Evaluation Findings from Year 2 of Georgia's CLASS-Related Professional Development Evaluation Project

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Contents

Abstract

During the 2015-16 academic year, Georgia's Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) piloted three professional development models for Georgia's Pre-K teachers. All three models focused on the Instructional Support domain of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System^{TM} (CLASS; Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008) and used resources developed by Teachstone. Pre- and post-intervention CLASS observations were collected for 94 participating teachers and revealed significant gains in average Instructional Support scores for teachers in all three models. Two of the three groups also evidenced gains in Emotional Support and Classroom Organization. The findings must be interpreted with caution because the sample was selected based on site director interest and convenience, thus we cannot know if these findings would generalize to other teachers.

Further, we cannot know if these teachers would have demonstrated comparable growth with different professional development supports because the current study did not assign teachers to groups at random and did not include a control group. To gain more insight on that issue, the posttest CLASS scores of the teachers in these three professional development conditions were compared to those of a randomly selected group of teachers who served as the control group in another study of Georgia's Pre-K teachers. The findings were encouraging: all three groups of teachers had significantly higher posttest scores than the control group from the other study, after accounting for pretest scores, on Emotional Support and Classroom Organization. The MMCI w/Coaching group scored significantly higher than the control group from the other study on Instructional Support. Again, these findings must be interpreted with caution because the comparison group was part of a different study, during different academic years, and employing different data collectors.

Teachers in all three conditions saw the professional development as useful and had had positive relationships with their coaches. Further, they generally felt that the training was in line with their personal goals and beliefs. Coaches generally reported that the teachers who improved the most were committed to change and open to feedback.

Despite the cautions noted above, these models appear to be promising approaches to improving teacher-child interactions and warrant further development and research.

Introduction

Georgia has been at the forefront of the pre-kindergarten movement since implementing its pre-k program in 1992 and creating the nation's first state-funded universal pre-k program in 1995. Georgia's Pre-K, administered by Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL), aims to provide high-quality preschool experiences to four-year-olds to help prepare them for kindergarten. Two recent evaluation reports concluded that participation in Georgia's Pre-K program significantly improved children's school readiness skills across a wide range of language, literacy, math, and general knowledge measures (Peisner-Feinberg, Schaaf, Hildebrandt, & Pan, 2015; Peisner-Feinberg, Schaaf, LaForett, Hildebrandt, & Sideris, 2014).

For the past few years, DECAL has used the *Classroom Assessment Scoring System*[TM] (CLASS; Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008) to provide a framework for its pre-k teachers' professional development. The CLASS is an observational tool focused on the aspects of teacher-child interactions that are most closely aligned with children's social, emotional, and academic outcomes. The CLASS provides scores in three domains of teacher-child interaction: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support.

During the 2015-16 academic year, DECAL provided support to three groups of Georgia's Pre-K teachers with the aim of improving teacher-child interactions, as measured by the CLASS. Similar CLASS-based professional development had been provided to 71 teachers during the 2014-15 academic year and the results were promising (see Early, Pan, Hume, & Kraus, 2016). As in 2014-15, in 2015-16 participating teachers took part in one of three professional development models, described below. Each of the models contained elements of My Teaching Partner (MTP) and Making the Most of Classroom Interactions (MMCI), two professional development models developed by Teachstone[1]. The models also included additional Teachstone-developed resources to support the professional development delivery. Georgia's Pre-K consultants—a group of DECAL employees who ensure compliance with the program standards while also providing training and technical assistance—delivered the professional development models after completing extensive training through Teachstone.

The three models were: Professional Learning Communities with Coaching (PLC-C); Making the Most of Classroom Interactions, Increased Focus on Instructional Support Domain Indicators, without coaching (MMCI w/o Coaching); and Making the Most of Classroom Interactions, Increased Focus on Instructional Support Domain Indicators, with Coaching (MMCI w/Coaching). Each model had a specific and intentional focus on the Instructional Support domain, which is the domain most closely linked to children's early academic gains (Mashburn et al., 2008). Instructional Support scores tend to be markedly lower than scores in the other two domains.

The PLC-C model started with a pretest CLASS observation and an introduction to the CLASS to provide teachers with a basic understanding of the tool. Following the introduction, the coach met with teachers individually to discuss results of their pretest observation. This cycle of classroom observation followed

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[1] Teachstone is an organization started by the CLASS authors to train individuals on the use of the CLASS and support implementation of professional development models designed to improve teacher-child interactions.

by face-to-face meetings with the coach and teacher repeated approximately every three weeks. During the individual conferences, coaches worked with teachers to identify and discuss effective interactions. Coaches also met with teachers in small groups to facilitate conversations about the Instructional Support domain. In one district, the school principals were invited to join the consultant on some of the CLASS observations and sit in on the small group meetings.

The MMCI w/o Coaching model is a slightly revised version of the MMCI model developed by Teachstone. It is a face-to-face, classroom-based professional development model in which a cohort of teachers learns to identify and analyze effective interactions in classrooms and discuss ways to interact intentionally to increase children's learning. Teachers have access to an online library of video clips demonstrating best practice in various aspects of teacher-child interactions and complete homework assignments that involve watching specific videos and practicing interactions in the classroom. Five full-day training sessions, led by DECAL consultants who had been trained in MMCI delivery, were held once a month over the course of five months. The standard MMCI model was enhanced for the current project by increasing the focus on the Instructional Support domain. MMCI does not typically include an individual coaching component, and teachers in this model did not receive individual coaching.

In the MMCI w/Coaching professional development model, teachers participated in MMCI with an increased focus on Instructional Support, as described above, and received coaching provided by DECAL consultants. Between each of the five MMCI sessions, the coach observed each teacher's classroom for 20 to 30 minutes and provided direct feedback following the observation. Coaches worked with teachers to enhance effective interactions, with a special focus on increasing teachers' understanding of the Instructional Support domain.

Study Description

To assess change in teacher-child interactions in participating classrooms, DECAL Pre-K consultants conducted pretest CLASS observations between October and December 2015 and posttest CLASS observations in April and May 2016. Consultants did not conduct observations in the classrooms in which they were serving as coaches and did not know in which professional development model the teachers were enrolled. These data were submitted to researchers at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute (FPG) for analysis. In the spring, the FPG research team also collected on-line questionnaires from participating teachers and the consultants who provided the professional development to learn about their perceptions of the supports, their views about intentional instruction, and their opinions about factors that contributed to change.

As with the 2014-15 evaluation, it is important to note that findings from this study *cannot* be used to determine if the professional development models *caused or led to* changes in teachers' instructional practice or be generalized to a larger population. Schools and centers were selected to participate based on directors' and consultant's mutual interest and consultants' ability to serve that geographic area, thus participating programs may be different from programs in general. The teachers were probably motivated to change and therefore might have shown similar gains if they had not had any supports or if they had had the typical professional development that DECAL requires of all Georgia's Pre-K teachers each year.

To partially address this shortcoming, the analyses presented here compare the posttest CLASS scores of the participating teachers to those of a group of randomly selected Georgia's Pre-K teachers who served as the control group for Georgia's Pre-K Professional Development Evaluation, after controlling for pretest scores. These analyses must also be interpreted with caution because the control group teachers come from a different study, and their CLASS scores were collected during different years and by different classroom observers. Nonetheless, they provide some information about how this professional development compares with what we would expect from standard professional development.

Additionally, the analyses presented below may overestimate any between-group differences because they do not account for nesting of teachers within centers/schools or nesting of centers/schools within district or cohort/professional learning community (PLC). More rigorous statistical analyses would account for this nesting, thereby decreasing the power to detect differences among groups. We have not employed such techniques because the number of districts and cohorts/PLCs would be too few to complete the analyses.

Sample Description

Only Georgia's Pre-K teachers with CLASS observations at both pre- and posttest are included in the analyses. The number of teachers and sites in each condition appear on Table 1.

Table 1. Teachers and sites in each condition

Model	Number of teachers	Number of sites	Schools/centers
PLC w/Coaching	52	26	10 schools, 16 centers
MMCI w/o Coaching	14	10	7 schools, 3 centers
MMCI w/Coaching	28	22	11 schools, 11 centers

Table 2 provides descriptive information about the classrooms and teachers in the analyses, based primarily on information gathered from teacher questionnaires, which were completed by 77 of the 94 (82%) participating teachers. The average class size was under 22, which is the maximum allowable for Georgia's Pre-K classrooms. Almost all classrooms used only English for instruction. Almost all teachers had a Bachelor's degree or higher and had college-level course work in early childhood education.

Table 2. Classroom and Teacher Characteristics

	PLC-C	MMCI w/o coaching	MMCI w/ coaching
Number with pretest CLASS scores	56	17	28
Number with pre- and posttest CLASS scores[2]	52	14	28
Number who returned questionnaire	39	12	26
Classroom Characteristics			
Average enrollment	21.3	21.0	21.5
% of children who are Dual Language Learners	19%	8%	10%
% of children with an active IEP	4%	13%	11%
% of classrooms where English is only language used	82%	100%	81%
Teacher Characteristics			
Mean years as GA Pre-K teacher	5.9	7.9	8.9
Teachers' Highest Degree			
BA/BS Degree	79%	58%	46%
Some graduate coursework	5%	17%	15%
MA/MS Degree	15%	25%	38%
Ed.D. or Ph.D. Degree	0%	0%	0%
Early Childhood Education (ECE) Degree[3]			
Bachelor's in ECE	67%	67%	46%
Graduate degree in ECE	5%	17%	15%
% of teachers who had taken a college course in ECE	100%	100%	100%

[2] All classrooms with a posttest CLASS observation also had a pretest CLASS observation. Only classrooms with both pre- and posttest CLASS observations are included in the analyses.
[3] Teachers could report having both a Bachelor's and a Graduate Degree in ECE, in which case they were counted in both these values.

CLASS Findings

Emotional Support

Figure 1 presents average pre- and posttest CLASS Emotional Support scores for the three groups. Teachers in both PLC-C and MMCI w/Coaching had significantly higher Emotional Support scores at posttest compared to pretest. The gain demonstrated by MMCI w/o Coaching group was not statistically significant.

Hierarchical linear models (HLMs) were estimated to compare the posttest scores of the three groups to one another, after controlling their pretest scores. Teachers in the MMCI w/Coaching group had higher posttest scores than those in the PLC group. No other significant between-group differences were found.

Figure 1: Emotional Support by Professional Development Model
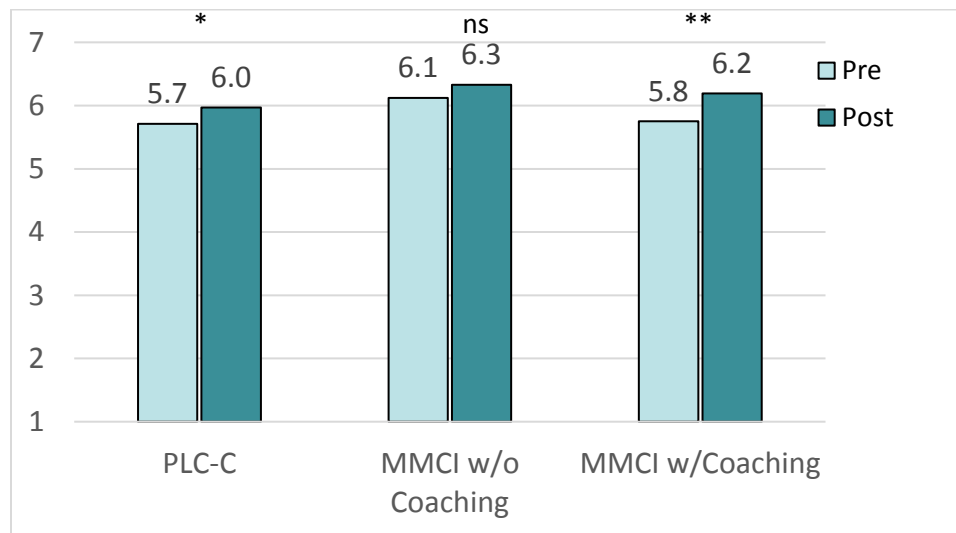
* p < .05, ** p< .01

Classroom Organization

As seen on Figure 2, teachers in both the PLC-C and MMC w/Coaching groups had significantly higher Classroom Organization scores at posttest, compared to pretest.

HLMs comparing the posttest scores of the three groups to one another, after controlling their pretest scores, were estimated. Teachers in both MMCI groups (with and without coaching) had higher posttest scores than those in the PLC group, but the two MMCI groups did differ from one another at posttest.

Figure 2. Classroom Organization by Professional Development Model
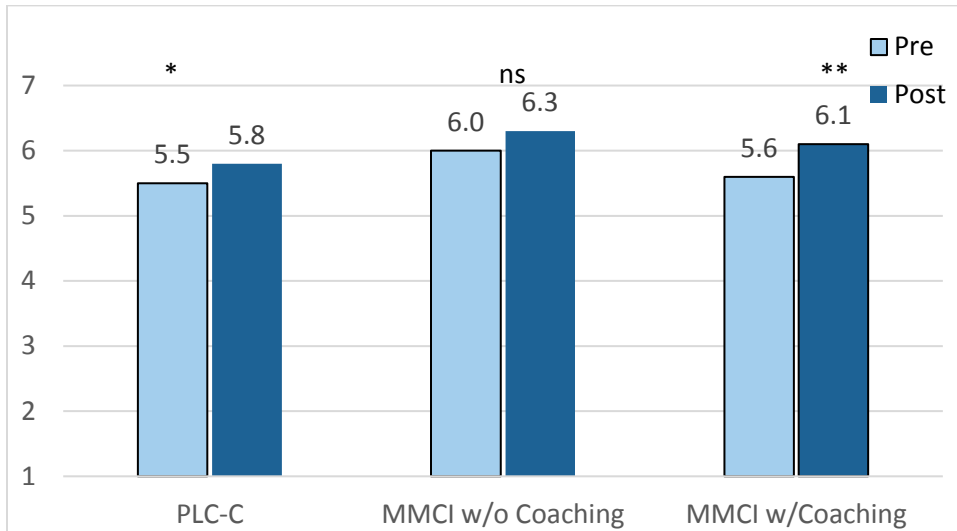
* p < .05, ** p< .01

Instructional Support

As seen on Figure 3, teachers in all three groups had significantly higher Instructional Support scores at the posttest as compared to pretest. HLMs comparing the posttest scores of the three groups after controlling pretest scores revealed the same pattern as seen in Emotional Support: teachers in the MMCI w/Coaching group had higher posttest scores than those in the PLC group.

Figure 3: Instructional Support by Professional Development Model
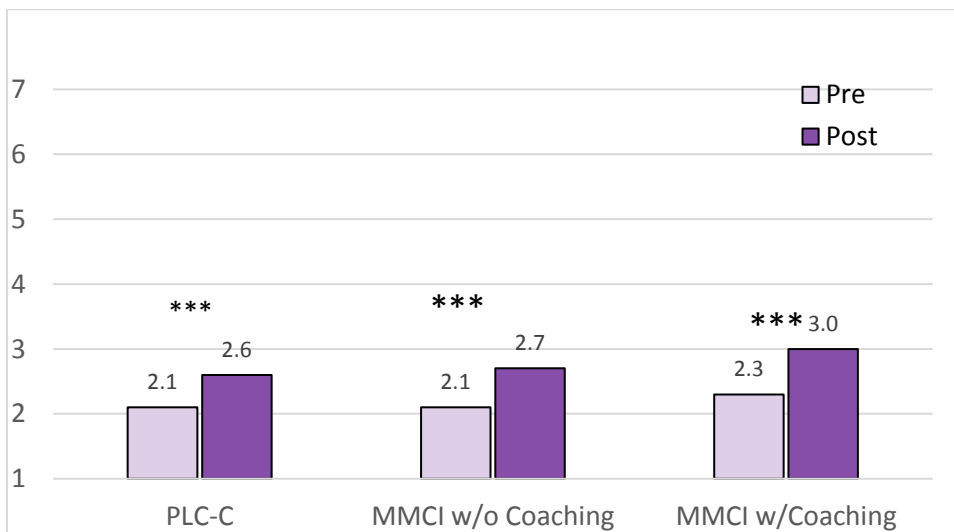
*** p < .001

Comparisons Among Domains

All three professional development models targeted the teacher-child interactions as measured by the three CLASS domains, but placed special emphasis on improving teachers' Instructional Support skills. Analyses that compared gains in the three domains, after combining the three professional development models, revealed that gains in Instructional Support were indeed greater than gains in Emotional Support ($p < .01$) or Classroom Organization ($p < .05$). The gains in Emotional Support and Classroom Organization were not significantly different. Likewise, the effect size[4] was larger for gains in Instructional Support ($d = .82$) than for gains in Classroom Organization or Emotional Support ($d = .56$ for both). As a reference, researchers often consider an effect size of .50 as *moderate* and an effect size of .80 as *large* (Cohen, 1992).

Comparisons with Georgia's Pre-K Professional Development Project Control Group

The current study did not include random assignment or a control or comparison group. Over three school years (2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14), DECAL, FPG and Child Trends had worked together on a randomized control trial evaluating MMCI and MTP (Early et al., 2014), called Georgia's Pre-K Professional Development Evaluation. That study included 160 teachers who were randomly selected for participation and randomly assigned to serve as a control group. CLASS observations were conducted at the start and end of the academic year in which each teacher participated. Control group teachers took part in Georgia's standard professional development opportunities. [5]

To evaluate how end-of-year CLASS scores for teachers in the three CLASS-based professional development models compared to what we might expect if they had not received this targeted professional development, the posttest scores of the teachers in the three conditions were compared to the posttest scores of the control group from this other study, after accounting for their pretest scores.

Findings indicated that all three professional development groups had significantly higher posttest scores on Emotional Support and Classroom Organization than the other study's control group, after accounting for their pretest score. Only the MMCI w/Coaching group scored significantly higher on Instructional Support when compared to the control group.

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[4] Effect sizes was calculated from the t-values, using the following formula: Cohen's d = 2t /√(df)
[5] See Early et al., 2014 for more details about the professional development received by control group teachers in Georgia's Professional Development Project.

Figure 4. Pre/Post Averages Compared to Control Group from Earlier Study
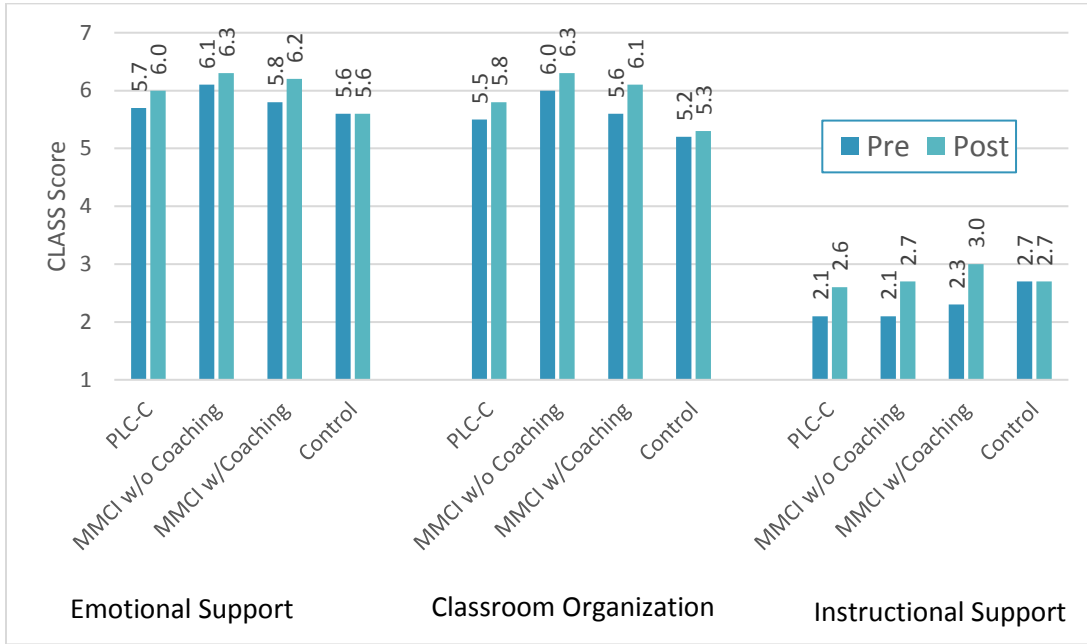
Pre-K Teacher Questionnaires

As noted earlier, all 94 Pre-K lead teachers who were taking part in the professional development were asked to complete an on-line questionnaire, and 77 responded (82%). This section describes their answers.

Beliefs About Intentional Teaching

The CLASS framework strongly endorses the ideas that teaching should be intentional, even at the preschool level, and that young children benefit from planned, purposeful instruction. To test the extent to which teachers endorsed the value of intentional teaching after participating in these CLASS-based professional development models, in the spring teachers were asked to respond to a series of statements regarding how children learn, written by Hamre and Downer (2007). An example of an item is "Young children learn best when teachers are actively involved in their play." Items were scored on a 5-point scale, ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5); higher values indicate a stronger belief in the importance of intentional teaching.

Figure 5 shows average spring scores on this scale.[6] All three groups endorsed strongly the intentional beliefs about teaching and there were no between group differences.

Figure 5. Beliefs about Intentional Teaching

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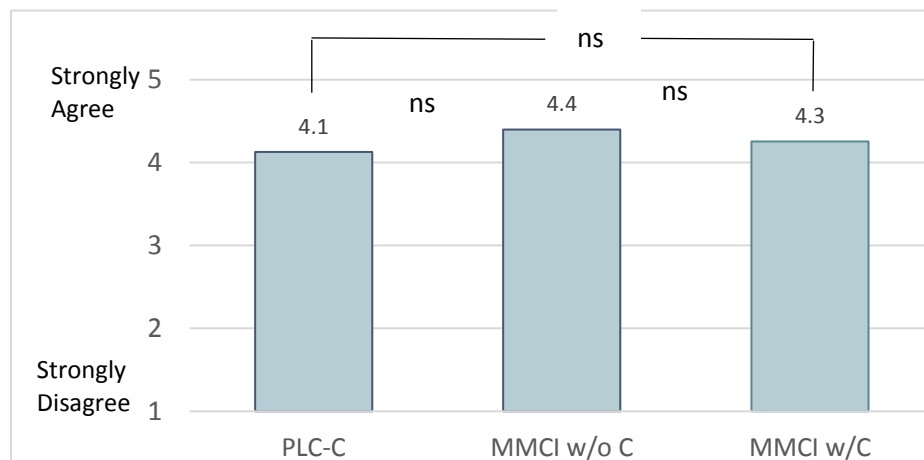
[6] The original scale included 11 items, but only eight were included in the final analyses. Three were dropped because they decreased the scale's reliability when included. All but two of the remaining eight items have been reverse scored so higher values are associated with stronger beliefs in the value of intentional teaching.

Perceived Value of the Professional Development and Relationship with Coach/Instructor

In the spring, all teachers were asked to respond to nine items regarding their perceptions of the professional development they had received that year (LoCasale-Crouch, Downer, & Hamre, 2009). Sample items included: "I feel more confident in my role as a teacher than I did before this professional development" and "This professional development stimulated my enthusiasm for further learning." Additionally, in the spring, teachers were asked to respond to five items addressing their relationship with and perceptions of their coach/instructor. A sample item reads: "The coach/instructor was enthusiastic about teaching/coaching." Responses on both scales ranged from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5).

The chart below shows the mean responses on these two scales for each group. Teachers generally found the professional development models to be valuable and had positive perceptions of their coach/instructor, with all averages above 4. There were no statistically significant differences among the three groups on either measure.

Figure 6. Perceived Value and Relationship with Coach
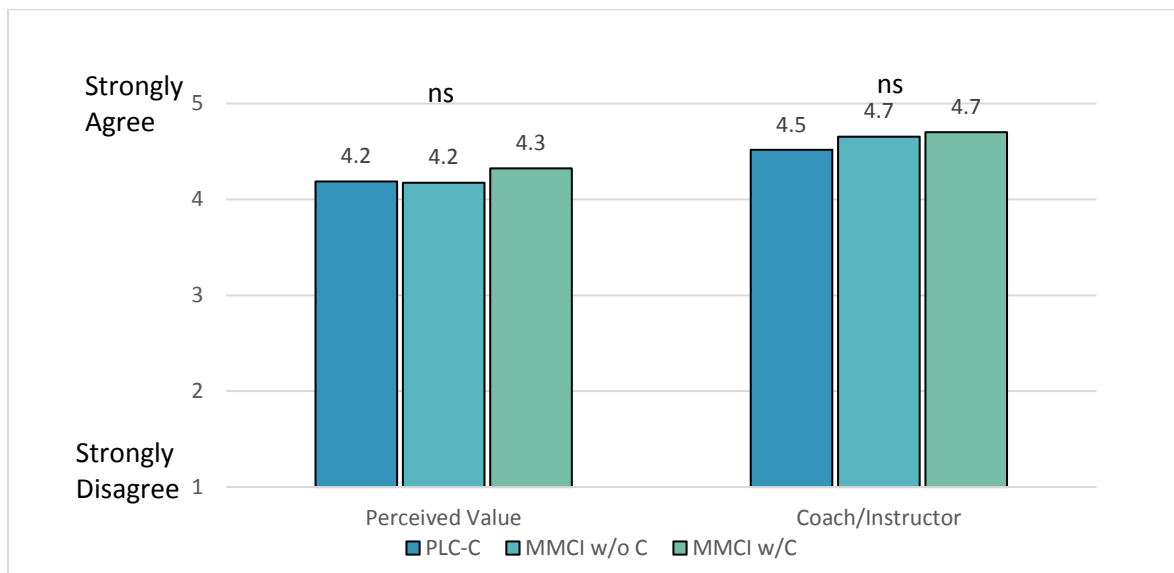
Practices and Philosophy

To better understanding teacher's perceptions of the professional development models, a new set of questions was added that listed some possible attitudes towards the supports, and teachers were asked to indicate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with each. Responses ranged from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5).

Table 3 shows the items and the mean responses, across all teachers. There were no significant between-group differences on any of the items, so we have not presented the means by professional development model. The items have been rearranged so that all the positively worded items are together, ordered from most to least strongly endorsed; followed by the negatively worded items, again ordered from the most to least strongly endorsed. On average, teachers agreed that the professional development they received is likely to lead to increased learning and fit with their values and beliefs.

They endorsed the idea that these professional development models fit with the goals and beliefs of their peers somewhat less strongly. Of the negatively worded items, they most strongly endorsed the idea that children with behavior problems make these practices unrealistic, followed by the idea that they conflict with the curriculum or other requirements.

Table 3: Practices and Philosophy

The practices and philosophy endorsed by the CLASS-related Professional Development….	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Positively worded items				
are likely to lead to increased learning among the children in my class.	4.22	0.79	1	5
fit well with my values and beliefs.	4.22	0.67	2	5
fit well with the beliefs and goals of the other pre-k teachers in my school or area.	4.01	0.81	2	5
Negatively worded items				
are unrealistic because there are a lot of children with behavior problems in my classroom.	2.23	1.12	1	5
are unrealistic because they conflict with our curriculum and other requirements.	2.00	0.91	1	5
are not supported by the parents of children in my classroom.	1.99	0.95	1	5
are at odds with the practices and philosophy endorsed by my school district and/or child care program.	1.92	0.83	1	5
conflict with the practices and philosophy endorsed by my principal/supervisor.	1.85	0.84	1	5
are not developmentally appropriate.	1.63	0.75	1	5

Change in Practice

To understand teachers' perceptions of changes in their practice and reasons that they did or did not change, a series of parallel questions was asked regarding each of the three CLASS domains. First teachers were asked the extent to which they believed their practice had changed in that domain as a result of participating in the CLASS-related PD. The response options were *not at all* (1), *very little* (2), *somewhat* (3), *a great deal* (4), and *a lot* (5). Teachers who reported that their practice had changed *not at all* or *very little* were given a series of closed ended options, plus an open ended *other* to explain why their practice had not changed. As seen in Table 4, across all three models and all three domains, a larger majority of teachers reported having changed. Over three-quarters of teachers in the PLC and MMC w/Coach groups reported changing in all three domains. Teachers in MMCI w/o coaching group were most likely to report change in Instructional Support.

Table 4: Change in Teaching and Classroom Practices

	PLC			MMCI w/o Coach			MMCI w/Coach		
	Mean	% Little	% A Lot	Mean	% Little	% A Lot	Mean	% Little	% A Lot
Emotional Support	3.41	14%	86%	2.73	36%	64%	3.52	8%	92%
Classroom Organization	2.92	24%	76%	2.64	45%	55%	3.28	20%	80%
Instructional Support	3.41	5%	95%	3.36	18%	82%	3.67	4%	96%

Note: *% Little* is the percent of teachers who reported changing *not at all* or *very little*. *% A Lot* is the percent of teachers who reported changing *somewhat*, *a great deal,* or *a lot.*

Across the three professional development models, 11 teachers indicated that they had changed their teaching or classroom practices *not at all* or *very little* with regard to Emotional Support; 18 teachers indicated they had changed *not at all* or *very little* with regard to Classroom Organization, and 5 indicated this about Instructional Support. Those teachers were asked a closed ended question about reasons they had not changed that included an *other* option. In all but one of these 34 cases, the teachers indicated it was because "I was already doing the practice endorsed." In the final case, in responding about changes in Classroom Organization, the teacher selected *other* and indicated "there was no advice given regarding classroom organization."

Teachers who responded that they had changed their teaching or classroom practices *somewhat*, *a great deal* or *a lot*, were asked an open-ended question: What factors do you think contributed most to your ability to improve. Forty-six teachers responded about improvement in Emotional Support[7] . See Appendix A for the full text of all teachers' responses, organized by theme. Typos have been corrected.

The most common theme to emerge (*n* = 18) had to do with being child focused. For example, one teacher responded "watching the videos and hearing how some comments may sound to a child and thinking about the way I communicate with my children." Another common theme was appreciation for the training and support (*n* =11), such as "Hands-on face-to-face instruction was great and helped a lot," and "Having someone else bring to my attention things I could improve upon."

Forty teachers responded about Classroom Organization and the main themes that emerged: being prepared (*n* = 14), increased knowledge of specific CLASS dimensions (*n* = 9), improved behavior management (*n* = 6), and availability of materials (*n* = 3). For instance, one teacher commented "Being prepared & organized for each day. Reminding children of our classroom rules and procedures and explaining why we have these in place. This limits down time which helps with behavior management."

Fifty teachers responded about Instructional Support. The most prevalent theme that emerged regarded improved questioning and conversations (*n* = 19), typified by comments such as "I am more involved in

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[7] These values exclude teachers who indicated *N/A* or *don't know*.

my students learning. I have become a more effective questioner. I always invite children to participate," and "Wait time/pulling information out of the students/higher thinking questions." Other themes included other specific classroom strategies (n = 10) and appreciation for training and support provided (n = 7).

Continuing the CLASS-Related PD for a Second Year

When Pre-K teachers were asked if they would like to continue to take part in the CLASS-related Professional Development next year, 29 of the 71 Pre-K teachers who answered (41%) indicated that they did not want to continue. When asked why not, almost half expressed that the professional development was either too time-consuming (n = 8) or that it took too much time away from the classroom (n = 6). For example, one teacher wrote "Unfortunately, it takes quite a bit of extra time and stress to have someone in your classroom every three weeks" and another said "I feel the class is very helpful however I did not like being out of my classroom every month - I also feel I have had sufficient training during our on-site staff development." Other answers included indicating that they had already participated for two years and felt they had learned all they could (n = 4), were retiring or leaving pre-k teaching (n = 4), and the PD being too stressful (n =2). See Appendix B for the full text of all teachers' responses, organized by theme.

Forty-two of these 71 (59%) Pre-K teachers indicated that would like to continue next year. The second part of the question asked what changes they would like to see. Eight teachers either said they would not change anything or simply commented on how much they liked the training. Among those that provided a recommendation, most common one had to do with adjustments to the training design (e.g., "I would like to see some more self-studies because class has made me a better teacher"; n = 8), followed by requesting more feedback or instruction on the CLASS (e.g., "I would like more detailed reports at the beginning and end as far as our CLASS observations"; n = 5). Appendix B presents the full text of all teachers' responses, organized by theme.

Additional Feedback

The teacher questionnaire ended with a request for additional feedback about the CLASS-related Professional Development and 35 teachers responded. The most frequent type of response (n = 21) was a positive comment about the professional development training, such as "I think this is a great course, and I feel that all teachers could benefit from this course. It helps you to reflect on what you are doing as a teacher and allows you to have another set of eyes on your teaching," and "The CPD made me think bigger. I realized areas where I could push my students a bit farther by asking thoughtful questions that require thoughtful responses-- and to keep asking." Other teachers made positive comments about the CLASS tool (n = 6) or provided a suggestion about the training (n = 5) such as "Could the CLASS professional development course perhaps provide some videos of more realistic classrooms? Classrooms that have more students and less teachers, students with special needs, students with behavior problems. I feel that it would be much easier to be organized with only 10 students in my classroom, and easier to provide children with quality feedback." Three teachers praised their consultant with comments like "My consultant is wonderful, positive, and supportive."

See Appendix C for the full text of all teachers' responses, organized by theme.

Consultant Questionnaires

The 24 consultants who provided the CLASS-based Professional Development were also asked to complete an on-line questionnaire, and all 24 responded. Most of the respondents indicated they were leading PLC (*n* =17) or MMCI (*n* = 5). The remaining two consultants indicated they were leading My Teachstone Only.

On average, they reported 7.2 years (*SD* = 6.1, *range* 2 to 25) of experience as a consultant, working to help teachers improve practice. They reported an average of 6.2 years (*SD* = 4.7, *range* 2 to 19) experience working as a consultant for DECAL. All indicted that they had had at least one college course in early childhood or child development. In terms of education, all had at least a Bachelor's degree and most (79%) had a Master's or higher.

Confidence and CLASS-Related PD Philosophy

Consultants were asked to respond to questions regarding their confidence in their understanding of the CLASS tool and ability to be an effective coach, using five items written by LoCasale-Crouch, Downer, and Hamre (2009). An example of an item on this Confidence scale reads: "I am confident teachers will change their practice as a result of working with me." Consultants responded using a five-point scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5).

Consultants reported a high level of confidence. Scores were created for each consultant that were the mean of the five items. Across consultants, the scale mean was 4.4 (*SD* = 0.4, *range* 3.8 to 5.0). Twenty-one consultants gave a 4 or 5 to all items. The remaining three gave a 3 (neutral) to some items.

Consultants were asked to rate two statements about their perceptions of the CLASS-related PD philosophy, again using a five-point scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5).

To the statement "The practices and philosophy endorsed in (professional development model) are likely to lead to increased learning among the children" the average response was 4.4 (*SD* = 0.5, *range* 4 to 5). To the statement "The practices and philosophy endorsed in (professional development model) are not developmentally appropriate" most consultants indicated strongly disagree (*n* = 15) or disagree (*n* = 7). One indicated *neutral* and one indicated *strongly agree*. The average response was 1.5 (*SD* =0.9, *range* 1 to 5).

Most and Least Improved Teachers

To understand what makes the CLASS PD more or less effective, consultants were asked first to "Think about all the teachers you worked with this year as part of (professional development model). Decide which one you believe showed the most improvement in terms of teacher-child interactions, using the CLASS related framework." Then they were asked to respond to the questions in the first column of Table 5, thinking about that teacher. A parallel set of questions (see middle column of Table 5) when thinking about the teacher who "showed the least improvement in terms of teacher-child interactions, using the CLASS- related framework." For both sets of questions, the responses ranged from *not at all true* (1) to *extremely true* (5). Their average responses appear in Table 5, arranged from highest to lowest mean score.

All of the reasons for the most improved teachers' success were rated highly. Consultants saw values as especially important, with the item about the model fitting well with the teachers values and beliefs

being the most highly rated, followed by being matched with the principal/director's practices and philosophy. On the other hand, none of the reasons provided to explain the least improved teachers' lack of change seem to fit very well. The most highly endorsed was again regarding values, this time it was the lack of fit with the teachers' values that may be interfering.

Following the closed-ended questions about the most improved teachers, consultants were asked an opened-question: "What factors do you think contributed most to this teacher's ability to improve?" Nineteen of the 24 Pre-K consultants responded. By far the most common type of response (n = 17) had to do with interest and motivation. Words like "willingness", "committed" and "open" came up in almost every answer. For example, one said "Willingness to listen, take risks, and try new ideas in the classroom" and another said "She was open and receptive to improving her practices." The full text of consultants' responses appears in Appendix D, organized by theme. Typos have been corrected.

Following the closed-ended questions about the teacher who showed the least improvement over the course of the year, consultants were asked: "What factors do you think contributed most to this teacher's lack of improvement?" Twenty of 24 Pre-K consultants responded. The teacher's low commitment or interest in changing her/his teaching practices came up most often (n = 13). Examples include "Her lack of drive, ambition, and work ethic. Just being there to draw a paycheck and insurance and to complain does not drive you to want to be a better teacher for your students" and "She felt like she knew everything already and did not really want to continue learning." The full text of consultants' responses appears in Appendix D, organized by theme. Typos have been corrected.

Table 5: Most and Least Improved Teacher

Most Improved Teacher					Least Improved Teacher				
The practices and philosophy endorsed by the (PD model)...	Mean	SD	Min	Max	The practices and philosophy endorsed by the (PD model)...	Mean	SD	Min	Max
fit well with the values and beliefs of the most improved teacher.	4.22	0.52	3	5	do not fit well with the values and beliefs of the least improved teacher.	2.43	1.24	1	5
are well matched with the practices and philosophy endorsed by the principal/director at the most improved teacher's school/center.	4.13	0.55	3	5	conflict with the practices and philosophy endorsed by the principal/director at the least improved teacher's school/center.	1.26	0.69	1	3
are consistent with the practices and philosophy endorsed by the most improved teacher's school district and/or child care program.	4.09	0.51	3	5	are at odds with the practices and philosophy endorsed by the least improved teacher's school district and/or child care program.	1.22	0.60	1	3
are feasible because they align with the curriculum and other requirements in the most improved teacher's school/center.	3.91	0.90	1	5	are unrealistic because they conflict with the curriculum and other requirements in the least improved teacher's school/center.	1.13	0.63	1	4
fit well with the beliefs and goals of the other pre-k teachers in the most improved teacher's school or area.	3.91	0.66	2	5	do not fit well with the beliefs and goals of the other pre-k teachers in the least improved teacher's school or area.	1.35	0.71	1	3
are supported by the parents of children in the most improved teacher classroom.	3.52	0.95	1	5	are not supported by the parents of children in the least improved teacher classroom.	1.39	0.58	1	3
are feasible because there are few children with behavior problems in the most improved teacher's classroom.	3.04	1.19	1	5	are unrealistic because there are a lot of children with behavior problems in the least improved teacher's classroom.	1.74	1.01	1	5

Moving Forward: CLASS-related Professional Development

When Pre-K consultants were asked if they would like to continue working with this same group of teachers next year as a part of the CLASS-related Professional Development, six of 24 Pre-K consultants indicated that they did not want to continue. When asked why, four of the six expressed that they did not feel it would be fruitful to work with the same group of teachers next year.

Fourteen of 24 Pre-K consultants indicated that they did want to continue with the same group of teachers next year. The second part of the question asked what changes they would like to see. The most common type of recommendation had to do with training design (n = 6), with suggestions such as "More hands-on activities related to videos, such as role plays and small group work." Two consultants had specific recommendations regarding the Teachstone on-line system. Four Pre-K consultants indicated that they had no recommendations for change. The full text of consultants' responses regarding to these questions appears in Appendix E, organized by theme.

Additional Feedback

Finally, the last question asked Pre-K consultants if they had any additional feedback about the CLASS-related Professional Development and 12 out of the 24 Pre-K consultants responded. The comments varied widely, from recommendations for future improvement to specific descriptions of their experiences. The full text of consultants' responses regarding to these questions appears in Appendix F.

Conclusions

Teachers in all three professional development models showed significant improvements in Instructional Support during the time they were participating in the CLASS-based professional development. The teachers in the two models with coaching (PLC-C and MMCI w/Coaching) also showed significant improvements in Emotional Support and Classroom Organization. These findings are largely similar to those from 2014-15.

The improvements in Instructional Support are important because there is some evidence that it is the domain most strongly associated with changes in children's early academic skills (Mashburn et al., 2008), and it was the primary target of all three professional development models. The fact that the teachers improved more in this targeted domain than in the other domains increases our confidence that the changes resulted from the professional development. We would expect the improvements to be comparable across domains if changes were the result of simply wanting to improve or growing familiarity with the children during the school year. Further, after accounting for pretest scores, all three CLASS-based professional development groups had higher posttest scores in Emotional Support and Classroom Organization than a group of randomly selected teachers in a control group from another study who had not received CLASS-specific professional development. The MMCI w/Coaching group also had higher posttest scores on Instructional Support than this control group from the other study. These comparisons lend further confidence to idea that changes seen in the three professional development conditions were linked to the professional development experiences.

Nonetheless, the findings must be interpreted with caution. Sites for the CLASS-Related PD project were selected for participation based on directors' interest and consultants' ability to provide the supports in their region. Thus, we cannot be certain that these same types of results would be seen if these

supports were provided on a broad scale to many teachers of various levels of commitment. Additionally, these same teachers might have shown equivalent improvements during this year if they had received DECAL's standard professional development or no professional development at all. Many Georgia's Pre-K teachers are familiar with the CLASS and the importance of Instructional Support, so motivated teachers might find ways of improving in that domain even without these professional development activities. Although the comparison with the control group from the Georgia's Pre-K Professional Development Evaluation are interesting, they too must be interpreted with caution because that control group was from another study, during a different academic year, and using different CLASS observers.

Teachers in all three conditions saw the professional development as useful and had had positive relationships with their coaches. Further, they generally felt that the training was in line with their personal goals and beliefs. Most teachers in all three professional development models reported that their practice had changed in all three CLASS domains (Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support). Almost all teachers who reported not changing indicated that they were already doing the practices endorsed by the professional development.

Coaches generally reported that the teachers who improved the most were committed to change and open to feedback. Those who changed less, according to coaches, we less committed or interested in improvement. Based on this feedback, DECAL might consider implementing strategies such as motivational interviewing (Miller & Rollnick, 2012) to prepare teachers to take full advantage of coaching and other professional development supports to enhance their practice and classroom quality. Some teachers indicated that they had difficulty implementing the practices endorsed by the CLASS-based PD because their classroom included children with especially challenging behaviors. To address this concern, DECAL might explore adding other evidence-based professional development models (e.g., Incredible Years ® Teacher Classroom Management Program, Webster-Stratton, 1994; Pyramid Model for Promoting Young Children's Social-Emotional Competence, Hemmeter, Ostrosky, & Fox, 2006) designed to provide teachers with additional strategies to address children's challenging behavior.

Provision of these professional development supports demonstrates DECAL's ongoing commitment to high-quality teacher-child interactions in Georgia's Pre-K classrooms. The fact that teachers showed improvements both during this year and during the year prior is encouraging. However, as with other efforts to improve instruction, scores in Instructional Support remain low at the end of the year. Similar findings resulted from a more tightly controlled study of MTP and MMCI published in 2014 (Early et al., 2014). Although these results are promising, continued work is needed to create and implement models that will result in all pre-k teachers engaging in high-quality interactions with their students.

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Appendix A: Full text of teachers' responses regarding factors contributing to improvement

What factors do you think contributed most to your ability to improve in <u>Emotional Support</u>?

Being child focused
Looking for ways to help the students solve the problem without solving it for them.
Making student feel as if the things they say are important
A better understanding of when and why children may need emotional support.
Encouraging children to talk/express themselves by using open ended questions/back & forth exchanges, along with feedback loops. Also being more flexible and allowing movement (allowing a child to rock or sit in a chair by choice during carpet time)
learning to stop and make the child feel important even if the subject if off target
Realizing it is okay to focus more on the interaction with the student than trying to get an anecdotal note.
Listening to the students more. Listening and watching how other teachers may deal with a student Emotional Support.
To see things from my students' perspective and think about the way I ask questions.
Encouraged me to allow the children to be more flexible with moving about the class during the day.
I learned to think from the child's point of view and try to see things as the child was seeing them.
Knowing each child's individual needs
more one on one conversations with students
Understanding the emotions of a 4-year-old child.
My students' needs
Knowing the children
the needs of the children and their learning
watching the videos and hearing how some comments may sound to a child and thinking about the way I communicate with my children
Learning how to build comfortable and supportive relationships with all my students and teaching them how to have a love for learning.
Looking at things more from child perspective
Creating a positive environment for students and being sensitive to their feelings
understanding the student better and being aware of positive/negative climate
To pay attention to clues so I can respond more effectively

Appreciation for training and support provided
The CLASS training.
The class development training
facts learned about brain development and four-year-old characteristics
The video sections and our rating of them helped me to focus on things that I could do differently and more effectively in this area
Hands-on face-to-face instruction was great and helped a lot.
I am better informed, I practiced how to become more efficient in different aspects of my teaching
Having someone else bring to my attention things I could improve upon.
Having an amazing support for teachers and staff.
The feedback that was given by the Pre-K consultant
Support and feedback from my area consultant.
Meeting with our consultant and giving us feedback.

Increased knowledge in specific CLASS dimension
Positive Climate, Teacher Sensitivity, and Regard for Student Perspectives
Just providing a more nurturing environment.
I exhibited positive climate during instruction.
Realizing the importance of regard for student perspectives.
positive climate
Close physical proximity to the students.
I made a concerted effort to make compliments very specific. This improved overall positivity in the classroom.

Other
Repeating what they said back to them and always being prepared.
understanding of parents' hardships
Demonstrations/examples/experience
Defining it and giving examples
I have high emotional support in my classroom already.
By choosing developmentally appropriate activities and using active facilitation.

What factors do you think contributed most to your ability to improve in <u>Classroom Organization</u>?

Being prepared
being more prepared and ready
Preparation is key to smoothness of class
To assist students in making the classroom their own and learning how to use the materials there you need an organized well planned out classroom.
Planning ahead
Realizing that formulating the questions that I am going to ask before an activity is very helpful.
Having support from other teachers, having support from the consultants, and having questions and lessons lined up and prepared daily that are very detailed for anyone to follow.
Being prepared & organized for each day. Reminding children of our classroom rules and procedures and explaining why we have these in place. This limits down time which helps with behavior management.
No time is wasted for the children to have down time. Having the materials prepared for the children daily during small and large group. Being prepared daily.
Making sure I am prepared for each activity each day ahead of time.
being more prepared with materials that I needed
Being more aware of transition time not being down time.
I start my day with all my materials ready. My books are ready to be read and questions about the books are on sticky notes ready to use. I have all my props ready and my music and materials for the day ready to go. I have no down time as a result of this planning and fewer behavior problems.
The emphasis on making sure that everything is ready and available for each lesson was a good reminder for me in this area
The fact that I have devoted even more time on planning in order to be better organized. Sometimes, it is hard to prepare materials ahead of time due to student behavior and limited planning time. Most preparation is done at home or after work.

Increased knowledge in specific CLASS dimension
Behavior Management and Productivity
understanding more of behavior management and productivity
It encouraged me to use those open-ended questions and feedback loops to encourage thinking in my students.
Bettering my behavior management.
Learning different teaching styles for the different kinds of learning styles within my classroom has helped with classroom organization. Also reviewing class rules and expectations with the students helped a great deal with classroom organization. I created a classroom treasure chest to reward students with positive behavior.
Classroom management
I sit on the floor regularly and truly look at the room as if I am one of the students.
It has helped me to think intentionally about instructional learning formats.
Hands on approach

Improved behavior management
Learning appropriate ways to handle behaviors in the classroom.
Clearly stating expectations for behavior
I identified specific skills in some children which helped them regulate their own behavior.
Being consistent and always reviewing the rules.
Being consistent with routines
By providing a well-ordered, low-chaos environment with scaffolding and positive adult modeling when needed.

Availability of materials
To put out more things to spark their imaginations.
Availability of materials
Available materials for students.

Other
the needs of the children
more knowledge
Advice given
Giving the students opportunities to carry on conversation.
My classroom is already very organized
The Class training and the need to organize my classroom to my difference in my classroom environment.
working longer hours
My training wasn't focused on classroom organization

What factors do you think contributed most to your ability to improve in <u>Instructional Support</u>?

Improved questioning and conversations
Asking higher order thinking questions
Asking more questions.
Wait time/pulling information out of the students/higher thinking questions
The class helped me to dig deeper, and ask more how/why/what questions.
Asking more open ended questions
Asking more open ended questions. Thinking of ways to make my students think.
Open ended questions.
Thinking about the open endedness of my questions
Always questioning pushing for more answers
I am more involved in my students learning. I have become a more effective questioner. I always invite children to participate.
thinking about using effective questioning and concept development
This area of CLASS is one in which I feel I need to grow the most. I am working hard on my questioning techniques and on my pushing children for more
I am trying to provide students with a variety of materials for learning and being more intentional with the questions I ask students.
Language modeling, feedback loops, and learning how to ask questions that help make a child think outside of the box. This promotes a deeper understanding of new concepts & vocabulary words.
Allowing the students to explain their answers
It has made me mindful of engaging in feedback loops and developing students understanding of concepts.
I take great care with richer feedback loops. Also, being much more wise and selective about books in the student's library.
Learning how to talk with children and get them thinking
By providing a language-rich environment, getting children to engage deeply with books, play with new words, and have lots of conversations.

Other Specific Strategies
Providing more hands-on learning, making things more of a full body interaction rather than a sit-down lesson.
It helped improve my use of self and parallel talk.
To follow a student's lead when teaching
Further understanding student interest.
Being more aware of the language opportunities in my classroom throughout the day
I try to give those children who need additional instructional support one-on-one time.
allowing students to interact more with each other during activities
lesson plans
Realizing different student abilities
sticking to my plans more

Appreciation for training and support provided
Being coached with new vocabulary and open ended questions
Support and feedback from my area consultant
The Class developmental training and the ways I'm implementing new ideas into my lesson plan for all my students, and how I teach and discuss daily topics with my class.
things learned in training
The focus of the training, and I also felt that I can improve in this area
Explicit examples of how to implement the practices
listening to things that the other teachers were doing in their classrooms

Other
The class
individual support of the students
Made me think of all the opportunities
We have a new curriculum, and after teaching it for the year, we see how we can enhance it to make it more student friendly.
Communication
Engaging students in a variety of lessons and activities that myself and my Georgia Pre- K consultant brainstormed.
Bringing it all the way home and by Literacy Focus
Knowing that I needed to improve and learning new ways to do so.
Linking concepts across activities.
Focusing on Concept Development, Quality of Feedback, and Language Modeling
understanding quality of feedback and language modeling
Instructional support for the students
Concept development and Language modeling contributed most
Concept development

Appendix B: Full text of teachers' responses regarding participating again next year

Would you like to continue to take part in the CLASS-related Professional Development next year? NO.

Why not?

Too time-consuming or disruptive
Unfortunately, it takes quite a bit of extra time and stress to have someone in your classroom every three weeks.
It is a lot of extra work on the teachers, lost planning time, and classroom and schedule interruptions
This is my second year participating in CLASS. I feel like the information is good but repetitive after mastering skill. Also, it is very time consuming (meeting each week).
time-consuming
It's beneficial but that's away a lot of time getting other work completed.
It's too time consuming.
While I enjoyed what I learned from participating, I felt the monthly visits to the classroom caused more of a disruption than anything else.
Very stressful to have someone in the classroom so often. On top of other things are asked of teachers. It gets more each year. A lot is asked of PREK teachers not to pay them as much or give raises for years taught. Our PREK teachers stay as late as or later than other teachers at school. We are there almost daily til 5,6, and sometimes even later. Just trying to meet all that is asked. CLASS is too much on top of our stresses. I love teaching PREK students but I can't think of a more demanding job. The prof Development was administered very well and our consultant couldn't have been any better but it is just too much. We have many school pressures as well as bright from start. Love my job, love the kids, and agreed with the philosophy, but would not care to pa (response exceeded space).

Too much time away from classroom
I feel it takes too much time away from the classroom. Maybe taking something online at my own pace would work better for me.
I don't like to be absent from the classroom. This class requires me to miss time with my school kids.
These trainings required me to be away from my classroom for too many days. I was not able to teach for 5 days, plus 2 days for the annual pre-k training. I feel like this is too much for 1 year.
I feel the class is very helpful however I did not like being out of my classroom every month - I also feel I have had sufficient training during our on-site staff development
too much time away from the classroom.
The CLASS professional development pulled me from my classroom for more than 4 professional learning days, this was in addition to 2 other state pre-k training sessions. In addition, most of the videos shown at the CLASS training were unrealistic. The classrooms had very few students and many teachers, whereas my classroom has 22 students, many with special needs and only two teachers in the classroom. The CLASS manual also mentioned taking time for ourselves in order to support emotional well-being for students in the classroom. It is hard to take care of ourselves when we do not get a 30-minute lunch break or a planning period without students. Overall, many of the expectations cannot be implemented practically.

Second year participant
I feel like I got enough information in the class that I already took. I just need time to fully implement it.
I have already participated, so I feel that it should be offered to other teachers who have not yet participated.
If the material does not change, no further training would be needed at this time.
This is my second year participating. I felt that CLASS wasn't always the main focus of discussion with my consultant since we discussed it the year prior. I feel that it would be better effective for teachers who have not been through the program or teachers new to Pre-K.

Retiring or leaving Pre-K
I am retiring this year.
I am gearing up for retirement in the next few years. I see this would be most beneficial to teachers in the first 3 to 5 years of teaching pre-k.
I will no longer be Pre-K Teacher at that site
This is my last year of teaching. I am going to retire.

Too stressful
Pre-K is a very challenging job in an unpredictable environment with children who are learning social-adaptability skills. Dealing with behavior issues and students with unidentified emotional problems with no parental support is a major issue in the lowest poverty county in the state. Numerous CLASS observations have been a learning experience. However, they have also been something EXTRA and very stressful to say the least. Furthermore, Georgia Pre-K teachers FROZEN PAY and increased class size can be overwhelming and very discouraging!
It was very stressful for me at times. Although, the feedback was always positive and good, I was very nervous.

Other
Too busy with edTPA
I am pregnant, and while I would love to continue to learn I feel that I wouldn't be able to devote my full effort to it.
I feel other teachers should take do this class. That means all teachers
It was a good experience however I would prefer a mentor type program instead of classroom observations
I have learned a lot this year, and I want to be able to focus in implementing my knowledge fully.
I want to focus on other aspects of my teaching career.

Would you like to continue to take part in the CLASS-related Professional Development next year? YES.
What changes would you like to see?

Training design recommendations
one chapter per class
A cohesive online component for teacher discussion
To study each domain in more depth- examples of good and bad in each domain.
I would like to see some more self-studies because class has made me a better teacher
Page numbers in both books. More interactions and less worksheets
No changes, I would just enjoy digging deeper in each area!!
This year, we had five sessions covering all subject areas. Next year, it would be nice to have individual sessions for each area.
more examples

More Feedback
More feedback after the CLASS observations were complete
I would like more detailed reports at the beginning and end as far as our CLASS observations.
Maybe not just tell us what we're being assessed on with class, but give ideas for how to implement better instruction. Such as providing resources (ex. Open ended questions to help with language development etc.)
I would like to understand the scoring better.
I would like specific feedback from my CLASS observations so that an instructor could work with me, and others who need similar development, on my specific areas of weakness.

Changes in time commitment
Maybe not have the two-hour observations
One session a day. Two sessions a day is a little overwhelming.
I would not like being out of my classroom for 5 days next year.
I think it should be a 2-year course not 1 year. Please change it.

Make available to more teachers
I enjoyed the course but would suggest not meeting the Monday after holidays/breaks. I thought meeting once a month with observations was a nice amount of time and kept the class flowing. I also would like to see more teachers in the class to collaborate with during the school year.
I like the format that I participated in. It didn't take away too much time, but I feel like I had strong instruction and support. I think this would be great for teachers that have been teaching in the 2-5 year range to encourage them in their teaching.
I would like more Pre-K teachers to be involved and it should at the beginning of the school year.
I think teachers new to Pre-K should have this Professional Development. Much of it was common sense, but we all need reminding.

Input about special needs children
Dealing with IEPs and behavioral issues
I would like to see more strategies for helping students with challenging behaviors and learning disabilities.

Other
More resources to use in the classroom. Teacher materials and student materials as well. Books for students, math and games.
A better variety of how the information is presented. The same old song and dance routine became very monotonous
I used my training manuals so much they fell apart. I would suggest providing sturdier training manuals that will hold up to the constant use.

Appendix C: Full text of teacher's additional feedback about the CLASS-related Professional Development

Please provide additional feedback about the CLASS-related Professional Development.

Positive comment about training
The class had good information. However, the repeated pattern of the class made it less interesting. It made the classes seem very long.
I think that it was very beneficial and very relevant.
I think this is a great course, and I feel that all teachers could benefit from this course. It helps you to reflect on what you are doing as a teacher and allows you to have another set of eyes on your teaching
It was a great course! I am thankful I was able to attend. :0) I am looking forward to next school year when I can start using the things I learned from the beginning of the year.
The professional learning sessions were very beneficial. However, the multitude of observations was too much. It is stressful to have someone watching you that often. As a teacher, you want everything to be perfect and "over the top", and if you know someone is coming to watch it puts an extra layer of stress and anxiety that should not be present. Being observed six times a year for our current TKES plan is ample time to receive feedback from administrators.
As previously stated, I think the approach to this class would greatly benefit those teachers with 2-5 years teaching experience. By that time, a teacher often understands the classroom basics, but needs a little support or coaching in some of the mechanics. This is also the time that teachers can become frustrated, and to have a positive experience such as CLASS could make a difference. It helped me as a 13-year veteran to give me new ideas and remind me of some things I used to do. It also gave me confirmation that I was correctly doing some of the things that I have been doing. It was amazing to apply the techniques suggested and watching it work with my students. It is important to keep this as a support and learning tool and not a tool for grading. This helps to tear down walls between teacher and instructor and opens up more dialogue. I think if this was based on a pass/fail situation, the teacher may not feel they can open up to their instructor or may feel intimidated. This was an extremely positive experience.
I was informational and made me think about the way I ask questions.
A great tool to rate teachers' strength and weakness. It gives great feedback on areas of improvement and what steps is needed to improve. The consultant gives good feedback and suggestions on how to improve.
I enjoyed the class. I learned a lot. [Pre-K consultant] was great. All GA Pre-K teachers should take this class.
The CPD made me think bigger. I realized areas where I could push my students a bit farther by asking thoughtful questions that require thoughtful responses-- and to keep asking.
It was a great class and I'm glad I had the opportunity to take learn new information to help me to be a better teacher.
This is my second time I have done CLASS - related Professional Development. I have enjoyed it.
I had a very positive training experience. It really did help me understand and be more aware of the way I communicate with my students. How to re-phrase questions to get the most out of my students.
The CLASS Professional Development was beneficial the first year I participated in it. I learned a lot and use the practices in my classroom. However, the second year was very repetitive. I feel like I had already mastered the skills so it leaves less room for growth. Also, it is very time consuming. Meeting each week in addition to our scheduled team meetings and faculty meetings make it hard to stay caught up on our work sampling online.

I learned a lot. I feel it benefited my students, by making me more aware of things I do and say in the classroom.
This was an amazing course on teaching children "How to think" rather than "What to think". It also helps children develop emotional security, language support, independence, and relate learning to their real world.
I learned a lot about myself and my teaching practices during these observations. It verified that I am a good teacher, I use creative ways in teaching old/new information and I make a daily difference in the lives of each of my student.
I enjoyed the information that I received from participating in the CLASS Professional Development. I felt that visiting every month might have been a bit much for this particular class this year.
The CLASS Professional Development gave me confidence in myself and my teaching abilities. It was wonderful to have my teaching skills fined tuned. Over the months of the course I grew more and more sure of my abilities as a Pre-k teacher. I enjoyed the videos and learned so much from watching other teachers' interactions with their students. In each class session I drew upon previous sessions and began to put all of the components of the course together in my brain. I have a very clear understanding of the importance of teacher/child interactions in the classroom. My instructor made me feel super comfortable. I am normally shy, but felt comfortable sharing my observations with my classmates. This was a very positive learning experience for me.
I enjoyed my time participating in the CLASS Professional Development
I got a lot out of this training. I feel more confident in my teaching and have also pinpointed areas where I can improve and I am working on those areas in my instruction. I am glad I went through this training.

Positive comment about CLASS tool
I learned a lot about Instructional Support. However, this was something extra and stressful on top of what we already have to do.
CLASS has been very instrumental to me in particular and my students in general as it has facilitated teaching and learning; and I've improved a lot in making the most in my classroom interactions.
CLASS has helped me improve a great deal in improving my skills in emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support. Improvement in all three of these areas is key to effective teaching. Participating in CLASS has allowed me to reflect on my teaching styles within my classroom and come up with new approaches for different class outcomes.
I very much enjoyed the in-depth knowledge of the CLASS tool and enjoyed being able to hear and talk with other Pre-K teachers from my community. I feel more confident in my teaching practices and am now implementing many of the new techniques I learned from the CLASS tool.
This professional development course was extremely informative and beneficial. Our consultant was very knowledgeable and encouraging. CLASS includes a wealth of information; I look forward to being able to delve deeper into each area as I go forward in teaching Pre-K students.
I agree with the CLASS tool. As a teacher, it helps me to think about ways that I can objectively and practically improve my skills. However, I teach in a high-needs school. My students often have difficulties and needs that make it challenging to improve instructional support and behavior management. I don't think they are unable to do these things, but I want to know how I can better support them.

Training recommendation
I would like to be able to read my online quizzes again. Knowing the correct answer helps me know at what I am watching. This wouldn't change my score, but this would help me learn.
I feel that this professional development should be 1-2 years max. I feel that a refresher course every 3 years would be appropriate. I believe that it would be beneficial for new teachers or teachers who have not had the professional development yet. Having done this for 2 years in a row, I feel that I did not get as much pilot this experience as I was hoping to at the beginning of the year.
I think the course should span over a 2-year period to truly see the changes and growth from the class professional development.
It was helpful; I would suggest to include more technology based support for the instructional part of the training, more videos and interactive learning materials.
Could the CLASS professional development course perhaps provide some videos of more realistic classrooms? Classrooms that have more students and less teachers, students with special needs, students with behavior problems. I feel that it would be much easier to be organized with only 10 students in my classroom, and easier to provide children with quality feedback.

Positive comment about consultant
My consultant is wonderful, positive, and supportive.
I enjoyed it! [Pre-K consultant] truly is an amazing consultant and instructor.
Instructors; [both Pre-K consultants] were amazing. They believed in what they taught and could back it up with knowledge about preschoolers.

Appendix D: Full text of consultants' responses regarding factors contributing to teachers' improvement and lack of improvement.

What factors do you think contributed most to this teacher's ability to improve?

Interest in improving teaching practices
Willingness to learn and change current practices
Willingness and readiness to learn new practices
She was open and receptive to improving her practices.
her willingness to embrace new knowledge and her willingness to implement the strategies
The teacher was committed to making improvements in her practices. She was willing to step out of her comfort zone and try new ideas. When she saw different results she was excited and wanted to know more.
first year teacher - open to suggestions and willingness to improve her teaching strategies
The most improved teacher was motivated and eager to improve her teaching practices. She was willing to accept feedback and make adjustments based on feedback. She was ready to learn about new approaches to interacting with children. The teacher and I also developed a positive working relationship, which helped her to be an active participant in this process.
Her willingness to be open-minded and her desire to continue learning
She was open to learning new information. She is a second-year teacher, and is relatively new to GA Pre-K, therefore, was open to learning new ways to teach. She is highly motivated (part of her personality) and loves her job. She also had a fantastic class this year, and therefore challenging behaviors did not hinder her ability to teach and try suggested strategies.
Her desire to make life changes in her students and herself. To see the very best in everyone and to be the very best.
Establishing and maintaining an open mind to new ideas and strategies for making connections with the children and their development. Opportunities to utilize the presented information in her own classroom also greatly benefited this teacher in addition to watching the recorded teachers' videos.
Her willingness to try new things!
Willingness to listen, take risks, and try new ideas in the classroom.
Very open and receptive; understood the philosophy
She had "buy in" and intentionally attempted to incorporate the behaviors shared.
Her desire to improve teaching practices and hunger for learning new information.
A willingness and desire to learn and adopt newly learned information into practice

Other
Focus on promoting meaningful interactions with students
The teacher did not so very much interest in the PLC project, however she participated as it was a requirement by her employer and was required to increase her scores in CLASS.

What factors do you think contributed most to this teacher's lack of improvement?

Low commitment or interest
She is not as intentional with her practices as the others were
Her lack of drive, ambition, and work ethic. Just being there to draw a paycheck and insurance and to complain does not drive you to want to be a better teacher for your students.
Not comfortable embracing new practices
The teacher showed little understanding of CLASS. Also, there seemed to have been a conflict with meeting employer requirements and having time to focus on the PLC. Very little participation in watching videos and reading resources to help in lacking areas.
The least improved teacher failed to follow through on assignments or prepare for observations. She simply went through the motions. She also moved from one program to another during the school year and had to make adjustments in the expectations presented by her new employer. Her focus was more on meeting the demands of the new employer than on My Teachstone.
Although this teacher and I had a positive working relationship, she was not at a readiness level that was necessary to accept feedback and make changes to her practices. Her basic understanding of pre-k guidelines and expectations hindered her ability to get the most out of the feedback sessions. There were other areas of growth that need to be addressed.
She felt like she knew everything already and did not really want to continue learning.
She had a very challenging group of students, and therefore, often found that most of her time and energy during lessons was spent dealing with classroom management issues. I learned that this teacher is not highly motivated to improve, nor does she have a desire to continue teaching Pre-K. Therefore, the desire to learn and improve really wasn't present.
Not willing to put much effort into making any changes or trying new things.
Lack of experience in taking and using suggestions from others.
Belief that it is already happening in this classroom plus lack of preparing for visits or intentionality of teaching.
This particular teacher did not put forth the amount of effort required to be successful; at times, newly learned strategies were not incorporated.
Initiative and ability

Individual teacher circumstances
Language barrier as I feel she desires the best for her students but the language barrier is a hindrance when discussing various strategies
out on medical leave for the majority of the professional development support

Other
Teacher beliefs and attitude
There was such a slight difference and I honestly don't see it as a lack of improvement but just that life maybe got in the way. All the teachers I worked with showed gains and for that I'm proud.
This teacher embraced the philosophy and practices presented in MMCI however putting those into practice in her classroom she found difficult as her assistant teacher did not subscribe to MMCI's practices and did not support the lead teacher's efforts.
Her inability to manage behaviors.
The way she currently teachers is fine

Appendix E: Full text of consultants' responses regarding working the same group next year

Would you like to continue working with this same group of teachers as part of the CLASS-related Professional Development next year? NO
Why not?

Work with same teacher would not feel fruitful
The two who made improvements have gained the knowledge they need and the one who did not make improvements is closed off to learning anything new or different so it is not a good use of my time.
I would like to work with one of the teachers that showed a great deal of enthusiasm and had a strong desire to improve her teaching and her student learning. I would choose the other teachers differently, and would base this decision on years of experience, long-term goals, and how open they are to improving.
Towards the end or the training period, it felt a bit monotonous. I'm certain there is still more they could learn, and more I could teach, but I believe time apart to learn and grow separately would be beneficial.
I believe we have done what is needed for this group; I would like to continue with another group of teachers.

Other
I would like to have the opportunity to develop relationships with other teachers in my territory.
…have decided to retire….

Would you like to continue working with this same group of teachers as part of the CLASS-related Professional Development next year? YES.
What changes would you like to see?

Training design recommendation
More hands-on activities related to videos, such as role plays and small group work
I felt like the school year was over and they were learning the best part (IS). I would like to see CD, QF, and LM integrated into earlier sessions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7.
I would like to see more teacher engagement in different activities
Some participant "buy" in. Some incentives for accomplishments (i.e. completing assignments on My Teachstone, videos, etc.). Possibly not even using My Teachstone next year. Starting earlier in the year and working with all dimensions, not just three.
I provided on-site mini observations every month through MMCI with same day feedback and individualized instruction based on that observation provided. During the face-to-face MMCI sessions, Instructional Supports strategies were modeled throughout the day. More modeling and individualized instruction would continue the involved teachers' development beyond just the MMCI product.
Maybe more videos of teaching practices and some possible activities that could be done with teachers to show specifically the focus of some of the domains?

Teachstone issues
We tried to use the comment section that follows each video. It was inconvenient for us to know when someone had posted something. I spent a lot of time checking to see if teachers had added comments, only to find there was nothing there. It would be helpful if My Teachstone could send an email to all participants when comments were posted - similar to the weekly updates we receive to let us know how much time teachers have spent in My Teachstone.
difficult to navigate - time spent on monitoring the on-line coursework, internet problems, separate emails to teachers regarding their assigned coursework

Other
The Director of the program to be a little more flexible in allowing the teachers to meet with me.
It would be ideal to work with teachers who show interest or initiative to be part of the PLC. This however doesn't always work out the best. Sometime teachers are chosen because of proximity to the Consultants home office due to the frequent number of visits. Maybe a survey can be conducted to determine a teacher's level of interest.

Appendix F: Full text of consultants' additional comments

Please provide additional feedback about the CLASS-related Professional Development.

My teachers really enjoyed the training but it was challenging for them being out of the classroom for the training (5 full days). It might be nice if the introduction/overview of CLASS was a webinar that teachers could watch in their own time. With a little quiz or some open-ended questions to check their understanding and share with the instructor.
I have had the honor to teacher MTP, PLC, as well as MMCI. MMCI and PLC have shown the best results out of the three trainings in my experience. The teachers I have worked with in all the trainings have grown but I am more supportive of MMCI as I feel l like it reaches more teachers. PLC was great but I was only able to work with two or three teachers, max. As educators, we all have the need to grow in our interactions and I am eager to reach as many as possible sooner rather than later. Once the core pieces are better understood, then we could go back and do more individual PLC training to reach the next level of growth.
Initially the two teachers I worked with were at the same site. During the year, one teacher moved to a new location. I had hoped to work with them together, but the distance made this impossible. We tried to get a dialogue going in the comment section after the videos. One teacher was very responsive. The other teacher was often unresponsive. This made it difficult to push them forward using only My Teachstone. Mid-year, I move to more of a PLC approach and started observing and meeting with teachers individually. I also posted videos individually and stopped asking them to add comments. This seemed to work much better than My Teachstone only. If I try My Teachstone only again, I will include more informal observations of teachers if possible. From my experience, My Teachstone only was not very successful.
I thought the process went well. Teachers were able to implement many of my suggested strategies, and improved overall. I had two teachers with severe challenging behaviors in their classes, and this hindered them from being able to put into practice some strategies as the bulk of their time was spent managing the children. I would like to be able to spend time (4-6 weeks) with teachers at the beginning of the PLC working on classroom management strategies (if needed) or any other areas of need, progressing later to strategies, feedback, and suggestions relating to concept development, quality of feedback, and language modeling (our focus during this PLC).
The model I elected (PLC) is the only model I have used besides the MTP and UCF. I found that I would begin the "face to face" with the video(s) I had suggested they review before each of our face to face sessions as they would not have taken the time to watch them ahead. I also found that we would have to brainstorm how the "behavior" might look in their room to get the conversations going. I found those that planned ahead were usually more successful than those that did not.
I did feel that my group started off slow and I had to think about what motivated them. These three ladies were chosen and there was no specific "buy" in. I do believe starting early in the year and doing an application and/or advertising for teachers to join this Professional Development group, gives them a reason to "want" it. Then it could outline the specifics of what is expected of them, what their coach will provide for them, and what are the outcomes. It would even be nice to give these teachers the benefit of not going to the 2-day teacher training that is required of them along with giving them incentives throughout the professional development model (i.e. book packages, classroom packages, gift cards, etc.). I also feel that it would be nice to give stipends to the consultants to purchase food, snacks, drinks, door prizes, gifts/surprises, etc.
The new Participant's Guide (bound) is difficult to utilize as it provides no capability for the teachers to add Master Coder's notes, etc. to their book as well as it begins to come unbound after prolonged use.

I think teachers would benefit from visiting other classrooms as well. Sometimes it is easier to reflect on behaviors when it is someone else. Then, teachers may be more open to seeing changes they can make in their own classroom. I do also love the video piece of MTP. I think it is very powerful for teachers to see their teaching in action. Simply going on recall of the lesson during PLC conferences sometimes allows for a skewed perception of what actually took place.

This professional development was helpful to teachers by providing an in-depth look at the CLASS tool, focusing on the Instructional Supports domain. This domain is where teachers need the most growth. Teachers were able to evaluate their current teaching practices through feedback and self-reflection. They also gained deeper knowledge of each dimension in the Instructional Support domain. The process was beneficial to me as a consultant because I was able to improve my own practices. By using the same types of interactions outlined in the CLASS tool, I was able to improve my approach to providing feedback, developing positive relationships with teachers, and using open-ended discussion to foster understanding.

I feel I will continue to improve as I work with teachers on CLASS-related Professional Development!

Enjoyed working with a small group of teachers.

I enjoyed this type of training the most; it can be adapted to more personal levels and interests of the teachers involved. They enjoyed the video library and felt open to speak up with a smaller more personal group of participants.