin, 2014). In GED prep classes at a local community college setting, there was no facilitation of CLM by adult educators for adult learners seeking GED.

According to Pegher (2014), adult learners' curriculum was aligned with the K-12 curriculum but did not include the use of CLM or did not add cooperative learning to the curriculum updates. To determine if a redesign of instructional practices was warranted, additional information was needed about adult educators' instructional practices in GED prep that imparted instruction in cooperative learning to adult learners. A qualitative case study was used to explore whether an interactive goal-centered learning tool would enhance adult learners' overall participation and increase GED outcomes. This study explored the following central research question (CRQ) and two sub-research questions (SRQ) as they relate to the local setting:

CRQ. What experiences have adult educators had to facilitate cooperative learning method to GED prep class learners?

SRQ1. How do adult educators perceive cooperative learning methods for adult learners in a GED prep class?

SRQ2. What assistance, if any, do adult educators believe they need to support facilitation of cooperative learning in GED prep classes?

Herrman (2013) found that when modern instructional methods were used in GED prep classes, it spurred active student engagement and improved successful outcomes. Careful research on the usefulness of cooperative learning helped to address low learners' participation and GED achievement. Educators who adopted new strategies and implemented essential features of cooperative learning in the classroom increased learners' dedication and skill levels, demonstrating successful outcomes in achieving the GED (Johnson & Johnson, 2013).

Review of the Literature

I developed this literature review to explore adult educators' current instructional practices to promote GED achievement and determine if educator use of an interactive goal-centered CLM method would enhance learners' participation and improve GED results. The literature review focused on the conceptual framework of

Johnson and Johnson (2009) cooperative learning, by way of social interdependence and its connection to achieving a successful outcome in adult education programs. Obtaining clarification of cooperative learning and how the learning elements were structured, were vital to promote learning in GED prep classes altering the use of educators' instructional practices (Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 2014).

I used a comprehensive search of the literature, including books and journals. I conducted an extensive search of educational internet websites. Multiple electronic databases were Eric, Wiley Online, MHEC Publications, Education Source, Psych Articles, Merlot, World Cat, U. S. Census and Cooperative Learning Institute. Keywords used to search were adult literacy programs, pedagogy, K-12 class curriculum, educators' facilitation styles, adult learning styles, GED learning strategies, adult learners' challenges, and High school drop outs. To gather viable statistical data and current trends, government-sponsored websites and educational newspapers were searched. To gain insight into educators' instructional techniques, informal conversations were held with trailblazers and GED prep class educators, and others involved in strengthening adult literacy programs. This concentrated source of information was imperative for this research study.

This literature review was divided into two sections. In Section 1 I reviewed the conceptual framework that was the basis of this study to explore adult educators'

instructional practices and the need to redesign instructional practices to increase learning in GED prep class. The first section began with a historical perspective of social interdependence and how cooperative and competitive learning fostered cooperative learning development. This section further discusses basic learning and the use of CLM as a modern learning tool. Three essential components of cooperative learning, and how they interfaced with the five elements of cooperative learning to provide guidance and directions to adult educators ensued. It emphasized the foundation and retooling of cooperative learning, and how it was used in preparing educators working with learners. A scrutiny of the fundamental theories and current research was reviewed to solidify the understanding of cooperative learning. These techniques enhanced educators' knowledge of instructional practices and increased understanding of adult learners' challenges to obtain a GED increasing classroom participation and the number of GED achievement.

In Section 2 of the literature review, the purpose of using cooperative learning, the benefits of implementing cooperative learning, and the challenges of integrating cooperative learning were reviewed and emphasized. The Johnson and Johnson (2009) method supported the instructional practices of adult educators working with adult learners enrolled in GED prep classes. Johnson and Johnson used CLM of interactive learning lessons in education applicable to adult learning, with a limited bridge to GED

prep class participants. Johnson and Johnson (2013) argued that cooperative learning is a sound and structured process to promote individualistic and competitive efforts to increase educators' knowledge of valuable classroom assimilation when working with adult learners. For GED prep classes to become successful, college administrators and stakeholders must be aware and involved with incorporating adult learning resources vital to the needs of educators fostering adult learners' achievement (Herrmann, 2013).

Johnson and Johnson (2013) asserted that educators must receive cooperative learning training on how to engage learner-to-educator and learner-to-learner in GED prep class. Theories surrounding how to engage adult learners in GED prep class and how educators implement instructional practices did not consistently align with each other. Although, given full implementation of cooperative learning guidelines, educators failed to develop professional skills necessary to incorporate in GED prep class to gain successful outcome for adult learners. An examination of fundamental theories and current research helped to bring together the importance of adult educators' integrating CLM with instructional practices in the GED prep class.

Conceptual Framework

Johnson and Johnson's elements of cooperative learning method. The conceptual framework for this study was Johnson and Johnson (2009). The method explained the competency and mastery structured between learners' subject areas

being studied and adult educators' instructional styles. Johnson and Johnson (2009) also revealed that working together collectively to accomplish common goals helped maximize adult learning. Cooperative learning connects adult educators and learners in a classroom setting.

History. Johnson and Johnson (2009) illustrated three goals to direct adult educators' roles in GED prep class (a) adult educators working together with adult learners, (b) learners working together in impromptu groups to achieve learning goals, and (c) establish long-term learning. Adult educators mastering the basic ingredients of cooperative learning allowed for better structuring of current lessons, curricula basic courses, tailoring unique subjective areas to learners, better understand and diagnose problems learners encountered GED prep class (Johnson and Johnson, 2009).

Cooperative learning is an interactive instructional process that is implemented and overseen by instructors while adult learners in small groups are mutually supporting each other. Cooperative learning allowed adult educators to address their own needs by involving them in cooperative learning interactive methods helped identify proper instructional practices for use in GED prep class. Herrman (2011), CLM, prepared as a newly designed instructional tool provided an opportunity for educators to observe group interactivity and to experiment how cooperative learning can enhance successful

learning and enhance achievement. Cooperative learning interactive learning elements can include a variety of techniques and practices useful in the classroom.

There are three main concerted components of cooperative learning. They are (a) cooperative learning, (b) informal cooperative learning, and (c) cooperative base group learning (Johnson and Johnson, 2013). The three components describe the structure and setting where interactive learning methods occur (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1991). According to Johnson and Johnson (2013), the idea of cooperative learning, which foundation stemmed from social interdependence, has been around for decades, though in more recent times cooperative learning became a tool used in diverse academic settings to promote education established by educators and executed by learners.

Cooperative learning method consists of five elements that are required to establish and implement cooperative learning as a research-based learning tool and should not be used independently of each other. The five elements are essential to interactive learning methods to strengthen and help educators' reach their fullest potential and are interwoven elements of cooperative learning (Johnson and Johnson 2009). Also, the five elements are necessary to develop, launch, and maintain cooperative learning according to (Tran, 2013)

Learning Elements. The five learning elements are

- Positive interdependence involves educators providing clear and defined group goals to link learners in GED prep class;
- Individual and group accountability where each member is responsible for another in-group formation facilitating learning to the entire group;
- Face-to-face require learners to interact with each other verbally in a group while encouraging, exchanging opinions, and supporting each other's learning task;
- Interpersonal and small group skills augment learning of subject's matter through sharing knowledge using small group skills; and
- Group processing is effective group interactions to self-evaluate towards academic skills improvement.

Educators changing approaches, and practices positively affected learners' outcome when demonstrating appropriate cooperative learning interactive method (Johnson & Johnson, 2013).

Literature Review

From Primary to Higher Education. Various theories have surfaced with the intent to make drastic changes in learning settings were adult learners, and educators' successes are mired in broken strategies. CLM mostly known for work in pedagogy learning during the 1960s became the face and preferred method providing instructional learning in educational settings in recent time (Johnson and Johnson, 2013). Pedagogy practices of cooperative learning in primary and secondary sites were found unsuitable for transferring to adult learning according to (Herrmann, 2013). The use of cooperative learning in adult education settings evoked change due to real techniques and practices shared in group foundations through their own thinking.

Cooperative learning is a research-based interactive learning method redesigned by Smith (2011) along with her colleagues for use in adult education settings. According to Smith (2011), cooperative learning birthed from a small teacher's development training conference whose discussion centered around adult learners that formulated three distinct interactive learning methods. Social interdependence a major topic of interest found necessary to use in the classroom for educators to have a more poignant position with adult learners (Johnson and Johnson, 2013). Social interdependence a vital interjection for a more cognitive perspective of cooperation and competition was an essential concept for mastering cooperative learning (Johnson, Johnson, and Smith,

2014). For interdependence to occur and have an impact on learners, one or more or groups of learners must engage in an exchange of positive social interactions (Johnson et al. 2014). Mastering the concept of Cooperative learning allowed educators to structure related lesson plans, provide different instructions to learners and establish a plan for observations while learners engage in-group interactions.

Identifying challenges of adult learners enrolled in GED prep classes to obtain a GED was problematic for educators, but engaging educators in training and understanding how to implement cooperative learning structured techniques in groups were favorable. It helps to advance their knowledge and understanding of learners' challenges. Moreover, it demonstrated to learners how to take ownership of their concerns or issues, further lessening the dismal need to encounter learners' challenges. Johnson and Johnson (2013) suggested implementing new learning elements in classrooms brought new meaning to achieving success.

Traditional Learning. A study later conducted by Kenner and Weinerman (2011) looked at the challenges of non-traditional college learners. Non-traditional learners, mostly adults seeking high school diplomas are self-directed and goal oriented but comes with disappointments and uncertainty of attaining GED. Adult educators not only tussle with challenges of adult learners but worked to formulate a larger degree of teaching practices, and techniques (Niwaz, Asad, & Muhammad, 2011). In a more recent

study, Kenner and Weinerman (2014) emphasized the need for adult educators to not only focus on the learning needs of adult learners but move away from concepts and strategies used with children. Simply because children need are different. When new methods of instructional practices and techniques were the focus towards helping adult learners, success in the GED prep class stood a better chance.

Adult educators, who were prepared to embrace the challenges and needs of adult learners incited classroom participation and fostered avenue for successful outcomes (Prins, Toso & Schafft, 2009). Adult learners come to GED prep class not sure of what to expect from educators or themselves, had one mutual goal which was to obtain a GED. The learning process for adult learners remained opened and flexible to meet their needs as learning takes place. How learning occurs is of most importance in gaining strives towards the achievement of adult learners enrolled in GED prep classes seeking a GED (Ihejirika, 2013). Functional adult literacy, like social learning, proved beneficial to successful outcomes of adult learners enrolled in an adult financial literacy program (Akello, Lutwma-rukundo & Mussiimenta, 2017). Given the antiquated techniques and strategies used by some educators, adult learners were not achieving goals as quickly as they initially thought they would.

Modern Learning. Educators responsible for preparing adult learners for literacy program seeking GED credentials saw an increase. The focal point of cooperative

learning was to engage adult learners in strategic learning at the same time embracing their educational goals (Tran, 2013). Using the five interactive learning elements, educators who embrace the principles to facilitate knowledge gained a better understanding of needs and challenges of adult learners, learning essential concepts and ideas for vigorous instructions. A common goal of adult literacy programs is to have the full participation of learners and favorable GED outcomes. A significant number of adult learners enrolled in the GED prep class continued a span of unsuccessfulness advancing to the next level for various reasons. The five elements of cooperative learning demonstrated through diverse group activities to guide the design of adult learning and link to the needs of both adult educators and learners Palmer et al. (2003). Conveying positive thinking towards educational achievement proves valuable to adult learners using these tools.

Cooperative learning used to alter adult learners' current thinking to new modes of thinking adds new ways of engaging in classroom practices across the class course (Johnson and Johnson, 2013). Integrating cooperative learning, according to Johnson and Johnson (2013) gave new ways of engaging learners' thinking and evoked a strong connection between adult learners and educators. Becoming active agents in one's own constructing of knowledge accentuated behavior changed affecting their sedentary values and beliefs (Tran, 2013). The continued use of the basic instructions in adult

education negatively influence adult learners and presents little modification in the instructional syllabus for educators.

Seemingly, educators assumed multiple roles to combat the daily challenges adult learners bring to the classroom, but the conditions for achievements were still out of reach. Adult learners came to class with life-learned skill and experiences. Educators encouraged learners to view their skill set with new interpretations that foster the change necessary to produce satisfactory achievements. According to Willans and Seary (2011), give adult learners opportunities to reflect upon their failed educational quandaries; charged forward thinking to eradicate those previous thoughts and move to new thinking and decisions. A study of mature-aged learners newly enrolled at a university suggested a significant number of them targeted as disadvantaged and lacked skill essential to connect and bond in the learning environment. Providing this group of learners with formal supports to help better understand the self as a learner and identify skills for success is necessary for personal and educational development. Developing an open and honest line of communication between educators and learners fosters trust and commitment to learning, help them cope with challenges, as both are responsible for their performance and development (Willans and Seary, 2011).

GED Prep Class Instructional Tools. Adult educators are expected to integrate new learning methods in GED prep classes. The new learning elements identified as

positive interdependence, promotive interaction face-to-face, individual accountability, interpersonal and social skills, and group processing can work in formal, informal and group-based methods. The utilization of this process offered varied learning situations to aid in the increase of learners' participation and academic achievement. Cooperative learning geared to suit the current era as it pertains to learners' classroom needs, has different needs, primary because of life-long experiences, and active belief systems that spear their learning. Balache & Brody (2017) asserted constructive research through tertiary education and beyond aided in identifying what adult educators needed to make them more effective at cooperative learning and serving adult learners in GED prep classes. The five learning elements simplified provides a source of guidance to adult educators.

Element I Positive Interdependence. Johnson and Johnson (2009) asserted positive interdependence is evidence when group members are cooperatively linked together to support each member in obtaining their goals. Adult learners working together formed groups developed cohesiveness to achieve an enhanced learning experience (Gillies, 2014). Whether first-time enrollment or re-enrollment in the class to obtain a GED, learners enter with self-prescribed interest and goals. They also had in mind an idea of how to navigate the class process to end sooner. Educators took

responsibility for learners' participation in groups and other activities creating a thriving learning environment edging them along through the process.

Setting goals and obtaining a GED was just one aspect of challenges learners faced in the classroom. Some learners unaware of challenges that upset their academic progress, educators shared valuable standard information with them that eased in the fulfillment of their goals. Providing oral and written instructions to adult learners on the use of newly designed materials and engaging in mutual feedback jumpstarted a different type of learning process.

During this interactive lesson, adult learners were made aware of existing challenges, prepared to accept new ways of learning and prepared to participate in newly designed classroom activities (Tran, 2013). Keeping learners active and engage in the learning process was essential to maintaining adult learners participating. Generating awareness by educators of inflexible thoughts and biases towards learners' education enabled both groups to close the gap between dated information and new concepts exercised in a new type of interactive learning method (Johnson and Bragar, 1997).

Given the interest from educators, implementing positive interdependence not only gave new life to learning but the practice of acknowledging and sharing further

information in a safe environment moving towards eradicating challenges adult learners have. Besides, considering recent data on the number of American who lack a high school credential, and the multiple reasons for this situation, the concept of positive interdependence interactive group lesson is relevant to endure a much slower process of combating adult learners' challenges.

Element II Promotive Interaction-Face-to-Face. Promotive interaction face-to-face supports reciprocity of information and materials, shared opinions, and feedback from the assessment of group members and on common topics (Tran, 2013). Interacting face-to-face with others eliminates miscommunication and misunderstanding. It allows for the equal exchange of information using facial and body expressions. Educators' exchange of conversation with little face-to-face interaction towards adult learners caused feelings of hostility and resentment. Fostering promotive interactive/face-to-face lessons engaging adult learners through group development help to transition the ambiance of the learning environment. Learners who became comfortable in-group settings are likely to engage in more internal and external dialog sharing newly attained information. Educators, who encouraged adult learners' participation in promotive interaction face-to-face lesson, gained skills of connecting with other learners and taking ownership of a significant role in the group and their learning (Smith, 2011).

It is essential that educators connect with learners in GED prep classes sharing warmth and understanding. Educators providing adult learners with user-friendly information and resources allowed the learners to ask questions and exchange information as a team member, relieving feelings and thoughts of taking this project on solo (Ferguson-Patrick, 2012). Educators felt less pressured as well when learners who voluntarily agree to gather for group lessons, were seemingly interested in new relationships and taking responsibility for self-learning. Promotive interaction /face-to-face lesson of cooperative learning implemented in classrooms foster productivity and achievement in small group sessions providing learners a different type of classroom experience (Tran, 2013).

New data supported that more than 40,000,000 American adults lack a high school credential (Martin & Broadus, 2013). For many adults, learning how to engage actively in meaningful dialogues is a needed skill. Being able to discuss academic goals and interest in an informal setting equipped them with skills to share their success with others in need of GED. Byrd, Achillies, Felder-Strauss, Franklin, and Janowich (2012) highlighted, program advertisement, dissemination of information in the classroom and community direct contact inspired potential learners to enroll in adult literacy programs. The use of promotive interaction/ face-to-face lesson to implement small group learning is designed to promote productively and achievement and can fit in most learning

setting (Tran, 2013). Integrations of this tool for the recruitment of potential learners in various parameters were efficient methods of sharing information about literacy programs.

Element III Individual and Group Accountability. The individual and group accountability learning provide learners accountability for achieving an individual goal and group goals with the support of a coach or educator in the classroom (Johnson and Johnson, 2013). Educators showing sensitivity and understanding towards learners' low skills for resolving issues gave them the edge to embrace new ideas. Learning to interact in groups was a unique experience for both adult learners and educators. Respecting one another among adult learners was important in GED prep classes and was discussed during class startup. Participation in individual and group accountability promoted respect and popularity among group members (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). With the help of educators, involving learners with tips for integrating and sharing extend a level of comfort and prevent them from becoming overwhelmed. Observations of adult learners included in this interactive lesson will guide and direct them to the proper dissemination of information, provide filters to engage in intelligent discussions and dialogue of information between all group members.

The supports do not stop with assisting adult learners in GED prep classes but engaged them in the healthy dialogue that flowed over to other settings. Learners'

reflection on their actions is another highlight of using cooperative learnings' individual accountability and group teaching (Johnson & Johnson, 2013). Adult learners, who successfully recognized their actions and strived to use new posture, and put to rest resolve challenges, moving towards using new options when engaging in other aspects of learning. Tran (2013) posits involving learners in their learning experiences, include them in-group lessons, and give real accounts; learners gain feelings of accomplishments and responsibility regardless of literacy levels. Group learners fully participating not only required less support from educators but applauded feedback from them as they guided their learning.

Additionally, learning is not just about getting a GED, consuming knowledge, or changing behaviors, but it broadens the mind, enhances one's self-belief, new family's concepts and further strengthens the community (Stanistreet, 2011). The pros and cons of understanding the needs of literacy learners seeking GEDs remain muddled. If there is any value in obtaining a GED remained for debate according to Rath, Rock, and Laferriere (2011), but, it is also calling attention to barriers that are not self-imposed, but due to the lack of enough support for educators. Educators can only progress as supported by administrators, stakeholders, and educators. Adult learners are not looking free access to complete their studies, just some assistance with negotiating

challenges that seem to hinder their progress. Individual and group accountability is not only for learners but includes the support and directions of educators.

Element IV Interpersonal and Social Skills. Adult learners enroll in literacy classes to obtain academic skills pertinent to leading them towards getting a GED and gaining interpersonal and social skills are a viable aspect of this process (Johnson & Johnson, 2013). Building strong and healthy relationships between learners and educators that go beyond the classroom were paramount in the process of teaching (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). The use of interpersonal and social skill learning was a valuable tool to jumpstart this process. Additionally, the development of social skills was expanded and had a direct correlation to increasing learners' participation, and ultimately GED achievements (Johnson & Johnson, 2013). Educators' ability to incorporate social awareness needed for healthy interactions with adult learners. They are having social skills not only influenced achievement but helped learners create an environment for regular engaging in dialogue.

Educators having the leading role in GED prep classes were ultimately responsible for learners' progress and became more active in identifying and understanding their needs pertinent to any challenges they may incur influencing their performance and participation (Muro & Mein, 2010). Resources, funding, and active recruitment were all essential to the adult literacy program, but educators' direct work

was considered the ultimate root of the success or failure of adult learners. Transferring the autonomy of learning to adult learners made learners feel they were part of a shared learning process ultimately increasing participation and successful outcomes (Terry, 2009).

Diehl (2011) exerted during their research study on the impact health literacy pointed out that the needs of adult learners were identified and met through the likes of the educators, administrators, and stakeholders. The study performed by Diehl (2011) also gave forethought to how vital it was for educators to provide adult learners with useful classroom tools and resources to succeed. However, Comings (2007) charged the burdens to learners to become more persistent towards completing literacy classes and encourage learners to remain diligent in their commitment. Learners enroll in GED prep classes to obtain a GED is of their choosing and have no mandates or legal requirements to do so. He further added, for the many that attend classes, they come with multiple barriers that lead to a more extended period to complete goals of obtaining a GED.

Therefore, making provisions to provide adult learners with available services to reach their educational goal of GED is essential. The use of interpersonal and social skills interactive learning assisted educators with properly engaging learners in a systemic manner, not only helping learners, but educators as well to grasps core competencies and knowledge that quickly integrated into classrooms (Johnson & Johnson, 2009).

Learners come from diverse backgrounds and carry with them baggage related to various life challenges.

Element V Group Processing. Tsay and Brady (2010) found when group processing was put into practice members established common group goals, assessed members as a group, and made changes as necessary to become more active. Goto, Spitzer, and Sadouk (2009) explained how potential learners responded to outreach from family and friends to enroll in adult literacy classes more often than from recruitment flyers. Likely learners' proud interaction with the family to discuss educational goals was not a formal form of cooperative learning method but was an indicator that learners had fundamental concepts of engaging in group-like behaviors.

That further suggested the need for educators to become proficient in the use of methods in cooperative learning group processing using more group activities. Adult learners, who sought out adult literacy programs, gave a sign of their desire to make a change though keeping them focused on studies while in the GED prep classes remained a challenge. On the other hand, if learners were asking questions and demonstrating interest, using an interactive method of cooperative learning group processing was instrumental in helping adult learners retain interest and redirect focus (Gillies, 2014).

According to Zafft (2008), educators gathering insight on the learners' interest and goals were essential, as not all adult learners enrolled in adult literacy classes interested in services or supports that were offered to complete GED prep classes. Implementation of CLM group processing used various topics about learners' interest provided valuable information about learners' reason (s) for enrolling in the GED prep classes and identified some of their challenges. Educators' group observations occur while learners were engaged in cooperative learning group processing to provide feedback. The lack of interest from some learners occur due in part to learners' lack of understanding of how the program was most beneficial in more areas than the classroom setting.

Further research in this area helped adult learners to determine what drives them to complete their studies, address their interest and understanding in matriculating to something higher. Noting that getting adult learners to come to the classroom could further stimulate their interest; provide a forum for open dialog and self-initiated interactive engagement in cooperative learning group processing. More participation also implied an innate social awareness of learners needs to be involved in a learning setting to develop an educational interest. According to Johnson et al. (2013), adult literacy learning is multidimensional, and it reached across educational and economic levels. The charge for educators was to be aware of the settled and

unassuming ways potential learners present to demonstrate an interest in learning and to want more information on GED. Whatever their situation was the need to encourage learners was paramount and engaging learners in interactive groups further accentuate their knowledge.

Augmentation of the new design adult literacy programs stagnated the achievement of adult learners and placed a strain on an already overwrought relationship between educators and adult learners. Educators must continue demonstrating seriousness and diligently towards learners' enthusiasm for achieving their goals. Extensive discussions with learners in the development of the new programs and changes to current programs were other avenues to engage learners' in-group interaction. Interacting with learners informally prevented annoyance and resistant to embracing other changes. Adult learners bring a variety of skills and experiences of sharing so entertaining their feedback was valuable.

Interactive Group Lesson-Classroom. Skilled educators design educational classrooms for learning with the understanding learning occurs on different levels; all classes require arrangement and structure, and effective instructional facilitation. Educators were charged to provide instructions to each learner who attended GED prep classes. Selecting the most effective tool to engage learners in achieving educational goals was crucial. The use of CLM involved learners working together to reach a

common objective and were considered a progressive element to forward successful outcomes in adult literacy programs (Gillies, 2014). In CLM, adult learners learned by engaging in group formation to endorse active listening, exchange of ideas and accepting responsibility for one's learning.

The strength of the interactive learning method was only as sufficient as educators established classroom structure and group adaptation. According to Palmer et al. (2003), the use of these cooperative learning interactive group lessons was to involve adult learners in the learning process. Interactive group lessons are identified based on activity learners engage in such as pair-share and jigsaw formation for easy recognition and understanding of how they are assembled. The design of the classroom layout to catch the view and make visual contact with all learners was of great importance. Interactive learning methods engaged GED prep class learners' in group discussions leading them to have greater success than traditional instructor-led talks to stimulated intellectual growth.

Tran (2013) offered the need for educators to provide GED prep class learners with group directions, such as group instructions, lesson objectives, and learners' corroboration and praise. Adding the need to be available to answer any questions learners may have. Provisions of support by educators to learners were crucial to maintaining ongoing progress towards the success of cooperative learning interactive

method. A research study supported by National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL) and The New Brunswick Public School Adult Learning Center, called attention to the importance of getting feedback from learners on commitment and courage to continue with classes. Information on newly formed techniques using cooperative learning and learner-friendly teaching styles and roles of educators were discussed (Beder, Tomkins, Medina, Riccioni & Deng, 2006).

Program liaisons implemented a study encouraging 395 adult learners to participate in a literacy reading class. Students received up to 100 hours of classroom instructions. Of the 395 adult learners who started, towards the end, 198 adult learners completed the program. This study focused on adult learners' profile, but the failure rate of program completion was significant. A large number of the adult learners seem as disengaged, uninterested and lacking commitment. Johnson and Johnson (2009) emphasized cooperative as one of the most dominant instructional practices currently used in various learning settings. Cooperative learning has dominated multiple educational environments although a lot more needs to be done for complete awareness of this tool by more educators. The implementation of cooperative learning lessons in this case study proved beneficial.

By integrating interactive lessons, educators gained new techniques and practices for classroom facilitation of adult learners. The use of interactive lessons may

point out some challenges of adult learners, such as how they connect and most importantly, how educators engaged them. Incorporating cooperative learning interactive elements with educators' instructional practices would prove favorable outcomes.

Facilitation of Learning. Purpose. The way of facilitating, instructions to adult learners enrolled in GED prep classes were becoming outdated, creating a drastic impact on the delivery of GED thus increasing the number of individuals without a GED. The traditional facilitation of instructions in GED prep classes continued to grow (Allen, Withey, Lawton, & Aquino, 2016). The assimilation of cooperative learning interactive learning methods helped modify the functionality of the classroom. Cooperative learning interactive learning elements is a unique tool to help educators start the new way of providing instructions. The more educators become involved with adult learners, the more familiar they became with using the materials. Using cooperative learning interactive learning elements spiked the interest of learners and slowly boosted the number of learners sharing positive experiences.

Johnson and Bragar (1997) asserted, as the economic climate changes, the world system become more advanced, the demand to acquire new knowledge, and exchange of information becomes critical to educators and learners. Educators' implementation of a new learning tool for GED prep class use required effective communication and a clear

and concise understanding of learners and an attempt to delineate assumptions.

Additionally, according to Brewer-Etzkom & Skolets (2014) changes administering GED exams is coming and keeping these changes in mind, may require significant attention to how facilitation of instructions happen. Integrating a change in the classroom instructions of any type involves a course of action. A process with step by step guidelines so, not only educators understood and put into practice, but adult learners, who were used to the primary ways of receiving instructions.

Wlodkowski (2008) stated, "Across most cultures, and to be respected in a group means, at the minimum, you have the freedom to express yourself with integrity and without fear of threats or blame and that you know your opinion matters" (p. 161). Respect is essential to the cooperative learning perspective on the use of interactive group learning. Demonstrating respect, freedom to express and feelings of importance was crucial to the success of adult literacy classes and were a general practice in most group settings. Interactive learning that involved learners in connecting with other learners is equally important. In many classroom settings, educators were in charge and asserted authority when learners act otherwise.

However, to strengthen the purpose for using interactive learning elements, educators thinking as creative leaders were involved as adult learners were in classroom planning and assessing of needs to move the class towards a common objective to

completing studies to take the GED exam Knowles et al. (2011). The old axiom, "not broken, don't fix it" was unfavorable to up surging of the new phenomenon in adult education. Educators employing interactive learning elements sensed noticeable change, as it was easier to change a group's prejudices or belief collectively rather than to change an individual's core beliefs (Gershwin, 2010). Educators using new resources required to engage learners in group work began to move learners from focusing on challenges and towards embracing new classroom techniques. Educators continue to be an expert in the classroom and learners who continue to look to them for instructions welcome the unique element of interactive learning and diverse methods. Taking a position to engage learners regularly, such as inquire how they are feeling, what name they would like to be called or even inquire about educational advancement leading conversations to the development of ideas and plans to discuss further challenges.

Process. Mark (2008) highlighted the need to seek out parallels between adult learning and techniques adult educators' use to engage learners. In other words, as offered by Busch, Gilles, Jean-Phillippe & Butera (2016) it is important that adult learners be emotionally prepared to work together to engage easily in cooperative learning. Aiding adult learners through general discussions to reckon with challenges, new methods, and techniques adult educators' implement could create a more productive learning environment. Moreover, basic methods educators used that were

engaging learners and keeping their attention, possible decreased learning and eventual provided adult learner's justification for not participating and dropout. The supplication of interactive learning elements to advance learners and strengthen mutual relationships made a way in the development of a more productive learning environment (Johnson & Johnson, 2009).

Holyoke and Larson (2009) stressed the need to look not at diversity in learners' values, history, and preferences based on age range. This study observed the difference in learners' values and other areas based on the age of graduate students from several generational groups. Various generational age-groups spanned across 25 plus years, and multiple generational groups were participating in adult literacy classes at any given time. A local literacy program enrolled a family of relatives in the same program, and because their last names were different, were unaware of potential relationships until introductions occurred. Whether the discovery of relationships among some of the learners created an issue was not revealed. However, being sensitive and aware that individual circumstances may be unique from ours is important. Educators mindfulness of many potential situations is better positioned to facilitate instructions to all.

The process of using interactive learning elements in GED prep classes bring instructional practices to a group setting to engage all learners and give educators the autonomy to work with learners on various levels. Cooperative learning is relatively new

in many adult education systems and will require educators conjoining to support adult learners learning. (Jolliff, 2014). Engaging learners at any level should require necessary explanation of the lesson process regardless if routine or new materials. Preparing handouts of cooperative learning interactive elements and methods, including sample activities to review with learners, would provide a visual to transition to the next steps. Some of these next steps are challenges for educators as it is to adult learners. Identifying some such as how to establish group sizes for development of cohesive relationships, along with aiding learners how to formulate groups is a start. Group formation is not received well in many adult learning settings.

Assignment of group roles and tasks are necessary, along with providing instruction to learners on how group work was facilitated. During the process of integrating interactive learning methods, it was helpful to conduct mini-sessions on behaviors related to respect, taking turns, decision-making and conflict resolution Palmer et al. (2003). Bansak and Smith (2011) devised vital steps to implement cooperative learning process using mock-style presentations with a focus on accountability and small group social skills for educators (college or community setting) to perform the necessary practices required in classrooms to bring about achievements. These presentations can demonstrate the appropriate structure to integrate

cooperative learning in a wide range of classroom settings and engage productive relationship necessary between adult learners and educators.

Cooperative Learning-Benefits. Many educators across college classrooms used cooperative learning to enhance adult learners learning building academic skills (Brame & Briel, 2015). Incorporating interactive group lessons were beneficial to adult learners, educators, and stakeholders. The benefits of cooperative learning in adult literacy was enormous but was more useful in settings where learners were academically, culturally and linguistically diverse (Sherritt, 1994). In the local setting as directed in this study, and in other settings on the East Coast, adult literacy programs trends showed the inclusiveness of more diversity in learners. Another factor to consider was properly implementation of cooperative learning in these settings.

According to Sherritt (1994), the fair use of cooperative learning minimized and, in some cases, eliminated class, gender, disability, and ethnic barriers. It developed interpersonal and group skills, facilitate live and exciting experiences while empowering learning and giving a positive impression of their knowledge. Ultimately, its enhanced achievement, vital to increasing GED numbers. Coordinating and providing instructions for cooperative learning was worth the invested time to implement its practices and techniques and using interactive learning lessons promoted social interactions, oral communication and modeled proper social behavior (Johnson & Johnson, 2013).

Engaging adult learners presented a significant problem that was essential to developing a healthy adult educator-learner relationship — establishing a connection with learners without a regular commitment from educators added to the difficulties promoting further distance between the goal of engaging learners for successful GED achievement and individuals unsuccessful. Cooperative learning providing interactive learning lessons was beneficial and provided a bridge to bring the distance of educators and GED prep classes together. The interactive formation learning lessons delivered about cohesiveness in relationships exercised additional benefits when adult learners developed interpersonal skills, connecting with other learners while overall enhancing their well-being Palmer et al. (2003).

Cooperative Learning-Challenges. Although CLM had proven beneficial to adult learners and even learners of pedagogy for decades, not all educators and stakeholders agreed that changing from basic use of instructions were beneficial. For centuries, educators had built instructional practices for engaging learners around the Pedagogical Model (Knowles et al. 2011). In more recent findings, Buchs, Filippou, Pulfrey & Volpe' (2017) using pedagogy model engaging learners in early education or adult education continue to pose a challenge. A few basic assumptions of adult learners were educators in charge of what learners learned, having little experience to influence learning and learners and affected by external pressures to learn. The thinking behind pedagogy is

appropriate educational settings, but as trends in adult education changed so do the need to provide support and modern techniques in educational settings.

However, implementing cooperative learning in various educational settings came with some challenges. Inadequate, feelings of frustration and doubt were some of the reasons reported by educators who attempted to use cooperative learning in educational settings (Pescarmona, 2011). Concerns arose around determining if adult learners were accustomed to co-operating in cooperative learning (Tamah, 2014). Johnson and Johnson (2017) suggested a limited understanding of how to structure the implementation of five basic elements would be problematic. To gain full benefits of using cooperative learning educators must be trained. For educators who received training on implementing CLM, concerns surfaced towards changing from old classroom techniques and practices to applying new knowledge. Having to share new techniques and methods of cooperative learning with colleagues presented another matter. Having to share new techniques and methods of cooperative learning with colleagues presented another matter.

Conclusions of Literature Review Findings

There is a standard inclination among researchers regarding educators' reluctance to engage in CLM and interactive learning elements. For example, Gillies and Boyles (2010) reported that educators, are resistance to using cooperative learning and

found fault with its use though educators who have been trained were more efficient with embedding cooperative learning with instructional classroom practices. Educators were challenged with moving beyond the scope of the basic training for many who worked hard to master adopting cooperative learning, which took longer and required much more time to engage learners. Further concerns with implementing cooperative learning were changing methods of communication in classroom and modifications educators needed to make changes to current syllabus.

Educators' commitment to adult learners achieving successful outcome were opened to implementing modern techniques. That could help move them through the process of acquiring a GED. Cooperative learning was designed to be incorporated in groups in various educational and non-educational setting and was effective when all were involved and striving towards a common goal. The five elements of cooperative learning were emphasizing being cooperative and strategically implemented by educators and supported by other educators and stakeholders. The use of cooperative learning was more than assigning learners to specific groups. If CLM were not integrated into GED classrooms, it was assumed basic instructional practices would continue, and adult educators continue seeking options to elevate learning. With this concern, this current project study explored educators' instructional practices to determine the need for CL to enhance participation and increase GED outcomes. Enter text here.

Implications

The conclusion of this study underwrote the current information needed to identify problems by focusing on adult educators' use of basic instructional practices and learners' failure to participate and obtain GED. With current information comes opportunity of training for adult learners and stakeholders on the need for research-based instructional practices or information to redesigned instructions to enhance adult learners' participation and increase GED outcomes. Based on the outcome of this study, professional development was a step in the process of training educators on use of new techniques. Possibly, some adult educators were skilled in diverse facilitation styles and instructions but did not have the flexibility or time to integrate under the current GED prep class layout.

The outcome of this study provided current information and understanding on a starting point to focus attention in GED prep classes with adult learners. By highlighting needs of adult educators in GED prep classes provided clarity concerning a starting point to make positive changes. By bringing more attention to adult educators use of basic instructional practices, and learners' continual decline of obtaining GED, this study became a resource to other failing adult literacy. More information highlighting adult educators' struggle to advance GED prep class learners using basic instructional practices inspired exploring positive impact of research-based instructional practices.

Summary

Available research reviewed showed that CLM significantly and positively shaped enhanced participation and increased learning for successful GED outcomes in GED prep classes. CLM is goal centered and reinforced using proven learning methods, along with assessments by peers. Educators in adult literacy classes are required to have some experience in pedagogy theory up to high school, but not experienced working with adult learners in college settings or non-educational settings. Educators used basic instructions to engage learners without standardized instructions or skill-set conducive to adult learning settings. These factors left learners unengaged, lower GED recipients who often drop out before the semester ended. According to several educators working off-campus, adult learners class participation was sporadic.

Research suggests cooperative learning has a host of benefits to adult educators and adult learners, including potential academic achievement in GED classes. The use of cooperative learning was advantageous to educators and moved them to recognize how this tool generated excitement and enthusiasm towards learners in their commitment to GED prep classes. A noticeable increase in academic achievement and class participation was shared. Cooperative learning is a preferred instructional procedure, which evokes significant change in educators' relationship with adult learners. Educators need to customize training in CLM to implement the three distinct learning method

styles, and five elements reflect on positive change augmenting performances of adult learners. Educators involved in professional development training build skills that permanently benefit adult learners long-term.

The current study explored educators' basic instructional practices to determine if research-based instructions to enhance class participation and increase GED outcomes. The outcome of this study was to inform adult educators, and stakeholders of the importance of using redesigned standardized instructions, also, to support educators need to consistently facilitate a higher level of instructions in GED prep classes with adult learners.

Section 2 highlights the rationale for selecting a qualitative case study design — a description of setting and sample selection, including how human subjects were protected. Data collection methods and tools were outlined. Data was described along with the analysis process, including coding. Consequent to the flourishing accomplishment and implementation of this study, a professional development workshop was developed for educators, administrators, and stakeholders. It also included activities used in GED prep classes.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand adult educators' use of basic instructional practices working with adult learners in GED prep classes. In Section 2, I discuss the critical components of this qualitative case study design and the rationale for using a qualitative case study. I cover the following topics: access to educators and their rights, the role of the researcher, data collection and its details, a description of the data analysis procedures and results, the strategies I used to enhance validity and control bias, and the results of the data analysis.

Research Design and Approach

Based on previous research on cooperative learning, it highlighted adult learners who are involved in cooperative learning groups showed an increase in academic achievement (Kalaian & Kasim, 2014). Despite the stated benefits of using cooperative learning in higher education, educators in GED prep classes rarely used it (Hermann, 2013). A problem in GED prep classes was that adult educators did not use a reliable and uniform instructional tool when working with adult learners. They used skills transferred from K-12 classrooms.

In a qualitative design, that is adaptable to educational settings; the researcher uses inductive method reasoning to view significant dissimilarities or trends (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010). Understanding some facets of the local problem could have been best understood with quantitative research—such as the distinction between the reported number of educators using basic instructional practices and the actual observation of how educators

were using these basic skills. While such a topic in a quantitative study could be valuable, the purpose of this project study was to explore the instructional practices of educators working in GED prep classes. Due to the small population size, and the need for in-depth information and feedback, a quantitative study was not the best method.

I concluded that the best design and approach to satisfy the purpose and goals and to answer the research questions to explore the instructional practices of educators was a qualitative case study. Qualitative research is best suited to explore a problem and to develop an understanding of educators' experiences compared to seeking an explanation of a relationship among variables (Creswell, 2012).

Fundamental to using a case study to examine groups—or in this study, individuals—were the rigorous analysis, descriptive data, and flexibility to gather information on a relatively new topic (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011; Streb, 2010). A case study was used because of the need to gain a detailed understanding of the phenomenon and establish a process to reshape the experiences of educators. Several other research designs, such as ethnography, phenomenology, and grounded theory research were determined to be unfavorable and rejected. Ethnography was not suitable because it focused on an individual's culture and society. This research study did not focus on own ethnicity, background, or customs, but on educators' instructional practices facilitating basic academic skills in adult literacy programs. Embedded interactions and questions to gain a real feel for a particular group are not necessary for the desired outcome of this case study (Lodico et al. 2010).

Additionally, consideration for phenomenological research design differs in the strategies used, such as intermingling and observing live experiences of educators as a part of a specific phenomenon (Lodico et al. 2010). It also focused on the interpretation of an individual's experiences, reactions, and feelings towards circumstances, requiring a longer data collection time. Grounded theory was inappropriate because it works best for a researcher who desires to build theory from themes resulting from data (Creswell, 2012).

Case studies are commonly used in academic research strategy to probe or describe individuals or institution (Baskarada 2014). There were similarities and differences to note when selecting a design. However, a case study was unique as it was a bounded system (case), and researchers are direct in identifying and keeping the boundaries. This project study was designed to thoroughly explore educators' experiences of instructional practices in GED prep classes with adult learners in a bound system. A case study gives flexibility to the exploration of a bound, specific to one global system; therefore, using a case study was the best method for this project study (Creswell 2012). Given the rich and comprehensive results of a case study that offers broad and inclusive meaning was the best selection for this study.

The purpose of a case study is to gather information from interviews and program reports to review and create data. This process also allows for exploring and rationalizing of different experiences from a variety of sources (Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2015). The research questions for this study focused on educators' instructional practices to increase learners' participation and enhance adult learners' participation in GED prep classes. Triangulation of data

from different sources gave me the proper direction for gathering information about educators' instructional practices working with adult learners.

This case study was best suited for this project study because of the limited number of educators and the need for detailed information required about educators' experiences of basic instructional practices in GED prep classes. Reviewing adult education program reports, end of semester summaries and gathering descriptive data from interviews questionnaires and face-to-face interviews gave me the autonomy to draw conclusions based on the collection convergence.

Participants

I conducted this study in a U. S. state on the East Coast. Multi-level approval meant getting approval from all involved sites was necessary to gain access to educators for this project study. There were 131 educators at this local college and satellite location, with 75 part-time educators (Data Book; MHEC, 2015). There are approximately 11 educators dedicated to GED prep classes although during the summer months that number is lower because of the summers recessed class schedule (Personal communication, 2016). All educators had some form of contact with GED prep class learners through either registration or orientation. Educators also worked as substitutes for GED prep classes when necessary, but there was no indication of what type of instructional practices they use during the time with adult learners (Personal communication, 2016). Seemingly, all adult educators were experienced working with adult learners. There was limited knowledge of the type of instructional practices used.

Purposeful sampling was used in this case study to select participating adult educators to conduct research. The process of using purposeful sampling in qualitative research design allowed researchers to choose educators who are best suited to provide information to support the research topic, and who are willing to engage in understanding the problem (Palinka, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan & Hoagwood, 2015). Educators ready to provide information on the topic would aid in learning about and supporting the central phenomenon according to (Creswell, 2012). The number of educators in this study was somewhat small so, the use of purposeful sampling was best suited to explore a range of questions. Adult educators who were not designated GED prep class workers were not suitable for the study. As such, I sampled educators whose assignment was to work with GED prep class learners.

During the summertime many educators are on break, therefore; it was necessary to post a research invitation letter at various locations at the institution represented in this study to recruit adult educators for this study (Appendix C). The content of the invitation letter included informed consent information along with the researcher's contact information. Eight educators responded and were selected to participate in the interview. Five of the eight interviewed later was done face to face. Two were retired elementary school teachers, one served as current high school teacher, two served as faculty in other departments of the college, and three sole responsibilities to GED prep classes. The eight educators selected for the study were all 18 years of age and older and possessed more than six months of experience working in GED prep classes. Three boasted more than five years work in adult educations-GED. All eight currently worked in GED prep classes or prior experienced in GED prep classes at local college.

Several educators had worked on the main campus and in satellite locations both days and evenings, helped me to understand the central phenomenon of their occurrences during GED prep class and how well prepared they felt to provide adequate instructions to learners. The educators were experienced as traditional educators (K-12) and possessed a broad knowledge of working with adult learners at some level. Also, these eight educators had best experienced low-class participation, low GED success rates, use of basic instructions, and best prepared to answer the research questions.

Before I could discuss the study with prospective educators, I requested approval to conduct the study and received permission from Walden's University Institutional Review Board (IRB 04-01-16-0194056). Correctly following the IRB process was essential to ensure that Walden's guidelines were followed with a focus on educators' protection, integrity, and confidentiality (Walden, 2018). As a part of the IRB process, I sent a letter of request to research the local community college. After I received written permission from the IRB to conduct my research, I began data collection. A letter was also sent requesting permission to gather data and conduct the study at the local college Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB granted permission. Additionally, I prepared an application to ensure the protection of each educator and obtain authorization to start the study. I explained the need for the study and potential contributions of the research to the college, adult literacy programs, and the field of adult education. Included in the application were an explanation of the data collection process and the method of data analysis.

Protection of Participants

The protection of each educator was held in the highest regard in research. To ensure awareness of the protection required by all educators, I received training from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research in 2016. This training discussed the importance of protecting educators from harm, about the considerations of benefits versus the risks of the research project and the importance of confidentiality (NIH, 2016).

In compliance with the IRB and the NIH, each educator signed the informed consent documents. According to Creswell (2012) using, an informed consent form serves as a reminder to protect the educators' rights. The consent form explained the purpose of the research study; educators' rights, including the right to withdrawal at any time; the risks and benefits of participating in the study; the educators' rights to ask questions and the rights as a volunteer (Creswell, 2012). Pseudonyms were used to replace educators' names and other identities in this study.

I stored all data collected from questionnaires and semi-structured interview summaries, adult education program reports, and end of semester summaries in a password-protected document drive on my hard drive. One form containing a list of educators' pseudonyms-names along with hard copies of the signed informed consent forms were stored in a locked filed drawer in my office. These confidential documents will be kept in a locked safe until five years after the research study is completed. After five years, I will delete the digital files and professionally shred the hard copies. Educators' names changed to safeguard their identity, using pseudonyms and omitting any personal information.

I informed educators the length of time potentially necessary to complete the interview questionnaires and interviews and my availability to answer any question to build rapport with them. I reassured them information provided to me would remain confidential. The educators needed to feel reassured, and comfortable to express freely without fear of the negative consequences or retaliation (Webb & Barrell, 2014).

Data Collection Methods

In the planning process of this case study, I pondered over several data sources that could best provide information to develop an in-depth understanding of the topic.

The data collection process was unique in the length of time to collect data due to institutional challenges. The length of time in no way affected the outcome of the study and was no fault of adult educators. At the start of data collection, the participating institution was on summer break that limited the number of potential educators. After receiving emails from each educator, a direct response from research recruitment flyers posted at the college, I responded to each educator answering any questions they had. Each educator met the research criteria, and as they agreed to participate, I emailed an informed consent document. Educators began completing the questionnaires.

I immediately received and responded to questions from two educators about the use of the comment section directly under each item. The section was made available to capture further thoughts or ideas on a similar question. Question 10 on the questionnaire was to re-cap any final thoughts or comments on the overall experiences on the questionnaire.

After review of completed questionnaires, I found it necessary to gain more data from educators to support the research questions. Data saturation is essential to gather full knowledge of the topic according to (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Therefore, I sent emails to all educators who had completed the interview questionnaire. I engaged the first five educators who responded in face-to-face semi-structured interviews. Proper protocol was followed, and updated consent forms were emailed and signed by educators. Interviews were arranged at nearby library and coffee shop after returning their consent forms. My doctoral study committee reviewed the interview protocol and approved the meetings before completion.

Before interviewing the educators, I discussed the reason for the request for a face-to-face interview and its benefits. A mutual location and time were considered based on their convenience to be interviewed. The approximate time for each interview lasted between 30 and 45 minutes to answer ten interview questions supporting the research questions. Each educator was allowed time to respond to the questions with an explanation. I also followed-up with questions and indirect questions to gain a thorough understanding of educators' responses (Boz & Dagli, 2017). I recorded my reflections immediately after each interview in my journal. I noted the setting and the educators' mannerism as well as nonverbal cues in my journal (Oltmann, 2016). Reflections on the interview process was an essential component as it helped to alleviate bias and built an interviewer-interviewee connection.

Through reviewing the adult education program reports and end of semester summaries, I was able to collect additional information. To keep in line with the literature review, I developed and used a document review protocol (Appendix D), to structure my

analysis of GED prep classes reports. Educators capture and compile data from each GED prep class at the end of semester summaries for administrative review. The report is comprehensive in its content but also allow for evaluation of data by narrow categories, monitoring and reporting, intake and curriculum standards, and instructions and professional development (DLLR, 2014). It provides insight on trends in learners' classroom participation, GED result outcomes and any extraordinary practices used by educators.

Using a qualitative case study methodology, I explored the following central research question: What experiences have educators had facilitating cooperative learning? Reviewing this research question the following subquestions closely related to the local setting to develop this project study:

1. How do educators perceive cooperative learning methods for adult learners in GED prep classes?
2. What supports if any do adult educators believe they need to facilitate cooperative learning in GED prep classes successfully?

Interviews: Questionnaire

One resource of data for qualitative inquiry is the questionnaire. Use of questionnaire in qualitative research is emerging, as such, can be used to garner data and along with free written thoughts and comments by answering questions on the questionnaire (Jansen, 2010). I implemented the questionnaire interview to understand the experiences of adult educators' use

of instructional practices as it related to enhancing learner's participation and increased GED outcome.

I compiled the instrument to center around questions related to adult educators' experiences facilitating cooperative learning in GED prep classes working with adult learners. Based on previous research on instructional practices in GED prep classes, topics addressed various aspects of instructional methods, including interactive group formation learning, staff development, and use of basic instructions in GED prep classes. The interview questionnaires were based on the review of literature and approval obtained by the research committee.

Researchers must be aware of the nature power they possess to influence educators and exercise care and respect in the natural in a research study (O'Grady, 2016). Reflection on mutual care and respect was helpful, and the flow of the process was an essential part of garnering data for this project study. He recommended keeping care and respect mutual towards educators as it cultivates trust between the researcher and educators (O'Grady, 2016). My role as the researcher was simplified, as I only facilitated contact with educators involved in the study, collected data, and analyzed data. I held no supervisory position at the local institution.

Eight adult educators completed an interview questionnaire using Survey Monkey to gain information on the dissemination of instructional practices of educators who currently work or have worked with adult learners enrolled in GED Prep classes. According to Creswell (2012), the use of an electronic interview questionnaire allows for rapid access to educators

where information can be readily attained. In this case study, engaging educators were time sensitive; therefore, using interview questionnaires was most appropriate.

The questionnaire consisted of 10 questions, and each item provided a comment section to garner free responses. Question number 10 specifically designed for educators to share feedback on the overall theme of the questionnaire. The use of the questionnaire allowed educators to respond to close-ended questions using five predetermined response categories, and a section to expound on their comments; then use an open-ended question to share final thoughts or comments on the questionnaire openly. The length of time it took to complete each interview questionnaire was timed stamp by Survey Monkey. The use of time was advantageous to gathering data, and it helped me monitor time responding to each question and adding comments. It took approximately 30 minutes to complete interview questionnaires, with some lasting long as 90 minutes.

Individual Interviews: Face-to-Face

Another source of collecting data for the project study was face-to-face interviews. According to Oltmann (2016), semi-structured face-to-face interviews are considered the golden standard. Such interviews can gather significant information including capturing nonverbal cues, body language, and mannerisms. I developed the semi-structured interview instrument to garner additional information regarding adult educators' experiences with instructional practices in GED prep classes with adult learners. The supplementary semi-structured interviews further addressed various usage of instructional practices, including interactive group formation, staff development and use of basic instructions in GED prep classes (Appendix C). Face-to-face

interviews, a qualitative research technique, using exploratory questions produce viable and enriched data (Boz & Dagli, 2017).

It was necessary to collect additional data to answer the research questions better. Getting the most out of data collections starts with a proper qualitative inquiry and research method to garner saturated results (Lewis, 2015). I followed each protocol as described in fore mention sections, along with an updated consent form and approval from Walden Institutional Review Board. I emailed the original educators requesting their participation and selected the first five who responded to interview using semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix C). I interviewed adult educators regarding their experiences facilitating cooperative learning as an instructional practice in GED prep classes. I developed semi-structured interview questions through a full review of the literature on adult educators' use of cooperative learning in GED prep classes (Appendix C). Several adult educators shared an end of semester summaries for my review. My project study committee reviewed and approved the semi-structured interview questions. .

Document Review

The second data collection method involved examining documents. The use of official documents in qualitative research method can serve to understand the culture of the institution that is being studied (Bretschneider, Cirilli, Jones & Wilson, 2017). I reviewed adult education program reports. These documents underscored characteristic for individualized institutions and compiled programming data. The first step in the process of obtaining these documents was to get information on the reporting process at the local institution. According to Merriam (2009),

using materials relevant to the institution under study was pertinent. The report was available for public view. I inquired to the library and was directed to their research department. During my preliminary review of documents at the library, I obtained and reviewed archived information on adult education programs, after which; I was directed to the research department at MHEC (2014) for further review of information.

The reports I obtained from MHEC provided me with information a general overview of outcomes in GED classes; however; the information was condensed to reflect a compilation of annual reporting per institutions instead of individual courses. The data reports included summaries of learners' attendance and class participation, GED outcomes and test scores, lesson plans and other data necessary for an annual fiscal report submitted to MHEC for stakeholders, and public information. The program report benchmark operates on a five-year cycle, and categories generally aligned with learners' characteristics, quality and effectiveness, and student-centered learning (PAR, 2013).

I collected additional data through reviewing end of semester summaries. Studying end of semester summaries gave me a visual, thus provided insight into the type of activities and group assignments educators plan for adult learners providing instructional practices. I used this information to strengthen the document review protocol (Appendix D). I obtained this information from adult educators who participated in face-to-face interviews. The doctoral study committee reviewed and approved the protocol before being used to evaluate the end of the semester summaries. The end of semester summaries included curriculum learning outcomes, objectives, materials, and activities. Adult educators' characteristics in GED Prep are

categorized by learners' results from the assessment. GED prep classes were assigned Essential skills Level-1, Level-2, and Level-3 with Level-1 as beginning literacy and increasing to the 8th-grade level and up to GED readiness. The end of the semester summaries was primary in the description and consistent in their format.

The review of documents helped me to understand GED prep class instructional practices, learners' low participation, and low GED outcomes. These documents were reviewed with an open mind and without prejudice towards the originator of the materials, subject of the information or the agency disseminating information (Creswell, 2012).

Data Analysis Process

Qualitative research process gathers data from several sources to achieve high validity and reliability results. Triangulation of data is principal because the use of multiple sources helps to gain a fuller understanding of the experience (Yin, 2015). In this project study, triangulation of data involved questionnaires, adult education and end of semester summary, and face-to-face interviews of educators who work as adult educators in GED prep classes. I coded and analyzed each data source necessary to uncover themes.

Merriam (2009) emphasized gathering data from a comprehensive source. As recommended by Creswell (2012), I used coding, and thematic analysis to help build description and themes. Questionnaires, face-to-face interview responses, review of adult education program reports and end of semester summaries from the local college brought together were all an essential part of this fundamental process of data analysis in this case study. First, I highlighted topics from my research question as to easily align the themes from educators'

responses in categories. I read each response several times to clearly understand educators' written data and carefully noted direct response to questionnaires. This information was transcribed and checked for accuracy.

Next, I organized the data into categories based on coded themes; according to Creswell (2012), this process is necessary for proper data analysis to interpret data. There was a possibility for predetermined themes; however, the themes were drawn slowly from written data instead of from predetermined themes. Finally, I coded each educator's response from the questionnaire by assigning colors to identify themes (Merriam, 2009). The eight educators answered the questionnaire according to their experiences relevant to GED prep classes at the college and satellite locations. I recognized each respondent by assigning pseudonym as educators completed interview questionnaires. Five educators, I re-interviewed used prior identifying codes. I used the inductive process of dividing, labeling and segregating to code small amounts of data providing more thorough and organize data analysis (Lodico et al., 2010).

The coding process and thematic analysis allow for the formation of themes. This process helped to answer the central research question: What experiences have adult educators had facilitating cooperative learning in GED prep classes? Themes were organized according to adult educators' experiences facilitating CLM, how they perceive cooperative learning was yielding positive outcomes in GED prep classes and areas of support needed to strengthen the program. This process allowed me to align the themes to the literature and draw a connection (Creswell, 2012).

I reviewed several ends of semester summaries from educators' GED prep classes to provide insight into instructional practices. I analyzed the end of semester summaries as it mentioned cooperative learning. Reviewing the GED prep class end of semester summaries gave insight into educators' approach to implement aspects of cooperative learning into GED prep classes. Emerging themes from questionnaires, face-to-face interviews, the end of semester summaries, and adult education program reports collectively provided further insight of educators' experiences and understanding of using cooperative learning in GED prep classes.

Discrepant cases are often encountered during the coding of data. According to Gul and Ates (2017), these cases may not follow the common themes but could provide an understanding of the complexity in the local setting. Further exploring the reason for these cases is necessary. Most of the adult educators' responses were consistent; however, one discrepant case was found. The adult educator's whose responses deviated from common themes were contacted for follow-up questions. The adult educator was asked to give more information on adult learners' unsuitability for engaging in GED classes specifically around interactive group formation.

This discrepant case involved an adult educator with a background in K-12. This educator worked part-time in GED prep classes and relied on her primary training to engage adult learners and could benefit from other types of exercise. She aligned her training with K-12 and limited experience working in adult settings. Her skills and training would dictate taking charge of the classroom. The discrepant in this case involved differences in a K-12 learning

setting and adult learners' college settings. Training to work with adult learners will provide access to needed knowledge for this adult educator.

Data Analysis Results

In this case study, I explored the experiences of adult educators working in GED prep classes regarding their facilitating of CLM as instructional practices to enhance participation and increase GED achievements in this qualitative case study. Garnering data from questionnaire, face-to-face interviews, adult education program reports, and end of semester summaries enabled me to conclude my consensus from the merging of data from various sources (Yin, 2015). I was impartial and open-minded during the data gathering process to prevent bias and to increase objectivity. I used thematic analysis to formulate categories and build themes based on a full review of the questionnaire, and face-to-face interview responses, adult education program reports and end of semester summaries. These themes were used to answer the research question surrounding adult educators' experiences with and facilitating cooperative learning instructional practices, and perceived learning methods to adult learners in GED prep classes.

Individual Interviews: Questionnaires

The method I used for the interviewing process was an integral component of qualitative research (Creswell, 2012). Each educator was expected to complete the interview questionnaire along with comments relating to their responses. The first few questions focused on adult educators' use of cooperative learning in GED prep class lesson plans, experience understanding of adult learners' challenges and feeling prepared to work with adult learners.

The next few questions focused on incorporating adult learners' educational and life experiences in class, and interactive groups to enhance learning. The final question focused on the implementation of new instructional practices to increase participation, satisfaction with learners' achievement and an open-ended comment section for comments on the questionnaire.

Educators' Experiences Facilitating Basic Instructional Practices

Each educator answered interview questionnaires about the experiences they have had with facilitating basic instructional practices to adult learners in GED prep classes.

Educators' definition of instructional practices. Each educator's response to the questionnaire varied. Each adult educator had a different understanding of instructional practices, and how they were implementing and little concept of CLM. According to Rohrer & Pashier (2016), instructional practices have a broad meaning, and the method of selecting them may impact learning. Considering, the different purpose of instructional practices in literature, it is understandable that adult educators do not have a common understanding of instructional practices.

I asked adult educators to complete an interview questionnaire and share comments about the use of instructional practices in GED prep classes with adult learners. Each adult educator is over 18 years of age, with six months or more of experience working with adult learners in GED prep classes. Two educators are retired elementary educators; one currently working as a high school educator, two serving as faculty in another department, and three fully committed to working with GED prep classes. Several adult educators had worked on the main

campus and in satellite locations serving day and evening programs. All positions in GED prep classes are part-time.

Theme 1: Training for Educators working in a GED prep class.

Educators' views on staff development or training to support educators' instructional practices in GED prep classes are markedly similar. Moreover, educators shared a different perception of working with adult learners, though all focus of GED prep classes were to enhanced participation and increased overall successful outcomes of earning a GED. They all strongly agreed with the lack of targeted training for adult learners enrolled in GED prep classes as it related to standardized instructional practices. Barb and Eliza decided that the use of pedagogy techniques used in K-12 provided enough learning for those enrolled in GED, although an upgrade in implementing pedagogy instructions may be beneficial.

They reported using pedagogy practices with high school students was successful and allowed educators to have better control of their classroom. They shared having little control over some behavior related issues. Barb stated, "Training and online webinars are available for viewing, but most contents focused on higher education credited courses instead of GED or basic development courses." Various subdivisions of training and webinars offered throughout the year, and they included topics, like Blackboard e-Education, distance learning or smart classroom 101. Mostly, face-to-face meetings were on the issues of college updates, budget cuts, attrition and enrollment numbers, significant policy changes and funding challenges, but there was little information directed towards working with special populations.

Having a background in childhood education gave Barb a foundation for working in the classroom, but she had more difficulty understanding the challenges of adult learners. For many of the learners bring multiple issues to class requiring some form of staffing intervention. The department heads prefer that all learners remain in class, regardless of behavior or disruption, and if they are dismissed, they can return to class the next day. Adult learners who can return to the class disrupts the classroom setting and impede learning for other adult learners.

The use of pedagogy theory is the standard design for instructional practices in K-12. Eliza understanding of GED classes was to “plug-in” reading and writing strategies that provided students with the most content towards passing GED. A consensus among adult educators, learners enroll in classes are there for a short period and will not learn all the content but provide them with as much as possible so that they may work on later. Having four years of using high school teaching strategies with these students would help, but they are not enrolled for that purpose.

The purpose of GED prep classes is to engage learners in essential academic skill to obtain GED. Shannon, Martha, and Jean agreed the need for more staff development and training that not only defines classroom instructions but also focused more on the need to build academic skills that align with higher education and vocational expectations. Rainer, Precious, and Gloria strongly agreed that faculty should have generalized pre-training to understand differences between working in a GED class versus working in a regular credit-based classroom. Shannon, Martha, and Jean all shared working with adult learners five years or longer in GED prep classes.

Shannon, "I learned skills to work with GED students through manipulation of classroom instruction and to get a feel for each student and their needs." I did not have a guide to deal with student's problems. I know they come to get a GED and my job is to teach them. "I work with what I have." Educators reported professional development meetings encouraged open discussion, sharing questions, concerns, and cross-feedback, but lacked formal instruction to aid educators with enhanced skill-set to implement in GED prep classes. A more precise response to questions was always deferred to administrators. They reported discussion on topics about better practices working with adult learners, but arguments concluded with an opinion from each other opposed to methods to enhance educators' instructional practices across the board.

Summary. Educators who were trained and confident in CLM instructional practices could influence the ways adult learners' master scholarship, group skills acquisition and command successful outcomes. Alexander & van Wyk (2014) offered when colleges or institutions align GED prep classes curricula or programs to learners' needs; cooperative learning can be embraced. An essential training workshop on CLM designated by college or institution should be mandatory for adult educator working for GED prep classes. Having the support of colleges or institution's stakeholders to push CLM training is significant and consequential to the GED prep classes process. Adult educators trained in CLM, and embed in its strategies, as a central component of curricula, provides the standardized instructional practices to efficacy adult learning (Favor, 2012).

Theme 2: Using Traditional Basic Instructions

Educators shared the type of instructional practices used in GED prep classes were elementary instructions for many used in secondary education. The educators spoke of the lack of standardized instructional practices used in GED prep classes at the college other than subject materials and some of those materials contrasted with the academic needs of adult learners. Differences shared among educators involved the execution of instructional practices relevant to group interactive learning in GED prep classes. Educators responded similarly in their understanding of group practices in GED prep class as learners coming together to discuss and complete assignments, and not recognized as a stand-alone instructional tool.

Educators' views were noticeably parallel in that they desired success in GED prep classes outcome, on the other hand; their approach to achieving this outcome in GED prep classes was remarkably different as it related to groups. Shannon stated: "Academic skills acquisition is developmental. Consequently, basic instructional practices must be implemented." Shannon also explained, "Basic instructions provided the teacher with informal and on-going evaluation data, which is a crucial aspect of instruction and learning." Barb stated, "The term CLM used in the classroom occasionally but not as a standalone term. This term is used to encourage students to cooperate and work together in groups." Eliza shared, "Engaging learners in working groups is a new concept recently adopted, but unfamiliar with specific framework or approaches to implementation CLM." Eliza shared, "Engaging learners in working groups is a new concept recently adopted, but unfamiliar with specific framework or approaches to implementation CLM." Educators are starting to embrace group learning, as it is used to engage learners while working with others, but they do not embrace it as a designated strategy.

Additionally, educators use what is familiar to them to promote success among adult learners to obtain a GED. Rainer explained, “Basic instructions have multiple benefits because it can easily assess if students have mastered the materials.” The educators reported using basic instructions with adult learners to support their mastery of materials and to measure the understanding of concepts. Shannon and Barb worked with elementary students and used simple basic instructions in GED classes. The educators revealed the use of basic instruction in GED prep classes gives more flexibility to re-teach adult learners. Educators reported some basic instructions implemented from elementary school instructions provided them with an informal and on-going assessment to determine the acquisition of information and learning. Educators engaged learners in groups frequently, using techniques such as making posters, drawing timelines to establish goals and collaborating on specific class assignments such as word order and punctuation.

Summary. The educators strongly agreed basic instructions are used in most GED prep classes at the college, but the overarching goal is for successful outcomes in GED prep classes with minimum focus on what type of instructions to use. The intended use of CLM was acknowledged and supported by adult educators. Basic instructional familiarity was assessable and natural in implementing, but educators agreed CLM improve participation and attrition of adult learners enrolled in GED prep classes, especially learners having bad experiences in the past. A goal for all educators is to foster a warm and inviting learning environment so adult learners can feel comfortable. Educators work with adult learners in GED prep classes require an understanding of the different interactive learning elements of CLM to engage them in concepts

meaningful to enhance skill sets. CLM has been recognized as one of the best practices in education' and boast as a means of raising grade attainment.

The need to identify which interactive learning methods, such as formal, informal or group-based settings is another important component. Educators trained in CLM would learn about interactive learning methods and how to provide interactive learning that was engaging, inclusive and social (McAlister, 2012). An interactive research-based tool use across adult literacy programs could assure adult educators of regular curricula based on a simple and uniform framework.

Theme 3: Educators' experiences and interactions with adult learners.

Educators agreed time working with adult learners was short and limited and kept adult learners' additional hours to work with them proved beneficial. Shannon added, "Learners who missed time receive fewer instructions." Eliza and Martha revealed teaching adults weren't comfortable, and adults come with baggage and barriers to learning, and in most classes, students were only getting between five to nine hours a week. Educators agreed adult learners shared experiences in high school and other GED prep classes were a gateway to connect with them. Rainer reported taking the time to consider adult learners' feelings into consideration before giving assignments. Engaging adult learners on emotions is an example of working with adults opposed to K-12 classroom. Additionally, the need to realize adult learners learn best with little change; the assignments were prepared for easy reading to meet the challenge of higher achievement.

Adult learners desired the same level of academic supports given to students enrolled in credit classes. Jean added, “The educational environment should be safe and conducive to learning. Adult learners were missing valuable concepts that imposed educational hardships such as lack of communication skills, reading and writing skills; therefore, when adult learners were strongly engaged, they could become overwhelmed.” Educators agreed adult learners were sharing of personal information related to careers, finances or family situations helped understand challenges they faced, and justify failures to participate in GED prep classes. Precious agreed, “Adult learners return to the educational setting with life experiences, therefore unlike the high school learner transitioning to college, these learners have many barriers or obstacles that prevent them from going straight through the educational system.” Jean added, “I enjoy teaching and learning from adult learners.”

Summary. Educators reported work with adult learners enrolled in GED prep classes at the college posed challenges, but collectively as educators, they were committed to working with them to achieve success. There are mandates for adult learners to participate in a designated number of hours per week and start on all class assignments. Adult educators recognized adult learners are returning to GED prep classes to complete the desired goal. Learners come with indifferences or salty temperaments, but a commitment to learners and a better understanding of their predicaments and life experiences result in real solutions.

Theme 4: Adult educators professional development training.

The educators shared various perspectives on using new instructional practices in GED prep classes to enhance participation and increase GED completion. Adult learners were initially

shallow in adjusting to new information, but with increased understanding and clarity of information, some became opened and engaged in discussions. Shannon shared, “When new practices are introduced to adult learners in GED prep classes skepticism could become a reality because educators have not been certified or trained on how to properly use the new materials.” Barb and Eliza responded similarly in that trying new methods and techniques to reach adult learners is a move in the right direction, but the classroom should not be the first run.

In many cases, according to adult educators, it comes down to funding and budget for training, despite the effect on learners’ success. When and where would the training take place? How long does training take before implementation can start? Who is qualified to facilitate the training? Martha pointed out, “It befits us to use caution with adult learners, given the progress they may have made, each adult learner works at his or her own pace, and they become comfortable with materials at hand.” Finding the best way to implement new instructions is paramount to the success of adult learners’, and educators who are trained are more knowledgeable and suited best. Rainer strongly supported the implementation of new CLM to increase adult learners’ participation because the previous methods did not work for learners in a traditional classroom setting or otherwise they would have finished school.

Further, implementing new CLM allow the instructor to consider the student’s needs, interests, and readiness levels, to determine key concepts and to organize questions, and to design appropriate activities for each learner. Educators concluded using repetitive classroom instructions is partly responsible for learners not completing high school. Educators felt

comfortable using different teaching tools, like new syllabus, and old and new textbooks.

Precious added that “New practices have to become a common core standard used by all adult educators in GED prep classes.” Educators acknowledged new instructional methods and updated material is essential to learning if adequately trained, but uncertain about the use of adult learners in GED prep classes.

Summary. The educators reported new ways of working with adult learners who have failed to complete necessary coursework helped adult educators and learners. Year to year proposed funding for new resources rarely makes its way to GED prep classes. Educators use materials from other sources and works to support learners in reaching goals of completing GED prep classes. Without the use of new instructional techniques, even if it is appropriately used, educators will continue to improvise and use what is available to enhance participation and increase successful results.

The responses to the interview questionnaires made by adult educators in this study emphasized several points. Working in adult education is different from a K-12 classroom environment and providing a basic workshop on the uniqueness of adult learners and how to interact and engage them soothes the introduction to GED prep classes. This may be a new experience for adult learners as it is for educators. The use of basic instructional practices is another point highlighted. Basic instructional practices are commonly used in K-12 and most accepted by adult educators in adult literacy programs, colleges, and other educational settings. The use of basic instructional practices will continue unless given an alternative.

Along with appropriate instructional tools in GED prep classes, understanding the needs and challenges of adult learners attending classes are indispensable to academic growth and achievement. A welcoming, warm and learner-friendly classroom environment aids adult learners to feel valued and encourage full participation. Finally, adult educators need supports through professional development workshops to establish a foundation to build integral learning methods. Educators who are well trained and skilled in CLM probably translate knowledge to premier learning setting.

Individual Interviews: Face-to-face

The face-to-face interview questions were structured to encourage adult educators to discuss experiences of using CLM as instructional practices in GED prep classes. The first several questions focused on educators' experiences of working with adult learners in basic adult literacy classes and introducing different learning concepts using basic instructions. The next several questions inquired about experiences facilitating interactive learning methods, and group formations to adult learners in GED prep classes. The last few questions focused on the need for any additional training or staff development and support for non-academic related challenges of adult learners in GED Prep classes. Each interview response coded in categories that connected exclusively to the research question (Saldana, 2015).

Educators' Experience Facilitating Cooperative Learning

To effectively answer the research question, I asked educators to discuss experiences facilitating cooperative learning in GED prep classes.

Educators' definition of cooperative learning. Educators' designed cooperative learning based on their perception of what cooperative meant. According to Perez-Jimenez (2018) educators' maneuver cooperative learning strategies in educational settings according to their knowledge base and the needs of adult learners. Considering the diverse understanding of cooperative learning among educators gives clarity to the variation and infrequent definition among educators describing cooperative learning.

The educators who were interviewed for this project study further discussed cooperative learning consistent of educator-learner collaborations, social learning and technology, and diverse learning groups.

Theme 1. Educator-learner collaborations. Eliza, with a background in K-12, described cooperative learning as “collaboration with one another to reach their ultimate goal of learning...utilize active statements to accomplish ‘what’ at the end of lesson...and incorporate diagnostic, formative and summative assessments to support learner’s education.” Barb, whose initial training is early childhood education, discussed the use of stimulating responses. She added adult learners need to “learn how to engage in healthy discussions, and most of all hands-on manipulative as much as possible.” She also added the importance of modeling enriched conversations and discussion with learners for others to see. Demonstrating a collaborative team concept between educator and learner demystify untruths and uneasiness between the two. The ideas fostered an ongoing process of learning instead of product style learning.

Summary. Proper engagement translates to positive responses, which opens the door for adult learners to open-up and connect with educators. Adult learners come to GED prep

classes with personal issues. Walking around the classroom and sitting next to learners engages them. It creates a relaxing atmosphere conducive to learning. Working near learners helps break the ice and make them feel welcomed. In K-12 settings building healthy relationships and establishing safe boundaries provides warmth and signals a message of connectivity.

Theme 2. Social Learning & Technology. The educators whose skill-set derived from K-12 core foundation laid their understanding of cooperative learning to the required implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act 2001 (Holbeina & Laddb, 2017). The NCLB pressured educators to advance learners regardless of academic success. Eliza shared, the need to engage learners in class to maximize learning was necessary. She stated, "I had to put learners in small groups to control the class...each group received an assignment, and I worked my way around the classroom until I reached each group." Barb shared having an aid in the classroom several days per week helped to engage learners without specific instructions and no instructions that transferred to working with adult learners in GED prep classes.

Several educators discussed cooperative learning in terms of integrating online technology. Rainer, a faculty member who worked with adult learners at satellite locations, described cooperative learning as incorporating technology into learning. She stated, "A great way of learning is interactive learning in GED classes. Google classroom for formative assessments. I also have fun with Jeopardy and Kahoot." She further added, "Many of our adult learners have not found success in the traditional classroom...we create presentations or portfolios of work...I also assign work for my class that is unconventional and outside of the box." Precious, likes to set goals for her class. "I tell all my GED learners that 80% of all who

attend my class will pass the GED test...if they don't pass the first time...I will continue working with them until they do." Precious added giving them hope is paramount to keep them participating and returning.

Summary. Educators had an explanation for cooperative learning, but all experienced problems relating it to the current instructional practices with adult learners in GED prep classes. The consensus is not defining cooperative learning, but how to get learners to engage in lessons and maintain skill levels so they may enroll in GED. Adult learners express feeling positive when hearing mostly everyone pass the GED test coming out of this GED prep class.

Theme 3. Diverse Learning Groups. Shannon included engaging learners through groups sharing life experiences. Cooperative learning in the sense of arranging two -three groups of four to five adult learners. Each group gets an opportunity to discuss family, work and social topics. The overall objective of this activity leads to learning about one another and sharing of information on the crucial factor of being successful. Shannon shared, "It levels the playing field to hear Constance from ABC country...over 40 years of age...here to get a GED." It gives learners a sense of pride in that they are more alike than they are different. Adult learners attend GED prep class ages range from 18 -70. Shannon discussed the opportunity to present a short lecture to summaries group sharing and help learners consummate group discussions and how it enriched their lives but also influenced and enhanced participating.

Summary. Educators willingly expounded on experiences working with adult learners but were not unified to a central understanding or definition of cooperative learning. Each

educator provided examples of how cooperative learning was used based on their knowledge. Although they used different types of techniques and skill-set to engage adult learners in GED prep classes, all agree to support each adult learner to pass the exam to acquire a GED was at the core for creating homogenous learning.

Educators' Perception of Cooperative Learning Methods.

Educators were asked to discuss how they perceived the benefits of cooperative learning for adult learners. All educators reported that implementing techniques like cooperative learning would benefit adult learners in a couple of ways. One educator stated having a model method incorporated as a research-based learning method would be pertinent to the growth of the adult learner. A research-based model would provide consistency in the delivery of information. Also, it would foster integrated group activities and group learning styles.

Further, the use of a research-based tool for all educators adding uniformity and core foundation to build learning. Another added educator, "During her tenure in GED programs, adult learners had little knowledge of materials used in class...however, it made a difference if materials were perceived elementary based." Cooperative learning method would provide interaction minus grade levels. It would include participation from everyone. Those who have committed to obtaining GED will have successful outcomes, due in part to their maturity and willingness. Strategic planning for adult learners enabled them to pull from other educators working in traditional classes bind roles and exchange learning strategies.

Perceived disadvantages to research-based CLM were minimum. The consensus among educators was any new addition to their current facilitation methods is welcomed. In general, educators shared adult learners' various issues and fears to class and most in need of essential academic skill-sets. Adult learners present fear of being unsuccessful. Often learners have not done well in high school and eventually dropped out. Returning to GED prep classes, they came without clear expectations, and in most cases are unaware of specific materials content unless presented with written grade levels on materials. Educators reported some adult learners to come to class with older children who sit and does homework and others bring children in strollers. This demonstrates committee but also lack of family supports. Overall, the advantages of cooperative learning outweighed the disadvantages, and educators were willing to do what is necessary better supporting adult learners in GED prep classes obtain GED. Research suggests educators are supportive of cooperative learning in various settings and boast its positives outcomes when educators are adequately trained (Chatila & Husseiny, 2017).

Supports educators need to facilitate cooperative learning in GED preparatory classes. "As an educator in GED preparatory classes, I want each participant to find success in and out of the classroom." This was a response from Precious, an educator working with GED Preparatory classes. Educators play a significant role in the development of essential skills for adult learners to obtain GED. As noted by Precious, academic skills play a major role in the lives of learners in and out of the class. According to Johnson, Johnson & Smith, (2014) educators who were trained and skilled in CLM were better prepared to engage learners in techniques and learning to foster an enhanced learning environment. Educators see their role as an asset to adult learners.

Pointing to the need to provide guidance or where and how to seek help for adult learners, educators want to be equipped to handle those situations. Educators have a clear understanding adult learners needs are different than K-12 learners. Cooperative learning has interactive learning components and gaining hands-on experiences were necessary to maintain competencies to handle related academic challenges and non-academic associated issues brought to GED prep classes.

Document Review

Along with interview questionnaires, and face-to-face interview from adult educators, I also reviewed adult education program reports and end of semester summaries for this project study. I was able to focus on data analysis by using a document review protocol (Appendix D). The document protocol review focused on the use of strategies to implement research-based instructional practices of cooperative learning which included, informal learning-instructor led small groups, formal education- learning goals and objectives, and base group processing-group participation and group learning and activities. The reports were coded into themes in response to the research question (Merriam, 2009).

The adult education program reports consisted of accessibility and affordability, diversity, student-centered learning, quality and effectiveness outcomes, student progress and achievements. The reports were consistent with program standards that educators used in lesson planning and classroom structure. These standards were consistently written for implementation across the adult education program in community colleges but could choose to include additional standards or redesigned suitable to specific programming. Educators

documented several factors affecting class completion but did not identify any reason. Several activities were noted to encourage participation on the academic side, such as writing assignments and topical research assignments. On the social side, activities could include working together on tasks away from the classroom and helping fellow learners with challenging assignments during class.

A review of end of semester summaries consisted of the syllabus, curriculum objectives, and assessments. Two educators presented end of semester reports for prior semesters. The summaries included specific standard lesson plans as a part of the syllabus, learning objectives and evidence of learning. Their standardized lessons included class introductions and daily topics, books and material used. Class introductions were used as an ice breaker during semester start-up. The subjects consisted of current event or other topics of interest and used as part of engaging the class, and sometimes as homework. The curriculum objectives at the end of semester summaries were basic, such as word recognition using visuals and pictures, time tables, and world maps. Pretest and posttest were listed as completed without identifying adult learners' outcomes. Both ends of semester summaries contained attendance, notes such as family concerns, withdrew involuntarily, problems staying focus and transportation and childcare concerns. No other data or identifying justification for comments were noted. The other three educators did not have an end of semester summaries available. After a review of adult education program reports and end of semester summaries, I then analyzed both documents to establish themes related to cooperative learning instructional practices.

The report overall did not identify cooperative learning as a research-based method used in GED prep classes. There were some indicators of educators attempt to engage adult learners through class introductions; however, according to Johnson and Johnson (2013), this is not considered cooperative learning. The absence of cooperative learning in adult education program reports does not mean it is not used and that it is not somehow integrated into GED prep classes.

Discrepant Cases

Several themes surfaced during data collection and analysis, like information working with older adult learners. One discrepant case emerged. Schwart-Shea (2006) strongly suggested that any discrepant cases that surface during data analysis and member checking be resolved by contacting the educator and discussing them apply corrections and reported them in the study. To clarify the discrepancy, I contacted the adult educator and ask about working with adult learning in GED prep classes and using instructional practices. After the follow-up and response, I found the educator experiences and training aligned closer to K-12 learners as opposed to other educators. This educator was worked part-time in GED prep classes and relied on her primary training to engage adult learners and could benefit from training working with adult learners. I did not find any other discrepant cases in this case study and the data was accurate and valid.

Summary of Outcomes

The problem in this study was a lack of evidence supporting whether or not incorporating research-based cooperative learning to enhance participation and increase

outcomes of GED prep class participants. It is essential to know if the use of newly implemented instructional practices in GED prep class programs was successful. The project study addressed this problem by exploring the instructional practices of adult educators working in GED prep classes.

Data from interview questionnaires, face-to-face interviews, and adult education reports were analyzed using thematic coding. I use multiple sources of data information that allowed me to triangulate the data information from different data sources. Creswell (2012) asserted triangulation is the process of comparing different data source with one another for evidence finding to support the theme. Triangulating data from interview questionnaires responses, face-to-face interview, adult education program reports, and end of semester summaries made sure that emerging themes were authentic, credible and valid (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009). The process of triangulation in this study underscored evidence from all sources to accurately code themes. Overall, educators indicated uncertainties of instructional practices to enhance participation, or increase GED outcomes. I expected a need for uniformity in how GED prep classes are facilitated and what types of instructional practices are used; however, most educators did not accurately identify a research-based method. Educators did suggest a need for more information about cooperative learning. Additionally, educators expressed ways to integrate CLM in the current program to enhance participation and increase GED outcome.

This data was used to answering the following overarching research questions and develop the project for this study: What experiences have adult educators had to facilitate

cooperative learning GED prep classes? Two sub-questions to further explore this research as they related to the local setting were addressed and used to help develop this study:

1. How do adult educators perceive CLM for adult learners in GED prep classes? Adult educators shared adult learners come to class with negative experiences, which may be a reason for leaving high school, and classroom time should focus on basic skills to prepare for GED test. Overall, adult educators shared adult learners in GED prep classes there to gain skills to pass the GED test, and for some adult learners change is difficult. Several adult educators shared using groups to maximize learning and according to the needs of a class assignment, but not necessarily identified as cooperative learning. According to Ghaith (2018) integrating cooperative learning in a GED prep class remains a challenge for many adult educators.

2. What assistance if any, do adult educators believe they need to support facilitation of cooperative learning in GED prep classes?

Data collected indicated adult educators do not have a shared understanding of cooperative learning. Several adult educators strictly use what is familiar in GED prep classes. For instance, they shared adult learners are developmental in learning and should start at the basic level and giving them too much as one time may create more problems in GED prep classes. Another adult educator shared adult learners are missing valuable concepts the impose hardships, such as reading and writing skills and communication skills necessary for gainful employment. These findings are consistent

previous research supporting pedagogy theory in GED prep classes, and that adult educators are at ease using this instructional method (Hempel-Jorgensen, 2015).

Evidence of Quality and Accuracy

Throughout the process of this project study, I followed the qualitative method of increasing accuracy and quality. Qualitative research generally uses more than one source of information to improve the quality and efficiency of results (Hartwick, 2018). I followed the ethical guidelines for quality research through Walden Institutional Review Board (IRB). I triangulated data gathered from multiple sources. For instance, I gathered information from adult educators' interview questionnaire responses, face-to-face interviews, adult education program reports, and end of semester summaries. I reviewed and transcribed the answers to analyze themes supporting the research questions.

I used member checking to increase accuracy by asking educators to review the transcripts. I urge educators to discuss their answers to both the questionnaires and face-to-face interview responses, to make sure all data were credible and that I had summarized their responses accurately. I asked educators to review the responses before finalizing the research report which is vital to reflect educators' voices. The educators were expected to seek out any changes, whether additions or deletions to the summary or the emergent themes. The following summaries were shared:

- a. Without the use of new instructional techniques, even if they were used properly, educators would continue to improvise and use what is available to enhance participation and increase successful outcomes.

- b. Educators working with adult learners in GED prep classes required an understanding of the different interactive learning elements of cooperative learning to engage them in concepts meaningful towards enhancing skill sets.

Member checking provided a safeguard to make sure that the findings were realistic and complete, and to ensure the accuracy of themes and interpretations of the data was impartial and represented their experiences. Member checking is an integral part of determining the accuracy or credibility of the findings, in the research process (Merriam, 2009).

Data collection and analysis reports are held by the researcher and will not be viewed by external analyzers. I informed each adult educator their freedom to withdraw from the research study at any time, and that participation in the research study was solely voluntary. The focus of this study was placed on educators' instructional practices and not on the individual who participated. Administration and stakeholders were made aware of emphasis placed on confidentiality, and it was mentioned on all consent forms that were signed by all educators.

Efforts were made to protect all educators involved with this project study following multiple methods. Pseudonyms were used to identify the institution further to protect the privacy of college staff, administrators, and educators. Names were not used to identify them, nor age, gender, specific class taught or college location. The sole right to this prospective study belongs to the researcher, and only the researcher will know the identity of educators. There were no external sources (evaluators, clinical workers, administrators, nor stakeholders) connected to this study and therefore, other than the researcher no one else will have access to educators' identification and data collected during this study.

Also, there were no external individuals associated with this project study, and the researcher was the only one to have access to the data and the only one who knows the identification of the educators. Educators were informed they could discontinue the interview questionnaire at any time and signing the informed consent form and obtaining the questionnaire did not bind them to remain a part of the study. Educators who decide not to continue to participate in the study information would stay under the same privacy agreement.

Assumptions

Facilitating cooperative learning, in GED prep classes were to provide adult educators instructional strategies to increase learners' achievement (Farrell & Jacobs, 2016). The most impactful assumption that I made was that educators at the college were not using proper instructional practices in GED prep classes facilitating basic academic skills set to adult learners. I assumed the use of proper instructional practices in GED prep classes would increase learners' participation in the classroom and increase more successful GED outcomes. I also assumed adult educators working with adult learners who received customized training and staff development training directly related to adult learners enrolled in the GED prep class. These assumptions were inaccurate because there was no set-aside training or staff development training aimed solely to support adult educators' working in GED prep classes.

Delimitations

I used a questionnaire with ten questions, and comment sections were adult educators encouraged to add comments to support responses. Adult educators who responded to a posted recruitment flyer (Appendix C) and met the criteria were selected. One of the ten

questions was identified as an open-ended question; the other nine questions included a section for comments. Each interview questionnaire took approximately 30 minutes to complete and as long as 90 minutes. The eight educators met the requirements for the study. Each educator was asked to complete the same interview questionnaire section to garner additional remarks.

Limitations

There were several limitations to using this case study as the methodology. First, as the researcher, and an adult educator, I could have experienced researcher's bias, by misinterpreting responses during the data reviews and data summaries (Patton, 2014). To reduce this, I used multiple sources of data, engaged in member checking and chose the educators on a first commitment/agreement to participate in the study. Triangulation of the data establishes accuracy, stability, and validity (Creswell, 2012). Also, the problem posed as local was a national problem and due to using the case study as the methodology, I was not able to generalize the sample to a larger population.

Conclusion

In this project case study, I provided interview questionnaires to educators to explore the instructional practices of educators who work in GED classes at a community college setting and satellite location. I use Walden Institutional Review Board guide to ensure educators were protected, along with confidentiality and informed consent, and protection from harm (Walden, 2014). I reviewed adult education program reports and end of semester summaries to better understand the experiences of educators use of cooperative learning instructional practices. The interview questionnaires, face-to-face interviews, adult education program reports, and end of

semester reports were coded and analyzed in categories related to educators' instructional practices in GED prep classes working with adult learners. I continue to follow the IRB guidelines to be as objective as possible to achieve high quality and accurate results. I collected data from the interview questionnaire, face-to-face interviews and reviewing of institutional documents. I analyzed data and highlighted themes to embed in the study.

This project case study provided more in-depth insight into the type of instructional practices adult use in GED prep classes and if they are useful, increasing outcomes. I used these results as a foundation for me to design this project based on my understanding of educators in the local settings. The decision for this project was due to the outcome of local adult educators' needs, including information on professional development and targeted training and research-based instructional practices. I designed a professional development workshop for GED prep classes educators at the local institution to evoke social change.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

The use of cooperative learning in a supported environment has been a valued tool for educators in academia for decades (Tadesse & Gillies, 2015). Existing research demonstrated that cooperative learning had a significant impact on achieving higher scores and knowledge retention when used in higher education (Tran Van Dat, 2014). Moreover, adult learners working together in small groups, supporting each other, we're likely to excel in learning (Tran, Van Dat, 2014). However, few institutions employ the use of cooperative learning, especially in GED prep classes, thus creating a documented gap between practice and research (Tadesse & Gillies, 2015).

Based on the results of this qualitative case study, adult educators confirmed their thinking that CLM would be advantageous to learners in GED prep class settings; however, they did not share a universal understanding about the new cooperative learning concept. Educators concerns centered on having necessary instructions to engage adult learners in participating in their learning, and to increase GED outcomes.

Rationale

Before undertaking this study, several special education programs were considered that would affect social change at the local community college. GED prep classes were comprehensive inaccessible to adult learners, but little was known as to whether adult educators were providing adult learners in GED prep class with cooperative learning instructions. If it was unclear whether cooperative learning instructions were being

implemented, it would have been difficult to offer direction to educators to improve the execution of those skills. Recording and analyzing practices and mindfulness of adult educators regarding instructional practices in GED prep classes was an appropriate step to best support the delivery of education. Understanding the methods and mindfulness of adult educators helped stakeholders and administrators further inquire and address the needs of learners in GED prep classes. Professional development associated with cooperative learning and its tertiary method of implementing instructional practices in GED prep classes enhanced adult educators' skill-set, thus increasing academic success in GED prep classes and other adult literacy settings.

Summary and Recommendations for Stakeholders and Administrators

Adult educators in GED prep classes located in a local community college setting shared concerns about instructional practices in regarding adult learners' achievement. Stakeholders and administrators alike received a detailed summary in PowerPoint handout form of the research outcomes. A summary of adult educators' responses and recommendations for redesigning adult educators' instructional practices in GED prep classes to enhance participation and GED outcomes were shared with community-based adult literacy programs as well. Topics of recommendations included cooperative learning during professional development for adult educators, redesigning of basic instructional practices and emphasizing openness to using new techniques and shared experiences learned while working with adult learners.

Using STAD (Student Teams-Achievement Divisions) or Jigsaw, two types of cooperative learning classroom activities will give adult educators access to hands-on instructions (Tiantong

& Teemuangsa, 2013). By combining various cooperative learning elements and proven activities to enhance these elements, educators had descriptive information incorporated into their instructional practices. Providing stakeholders and administrators with project study results and specific recommendations initiated the process to address this concern. Gaining administrators and stakeholder's support in the educational setting will ignite the process of providing cooperative learning instructions to educators working with GED prep classes.

Rationale for Professional Development

Educators' mutual understanding of cooperative learning elements and implementation of cooperative learning activities were limited. While all educators simplistically described their instructional style, none was consistent or demonstrated a seamless delivery of instructions. They acknowledged engaging adult learners in groups work or teamwork but were uncertain of CLM or a standardized method to measure outcomes of success. Professional development that focused on a systemic definition, including how and why it was done helped educators began to steadily implement cooperative learning in GED prep classes (Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2016).

Implementing cooperative learning elements of instructional practices. Considering that adult educators shared about needing more training related directly to working in GED classes, consistent instructional methods, and more time to engage and interact with adult learners, professional development was needed to support adult educators in implementing CLM in GED prep classes. Based on adult educators' reoccurring message of needing instructional practices conducive to engaging adult educators, a professional development guide was developed to

provide a layout instructing cooperative learning instructional practices, instead of educators' using isolated instructions of cooperative learning (Vanassche & Kelchtermans, 2016).

Review of the Literature

This literature review that helped me to achieve more in-depth insight into this project study was divided into three sections. The three sections included a review of literature that helped to achieve deeper insight on the need for professional development training of adult educators, research-based instructional practices and interactions between adult educators and learners in adult literacy programs. I explored scholarly journals for peer-reviewed articles associated with, cooperative learning, adult educator professional development training, and educators' instructional designs. Databases used to perform the literature review were Academic Search Complete, College Resource Center, and Education Source, DOAJ, EBSCO, ERIC, Google Scholar, ProQuest, SAGE Premier Full-Text, and Dissertations & Theses at Walden University.

Keywords used to search were *instructional practices, adult educator training, cooperative learning, non-traditional learner, andragogy, GED students on a college campus, teacher's professional development, group lessons process, and classroom standards*. I explored other materials such as curriculums, textbooks and white papers that gave me more insight into training and helped with the compilation of the project study.

Importance of Professional Development Training for Educators

Professional development training of educators in GED prep classes are in its formative years as it relates to determining what the essential are to sustain growth in training lesson

methods. However, training and professional development of educators reflected educators' competency in instructional practices, knowledge in research findings, analysis, and outcomes (Raider-Roth, Stieha, Kohan & Turpin, 2014). Developing a culture of change with adult educators in GED prep class required innovative ongoing training sustainable and relevant to practices of today's GED prep classes (Goodyear & Casey, 2015). Adult educators working in a community college setting were responsible for the delivery of instructional practices to ensure GED prep class learners made academic and social gains (Navarro-Pablo & Gallardo-Saborido, 2014). Modest systemic gains in GED prep classes might comprise the funding and resources allocated to the program.

Moreover, educators considered as change agents in the development of learners' skills, making the need for a new training and professional development paramount to generating competencies. Training of adult educators focused on systemic learning and not limited to solely face-to-face classroom training, webinars or webcam type video provided by administrators or stakeholder with focus on a college budget, funding sources or GED prep classes outcomes. Adult educators working in GED prep classes on college campuses worked to move beyond basic instructional practices, often is referred to as the 'honeymoon' period of implementation of basic pedagogy practices (Goodyear & Casey, 2015). Honeymoon period suggested learning a standard teaching style without further development. Gaining knowledge of practical tools was an asset to adult educators whose desire is to become competent in various areas.

Professional Development Workshop for Effective Training

The research revealed that ongoing learning through workshops was essential to adult educators' skills development and influenced critical thinking skills in learners to advance learning (Nandan & Nandan, 2012). Professional development workshops provide teaching strategies and techniques, skill-sets and classroom management in a learning-friendly structured. While adult educators' instructional practices were basic, the learning environments presented a learner-friendly setting. Educators' workshops were formal and informal in presentation, topical or general in discussion and congruent to all levels of education in the professional field of study (Rinfrett, Maccio, Cayle, Jackson, Hartinger-Saunders, Rine & Shulman, 2015). Workshops for educators in GED prep class provided training directly related to instructional practices, group process, interactive learning, and goal setting specific to learners need. Educators engaging in the Learning with a Purpose (LWAP), professional development workshop quickly transferred knowledge and information to adult learners.

Further, educators frequently worked in other positions at local sight or other institutions. When planning professional development workshops consideration of time, location and material content and the delivery of information were considered. Ensure that professional development workshops and future training were practicable to preset goals and relate directly to educators' workplace responsibilities and personal enrichment (Renta-Davids, Jimenez-Gonzalez, Fandos-Garrido & Gonzalez-Soto, 2016). The layout of future training material expanded over time, so building a foundation from the materials offered through LWAP workshop proved beneficial for self- directed learning.

Professional development workshops met the needs of educators and were a productive way to encourage learning in adult educators, stimulate positive work ethics, and decrease staff turnover. Moreover, well supported, project-based and extended -term engagement of professional development easily integrated into learning practices (Teras and Lasonen, 2013). Structured workshops sponsored by local institutions established an environment for adult educators to reflect on individual instructional practices, educator and learners' interactions and advance learning in GED prep class.

Conceptual Framework

The findings of the study emphasized the need to focus on an instructional design method related to educators, cooperative learning, and interaction of educator and learners in GED prep classes. The development of standardized instructional design, educators and adult learners' interaction and cooperative learning was the basis of this project study while it was under development. The conceptual framework centered on Johnson and Johnson (2009) CLM.

As I compiled the information to design the workshop, the needs of adult educators were interactive and promoted learning among GED prep class learners. I used Johnson and Johnson (2013) method of cooperative learning to design the workshop. The workshop and redesign of instructional practices for adult educators were the focus of the project. Johnson and Johnson (2013), conceptual learning methods included five elements of cooperative learning: positive interdependence, individual and group accountability; face-to-face promote interaction, interpersonal and small group skills, and group processing (Tran, 2013). The

elements of CL were previously discussed in detail in section 1 of this project study. Educators worked together collectively to accomplish common goals to exploit learning.

Learning activities of cooperative learning included formal cooperative learning, informal cooperative learning and cooperative base groups that ensured active processing of information (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). Formal cooperative learning learners work together with one class or several weeks making pre-instructional decisions to achieve a shared goal; informal cooperative learning learners worked in ad-hoc groups during lectures or workshops to achieve joint learning goal; and cooperative base groups long term, 3-4 members with heterogeneous learning towards academic progress (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). Meticulous planning, preparation, and guidance were required of adult learners in each learning activity (Zeng, 2012).

The tertiary method of cooperative learning among adult educators spurred accepting and supporting each other, trust building and conflict resolution, social skills, and mutual interactive learning (Alexander & van Wyk, 2014). Adult educators' use of sensory and resultantly was important to attaining knowledge and translated it from a standard (teacher-centered) classroom setting to learning focus (learner-centered) approaches (Hussain, Khan & Ramzan, 2013). Cooperative learning emphasized the learning process as well as the results of learning as a vital component and development of goal-oriented thinking, individually, and collective responsibility of learning (Roman, 2012).

Implementation

I found most of the adult educators desired more training on the use of standardized instructional design to better engage learning in GED prep classes. Adult educators' commitment and interest to participate in professional development workshops and follow-up with a continuation of building on new concepts was the remedy to improve competencies. The beginning of cooperative learning in GED prep classes moved adult educators into new territories of learning.

The 3 days professional development workshop was designed to provide adult educators competencies in instructional practices, a forum for interactive learning discussion, review of new research methods, and guidelines for implementing new CLM at the college. The 3 days, from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., of professional development training, engaged educators in interactive group projects, learning new strategies of implementing CLM, activities, and homework. Support by administrators and stakeholders were necessary before the implementation of the project. Though the local community college did not have a professional development workshop for educators working with GED prep classes, implementation of a new project caused concerns for educators. Adult literacy classes were generally held during evening hours and will present fewer challenges to adult educators attending and allowed educators to practice new techniques and provide feedback during the professional development workshop series.

Project Goals

The goals of the project study were based on expressed needs of adult educators working in GED prep classes, that included a redesigned instructional method, training for adult educators to better engage adult learners with limited time increasing successful outcomes; and implementing new instructional methods in GED prep classes. Appendix A detailed project details, including PowerPoints, interactive activities and project evaluation assessment. The goals of the project (a) involved adult educators in a descriptive conversation on identifying three types of CLM and interactive goal-centered elements to develop a uniform researched-based instructional method for GED prep class, (b) increased adult educators' knowledge of CLM to integrate a research-based instructional method in GED prep class in timely and skilled manner, and (c) increased adult educators' knowledge of implementing cooperative learning instructional methods to enhance learners' participation and increase GED outcomes.

Helping adult learners obtain GEDs required adequate instructions that met their needs. During session one, I presented the process of engaging in cooperative learning professional development and what educators can anticipate. Next, I shared information in a PowerPoint on three main concentrated CLM, formal, informal, and cooperative base groups. Also, five elements of establishing and maintaining cooperative learning along with cooperative learning activities (e.g. STAD) demonstrated for use in GED prep classes. Research supporting underlined benefits of CLM and complex components for enhancing participation and increasing successful outcomes in GED prep classes were highlighted in a PowerPoint.

Educators shared no standardized instructional practices conducive to scholarly learning for GED prep classes. Therefore, this session started with reflections for educators on the use of current instructional methods. They were geared towards having an opened dialogue on what worked and what was modified or eliminated. Educators directed to develop some common themes as they enhanced their understanding of cooperative learning. After the discussion, educators reflected on their use of current instructional methods to see if common themes identified were used in their instructions — a time for sharing feedback available during the next workshop.

The second professional development session started with educators sharing reflections of instruction used in GED prep classes during the previously scheduled class time. Educators led discussions on themes implemented in their instructional practices, timelessness, and engagement of learners. Next, I shared a PowerPoint that highlighted targeted research-based strategies to increase adult educators' knowledge that helped to redesign instructional practices during the preplanning phase. I demonstrated the significance of using new skills and urged teaming up with a partner to role-play new skills. During this process, adult educators spurred to discuss their perspectives on techniques they felt adequately prepared them to use during the next GED prep class. Encouraging adult educators in open discussions about their executing CLM in GED prep classes fostered a learners-centered and mutual cohesive interactive setting that enhanced group learning. Next, I guided adult educators to develop their questions and comments for the next workshop. Between the second and third session, adult educators

developed and implemented CLM and cooperative learning group activity in their instructional practices.

The third and final professional development session continued the discussion and implementation of how adult educators incorporated all aspects of cooperative learning instructions into their GED prep class. The first part of this workshop allowed time for educators to reflect on experiences implementing CLM during the last GED prep class interaction. Next, a PowerPoint presentation highlighted integrated components of cooperative, linking cooperative learning activities that enhance adult learners' participation and successful GED outcome. The action plan detailed cooperative learning and group activities such as Student Teams-Achievement Divisions (STAD) and other cooperative learning activities selected. Finally, all educators completed an assessment form for professional development workshops. The assessment process was beneficial to determine if the goals of the professional development workshop were attained.

Project Description

Project Resources and Existing Supports

It was vital for consideration and utilization of existing resources and supports to implement the project in the community college GED classes successfully. Stakeholders at the college desired to support educators recognizing successful outcomes for GED prep class learners. Moreover, increasing successful results in GED prep classes are part of the community college five-year strategic planning that is a longstanding goal of administrators. The project was a natural fit considering the institution had been pondering ways to increase successful GED

outcomes. Given that educators shared the need for additional ways to standardize instructional practices and enhance classroom participation, this project lessens the need to seek other options. Given this was a new project, customizing it for the local community college was beneficial to all.

Another added support was adult educators working in non-GED prep classes. Educators came to the Center for Family and Adult Learners department at the community college as experienced. Their backgrounds were generally in traditional K-12 settings. Professional development and training are a requirement in K-12; therefore, the expectation to continue professional development and training as adult educators in GED classes were expected. This targeted group of educators provided the foundation of support needed to demonstrate to other educators the value in regular professional development and training.

Potential Barriers

The purpose of this study was to support the needs reported by educators. My aspiration to implement the project was optimistic, although, attaining a social change in established programs often faced obstacles. Data collection took place during summer months, and few adult educators work during summer months. The collection of data during summer months decreased educator pool further reducing the potential for greater participation. Participating educators felt their current use of instructional practices in GED prep classes were working for them.

Additionally, anticipating professional development and training from the local college that did not occur left educators discontented. Educators working part-time feared time was

limited, and adult learners in the GED prep classes require most of their attention as providers of tutoring and other supports learners needed. To diminish these potential barriers, to provide a Q&A forum to answer questions at the beginning of the workshop and sharing the benefits to all shareholders was well received.

Another potential barrier was the viability of training. GED prep classes mostly guided in part through workforce development programming. A compilation of core standards learning designed for adult learners in specified time allocation influenced educators' interest. Adult learners attended GED prep classes for a short period and during that time engaged in academic assignments. Several educators feared time used to put into practice other instructional techniques reduced a valuable time for required learning. This workshop solicited current strategies and technique from workshop participants and implemented best practices for incorporating cooperative learning in regular class instructions.

Implementation Timetable

Prior to implementing this project, I scheduled a time to discuss the research with the community college stakeholders. I prepared a summary to include research results, recommendations, and the timeline for implementation of the project. An overview of the literature review supporting cooperative learning as a standardized instructional method to enhance GED prep class learners' participation and increase GED achievements was completed. I made myself available to answer any questions and gave the stakeholders time to review the summary and schedule a second meeting.

I contacted stakeholders for follow-up with specific questions. After stakeholders had a sound understanding of the project, I scheduled a meeting with designated stakeholder and coordinated dates and time for the workshop. I met with IT staff to ensure IT was aware of the PowerPoint presentation and other use of computers. Meeting with IT staff ensured workshops occurred without any problems. The professional development training workshop taught in three days was presented during the winter conference. Winter conference include other professional development training. Due to the high content of information, 30-minute segments were established with 45 minutes of lunch. To remain on schedule hourly breaks were not included in the program. Break times were taken as needed. The design of the workshop for educators, administrators and stakeholders consisted of interactive group discussions and presentations, PowerPoint presentations, questions, and answers. Working in small groups incurred group interactivity and learning that increased group members were understanding of information.

Role and Responsibilities

There was a collaborative effort with all involved including educators, stakeholders, and myself. Support from each party played a vital role in the success of planning, executing and delivery of the project. All educators involved in GED prep classes and as designated by administrators and stakeholders attended the information session, which included a modified discussion on specifications of the project. Having the support and understanding of administrators and stakeholders who were responsible for making decisions were vital to the success of the project. Additionally, they made certain educators attend the workshop and more

importantly, they supported future discussions for additional training to guide them in further instructions of learning lessons.

Project Evaluation Plan

After the conclusion of each workshop session, educators are to complete an anonymous evaluation. In the event the attendee is unable to attend the entire professional development workshop, they would be expected to complete the evaluation form inserted in the welcome packet before leaving the workshop. The purpose of the anonymous evaluation is to ensure some level of knowledge is achieved on cooperative learning. A 12-item anonymous evaluation is provided to help identify and gauge suitability and relevant information content, ideas to strengthen the workshop, and how receptive educators would be to implement it in class. The survey included open-ended questions to encourage educators to share an honest opinion about the training. Immediate feedback allows for critical suggestions and recommendation for necessary upgrade to provide educators with a ready-made research-based tool for GED prep classes. Anonymous evaluation is reviewed after each session to compile a summary.

Investing in ongoing workshops and professional development forum demonstrated to adult educators that the work in GED prep classes was central to the local community college. GED prep classes funding is often limited or in some cases unfounded. Regular workshops and professional development attracted educators who desired to work at an institution that values staff development and growth. Developing a routine to engage educators in professional development and training strengthened their knowledge base that further strengthened the

learning of GED prep class learners. Regularly engaging educators ultimately enhance class participation, increase GED outcomes, and benefited the community.

Project Implications

In Section 3, I discussed the process to create the project for this study. I extracted key themes, during the data analysis that were central to this project study. Educators lacked a modern standardized instructional tool and professional development training, which inadvertently impacted adult learners' academic outcomes. Also, there was no strategic plan for educator and learners' interaction enhancing GED prep classes participation and increase GED outcomes. I developed three days of professional development workshop training.

The professional development workshop enhanced social change at the local community college and impacted the community as adult educators equip themselves with current research-based instructional practices and learning strategies that enhanced learning in GED prep classes.

A request for recommendations to further develop continual learning incorporating the use of small group discussions, PowerPoint, and alternative education was proposed for a later time. Next steps are essential to continue the development of the project, but reflections on how we developed the project, including changes and successes are critical to promoting further learning.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

Adult educators used basic instructional practices in GED prep classes. They were held accountable for the improvement in learners' participation and improved GED outcomes as measured by pre-established adult basic education core standards. Adult learners were not meeting the academic standards for successful GED outcomes. Prior research supported adult educators using cooperative learning strategies in for-credit classes improved educator-learner interaction and academic achievement (Haiynn, 2014).

Data collected from interviews and documents supported this project of addressing the problem of using basic instructional practices with adult learners in GED prep classes. Due to the results of this project study, I determined that the instructional practices of adult educators needed redesigning and that the educators needed training in cooperative learning. The results of this project study were used to develop a summary of the results for educators, administrators, and stakeholders in the form of a professional development training workshop.

This section covers the following topics: project strengths and limitations, recommendations for alternative approaches to the problem, my growth as a scholar and educator, the project and its development, and the implications for future research.

Project Strengths and Limitations

Exploring the instructional practices of educators and determining a need for a redesigned method was the emphasis of this project. After data collection and data analysis were completed, I discovered that the redesigning of instructional practices, the use of

professional development workshops, and educators and learner's interactivity enhanced participation and GED outcomes. I found that cooperative learning was beneficial to adult learners in GED prep classes, that adult learners were failing to participate in class and had low GED outcomes, and that educators rarely use alternate instructional practices. I based the interviews and document review protocols on the initial review of literature. Therefore, I used the project blueprint as a guide, as I designed a professional development training workshop to address problems identified in the local setting.

An important strength of this project was that it was data driven and guided by information reported by educators at the community college and satellite offices, an indication that the information I collected was enough to determine the need for an on-going professional development forum. The project included a researched-based professional development workshop for implementation at the local institution.

Another primary strength of this project was that the creation of the professional development workshop was a prelude to a much-needed discussion of diverse methods of professional development (De Rijdt, Stes, Der Vleuten, & Dochy, 2013; Gregory & Salmon, 2013). The professional development workshop was developed with an emphasis on moving to research-based instructions, underpinning the need for incorporating cooperative learning in GED prep class, so educators can gain familiarity for daily usage. Educators placed emphasis on the importance of learning new instructional practices and likely developed a keener understanding and value of increasing successful outcomes.

Considering that many educators expressed feelings of concerns that adult learners were not participating in class and underachieving, and educators lack standardize practices; the workshop brought hope that alternatives to current instructional practices were available. The professional development training workshop for educators delivered a research-based cooperative learning tool for skills enrichment and understanding that focused on educators' didactic strategies. Therefore, the workshop was based on my knowledge and comprehension of experiences and viewpoints of GED prep class educators at a local institution.

Educators were increasingly under fire from demands of internal and external stakeholders from local and state requirements to ensure adult learners increase GED outcomes. As demands persisted, a limitation of this project was that educators chose to abstain from regularly implementing cooperative learning instructional practices and default to familiar methods. Although the proposal of the workshop was designing to simplify and standardize instructional practices using group formations, and other educator –learners interactions strategies, some educators felt overwhelmed and use of new methods created a challenge. Therefore, adult educators without natural supports were not able to adjust implementing redesigned instructional practices.

According to Ghaith (2018) cooperative learning has been effective in achieving student success, critical and creative thinking, and success in other researched areas. Adult educators were effective in advocating the use of cooperative learning and demonstrating the use of certain group activities. Educators' and adult learners' interactions were noted as well.

Although, research supported improvement in critical areas, implementing cooperative learning remained a concern and is underutilized in classroom across curriculum.

Recommendation for Alternative Approaches

Although this professional development workshop provided supports for educators implementing cooperative learning instructional practices, there was a possibility that there were other means to approach the problem. One alternative approach is seeking educators who currently use cooperative learning in other academic program at the local institution and promote mentoring. Mentoring can be beneficial to both, existing GED prep classes educators by modeling essential strategies of cooperative learning, and their peers using mentoring as a means of professional development. Mentors can lead interactive discussions, provide best practices and become a valuable resource.

Another alternative approach is to implement professional development workshops quarterly or along with the end of semester meetings. With time restraints and requirement of professional development for all adult educators working in GED prep classes, adding the workshop quarterly lessens the challenges felt to implement cooperative learning methods in GED prep classes. This process established by administrators and stakeholders selected adult educator from GED prep classes to present CLM at end of semester meeting. This option was viable as it related to timely implementation and needs for professional development. Educators using training resources at their discretion, as classroom challenges decreased, will eventually make implementing CLM easier in GED prep classes.

Adult educators use of cooperative learning peer teaching educator on a college campus is an option to implement this interactive tool. According to Bowling, Cross & Ball (2017) implementing cooperative learning during peer teaching instructional assignments proves valuable, providing hands-on training and engaging adult learners. The overall outcome indicated positive results, which included improved relationships between educators and learners and enhanced learning among adult learners.

Finally, adding a virtual professional development forum could be established as a standalone component for educators, school administrators, and local and community stakeholders for continual of learning. Adult educators hardly have enough time to manage multiple work schedules benefited from a virtual forum. The virtual professional development forum would include a gambit of tools, to include face-to-face discussions, storyboards, visuals, and a blog. The virtual professional development forum would provide updated research-based information on instructional practices, educators and learners' interactive learning, scholarship tips and education resources (Macdonald & Poniatowska, 2011). For educators who were not technically confident, an introduction to online learning using the Learning Management System (LMS) practice version. LMS is used in higher education institutions to support regular training and professional development for educators (Shien, 2017).

Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change

The amount of personal growth that I have experienced, as I reflected over my doctoral study was monumental. Earlier in the process, initial coursework helped provide fundamentals for adult learning theories and essential research techniques. The initial coursework and other supports provided me a framework, but nothing could have prepared me for the unsteady process of completing the doctoral study.

Scholarship. As I journeyed through the doctoral process, I began to formulate a sense of direction. The art of research led me through a collection of journals, articles, and topics. As shaky as it seemed, I enjoyed reading and sifting through articles and sharing them with other scholars. I soon learned that researching for the doctoral study must be meticulous and purposeful. I further understood that there was more to learning and real scholarship was about learning about topics aside from my knowledge and understanding.

After narrowing my topics, I finally selected one. A few topics I had researched included, instructional practices, teaching strategies, cooperative learning, distant learning and workshops for educators, and GED students on a college campus. Several revisions were made to my prospectus and then proposal as I further narrowed my selection. Pinpointing my top topic helped me gain momentum, moving along with data collection, data analysis and finally the project development. I now realized that scholarly research must be meticulous, focused, and narrowly defined to explore a specific problem. With the support of my professors and committee, I was able to learn this valuable lesson.

Project Development and Evaluation. Data collection and analysis guided me in the decision to develop this type of project. Working through those steps in this qualitative study,

helped me to define and grasp information. A constant review of data analysis underscored the value in developing a professional development workshop essential to impact social change at the local institution. An examination of documents that started the data collection process was an asset. I reviewed adult education program reports and end of semester summaries, followed by interview questionnaires and face-to-face semi-structured interviews which were completed timely.

I demonstrated diligence in following all protocols of qualitative research. I reviewed each questionnaire to garner feedback within 24-hours of receiving it. The interview questionnaires were automatically stamped through Monkey Survey noting start and completion time. Auto time stamped helped with time containment without watching the clock and focus on accuracy. I took care to read for content, error-free data without bias to make an accurate summary. Educators reviewed each summary and provided feedback as needed.

As mentioned previously, the outcome of a comprehensive data collection and analysis guided me in determining the need to develop a professional development workshop. The professional development workshop will provide support to a customized facilitation tool. The skills acquired from the workshop will enable educators to feel confident and knowledgeable to use cooperative learning. I developed a three-day professional development workshop for educators and targeted stakeholders as directed by college administrators. The workshop will be comprehensive in its delivery over three days with hopes of on-going independent learning. The workshop five targeted content areas: cooperative learning instructional materials and content

(presentations), educator to a learner (building respect and rapport), communication and learning, and professional communities in a classroom (group interactions).

A formal method of evaluation was not a part of this professional development workshop, but the development of this project gave me a clear understanding of the importance of evaluating a problem before designing a solution. There were specific stages to consider creating a successful project. The first stage required adequate preparation and planning. First, I started with identifying the setting and stakeholders beyond educators, gathered and reviewed primary and seminal research appropriate to the setting. The next stage was seeking methods to assemble data outcome for presentations, and then implementing the project. Finally, evaluating the result of the project helped determine the next steps for the project study.

Leadership and Change

As I worked through this doctoral project study, I learned to be a good leader; one must first be able to follow. Understanding the tenets of doctoral research is very different from any other level of research. I learned that leadership is a skill, which develops over time. I needed to discuss various segments of the project with administrators and executive staff to obtain approval to conduct the study. During this discussion, I was able to adequately and proficiently explain and identify the problem and defend the need for research and its impact in the local community. Working in a position where I would normally make inquiries or ask questions, this situation required me to employ change and use a different set of leadership skills.

As a leader and while completing this doctoral project study, I understood that effective change could be difficult. I experienced multiple changes during this process, as my committee chairperson changed, my second member changed and adjustments in the data collection process. Various changes seemed a difficult task to conquer, meaning that with the change in staff come different opinions. Initially, I felt frustrated with the need to reevaluate and make changes to an already approved proposal; though I gradually embraced the changes and took a different approach and viewed change as an effective way to move forward. I soon realized the difference is essential to growth, and as I allowed the process, my doctoral project study became more refined and developed.

During the implementation of my project, consideration from each educator regarding effect change was evident. This project involved adult educators redesigning current instructional tools to use new information they may be unfamiliar. The experiences I learned developing this project to integrate into the training process to lessen the potential of fear. Sharing my uneasiness with change helped educators identify apprehension to change.

Reflection on Importance of the Work

Analysis of Self as Scholar

My reflection as a scholar, recall two themes: scholarly writing, and systematic research. I learned the need for academic writing and developed a clearer understanding of writing mechanics and writing styles as it relates to APA 6th edition. Researching my project study, I discovered various types of research designs and method, which had propelled me to delve further into research. Research is essential to this project study, and I realized how important

and useful it was in our daily lives. It was necessary to approach a doctoral program with a bright, committed, and scholarly readiness to endure the task.

Further, as a scholar in pursuit of a doctoral degree, I had to evaluate my strengths and weaknesses as a person, an educator, a counselor, a professional and scholar. This doctoral journey had compelled me to realize how research had influenced and entwined with each component of my life, as well as investigating theories and solving problems. The doctoral process a long journey with constant learning spurs, and I am better because of them. I became humble, amazingly grateful and blessed beyond measure.

Analysis of Self as a Practitioner

As a counselor and educator, the methodical and calculated process interjected in my project study gave me a detailed understanding of how research related to the field of mental health and adult education. This process helped me recognize and appreciate how research not only relevant to related fields but can invoke change in adult education and the mental health profession, within myself as a counselor educator in the local community. In my job as a counselor educator, the use of data was common as it mainly relates to achievement. Through this process, I have since learned to research questions to seek problem solutions and challenge others to do the same. I learned to explore problems and situations from a more systematic perspective as opposed to an emotional view.

Analysis of Self as Project Developer

Identifying me as a project developer became apparent during the last phase of the doctoral project study. I took great interest in developing a project used to create social change

but developing two projects was a concern. I was concerned two projects would require time and stakeholders would have concerns. I continued with the project and realized after a review of literature; a two-part project was unsubstantiated and unsupported by enriched data. Consideration for a virtual professional development is discussed in this study. Grant & Osanloo (2014), declares developing and writing the dissertation is a labor of love, and end of being a once-in-a-lifetime achievement.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

Instructional practices of cooperative learning demonstrated academic achievement, motivation to participate and better interaction between educators and adult learners enrolled to obtain GED (Yi & LuXi, 2012); therefore, this project study had the potential to increase successful outcome of adult learners in GED prep classes. The results of this doctoral project study confirmed that the experiences of educator instructional practices did not include a CLM as part of facilitation in GED prep classes. Based on comprehension data collection and review of the literature, I developed a project to respond to the training and professional development needs and concerns of educators in GED prep classes at the local community college.

Educators are responsible for preparing adult learners to pass an examination earning a GED. This process requires innovative and proven instructional practices. The more comfortable educators become as trained CLM educators, the facilitation of information becomes more natural to disseminate in classrooms. This could result in moving learning along with adequate skill-sets to reach the desired goal, closing the achievement gap between non-GED learners and those who have achieved their goal.

I believe all educators desire success among all their learners. The news of successful professional development training in other departments started the evasion of educators across the college campus and satellite locations to participate. Moreover, other educators seeing the continual of accomplishments because of cooperative learning became willing to blend these skills into their daily lessons. Therefore, professional development training workshops become a vital component to educators believed to created enhanced participation and increased GED outcomes. The potential success of CLM in the GED prep class could rapidly travel across the country.

The continuation of research in the future would add components to the current five cooperative learning elements used in GED prep class held on a college campus and satellite locations. The need for GED prep classes continues to expand, and adult learners needs continue to develop. Currently, there are specific protocols for using CLM in GED prep class, other than the core concept of using cooperative learning, and there is no process in place to identify or add additional components to this method. Without the need to make modifications to CLM, it solidifies the research-based tool and can become a natural part of educators the daily syllabus.

Research addressing cooperative learning in GED prep class on a college campus and satellite locations continue to focus on educators' success with the exclusive use of cooperative learning instructional practices and matriculation. Several studies have explored types of other materials used, others have discussed challenges to learners, but more information regarding the outcome of adult learners and their success in enrollment in a college setting is necessary.

Additional research on professional development training workshops that target adult educator's use of cooperative learning in several GED prep classes on a college campus and satellite locations success rate increased.

Conclusion

Adult educator's knowledge and understanding instructional practices using CLM in GED prep classes could enhance learner's participation and increased GED outcomes. Adult educators in the local setting shared concerns on needs for more support and training working with adult learners. Educators, who received training and current information on cooperative learning, were better prepared to implement the new research-based instructional practices to enhance participation and increase GED outcomes. Educators also shared concerns with learner's challenges they brought to class. CLM in GED prep classes could provide an instructional experience to incite group discussions and interactions fostering group cohesiveness.

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Appendix A: The Project

Professional Development Workshop Training

Details for Professional Development Workshop Training

At the end of a Walden University study completed by adult educators of local community college, related to the use of basic instructional practices in GED prep classes, the results determined that a research-based cooperative learning was needed to enhance adult learner's participation and to increase adult learners GED outcomes. The data collected revealed the need for a redesigned research-based instructional tool for current and newly hired GED prep class educators. A redesigned research-based instructional tool will be patterned as outlined according to (Johnson & Johnson, 2009).

Purpose of LWAP

This project is designed for educators working with adult learners in adult literacy programs and targeted program classes such as GED prep class. The purpose of this workshop is to provide current and newly hired adult educators employed by a local community college in a U.S. state on the East Coast the introduction to interactive instructional methods to increase skill set to produce a more success program (Ajaja & Eravwoke, 2010). The local community college does not have a customized workshop that target GED prep class educators; therefore; Learning with a Purpose (LWAP) pronounced *Lawap* is presented during the winter professional development conference for current and newly hired educators. Participation in this workshop is required for adult educators employed in GED prep classes and other staff designated by

college administrators. LWAP will be presented as three-day classroom professional development workshop from 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Learning Outcomes for LWAP

The learning outcomes created by this researcher based on a study completed by adult educators related to basic instructional practices used in GED prep class. The design of LWAP workshop helped current and newly hired adult educators to achieve the following outcomes

- Implement cooperative learning instructional practices (5 elements of learning) and strategies (STAD-study group type activities) in GED prep class;
- Increase educators' knowledge and understanding of cooperative learning strategies to simplify use in GED prep class lesson plan to increase overall success of GED prep class;
- Strengthen educator-to-learner rapport integrating group interactive elements of CL building confidence in adult learners to encourage systemic learning; and
- Develop and present a research-based instructional tool incorporating techniques as outlined in the workshop to the professional development workshop participants.

Target Audience for LWAP

I created the LWAP workshop to address the concerns and needs of educators in GED prep class at local community college and satellite locations. The targeted audience for the professional development workshop is educators who are currently working in GED prep class

and desire to work in GED prep classes. Educators work in various educational subject matters and at various locations, therefore; an invitation is extended to administrators, stakeholders and staff.

Timeline for LWAP

LWAP workshop consist of three-day professional development workshop training. The three-day professional development workshop held 9:00a.m.-3:00p.m. commence at winter staff development conference. The winter conference is held annually, for staff development so highlighting LWAP as a newly added addition is given heighten attention.

Format for LWAP

LWAP is structured as an interactive group formation experience. Adult educators engage in cooperative instructions supported by handouts, PowerPoint presentations and interactive group learning. Handout provided as a guide to engage in interactive group discussions, lesson planning, modeling and presentations role playing. Questions or comments are written on a flip chart and posted on the wall for further discussion.

Evaluation for LWAP

The purpose of completing these evaluations helps to determine if the workshop material contents and subject matter met the project's goals and objectives. A Likert type evaluation include a section for comments and feedback. Educators will complete an anonymous evaluation at the conclusion each session of LWAP workshop. For attendees who

are unable to complete the three days' workshop will complete it at end of that particular session.

General Information

Increasing the number of GED is at the forefront of Adult and Family Literacy Programs at the local community college and satellite offices. Steady increase in learners attaining GEDs will bring awareness and value to GED prep class. Administrators, stakeholders, and staff work together supporting adult educators to successful outcomes for adult learners. Materials used throughout the professional development workshop includes the following: computers, internet access, projector with screen, or TV with DVD player; white board, small notepaper, index cards, handouts, take-away promos, information and resources. Notepaper, pens, take-away promos, resources, information and agenda can be located in the workshop bag which each attendee will receive upon entrance to session one.

LWAP-Session One

Topic: The Major Components of cooperative learning Supporting Adult Educators

The first session centers on two major components necessary to encapsulate cooperative learning. The three types of cooperative learning include informal, formal, and group processing. It is necessary to include five elements to produce the cooperative objectivity in cooperative learning. They are positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face promotive interaction; interpersonal and small group skills and group processing. Additionally, presenting an overview of research supporting cooperative learning with focus on instructional practices of adult educators.

Discussion: How would you define cooperative learning? What experiences have you had integrating cooperative learning in GED prep classes. A look at instructional paradigm shift from old Paradigms of instructions vs new Paradigms of instructions.

Session One

Agenda 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Assignment	Materials	Activity	Time	Outcomes
Welcome and Introductions: select table matching index card color held in hand. Follow directions on index card. Introductions will continue with each attendee introducing each other, along with brief discussion on questions/Assessment	Colored Index Card/note pad/writing instrument/chart paper and permanent marker	Ice Breaker connect with a partner at your table; write name on your card; ask partner one of two questions written on index card, if enough time ask another partner at same table 2 nd question.	30 minutes	Educators gain understanding on feelings and thoughts of new learners entering GED prep classes; required to engage in questions and answers; share their thoughts
CL Defined Identify old paradigm vs new paradigms of instructions	(see PPT) Slide#	Notes	30 minutes	Definition of CL Learning new paradigms of instructions
Display thru PPT 3 types of CL-one-word definition- Formal: structured Informal: temporary Group processing: long term	PPT/ Handouts/writing materials	Jot down notes from PPT on CL/reflecting on current teaching methods/provide definition of each type of CL. Can use more than one word/Class discussion.	30 minutes	Articulate <u>basic</u> knowledge of 3 types of CL.
Display thru PPT the 5 elements embedded in cooperative learning/ researched-based definition will display in afternoon session	PowerPoint	Informative instruction/ discuss with group current basic understanding and use of 5 elements in GED prep classes.	30 minutes	Educators will gain a <u>basic</u> knowledge of 5 elements drawing from past experiences in GED prep classes and build upon in future sessions.
Small group assignment; groups discussions/pros and cons prior instructional practices	Questions & comments written on flip; discuss at end of workshop	Informative group discussion/discuss what worked/not worked in GED prep classes; any similarities? 1 person from each group will highlight groups discussion	30 minutes	Educators will engage in discussion/ challenges /barrier in GED prep classes.

Present PPT CL history; brief overview/take note of information for familiarity/full discussion after break.	PowerPoint/chart board	Visual information	30 minutes	Educators will observe information on PPT and prepare to discuss after break
Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	45 minutes	Lunch
Discuss theoretical perspective on CL: <i>Formal cooperative learning</i> -3-4 learners working together for one class period or more/ <i>informal learning</i> - working together in ad-hoc groups or for few minutes or one class period; <i>cooperative base groups</i> -stable ongoing learning/meet outside of class	PowerPoint	Collaborative discussions	30 minutes	Educators will gain a knowledgeable understanding of the history of CL/including the efficacy of implementing in GED prep classes.
Discussion theoretical perspective of 5 elements embedded in cooperative learning	PPT/handout notes	Collaborative Discussion	30 minutes	Gain understanding of 5 elements.
Questions & comments written on flip chart; discuss at end of workshop Anonymous evaluation		Homework	30 minutes	Gain clarification on comments & questions written on flip chart

Session 1 Evaluation for LWAP Workshop

You have completed session one of LWAP training. Please take a few minutes and answer the following questions using the scale below. Your participation in this exploratory-based professional development workshop is appreciated and will help us to improve our professional development workshop for the future. Check the appropriate box matching your selected answer 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3 neutral, 4=agree and 5=strongly agree.

At the end of this training workshop, I feel that:	5	4	3	2	1
The method of introduction used helped to demonstrate how new GED prep class enrollee may feel attending class for first time.					
I was familiar with old instructional paradigm.					
I was familiar with new instructional paradigm.					
I have a better understanding of cooperative learning theory.					
I can identify 3 benefits of implementing cooperative learning in daily lesson plans.					
I am ready to develop a lesson plan using research-based instructional practices.					

Please add any comments regarding the content materials, the facilitator or facilities. Your comments are welcomed, including any content material or any subject matter you would like to see covered in Session 2 workshop. You may use the space below for added comments.

LWAP-Session Two 9:00 a.m. -3:00 p.m.

Topic: Incorporating the three types of CLM and 5elements of cooperative learning in your classroom.

The second session focus on techniques of cooperative learning.

Discussion: Which cooperative learning techniques have you used in GED prep class? Of the techniques you identified, how were they incorporated? If you have not use cooperative learning techniques, how similar were those to cooperative learning? How feasible is it to incorporate these techniques for increasing overall GED outcomes? What do you prioritize to focus on during before the next session?

Session Two

Agenda 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Task	Materials	Activity	Time Allotted	Outcomes
Welcome/ highlights from Session 1	Flip Chart board	Cooperative Discussion	30 minutes	Educators thoughts and questions clarified; building best practices for GED prep class
Selecting techniques of CL type; base upon class size or time	Writing pad/pen/pads/markers	Assessing current GED prep classes matching with CL type/ e.g. information CL type for smaller GED prep class & group base learning for another class/cooperative Discussion	30 minutes	Learning to select specific CL style in GED prep class.
Present and discuss 5 elements of CL relevant to enhance adult learner's skills.	Writing pad/pen	Instructions Educators involvement	30 minutes	Educators gains enhanced knowledge of CL elements/essentialities to successful outcome of group learning (the significance of cooperate in CL).
Model group processing building/review activities	PPT	Modeling Discussion	30 minutes	Educators observed activities to enhance learner's participation/STAD & Jigsaw

Practice instructional strategies to increase learning concepts	Writing pad/pen	Guided Techniques	30 minutes	Educators will gain confidence using strategies to increase GED outcomes
Discussion centered on implementing new skills within current class schedule	None	Guide Techniques	30 minutes	Educators work together to explore teaching CL within daily class schedule
Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	45 minutes	Lunch
Encourage educators to select one CL type (discuss rationale) to implement during next session	None	Demonstration	30 minutes	Educators will engage in essential learning goals of CL integrating in their instructional strategy
Discuss questions and comments Complete anonymous evaluation	Anonymous Survey	Individual assignment	30 minutes	Get clarification of material content Share feedback to determine the efficacy of professional development

Session 2 Evaluation for LWAP workshop

You have completed Session 2 of LWAP training. Please take a few minutes and answer the following questions using the scale below. Your participation in this exploratory-based professional development workshop is appreciated and will help us to improve our professional development workshop for the future. Check the appropriate box matching your selected answer 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3 neutral, 4=agree and 5=strongly agree.

At the end of this training workshop, I feel that:	5	4	3	2	1
I was satisfied with the clarity of answers provided to building best practices for redesigning instructional tools for GED prep classes.					
I can select specific cooperative learning style for use in GED prep classes with little assistance.					
I gained significant knowledge on 3 cooperative learning styles essential to impact group learning.					
I gained significant knowledge on 5 cooperating learning elements to impact group learning					
I have a working knowledge of group strategies using STAD activity in GED prep classes.					
I have a working knowledge of group strategies using Jigsaw activity in GED prep classes.					

Please add any comments regarding the content materials, the facilitator or facilities. Your comments are welcomed, including any content material or any subject matter you would like to see covered in Session 3 workshop. You may use the space below for added comments.

LWAP-Session Three Agenda 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Topic: The third and final session focus on research-based instructional strategies of cooperative learning to enhance GED prep class participation and increase successful GED outcomes, during the structuring of cooperative learning in GED prep class.

Research-based cooperative learning lesson plans are presented.

Discussion: Which type of cooperative learning is suitable for your classroom setting? Of the type you identified how did you implement it in GED prep class? What problems did you incur if any, and if not, what technique (s) would you share with others who may have encountered problems? How can you incorporate techniques you identified to strengthen instructional practices to increase GED outcomes during regular class time? How will you fully incorporate cooperative learning types and elements in your GED prep class? What tools will help you with your transition to new research-based instructional practices in your new classes? What have you learned about cooperative learning? How has it aided you in developing a more effective lesson plan? Most of these questions will be answered and demonstrated through group presentations.

Session Three

Agenda 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Task	Materials	Activity	Time Allotted	Outcomes
Welcome/ highlights from Session 2 /Dev. lesson plans	Flip Chart	Cooperative Discussion	30 minutes	Educators thoughts and questions clarified; building best practices for GED prep

Focus discussion on CL types selected to implement in GED prep class	None	Large Cooperative Discussion	30 minutes	Educators will cooperatively reflect on new skills used, how comfortable they are, and how to more easily integrate CL elements
Skill development/ discuss and present CL as a research-based instructional method/ enhance learners' participation and increase GED outcome	None	Large Cooperative Discussion Instructions	30 minutes	Educators will gain information on a research-based instructional method/explore methods/options to teach CL in GED prep class time schedule
Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	45 minutes	Lunch
Develop chosen CL type and develop it using 5 elements	None	Didactic instructions/design lesson	30 minutes (2 group presents)	Educators will engage in CL instructional practices to teach workshop participants
Continue group work/ Present your lesson plan to the group	notes, lesson plan using CL interactive elements/pens/white board/presentation chart/computers	Group presentations	30 minutes	Engage in interactivity sharing and identifying best practices implemented in lesson plan. Learn from other educators.
Close out-recommendations for continual learning		Write suggestions on evaluation form	30 minutes	Highlight several best practices and next steps
Discuss questions or comments Complete anonymous evaluation	Anonymous evaluation		30 minutes	Get clarification of material content Share feedback to determine the efficacy of workshops

Session 3 Evaluation for LWAP Workshop

You have completed Session three of LWAP training. Please take a few minutes and answer the following questions using the scale below. Your participation in this exploratory-based professional development workshop is appreciated and will help us to improve our professional development workshop for the future. Check the appropriate box matching your selected answer 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3 neutral, 4=agree and 5=strongly agree.

At the end of this training workshop, I feel that:	5	4	3	2	1
The objectives of LWAP was clearly defined and connected to training topic					
I can describe 3 types of cooperative learning and 5 cooperative learning elements.					
I learned new skills to enhance participation and increase GED outcomes					
I understand how to implement cooperative learning in GED prep class.					
I benefited by participating in LWAP cooperative learning researched based professional development workshop					
I was satisfied with the professional development workshop					

Please add any comments regarding the content materials, the facilitator or facilities. Your comments are welcomed, including any content material or any subject matter you did not cover in previous sessions. You may use the space below for added comments.



Learning with a Purpose Workshop
LWAP

Center for Adult and Family Literacy

Logistics

Monday-Tuesday & Wednesday
9:00a.m–3:00p.m

Main campus-Library-conference room
Rest rooms
Breaktime/Lunch

Materials: Agenda/Handouts/ Registration bags

Certificates of attendance
Completion of anonymous evaluations

Cooperative Learning: ~Types and Theory

- **Cooperative Learning Types:** Informal, Formal & Group Processing
 - see Figure 1
- **Theory behind cooperative learning**
 - social interdependence
 - group based interaction
 - successful outcome

• What is Cooperative Learning?

- Pedagogical instructional method
- Interactive and goal oriented
- Consist of five core elements

Old Paradigms of Instructions VS New Paradigms of Instructions

Factor	Old Paradigm of Instruction	New Paradigm of Instruction
Information	Independently Lead by Adult Educators to Learner	Jointly Lead by Adult Educators and Learners
Adult Learners	Unreceptive Learner Ingesting Adult Educators Knowledge	Receptive Engager, Transfer and Discoverer of Self-Knowledge
Adult Educators Purpose	Learning as One Body	Enhance Learners Competencies and Expertise
Relationships	Adult Educators-Adult Learners Impersonal Relationships	Personal and Amenable Relationship Between Adult Educators and Adult Learners
Perspective	Competitive/ Individualized	Cooperative Engagement in Learning Groups with Adult Educators
Assumption	Basic Teaching Instruction Use Across Learning	Working with Adult Learners Require Specific Training

Cooperative Learning: ~Types and Theory

- **Cooperative Learning Types:** Informal, Formal & Group Processing
 - see Figure 1
- **Theory behind cooperative learning**
 - social interdependence
 - group based interaction
 - successful outcome

Types of Cooperative Learning—

Informal

Formal

Group Processing



Design of groups

Informal: ad-hoc groups, joint learning goal, few minutes

Formal: structure, working together, shared learning goals, one class or several weeks

Group processing: long-term, off-site group learning, goal centered



On Your Own

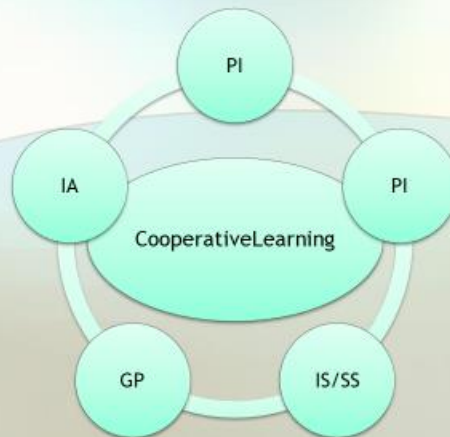
Cooperative Learning in GPCs: Research-based (How effective with Adult Learners)

- “Research validates or disconfirms “ according to Johnson & Johnson (1999). A continuum of research validates benefits.
- Adult educators provision of little structure in learners group formation will be less effective.
- Adult learners sitting together in a group and receiving instructions without cohesiveness and scholarly interaction, and support of each other have demonstrated lower academic achievement compared to learners use cooperative learning applications facilitated by adult educators.

Correlation between cooperative learning and GED prep class

- Creates more effective learning and successful outcomes.
- Educators are more likely to impact adult learning across learning spectrum.
- Educators help learners to develop skills.

Cooperative Learning-A unit



Five Basic Elements of CL

What are they?

Positive Interdependence—

Mutual learning

All group members must succeed

Individual Accountability

Each group member assessed
Constructive feedback
Each group member held accountable

Face to Face Promotive Interaction

Support each group member
Help each other to achieve by
supporting and encouraging-power of
influence

Social & Interpersonal Skills

Building trust, leadership skills

Decision-making skills

Group Processing

Collaboration

Identify, define and resolve group
problems

Common Threads of Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning implemented and incorporated using variety of methods and strategies.

What is your understanding of Cooperative learning up to this point?

In a few words how would you describe CL?

Experiences teaching Cooperative Learning

- Having a closer look at cooperative learning, which techniques have you incorporate (if any) in your instructional practices?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Homework

- Copy comments and questions from “parking lot” and correlation between cooperative learning and current instructional practices--job down any thoughts or reflections.
- Be prepared to present in Session 2
- Also, you may consider suggestions, recommendations,
- And information supporting adult learners for the online professional development website to be discussed later in the week.

Session Two

- Welcome/Highlights from Session 1
- Discuss homework assignment: Correlation between cooperative learning and current instructional practices. Selecting cooperative learning type: formal, informal or group processing—
- Present and discuss 5 Elements of cooperative learning
- Implementing New Skills: Group Activities
- Homework

Review homework slide

Reflections, thoughts, instructions
etc.

2 Types of Group Activities

STAD (Student Teams-Achievement
Divisions)

STAD-Study Group 1

Groups of four learners study together (multiple groups)

All learners master the materials

Take individual test

Group test scores increase from past performance

Jigsaw 2

Four to six adult learners per team

Sections of material shared with learners, study their section, return

and take turns teaching group mates

Increase knowledge, becomes experts

Guided Discussion

Strategies and Activities

Vs

Real Class time of real classrooms

Instructional Strategies: Adult Educators perspective

How time flies



Managed class time



Homework

Copy comments and questions from “parking lot” and jot down thoughts or reflections. Be prepared to present in Session 3.

Suggestions and recommendation are welcome for online professional development forum in Session 4.

Session Three

- Welcome/Highlights from Session 2
- Discuss homework “Parking Lot” questions
- Group member discuss cooperative learning a research-based instructional method
- Role play as educator and learner engaging strategies e.g. assigning group etc.
- Homework

Parking Lot: cooperative discussion

Thoughts-resolutions-comments/
questions posted in the “parking lot”
during work shop. Will review during
next session.

Cooperative learning— research-based

In your words

Great minds thinking



Cooperative learning-
research-based/Role-play
Which picture supports cooperative
learning?



LWAP Recap

Highlights from Sessions

Discuss homework assignment: “Parking lot” questions, concerns or comments.

Group presentations: Research-based CL Lesson plans for GPCs.

Critique group presentation

Next steps/Navigate ideas virtual professional development workshop *LWAP-II*

Complete all evaluations

Critique Presentations

List on flip chart for future review and potentially implementation

Online Professional Development Forum

Navigate Online forum

Become Familiar

Continual Online learning



LWAP (Learning with a Purpose) Professional
Development Workshop @2107

Thanks for your participation

Please check back soon

w.w.w.lwapunderconstruction for best
practices, research, resources, forum and
other information

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tHe EnD eDucators-GeD pRep CLasses



Appendix B: Interview Guide for Educators: Questionnaire

I will like you to take a questionnaire about the instructional practices use in GED classes using Survey Monkey. I ask that you review the following before you begin the questionnaire. Your participation is completely voluntary, and all information will be kept confidential. Any questions you are uncomfortable answering, you do not have to answer and if you desire you may contact me using the designated email. You may discontinue the questionnaire at any time. Your return of the informed consent form served as willingness to start the questionnaire. Your participation will take about 30 minutes.

Cooperative Learning is a widely (commonly use) used term when compiling lesson plans for GED Prep classes

___ Do you strongly agree?

___ Do you agree?

___ You are uncertain?

___ Do you disagree?

___ Do you strongly disagree?

Your experience teaching basic academic skills in GED classes have increased your understanding of adult learner's challenges

___ Do you strongly agree?

___ Do you agree?

___ You are you uncertain?

___ Do you disagree?

___ Do you strongly disagree?

Your institution/college provides you with staff development/training to prepare you to work with GED Prep learners

___ Do you strongly agree?

___ Do you agree?

___ You are uncertain?

___ Do you disagree?

___ Do you strongly disagree?

You incorporate adult learner's previous educational and life experiences in GED Prep class discussions.

___ Do you strongly agree?

___ Do you agree?

___ You are uncertain?

___ Do you disagree?

___ Do you strongly disagree?

You use basic instructional practices in GED Prep classes.

___ Do you strongly agree?

___ Do you agree?

___ You are uncertain?

___ Do you disagree?

___ Do you strongly disagree?

Connecting with adult learners using group formation enhances academic achievement in GED Prep classes.

___ Do you strongly agree?

___ Do you agree?

___ You are uncertain?

___ Do you disagree?

___ Do you strongly disagree?

Interactive group formation is a technique often used in GED Prep classes.

___ Do you strongly agree?

___ Do you agree?

___ You are uncertain?

___ Do you disagree?

___ Do you strongly disagree?

In your opinion, implementing new instructional practices may increase adult learner's participation, and GED outcome.

___ Do you strongly agree?

___ Do you agree?

___ You are uncertain?

___ Do you disagree?

___ Do you strongly disagree?

Overall, you are satisfied with the outcome of learner's academic achievement enrolled in GED Prep classes.

___ Do you strongly agree?

___ Do you agree?

___ You are uncertain?

___ Do you disagree?

___ Do you strongly disagree?

1. Do you have any additional comments? Write on lines below--
-

Appendix C: Interview Guide for Educators: Face to Face

I will like to interview you about the instructional practices use in GED Prep classes. I ask that you review the following before the interview begin. Your participation is completely voluntary, and all information will be kept confidential. Any questions you are uncomfortable answering, you do not have to answer. You may discontinue the interview at any time. Your participation in the one-on-one interview will consist of responding to 10 open-ended questions, taking about 30 minutes.

1. How do you currently see your practices of instructing adult learners in GED Prep class?
2. How would you define interactive learning methods in your GED Prep class?
3. How do you use interactive learning method in your GED Prep class?
4. How do you define cooperative learning?
5. How do you currently use cooperative learning methods instructing basic academic skills in GED Prep class?
6. How, in your opinion, does one incorporate group formation with adult learners to optimize academic achievement?
7. How do you view adult learner's participation if adult educator incorporates a research-based interactive learning method in GED Prep class?
8. How often, in your opinion, do you provide instructions that involves hands-on interactive learning and discussions?
9. How often, in your opinion do you engage in staff development/training to work with GED Prep class? If none, what would you need to better prepare your work with adult learners?
10. How prepared, in your opinion, are adult educators able to handle non-academic related challenges and issues brought to GED Prep class?

Appendix D: Document Review Protocol

Pseudonym of adult educator:

Program: GED Prep Class

The chart was used to guide the review of cooperative learning instructional practices. The outlined categories below used as a planning guide to highlight certain strategies during implementation of cooperative learning elements.

<p>The use of instructions in GED prep classes. Strategies/Types of CL elements Establish group setting</p>	<p>Informal Learning -question & answers instructor led -small, short-term, ad-hoc groups -two-four learners -short periods to one class period</p>	<p>Formal Learning -learners assigned to groups - learning objective - specific roles -heterogeneous group -social skills -learning goals -outcomes -instructor engages -evaluation & group functioning process</p>	<p>Base Groups -long-term (1 or more semesters) -group member commitment -learning goals encouragement member supported -Cognitive growth</p>
<p>Positive Interdependence -Establishing mutual goals -Shared resources</p>			

<p>Individual Accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Assess member contribution -Share results 			
<p>Face-face promotive interaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Team promotion -Discuss & teach to each other 			
<p>Interpersonal and small group skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Purposefully & precisely demonstrate individual skills -Collaborative skills 			
<p>Group processing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Time to discuss goals openly -Demonstrate effective working relationship -Instructor assign task -List learners' actions Select action to strengthen group 			
<p>Additional group activities:</p> <p>Group Interactive Projects STAD (study groups activities development)</p>			