

A QUALITATIVE INSTRUMENTAL CASE STUDY INVESTIGATING THE  
INTERRELATEDNESS OF ADULT LEARNING THEORY, TARGETED PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT, AND THE CREATION OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING  
COMMUNITIES DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
IMPROVEMENT MODEL

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ABSTRACT

Federal school reform mandates and open enrollment policies have challenged U.S. public school leaders to find and implement innovative improvement programs. Research has shown effective professional development that is targeted to student, teacher, and school needs is essential to implementing new programs. The purpose of this study was to illustrate the interconnectedness of adult learning theory, targeted professional development, and the creation of professional learning communities (PLCs) during the implementation of the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program (IB PYP) at Southeast and Midtown Elementary Schools in the Midwestern U.S. The conceptual underpinnings of the study were adult learning theory and learner-centered theory for adults. Research questions developed investigated the extent to which staff members perceived the schools' professional learning activities supported their adult learning needs. The study's data indicated targeted professional development activities at both school met the adult learning needs of the teachers and professional learning communities were formed. Data and discussion of findings of this investigation would be useful to school leaders seeking guidance with implementing school improvement models.