Middle school educators' experiences in a cross-institutional professional development model for enhancing writing instruction

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper explores a five-year case example of two educators engaged in practice-based professional development (PBPD) for the Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) model in a middle school. It examines the transformative effects and challenges of improving writing instruction, the activities involved and alternative PBPD delivery methods. Highlighting a collaborative effort between an institute of higher education (IHE), a middle school and ThinkSRSD, a PBPD for SRSD developer, the example underscores the long-term benefits and innovative insights into engaging with PBPD for SRSD over multiple years.

Design/methodology/approach – The case involves analyzing survey data collected over five years. These surveys, which included specific SRSD-related queries and open-ended questions, were instrumental in assessing the evolution of the educators' perceptions regarding SRSD and their engagement with PBPD. Additionally, the paper details PBPD activities as documented in a research journal, providing a comprehensive account of the developmental process.

Findings – Through a cross-institutional partnership, two middle school general educators participated in PBPD for SRSD for 30 h across five years. Their engagement with PBPD progressed from initial introduction

NAPDS nine essentials addressed:

Essential 3: Professional Learning and Leading: A PDS is a context for continuous professional learning and leading for all participants, guided by need and a spirit and practice of inquiry.

Essential 9: Resources and Recognition: A PDS provides dedicated and shared resources and establishes traditions to recognize, enhance, celebrate and sustain the work of partners and the partnership.

and implementation to facilitating PBPD for SRSD among peers and at the national level. Over time, the most consistently enacted SRSD action was "memorize it," while actions such as "discuss it," "support it" and "independent performance" showed greater variability. Both educators consistently praised SRSD and sought continued PBPD engagement over the five years.

Originality/value – Our case example is the first five-year analysis of PBPD for SRSD among general middle school educators, highlighting the benefits and challenges of adopting evidence-based writing instruction. Our example emphasizes the need for continuous and focused professional development in areas crucial for student success, including self-regulation, prewriting strategies and techniques for fostering independent performance. Moreover, the two middle school educators' critical feedback is invaluable for refining PBPD for SRSD. This work also enriches professional development schools (PDS) literature by offering effective strategies to support middle school teachers in developing a vibrant writing community, a cornerstone for student advancement in writing.

Keywords Professional development schools, Cross-institutional collaboration, Professional development, Self-Regulated Strategy Development, SRSD, Writing instruction, Evidence-based practices

Paper type Practitioner paper

> The Self-Regulated Strategy Development model is excellent for teaching writing. It provides students with a "game plan" or a toolbox of strategies to use when they write. If implemented successfully, I think the SRSD model could help students think more positively about the writing process or written assignments/work. For teachers/administrators, the SRSD model provides structure and strategies to teach students in a logical and meaningful way/order that is flexible. . . .Implementing SRSD takes time and teachers need adequate training/commitment to effectively apply it within their curriculum in a meaningful way. It is not a "one and done" type of model and needs to be threaded throughout the curriculum and across content areas for true success. For me, the SRSD model has been empowering as it helps me not only manage my writing instruction but provide students with the necessary tools that make them more powerful writers.
>
> Ms. Burke, 7th-grade ELA Teacher

We begin our exploration of middle school general educators' experiences in cross-institutional professional development with a reflection from Ms. Burke, an experienced 7th-grade English Language Arts (ELA) educator. Ms. Burke shares her insights into two evidence-based approaches: the Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) model for teaching writing and the practice-based professional development (PBPD) approach for learning how to implement SRSD (Graham & Harris, 2018; Harris *et al.*, 2023).

SRSD is an evidence-based approach to teaching writing to students in grades 2 through 12 and is characterized by having six instructional stages (Graham & Harris, 2018; Harris *et al.*, 2008; Rogers & Graham, 2019; What Works Clearinghouse [WWC], 2022; see a more detailed description of SRSD below). SRSD is not a standalone approach but a set of specific strategies applied to an existing literacy curriculum. Teachers employ these stages iteratively as needed until students attain independent writing proficiency (Harris *et al.*, 2008). Teachers integrate the stages into lessons to advance students' understanding of the writing process, summarized by the mnemonic, POW or POWrE: Plan, Organize, Write and Say More, Revise and Edit (Laud & Patel, 2023). Teachers add mnemonics to reinforce the "Organize" component, tailoring strategies to the specific writing genre (e.g. narrative, expository and argumentative). The stages consist of (1) Develop background knowledge, (2) Discuss it, (3) Model It, (4) Memorize it, (5) Support it and (6) Independent performance. The SRSD model also emphasizes explicit instruction, the gradual removal of supports and a focus on self-regulation. Techniques to teach and reinforce self-regulation mirror the six stages and involve positive self-talk, goal setting, self-monitoring and self-reinforcement.

Much like SRSD, PBPD for SRSD is an evidence-based approach designed to help educators learn and implement the SRSD model with their students (Festas *et al.*, 2015; Harris *et al.*, 2012a, b, 2015, McKeown *et al.*, 2016, 2019). PBPD involves hands-on practice

with the SRSD strategies and tailored feedback. This approach extends beyond traditional professional development by ensuring educators continue their learning until they can effectively comprehend and employ each aspect of the SRSD model (Graham & Harris, 2018). PBPD mirrors the six instructional stages of SRSD, and it features six distinct attributes: (1) collective participation by educators from the same school who share similar needs, (2) customization to address the unique characteristics of the educators' students, (3) focus on both pedagogical and content knowledge essential for SRSD implementation, (4) active learning through methods such as reviewing exemplars and acting out lessons, (5) use of materials identical to what educators use in their classrooms and (6) feedback prior to using the methods in the classroom (Graham & Harris, 2018).

A growing body of literature has investigated PBPD for SRSD, consistently finding positive outcomes for both educators and students (Festas *et al.*, 2015; Harris *et al.*, 2012a, b, 2015; Mason *et al.*, 2017; McKeown *et al.*, 2016, 2019). To date, most of these studies focus on the elementary education setting, with a gap in research at the middle school-level, especially concerning general educators in inclusive classrooms. The work conducted by Festas *et al.* (Portuguese middle schools) and Mason *et al.* (rural middle schools) are notable exceptions. Their one-year studies were largescale, conducted at the middle school-level and involved adapted versions of PBPD for SRSD. Both research groups found their PBPD for SRSD was successful and suggested the need for future work to create more flexible approaches for delivering PBPD such as the online delivery of PBPD in the Mason *et al.* study.

Theoretical models also inform PBPD for SRSD work and influenced the design and execution of our five-year exploration. We drew on Graham's 2018 theoretical work, which utilizes a social/contextual and cognitive perspective to identify the crucial components of a "writing community." This analysis, further elaborated in Graham and Harris (2018), highlights the need to understand several factors hypothesized to influence the effective deployment of SRSD and PBPD. Notably, they describe the writing community as a key factor. Graham's "Writers in Community" model offers a blueprint for understanding how communities may differ in their ability to utilize tools and engage in continuous practices effectively. Although Graham and Harris (2018) discuss the model in the context of a PBPD study conducted by Harris *et al.* (2012b), there remains a need for a more nuanced conceptualization of how communities, especially those spanning multiple institutions, can be established and maintained over time.

Our work also draws on insights from professional development research within professional development schools (PDS). Defined by the National Association for Professional Development School (NAPDS, 2021) essentials, these schools offer distinctive opportunities for collaborative initiatives. There are numerous instances of school–university partnerships engaging in best practices for continuous professional learning (Essential 3) and utilizing shared resources to augment the partnership's work (Essential 9). While the focus on enhancing instructional practices is widespread, specific attention to writing instruction has been limited, particularly at the middle school-level. Notably, research at the elementary-level (e.g. Catelli, 2017; Knight *et al.*, 2000) has made contributions to the field. However, the distinct needs and attributes of middle school settings, well documented in the literature (e.g. Bishop & Harrison, 2021), point to a gap in providing unique types of support for this particular age group.

Our case example addresses these gaps by exploring alternative approaches for delivering PBPD for SRSD in general education middle school settings and the long-term development of two educators' writing communities. Our paper is also unique because these activities occur within a PDS school with a long-standing- university–school partnership.

By examining the experiences of middle school educators engaging in five years of PBPD for SRSD, our case example aims to shed light on the potential for such professional development to enact changes in writing instruction practices. Doing so contributes to the

broader conversation about effective teacher development and instructional strategies, particularly in cross-institutional collaborations and inclusive general educational settings.

Context for our work: PDS and writing

Our work occurred at a professional development middle school located in the Midwest. Our case example explores how "community" was developed through collaborative efforts between a university and a middle school from the third to the eighth year of their ongoing PDS partnership. The PDS partnership was established on the principles of the NAPDS nine Essentials, with a particular focus on Essential 3's call for continuous professional learning and leadership as well as Essential 9's commitment to dedicated resources and recognition of the partners involved.

Why did Ms. Burke and Ms. Herricks prioritize writing for their professional development? Their decision to focus on writing instruction stemmed from the intersection of opportunities and their shared desire to delve deeper into a subject they both felt had received minimal attention during their preservice and inservice teaching experiences.

First, the opportunity presented itself. Both teachers were part of a PDS, where one of the authors served as a university-based teacher educator and mentored preservice teachers in several classrooms, including those of Ms. Burke and Ms. Herricks. Furthermore, the university-based teacher educator authored numerous papers on writing instruction, sparking discussion from Fall 2016 through Spring 2018.

Second, the evidence-based approach to teaching writing became visible when preservice teachers in Ms. Burke's classroom began implementing SRSD lessons in the Spring of 2018. Witnessing this approach prompted Ms. Burke to seek further knowledge.

Finally, the decision to focus on writing instruction arose from a recognized need. Ms. Burke and Ms. Herricks expressed that their preservice programs allocated minimal time to this critical aspect of literacy instruction. Subsequently, during their inservice careers, they independently engaged in various self-studies to improve. Both experienced ELA instructors understood the importance of writing and writing instruction. They recognized the need for additional support in employing strategies to empower themselves and their 7th-grade writers.

Ms. Burke and Ms. Herricks' beliefs regarding the importance of writing and writing instruction echo sentiments expressed by others. Being able to write well has many benefits, including promoting reflection, enhancing communication, fostering problem-solving abilities and contributing to overall personal well-being (Graham *et al.*, 2023). Despite these benefits, a concerning issue persists: many students need writing help to demonstrate the most basic writing skills (Graham & Perin, 2007; Harris *et al.*, 2015).

Nationally, the percentage of 8th and 12th graders achieving writing proficiency remains alarmingly low, with only 24% performing at the proficient-level at both grade levels (NCES, 2012). Our work, conducted in the Midwest, mirrors these issues. For example, in the 2021–2022 academic year, only 37% of students scored proficient on the ELA test, a portion of which is calculated using students' writing samples. These data underscore the urgent need for action to improve overall writing proficiency.

Nevertheless, why focus on writing instruction? Writing instruction is a dynamic and essential component of education and its success hinges on the dedicated individuals at the heart of the process: educators and students. A substantial body of research underscores the pivotal role of quality writing instruction in enhancing students' writing abilities (Hqchman & Wexler, 2017; Rogers & Graham, 2008, 2019; What Works Clearinghouse, 2022). Writing is not an innate skill that naturally progresses to proficiency without deliberate guidance and instruction. Effective writing instruction consistently impacts students' performance positively, as numerous studies indicate (Datchuk *et al.*, 2022; Rogers & Graham, 2019;

What Works Clearinghouse, 2022). Among the various writing instruction models available, the SRSD model stands out with robust empirical support across a broad spectrum of students, from elementary to high school levels, as confirmed by findings published by many different research groups and national educational databases (Rogers & Graham, 2008).

Ms. Burke and Ms. Herricks nurtured their students' writing abilities and guided them toward proficiency, creativity, effective communication and independence. However, with a decade of experience in ELA, they understood that teaching writing was a complex task. It demanded a unique skill set. Recognizing this, they saw incorporating the SRSD model into their existing practices as the solution.

Cross-institutional PBPD for SRSD: our work

Our case example outlines the components of a cross-institutionally-delivered PBPD for SRSD writing community. The focus is on the initial activities undertaken by the first cohort of participants at this PDS site. Following this introduction, we detail the participants' roles, the methodology employed to assess developmental changes and a synthesis of these changes observed over five years.

Participants

Four adult participants engaged in the five-year examination. The participants included two experienced PDS-based ELA educators: Ms. Burke and Ms. Herricks. Each educator had over 10 years of teaching experience and no prior knowledge of SRSD writing instruction. The third participant was a teacher educator from a nearby institute of higher education (IHE) with 13 years of PBPD for SRSD experience. She worked with Ms. Burke and Ms. Herricks for two years before this examination as the IHE PDS liaison. The final participant was the director of ThinkSRSD, an online PBPD for SRSD developer with over a decade of experience delivering PBPD for SRSD in multiple formats to educators nationwide. She had a working relationship with the university-based teacher educator as they had collaborated on other projects for approximately two years, but she did not know the ELA teachers at the onset of this work.

Please note. The writing community participants also included 95 consented middle school students. As the focus of this case example relates to the writing community at the teacher-level, information related to student participation is not included in this paper.

SRSD: Implementation, benefits and challenges

Part of our efforts to capture changes in Ms. Burke's and Ms. Herrick's SRSD teaching practices over time included Ms. Burke and Ms. Herricks completing one or two validated SRSD-related surveys for the first four years (see Iwai *et al.*, 2019). The validated survey, containing two sections, consisted of 29 multiple-choice questions related to specific SRSD actions and an open-ended response related to the benefits and challenges of using SRSD. The 29 questions related to SRSD implementation. They required Ms. Burke and Ms. Herricks to share the frequency they felt they were using those actions in their literacy lessons. Responses ranged from "I haven't tried this yet" (score = 0) to "I do this often" (score = 3). The average frequency scores from before PBPD for SRSD through the fourth year of implementation are provided in Table 1 and captured within our description of each year's work (see below).

The second part of the survey included opportunities for Ms. Burke and Ms. Herricks to elaborate in writing on the benefits and challenges of SRSD implementation. Both educators answered these questions on every survey.

SRSD stages	Ms. Burke's average scores						Ms. Herricks' average scores				
	$Y1^2$	$Y2^1$	$Y3^3$	$Y3^3$	$Y4^2$	$Y4^3$	$Y2^1$	$Y3^1$	$Y3^3$	$Y4^2$	$Y4^3$
Develop background knowledge	1.5	2.3	2.0	2.0	2.3	2.5	1.8	2.5	1.8	2.0	2.5
Ongoing discussions	0.3	2.3	1.8	2.3	1.8	2.0	1.0	2.8	1.8	1.5	2.8
Repeatedly model	1.4	2.4	2.9	2.4	2.4	2.7	1.4	3.0	2.6	2.9	3.0
Memorize strategies	1.7	3.0	2.5	3.0	3.0	3.0	1.3	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Scaffold supports	1.3	2.3	1.9	2.4	2.3	2.7	0.9	2.4	2.0	1.7	2.0
Independent performance	1.1	2.0	1.8	2.6	1.8	1.8	1.0	1.8	1.8	1.8	2.0

Note(s): SRSD = Self-Regulated Strategy Development; Y indicates the year. Ms. Burke's $Y1^2$ and Ms. Herricks $Y2^1$: Completed before SRSD Practice-Based Professional Development; Exponents refer to time during the school year: 1 = Fall; 2 = Winter and 3 = Spring Average Scores for SRSD stages: The 29 SRSD-related questions on surveys grouped according to SRSD's six stages: Develop Background Knowledge – 3 questions; Ongoing Discussions – 4 questions; Repeatedly Model – 7 questions; Memorize Strategies – 3 questions; Scaffold Supports – 7 questions and Independent Performance – 5 questions. Scores on survey ranged from 0 = I have not tried this yet, 1 = I have tried it, 2 = Occasionally and 3 = I do this often
Source(s): Table created by authors

Table 1.
Self-reported SRSD implementation (0–3) across six SRSD stages and years

PBPD: Engagement, benefits and challenges

Using journal notes, the university-based teacher educator documented PBPD for SRSD engagement and the benefits and challenges described during weekly meetings and classroom observations. These notes were written and stored in a secure online location. The participants confirmed the conclusions via "member checks" before sharing the information in this paper.

Evolving cross-institutional PBPD for SRSD actions. The cross-institutional approach for delivering PBPD for SRSD and building a writing community at this PDS location evolved. In this section, we describe the initial establishment of the cross-institutional writing community and changes that occurred over five years. We detail the impact of the PBPD for SRSD on each teacher's use of SRSD and provide direct quotes from the teachers to capture their impressions about the benefits and challenges of such an approach.

Year 1: Introduction and initial implementation

In the first year, after receiving Institutional Review Board (IRB) and school district approval, the university-based teacher educator introduced SRSD, facilitated collaboration between Ms. Burke and ThinkSRSD, co-developed the organization of the PBPD framework with Ms. Burke and supported her in the PBPD for SRSD.

Ms. Burke first learned about the SRSD model for writing instruction when she reviewed lessons submitted by her preservice teachers who were being mentored by the university-based teacher educator in applying SRSD to the existing literacy programs. Ms. Burke was curious and asked questions about the new approach, feeling it aligned with her school's newly established PDS model's goals. Her initial survey response in "Year 1" expressed her thoughts on SRSD:

> This is the first-time learning about the SRSD model, so I don't have many formed perceptions. However, I do want my students to take more ownership over their writing and I think the SRSD model will help student develop confidence in their writing as it seems though this model students will be provided a variety of strategies to go back to and utilize based on what they need. At present, I am most concerned about infusing the SRSD model in the middle of my class and curriculum. I want to make sure this model is manageable and beneficial for my students and for my ELA Professional Learning Community. (Ms. Burke, January 2018, survey response)

Before engaging in PBPD for SRSD, Ms. Burke utilized some stage-specific SRSD teaching actions (e.g. helping students memorize specific strategies; see Table 1). Her self-reported SRSD frequency scores were highest for the "Memorize Strategies" stage (average score: 1.5 out of 3.0) and lowest for "Ongoing Discussions" (average score: 0.3 out of 3.0).

Ms. Burke engaged in approximately 14 h of PBPD for SRSD. The university-based educator facilitated this work in meetings during Ms. Burke's prep time.

Year 2: Expansion and continued engagement
During the second year, the cross-institutional PBPD for SRSD evolved to include Ms. Herricks. Ms. Herricks' initial survey response expressed her eagerness to learn about the SRSD model. Like Ms. Burke, Ms. Herricks was also using some of the specific SRSD strategies when teaching writing before she began participating in PBPD for SRSD (see Table 1). Her self-reported SRSD frequency scores were highest for "Develop Background Knowledge" (average score: 1.8 out of 3.0) and lowest for "Scaffolded Supports" (average score: 0.3 out of 3.0).

Ms. Burke and Ms. Herricks engaged in 14 h of the PBPD for SRSD and met with the university-based teacher educator weekly during the teachers' co-planning prep meetings.

Survey comments indicated Ms. Burke had a growing number of questions related to specific SRSD topics:

> The SRSD model is excellent for teaching writing. It provides students a "game plan" or a toolbox of strategies to use when they write. If implemented successfully, I think the SRSD model could help students think more positively about the writing process or written assignments/work. For teachers/administrators, the SRSD model provides structure and strategies to teach students in a logical and meaningful way/order that is flexible. That being said, implementing SRSD takes time and teachers need adequate training/commitment to effectively apply it within their curriculum in a meaningful way. It is not a "one and done" type of model and needs to be threaded throughout the curriculum and across content areas for true success. For me, the SRSD model has been empowering as it helps me not only manage my writing instruction but provide students with the necessary tools that make them more powerful writers. (Ms. Burke, September 2019, survey response)

During the second year, Ms. Burke's self-reported SRSD frequency scores were the highest for "Memorize Strategies" (average score: 3.0 out of 3.0) and lowest for "Independent Performance" (average score: 2.0 out of 3.0).

Year 3: Adaptation and online support
In the third year, Ms. Burke and Ms. Herricks continued to deliver SRSD lessons. The university-based teacher educator provided online support due to COVID-19 and the PBPD for SRSD developer created additional instructional resources. Survey responses in the fall and spring documented the benefits and challenges of SRSD implementation.

Ms. Burke shared her experiences, emphasizing the potential of the SRSD model while acknowledging the challenges it presented:

> SRSD provides students and teachers explicit lessons/strategies to teach, utilize and build upon throughout the entire writing process. Challenges: Having the time to teach and reinforce all the strategies at the beginning of the school year, connecting writing prompts to our curriculum, & having students monitor/graph their growth and self-regulation plans. This year teaching virtually has also presented many challenges. Having students represent their written work on their iPads and through our new learning management system - CANVAS has been a new experience for us all. (Ms. Burke, October 2020, survey response)

> Benefits: SRSD and strategy-based instruction provide students with a step-by-step process and a way to remember the process. This way students can apply their learning to other content areas

beyond my class. The SRSD model also helps me organize my instruction as a writing teacher. Challenges: The SRSD model takes a lot of time to introduce. Teachers need time to learn the SRSD model prior to teaching. (Ms. Burke, April 2021, survey response)

Ms. Herricks also expressed her appreciation for SRSD, focusing on the required effort and practice.

I love using the SRSD model. It makes sense, it works and we have seen improvements in our instruction, student writing and student attitude toward writing. (Ms. Herricks, October 2020, survey response)

I love using SRSD. It has guided my instruction. I have seen students make gains. It is a long process. It does take a lot of effort, thought and practice. (Ms. Herricks, May 2021, survey response)

During the third year, Ms. Burke's self-reported SRSD frequency scores were the highest for "Memorize Strategies" (average score: 2.9–3.0 out of 3.0) and lowest for "Independent Performance" in the fall (average score: 1.8 out of 3.0) and "Develop Background Knowledge" in the spring (average score: 2.0 out 3.0).

During the third year, Herrick's self-reported SRSD frequency scores were the highest for "Memorize Strategies" (average score: 3.0 out of 3.0) and lowest for "Independent Performance" in the fall (average score: 1.8 out of 3.0) and "Develop Background Knowledge" (average scores: 2.5 out of 3.0 in the fall and 1.8 out of 3.0 in the spring), "Ongoing Discussions" (average score: 2.8 out of 3.0 in the fall and 1.8 out of 3.0 in the spring) and "Independent Performance" (average score: 1.8 out 3.0 in the fall and spring).

Year 4: Role transition and professional development
In the fourth year, Ms. Burke transitioned into a coaching role and expanded her PBPD for SRSD involvement. She began facilitating PBPD for SRSD work with the PBPD developer and the university-based teacher educator. Ms. Burke and Ms. Herricks presented updates on their cross-institutional PBPD for SRSD work at a national conference and submitted a proposal for the next year.

During the fourth year, Ms. Burke and Ms. Herricks continued to share their thoughts regarding the benefits and challenges of SRSD implementation. They acknowledged the impact of SRSD on their teaching and highlighted areas where further professional development was needed:

Thank you for introducing me to SRSD! It has made a huge impact on my work as an educator and coach. (Ms. Burke, January 2022, survey response)

How can I scale up students' goals, or create a focus for each grade level? How can I create a standards-based checklist or rubric building upon what we currently use? I want to learn more about close reading, GIST and language boxes (I still need to read the article that Dr. Rogers sent to me) (Ms. Burke, June 2022, survey response)

I enjoy using SRSD. I think I could probably use some booster PD in SRSD. (Ms. Herricks, January 2022, survey response)

Challenges: time, providing descriptive feedback for so many students in a timely fashion, student goal setting, more planning for pre-assessments and more adult help with reading, revising and editing one-on-one with students. (Ms. Herricks, June 2022, survey response)

During the fourth year, Ms. Burke's self-reported SRSD frequency scores were the highest for "Memorize Strategies" (average score: 3.0 out of 3.0) and lowest for "Ongoing Discussions" (average scores: 1.8 out of 3.0 in the winter and 2.0 out of 3.0 in the spring) and "Independent Performance" (average score: 1.8 out of 3.0).

During the fourth year, Herrick's self-reported SRSD frequency scores were the highest for "Memorize Strategies" (average score: 3.0 out of 3.0) and "Repeatedly Model" (average scores: 2.9–3.0 out of 3.0). Her lowest frequency scores were "Ongoing Discussion" (average scores: 1.5–2.8 out of 3.0), "Scaffold Supports" (1.7–2.0 out of 3.0) and "Independent Performance" (average score: 1.8–2.0 out of 3.0).

Year 5 – facilitation and national-level involvement
In the fifth year, the PBPD for SRSD work evolved as Ms. Burke and Ms. Herricks took on facilitation roles in PBPD for SRSD. Ms. Burke continued her coaching position and began facilitating PBPD for SRSD at the national-level, collaborating with the PBPD developer at ThinkSRSD.com and the university-based teacher educator on these activities. Ms. Burke and Ms. Herricks did not complete surveys during the fifth year.

Discussion and implications
In our study, we sought to understand the evolution of a writing community facilitated by the collaborative dynamics among the four adult individuals at its core. By completing this work, we offer a rich longitudinal examination of middle school ELA educators" experiences with PBPD for SRSD. We aimed to explore the immediate and sustained impact of an alternative approach for implementing PBPD for SRSD (cross-institutional, flexible and designed based on teacher input), its influence on the educators' writing instruction methods and their writing community. We also aimed to gather educator input to continue to offer suggestions for the successful implementation of PBPD for SRSD and SRSD itself. The information shared by the two educators across the five years has allowed us to contribute much to these topics.

Through this longitudinal lens, we observed the transformative effects of sustained collaboration. Our findings reveal that as Ms. Burke and Ms. Herricks navigated the SRSD process, their pedagogical practices for teaching writing changed and matured, as did their writing community, growing from one educator to a writing community beyond the school walls. This maturation is a testament to the power of a professional community in fostering lasting change in educational practices.

Over the five years, the teacher-driven, flexible and cross-institutional approach for delivering PBPD for SRSD resulted in Ms. Burke and Ms. Herricks using more SRSD strategies, although inconsistently, and taking on increasing levels of leadership and facilitation roles related to the delivery of PBPD for SRSD. Despite the challenges such as time management and the need for ongoing professional development that was not always readily available or accessible, SRSD was viewed positively for its structured approach to teaching writing and its adaptability to different teaching contexts.

This extended inquiry into the educators' journeys provide novel insights into how professional development, specifically PBPD for SRSD, can shape and refine educators' instructional strategies over an extended period. Such a comprehensive view was unprecedented in the literature and underscores the profound potential of PBPD for SRSD to effect enduring enhancements in teaching and learning within the writing domain.

Our work revealed that the PBPD for SRSD, employed over five years, did not consistently result in robust SRSD use. Based on the surveys completed by the teachers, we analyzed how their perceptions of SRSD use changed over time. Some SRSD actions immediately changed after engaging in the first PBPD for SRSD and remained consistently high (e.g. "memorize it" actions). However, both teachers used two SRSD-related actions – "discuss it" and "support it" – more sporadically. The "discuss it" actions showed variability; Ms. Burke's scores ranged from 0.3 to 2.3, then dropped to 1.8, while Ms. Herricks experienced fluctuations from 1.0 to 2.8, a drop to 1.5 and a return to 2.8.

Similarly, "support it" actions were sporadic; Ms. Burke's scores varied from 1.3 to 2.4 before slightly decreasing and Ms. Herricks' scores increased from 0.9 to 2.0, but inconsistently. These variations indicate intermittent engagement. The most challenging SRSD actions were those that relate to "independent performance." Both teachers showed minimal growth in this area; Ms. Burke's scores moved from 1.1 to a peak of 2.6 before dropping to 1.8 and Ms. Herricks saw a marginal increase from 1.0 to 2.0. The consistently lower scores suggest that either teacher never fully realized this stage.

Based on our findings, we recommend several areas for future research. First, there is a need to enhance ongoing support for teachers in employing actions associated with the following SRSD stages: "independent performance," "discuss it" and "support it." The teachers employed practices related to these stages to a lesser degree than they completed actions related to other SRSD stages. Future work should focus on developing personalized, targeted, accessible and consistent PBPD strategies to aid teachers in effectively implementing and sustaining practices in these areas.

Secondly, further studies should examine the effectiveness of PBPD for SRSD using Graham's "Writers in Community" model. This approach could illuminate how the model improves longitudinal studies of PBPD for SRSD by identifying specific enablers and barriers. Our research indicates that expanding the writer's community to include the broader middle school could enhance teacher motivation and engagement. Investigating how accessing this wider writing community impacts the implementation of challenging SRSD stages would also be valuable. This work should also include an analysis of the middle school students who participated in the writing instruction. They are also a key to the writing communities established when using PBPD for SRSD.

Thirdly, the role of technology in enhancing PBPD for SRSD warrants further exploration. Building on past studies in the rural areas (e.g. Mason *et al.*, 2017) and middle school settings (Festas *et al.*, 2015), exploring the flexible and alternative methods for delivering PBPD is crucial. Additionally, understanding how technology facilitates in-school and across-school professional networks, which in our work seemed to boost teacher motivation and engagement, is also important.

Our middle school PBPD for SRSD exploration suggests that writing community development through collaboration is not a static achievement but a continuous process that can lead to meaningful pedagogical advancements. It is the first of its kind to scrutinize these dimensions over an extended period, and our case example contributes a crucial chapter to the story of professional development related to writing instruction in middle school education.

Acknowledging the practical significance of the cross-institutional collaborative work between IHE faculty and middle school educators is crucial. Throughout our work, the middle school educators frequently expressed their gratitude, noting the substantial impact of SRSD on their professional practices (e.g. "Thank you for introducing me to SRSD! It has made a huge impact on my work as an educator and coach" – Ms. Burke, Year 5). Equally important is the benefit of continuous feedback from teachers regarding the evidence-based instructional methods. This case study illustrates a successful model for such collaborative efforts through a cross-institutional partnership.

In conclusion, our five-year case example underscores the critical need for genuine, collaborative partnerships within PDS and beyond. Establishing such alliances is pivotal for engaging more educators in vibrant communities of learning, where they can both absorb and contribute significantly to the collective understanding of effective, sustainable and evidence-based practices. This reciprocal enrichment not only heightens the sense of agency and ownership among educators but also fosters the development of innovative educational strategies that are responsive to the evolving demands of teaching and learning. Ultimately,

these partnerships pave the way for a future where the educators are not only just recipients of knowledge but also active creators and disseminators of pedagogical wisdom.

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