

# TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON THEIR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND RELATIONSHIP TO GROWTH IN STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

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## ABSTRACT

The idea that teaching quality is critical to a student's success in school may be taken for granted as a logical principle. However, researchers have struggled with how to identify and measure teaching quality. This study uses teacher survey data to examine relationships between best practices in teacher learning communities and professional development and growth in student achievement. The teacher and achievement data are from a representative sample of Missouri elementary and middle schools that went through the accreditation review process in 2007-2008.

As expected, student-level characteristics showed a strong relationship with student achievement growth. However, the analysis of teacher learning communities and professional development and growth in student achievement showed no significant relationships. As the pressure of limited resources adds to the expectation for return on investment, future research must further explore interventions thought to increase teacher quality and determine if those interventions are producing measurable gains in student learning.