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### Toward Raising the Child and the Village: Analyzing the Barriers to Implementing Community-Based Curriculum in New York City High Schools

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## **ABSTRACT**

As automation increases and single-skill set jobs become non-existent, employees can no longer only possess the technical knowledge of their industry but must also be well versed in a variety of essential skills that artificial intelligence cannot acquire. It is evident from the research that the United States' traditional approach to teaching and learning has not kept up with the demands of the changing labor market because young adults are graduating from high school lacking the 21st-century skills needed for contemporary careers. High school educators can develop these skills within students by implementing community-based learning (CBL) activities into the curriculum. CBL, a form of experiential learning, provides students with opportunities to simultaneously develop academic skills, 21st-century skills, and communities. To transition from traditional learning to CBL, it is critical to understand the barriers to implementation. In this qualitative phenomenological study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 New York City public high school teachers to answer the question, what barriers prevent New York City public high school teachers from implementing community-based learning into the curriculum? This study yielded 88 unique responses, leading to 99 primary, secondary, and tertiary sets of themes. From the collected data, themes of lacking and needing support and knowledge emerged for teachers, administrators, students, community partners, and other stakeholders. Strategic planning was recommended to provide all stakeholders with the support and knowledge needed to effectively implement CBL into the curriculum.

*Keywords:* barriers to implementing community-based learning; 21st-century skills development; community as partner in the learning process; culturally responsive and relevant

TOWARD RAISING THE CHILD AND THE VILLAGE:  
ANALYZING BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTING COMMUNITY-BASED CURRICULUM IN  
NEW YORK CITY HIGH SCHOOLS

by

Ife Ngozi Akinsheye Knox Damon

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the  
Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership (Ed.D.)

School of Graduate and Professional Studies

Gwynedd Mercy University

Gwynedd Valley, Pennsylvania

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2022

Toward Raising the Child and the Village:  
Analyzing the Barriers to Implementing Community-Based Curriculum in  
New York City High Schools

We, the Dissertation Committee, certify that we have read this dissertation and that, in our judgment, it is fully adequate in scope and quality as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership.

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**DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my parents (Reginald and Claudia), my children (Isis, D'Angelo, Mia, and Desmond), my grandsons (Zyrell and Future), the Akinsheye family, my ancestors, and my future descendants.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Young adults are graduating from high school lacking the skills needed for 21st-century careers. At the high school level, national and state standards are followed with the goal of preparing students for success in college, careers, and life by emphasizing a rigorous curriculum in the areas of Mathematics and English Language Arts. However, these standards do not prioritize universal skills, like communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity, that all students will need in college, careers, and life in the 21st century and beyond. For students to be prepared for employment, high school instruction needs to create opportunities for them to develop these critical 21st-century skills.

CBL is an instructional approach that supports the development of students' academic and 21st-century skills as they learn about and improve their communities. To adequately prepare for the transformation of traditional schools into CBL environments, it is important first to understand the barriers that may prevent teachers from including community members as partners in the learning process. In this qualitative phenomenological study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 New York City (NYC) public high school teachers to answer the question, what barriers prevent New York City public high school teachers from implementing community-based learning into the curriculum?

### **Statement of the Problem**

During the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, one could find sustaining and adequate employment with basic skills and limited education; however, in the 21st century, those who enter the workforce possessing only a narrow range of skills will increasingly struggle to find sufficient employment (Chamberlain, 2019; Bevins, et al., 2012). As automation continues to expand in the 21st century, robots are replacing humans exponentially (Dizikes, 2020). As single skill set jobs are becoming extinct, employees can no longer only possess the technical knowledge of their industry but must also be well versed in a variety of cross-cutting career

competencies that artificial intelligence cannot yet procure (Deming, 2017; Harris et al., 2009; Hart Research Associates, 2015; Burkle & Cobo, 2018; National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2018; Education and Learning for the Modern World, 2019).

Employers cannot expend resources to develop these 21st-century skills within employees; therefore, to remain marketable and competitive, employees need to come in with these skill sets already developed (Bersin, 2016; Deming 2017; LaPrade et al., 2019). If employees are expected to possess these skills before entering the workforce, intentional development of these skills needs to occur at the high school level. One way high schools can develop these skills within students is through the implementation of CBL activities. CBL activities are approaches to instruction that allow students to use standards as skills to learn about and improve their communities through instructional connections, community integration, community participation, and civic action (Great Schools Partnership, 2014). When CBL activities are implemented into the curriculum, students can engage with standards while developing 21st-century skills by communicating, collaborating, thinking critically, and creating (Carlisle et al., 2017; Guo-Brennan et al., 2020; Peace, 2015; Rock, 2021; Tijmsa et al., 2020).

Too many high schools, however, are not producing a workforce that is equipped with the skills needed for jobs in the 21st century because teachers often resort to passive instruction to prepare students for high-stakes standardized assessments that concentrate on a small, specific set of standards, none of which include career-readiness competencies (Sawant & Rizvi, 2015; Great Schools Partnership, 2014). The traditional approach to teaching and learning does not provide students with adequate opportunities to develop these 21st-century skills at the high school level, causing the employment skills gap to widen even further. To support teachers with developing students' 21st-century skills through CBL, it is vital to investigate the factors that prevent teachers from extending instruction beyond the classroom.

### **Purpose and Significance of the Study**

Without knowledge of the obstacles preventing instruction from extending beyond the classroom, sole reliance on traditional instruction may continue to permeate American education. As a result, students may continue to receive instruction that limits their opportunities to utilize 21st-century skills, thus perpetuating the incompetent workforce that employers currently oppose. This research aimed to fill the gap in knowledge concerning the barriers that prevent teachers from including community members as partners in the learning process. This study examined these factors based on the experiences of teachers. Filling this gap was critical because the traditional approach to teaching and learning is not preparing the current generation for an ever-evolving 21st century; therefore, exploring why this approach to teaching and learning is still prevalent was imperative.

The results of this study have the potential to shed light on why public high school teachers are not consistently implementing CBL into the curriculum. By bringing awareness to why students are not receiving opportunities to use standards as tools to learn about and improve their communities, education decision-makers can better understand the support needed to increase the implementation of CBL in the classroom. By increasing CBL activities, students will be more engaged in their education and better equipped for a global 21st century. Whether students are going to college, other post-secondary education options, or directly into the workforce after graduating from high school, developing 21st-century skills while in high school will serve them throughout their lives.

### **Research-Guiding Question**

Answers to the following question were sought to address the purpose of the study:

What barriers prevent New York City public high school teachers from implementing community-based learning into the curriculum?

## Definitions of Key Terms

**21st-century skills.** The skills, knowledge, work habits, and character traits that are crucial to success in today's ever-evolving global society, especially in collegiate programs and contemporary careers and workplaces (Great Schools Partnership, 2014). Synonyms that were referenced in this study include *applied skills, behavioral skills, career readiness competencies, cross-curricular skills, cross-cutting career competencies, cross-disciplinary skills, human skills, interdisciplinary skills, non-cognitive skills, soft skills, technical skills, transferable skills, and transversal skills*

**Active learning.** The acquisition of knowledge or skills through the process of actively engaging in inquiry.

**Community.** A unified body of individuals with a particular attribute in common. Communities can be at the school, neighborhood, city, state, national, continental, or global level.

**Community-based learning.** A wide variety of collaborative instructional activities that connect what is being taught in schools to students' surrounding communities (Great Schools Partnership, 2014). Synonyms include *community-based instruction, community-based research, community service, service-learning, and place-based learning*

Although community-based learning comes in vast forms, there are four general approaches (Great Schools Partnership, 2014):

**Instructional connections.** Activities connecting content to students' surrounding communities occur within the school building.

**Community integration.** In addition to instructional connections, community resources are brought into the school to enhance learning.

**Community participation.** In addition to community integration, students go into the community to enhance learning.



**Citizen action.** In addition to community participation, the audience for, and potential beneficiaries of, students' work include community organizations and the general public.

**Experiential Learning.** A variety of instructional activities that allow students to learn by doing. Synonyms include *experience-based learning* and *experience-centered learning*.

**Learning.** Knowledge or skill acquired by instruction or study.

**Passive learning.** The acquisition of knowledge or skills through the process of teacher-led instruction.

**Traditional learning.** A variety of lecture and paper-based instructional activities in which students primarily take notes and demonstrate content knowledge through essays, short answers, and multiple-choice questions. Synonyms include *conventional learning*, *teacher-centered learning*, and *passive learning*.

### **Limitations, Delimitations, and Assumptions**

The factors that limited this study were geography, time, and quantity. Given the practical constraints, the number of surveyed individuals was limited to 10. Additionally, more time would have allowed a greater sample size which could have strengthened the transferability of this study. The study was delimited to individuals who have worked as educators in NYC public high school settings. Administrators, students, parents, community partners, and other education stakeholders did not participate in the study. It was assumed that the participants would understand the provided definitions and examples of CBL. It was also assumed that participants' responses were truthful and accurate representations of their experiences.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceived barriers to the implementation of CBL. To understand the problem of students graduating lacking the skills needed for modern careers and lifestyles, this chapter provides an overview of previous literature on the topics of education, experience, and preparedness. The literature review begins with an exploration of the relationship between workforce needs and skills development in America over time. Next, the theoretical framework, experience-based learning, will be discussed, along with an analysis of the difference between traditional and experiential approaches to skills development. The literature about CBL, its benefits, and its barriers will also be analyzed in this section. Finally, this chapter will conclude with a conceptual framework that demonstrates that barriers to implementing CBL need to be removed to support the development of high school students' 21st-century skill sets.

### **Workforce Needs and Skills Development in American Education over Time**

American educational institutions have always tried to prepare students for market and societal demands. However, to understand why educational institutions need to change to meet the current demands of an evolving global 21st century, it is imperative to conduct a historical analysis of the relationship between workforce needs and skills development in America. By analyzing these significant relationships, the role traditional instruction plays in the disconnect between skills acquisition and workforce needs will demonstrate the current need for innovative approaches to teaching and learning like CBL.

#### ***Agricultural Era (18th and 19th Centuries)***

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the decreasing power of Britain in North America allowed for the autonomous development of an independent economy (Post, 2009). However, this economy was primitive in many relations compared to the economy of the modern-day USA. It was dominated

by colonial merchants and planters who used enslaved Blacks as a free workforce (Post, 2009). The primary source of income was the land, which was used to grow sugarcane, cotton, grains, tobacco, etc. A large proportion of the population also had farm animals, and the surplus of meat provided a steady income to households. Economic growth, which is always associated with increasing skills demands, was severely hampered by the War for Independence (Lindert & Williamson, 2012). Nevertheless, the economy was growing slowly but steadily during this period as the settlers moved westward and built new infrastructure, such as roads, cities, railroads, etc.

Over time, the list of occupations expanded. According to Lindert and Williamson (2012), around 1774, the following occupations were mainly represented in the labor market: “officials, titled, and professionals; big city merchants and shopkeepers; small town and rural merchants and shopkeepers; skilled artisans in manufacturing; skilled in the building trades; farmers (renters, sharecroppers and owner-operators); male menial laborers; and female menial laborers” (p. 5). As seen from this list, the range of skills needed to survive at that time was relatively low and limited to technical skills needed to perform manual labor or administrative work. Farmers, artisans, and wage laborers required only technical skills to earn money and survive; therefore, soft skills were not part of education and training for those few who gained those technical skills in specialized educational institutions.

From the earliest years of American settlement, teaching essential skills has been a significant concern. Colonists established local varieties of free and fee schools, which varied depending on community characteristics, population, and other local factors (Cremin, 1970). Leaders felt the urgency to teach children reading and writing, but these skills were mainly taught to boys, who were the primary beneficiaries of the expanding system of grammar schools throughout the colonies. However, formal education was a private matter for a long time, and educational programs lacked consistency and structure (Urban & Wagoner, 2000). The

haphazard nature of skills development at that time was threatening the health and survival of the nation, which desperately needed skilled workers to develop.

In 1779, Thomas Jefferson proposed *A Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge* (Brooks & Brooks, 2015). The politician called for the provision of basic education for the general population (excluding free and enslaved Blacks) and public support for secondary schools and scholarships for the most high-performing students (Brooks & Brooks, 2015). It was recognized that Americans should be taught basic literacy and computational skills to enable them to manage their own affairs (Education Encyclopedia State University [EESU], 2021). In addition, Jefferson argued that civic literacy should also be taught to develop children's moral and civic virtues and teach them their rights and responsibilities (Brooks & Brooks, 2015). It was widely recognized that by providing education to the masses, the government would contribute to social stability, prosperity, high moral standards, and nation-building efforts.

In the 1830s, the common school movement gained prominence in the United States (Segall & Wilson, 2004). This movement, which Horace Mann initiated, is considered the beginning of public schooling in the country (Marshall, 2012). The goal was to promote nonsectarian Christian moral values and develop citizens able to participate in a democracy (Brooks & Brooks, 2015). The proponents of the movement argued for the necessity of teaching writing, reading, history, arithmetic, geography, handwriting, grammar, and physical health (Segall & Wilson, 2004). This mission, also referred to as the Protestant-Republican Ideology, was later adopted by many states (Marshall, 2012).

Skills development remained modest despite the ambitious plans and suggestions in the Agricultural Era. Schools were run by private headmasters and had no unified curriculum (EESU, 2021). The educational requirements for work and adult life in general for most people were low, regardless of citizens' background. Skills and knowledge were mostly gained through hard labor in the household or apprenticeship. For a long time, the market realities did not require more from the citizens, as the basic skills they gained were enough (EESU, 2021). Most

children transitioned into adulthood at an early age with minimal skills needed to earn a living. Boys were often sent to apprentice in a trade or expected to help their families on the land, while girls engaged in domestic work (Shuman, 2017). All children, except those of affluent merchants and Southern plantation owners, were expected to move to adulthood with at least minimal skills for gainful employment, but these skills were mainly gained in practice or through informal training. Unfortunately, there are no statistical data on independent adulthood that would allow evaluating the effectiveness of the skills developed during this period.

### ***Industrial Era (19th and 20th Centuries)***

During the Industrial Era, the labor market requirements changed, and so did skills development. It was a time of fast industrial growth characterized by the emergence of machines that replaced manual labor. A new nationwide network of railways connected the American cities, enabling faster and more efficient trade and business (Rosenbloom, 2008). New factories needed thousands of trained workers who could perform the assigned job in the production process. The speed and nature of work thus changed considerably, meaning the workers needed new skills and knowledge to succeed in the industrialized economy (Rosenbloom, 2008). Innovations, in turn, further promoted economic growth and required trained and well-educated scientists and engineers able to develop new industrial machines (Voskuhl, 2016). Given that unskilled laborers received meager wages, barely enough to survive, gaining professional skills became extremely important during that time.

Despite the increasing skills demands, institutions for training and skill acquisition remained limited for a long time, and school attendance was still suboptimal in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Children learned on the job as helpers or apprentices and rarely gained formal education before entering the labor market as independent workers (Rosenbloom, 2008). Non-technical knowledge and skills such as reading, writing, etc., were provided in schools, but these were not educating all citizens. According to the estimate provided by Hunt and Hunter

(2012), in 1870, only 75% of children ages five to 17 attended public primary and secondary schools. The average number of days students typically spent at school was about 78, which means they had minimal opportunity to gain in-depth knowledge of academic skills (Hunt & Hunter, 2012).

Tyack (1974) provided a good description of the skills developed in this period. According to this author, schooling was only an insignificant part of a child's overall educational experience because he

[...] acquired his values and skills from his family and from neighbors of all ages and conditions. The major vocational curriculum was work on the farm or in the craftsman's shop or the corner store; civic and moral instruction came mostly in church or home around the village where people met to gossip or talk politics. A child growing in such a community could see work-family-religion-recreation-school as an organically related system of human relationship (p. 15).

This quote vividly shows that even in the Industrial Era, skills development was mostly and home- and community-based (Hunt & Hunter, 2012).

At the same time, the Industrial Era eventually promoted changes in this system of skills development that prepared children for adulthood for centuries (Carl, 2009). Factory owners needed docile, agreeable, efficient workers who would show up on time every day and follow managers' instructions (Schrager, 2011). These workers were required to be compliant and literate, operate machines, and work as a group. Adam Smith, an 18th-century economist, further explained the connection between the industrial revolution and education, claiming that the more instructed people are, "the less liable they are to the delusions of enthusiasm and superstition" (Kandel, 1933, p. 51). He also maintained that "instructed and intelligent people, besides, are always more decent and orderly than an ignorant and stupid one" (Kandel, 1933, p. 51). Thus, with the development of industry, support for public education increased, leading to

the fundamental transformation of schooling from the limited provision of a narrow list of skills into widespread and complex educational systems that sought to meet the increasing demand of the labor market (Katz, 1987).

This relationship between industrialization and education was also expressed by Vander Ark et al. (2020), who stated,

The impulse to expand access to education in the mid-19th century began the process of industrialization of learning. Knowledge was the asset possessed by teachers and delivered to students. Instead of learning in the community, education became a formal system delivered to age cohorts that, like industrial products, were processed in batches through a standardized system. The community became less relevant as the industrial model of education emerged (p. 10).

While most scholars see a clear connection between industrialization and educational changes, some authors question the pervasive role of the labor market demands in this process. For example, Meyer et al. (1979) argued that the spread of public education is attributed to nation-building social movements that have both political and religious roots.

Although the causes of the educational revolution in the United States are a topic for further research, it is undeniable that public schooling changed skills development. The most significant change concerned the accessibility of education and enrollment rates. For example, in 1830, approximately 55% of children aged 5 to 14 were enrolled in public schools, and in 1870, the proportion of children attending schools increased to 78% (Center on Education Policy, 2020). However, school education in this period was, for most children, limited to elementary and middle school education. High school attendance remained very low until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1910, only 14% of adult Americans aged 25 and older had finished high school (Center on Education Policy, 2020). Black children were able to be educated during this era; however, their education was racially segregated and limited. Regarding the best educational

approach for Black people to take to secure economic well-being, the two most respected black men of the time, Washington and Dubois, differed on the topic. Washington (1901) advocated for focusing on developing vocational skills, while Dubois (1903) insisted that academic skills would end the second-class citizen treatment Black people experienced.

Assembling the disaggregated data on how educational institutions looked at that time is a challenge, as they varied in size, population coverage, skills taught, and other characteristics (Goldin & Katz, 1999). The so-called “common schools” taught children between the ages of six and seven to 14 and 15. Schools were small and often occupied one room; in most cases, there was only one teacher who employed a teacher-centered, passive learning model. Such schools were primarily located in rural areas (Goldin & Katz, 1999). Villages, towns, and cities also had graded elementary schools. Secondary or high schools educated adolescents from ages 9 to 18 and provided basic reading, writing, and arithmetic skills. In junior high schools, students were also provided with some practical training in a shop or home economics, motivating more children to get a diploma (Goldin & Katz, 1999).

Tertiary education was extensively promoted through the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862. This law granted federal land to the states that established and supported at least one college. The main requirement for these colleges was that, besides other classical and scientific studies, they should include disciplines related to agriculture and mechanical arts (Goldin & Katz, 1999). Such colleges were intended to strengthen the declining agrarian values and teach farmers ways to prosper through productive work. Male students attending these institutions were expected to build character by performing agricultural labor (Dubofsky, 2013). By 1875, this labor requirement was removed from the curriculum, but students were provided with military training that was helpful for their physical and moral development. This college system reflected the increasing demands of the American economy, as it trained industrial engineers and agricultural scientists that led the revolution in business, government, and industrial



development from 1880 to 1919 (Goldin & Katz, 1999). Thus, during the Industrial era, education became more structured and accessible.

Although many children still learned the necessary technical skills through hands-on work and practice, schools and colleges were increasingly focused on delivering market-relevant skills. This era is marked by a clear understanding of the need to train competent and knowledgeable professionals who could perform the work and meet the organizational requirements (Kandel, 1933). There is a lack of data on the quality of education at that time, making it challenging to determine how many children were sufficiently prepared to move to adulthood after finishing formal and informal education.

### ***Information Era (20th and 21st Centuries)***

The Information Era, also known as the Technological Era, Computer Age, Digital Age, or New Media Age, has brought unprecedented social and economic changes. Technology makes the world very difficult to navigate, as people struggle to keep up with the market demands and emerging professions (Bi, 2019). As technology becomes pervasive, people need advanced technical skills to be able to use them in their personal and professional life (Bi, 2019; Jackman et al., 2021). These include but are not limited to digital literacy and skills in complex machines, hardware, and software management (Van Laar et al., 2020). At the same time, the Information Age requires advanced soft skills for collaboration, problem-solving, information literacy, independent learning, and creative and critical thinking (Doherty et al., 2005; Eisenberg, 2008). Twenty-first-century employers search for people who possess both technical and soft skills and can learn fast to adjust to the evolving work requirements (Gouda, 2020).

The list of skills that young adults should possess is long. It includes cognitive skills (e.g., critical thinking and problem-solving), interpersonal skills (communication, teamwork, cultural sensitivity, etc.), and intrapersonal skills (time management, self-management, independent learning, self-regulation, adaptability, and many others) (National Academy of Sciences, 2021).

Partnership for 21st-Century Skills (P21), the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), and the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) agreed that 21st-century skills include information and technology use, learning and innovation (e.g., creativity, communication, collaboration, and critical thinking), and life and career skills (Batelle for Kids, 2019; Ball et al., 2016). Teaching these diverse skills and competencies requires an enhanced curriculum and advanced teaching practices (Vander Ark et al., 2020).

**Skills Gap.** In many ways, the changes made in the educational sector contributed to the rapid expansion of skilled labor in the United States (Cappelli, 2015). However, there are still many challenges that the American educational system should address to meet the demands of the Information Age. Policymakers stress that education should develop the knowledge and skills students will need for technical, professional, and managerial positions (Brint & Clotfelter, 2016), but there seems to be a significant gap. An intense school curriculum primarily focused on core subjects leaves little time for students to develop life-long skills such as communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity, which are useful in all industries and professions (Lujan & DiCarlo, 2006). In addition, technical education does not suffice, as students need soft skills to perform their work duties effectively. Chamberlain (2019) noted that contrary to common belief, technical careers also demand excellent leadership skills, productivity, problem-solving, and collaborative teamwork. People trained in technical professions work in an equally complex and challenging environment as any other profession, yet they do not receive adequate education and training (Chamberlain, 2019).

Students themselves doubt whether they are adequately prepared for adulthood and employment. For example, a study by Rayner and Papakonstantinou (2015) found that students expressed concerns about their future employability, which may be due to the fears of not possessing enough skills. Interestingly, another study found that while students are generally positive about their career readiness, employers disagree with them, arguing that they are less

prepared than they think (Hart Research Associates, 2015). However, both studies focused on students whose experiences and perceptions may differ from those of teachers.

Another problem with American high schools is that they seem to fail in preparing students for colleges and universities. Morrison (2019) insisted that the traditional education system is broken because it focuses on theoretical knowledge rather than skill-based education. Similarly, Moore et al. (2010) argued that the school's focus on academic skills and knowledge is insufficient, as students also need other skills and need to be emotionally ready for higher academic demands. Moreover, Leeds and Mokher (2019) argued that although most first-year high school students (90%) plan to pursue post-secondary education, many are unprepared to do so. Moreover, they are unaware of the soft skills needed for college-level work, which means that after graduating from high school, they may risk facing significant challenges in continuing their education (Leeds & Mokher, 2019).

Furthermore, critics of the current educational system in the United States argue that it fails to prepare students for adulthood. According to Serdyukov (2017), despite the successes related to attendance, academic research, etc., there is not much improvement in how American students are prepared for life and work. Spangehl and Hoffman (2012) maintained that American education failed to use technological innovations that could increase instructional capacity and effectiveness. Some experts even claimed that colleges focus too much on teaching professional skills, resulting in students' losing their spirit of exploration and search for purpose (Mercurio, 2016). When technology brings sudden and significant changes in the Information age, it becomes crucial to anticipate employers' needs. Addressing short-term skills needs and unwillingness to accept distant changes in society and economy may have long-term repercussions (Serdyukov, 2017).

The literature vividly shows a gap between the skills needed in the American workforce and the skills graduates currently possess. This shortage of skilled workers has already negatively affected businesses. The data provided by the Department of Labor shows that there

were 7.6 million unfilled jobs in 2019, but only 6.5 million Americans were looking for a job that year (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021). Additionally, the World Economic Forum (2020 & 2021) forecasted that 50% of employees would need upskilling and reskilling due to the increased automation of jobs. Moreover, they asserted that the COVID-19 pandemic aggravated the problem (World Economic Forum, 2021). Additionally, Craig (2019) specified that the most significant gaps are reported in digital skills and soft skills (teamwork, communication, organization, creativity, punctuality, and adaptability) and added that colleges and universities perpetuate this problem. Furthermore, 92% of American executives think that employees are not skilled enough, almost half (45%) believed that this skills gap limits their companies' growth opportunities, and a third maintained that company profit and product development are also suffering due to this problem ("The American Skills Gap is Real," 2016). Given the mentioned challenges, it is crucial to modify the American educational system to make it more efficient at preparing students to possess extensive 21st-century skills.

### **Theoretical Framework: Experience-Based Learning**

To determine a proper approach toward curriculum development and its ability to facilitate the acquisition of 21st-century skills at the school level, a literature review of a suitable theoretical framework is imperative. This theoretical review helps organize and contextualize information that applies to CBL and provides a meaningful theoretical underpinning to the study. This section includes a discussion about the concept of experiential learning and the benefits of this approach to teaching and learning compared to more traditional methods.

#### ***Experience-Based Learning Theories***

**Experiential Learning.** Historically, experience has been recognized as fundamental to the learning process. In ancient times, noted Greek philosopher and polymath, Aristotle, maintained that knowledge and truth are meaningless without experience (Andersen et al., 2000). Aristotle et al. (2009) asserted, "even some who are without knowledge- those who have

experience, among others- are more skilled in acting than are others who do have knowledge" (p. 17). As a fundamental process of learning, Aristotle observed that wisdom and prudence, two of the highest human and, therefore, social virtues, could only be obtained by a person through experience (Aristotle et al., 2009).

In the 17th century, John Locke further developed this idea by arguing that human knowledge originates from experience, while in the 19th century, John Stuart Mill promoted the idea of learning a foreign language by being immersed in the country where it is spoken (Andresen et al., 2000). The interconnection between knowledge and experience was further examined by John Dewey (1916), Maria Montessori (Montessori & George, 1912), Kurt Hahn (Veevers & Allison, 2011), A.S. Neill (Neil & Fromm, 1960), and other 20th-century scholars. An examination of American education and skills development history shows that experience has always been prioritized, particularly in the Agricultural and Industrial eras, when practical skills were a prerequisite for employment. Today, as educators re-discover the value of practical experiences as a contributor to 21st-century skills, experience-based learning moves to the forefront of educational research and pedagogy (Smink & Schargel, 2013; Holubova, 2008; Albanese et al., 2019). Therefore, its overall value and relevance for this study are unquestionable.

Experience-based learning is based on a list of principles and activities, which were well-described by John Dewey. According to this scholar, education is not a mere accumulation of knowledge but a more complex, action-based process of developing learners' judgment (Dewey, 1938). Dewey argued that true knowledge is developed when students apply critical thinking and decision-making to address real-life problems, which are the skills necessary for participatory democracy (Dewey, 1916; Dewey, 1938). Therefore, by creating ordinary environments where structured experiences draw on past knowledge, students continue to acquire new skills in natural ways. This theory highlights the importance of critical thought and

skills for managing new situations, which are crucial in the information-driven, fast-changing economy of the 21st century (Tschurtschenthaler, 2013; Miller & Twum, 2017).

Using some of Dewey's original ideas, Kolb (1984) argued that learning is the process of knowledge creation through the transformation of human experience. In other words, knowledge is the outcome of combining theoretical and practical experience (Kolb, 1984). According to this theory, learning is a cycle with four main elements: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Kolb asserted that these steps may occur in any order, facilitating students' reflective skills and cognitive and affective behaviors. Furthermore, Kolb's theory aligned with brain research that stated that the brain develops knowledge in four steps: receiving information, making sense of this information, creating new ideas, and acting on them (Zull, 2002).

Evidence from primary research validates Kolb's theory and its relevance to CBL and experience-based learning in general. Yu et al. (2013) found that neuroscience graduate students progressed through Kolb's learning cycle when participating in CBL learning and were found to learn better and attribute greater meaning to their experiences (Yu et al., 2013). Kalas and Raisinghani (2019) applied the learning stages proposed by Kolb (1984) using a sample of biology students in Canada and showed that this theory helped enhance academic and technical skills development. Kolb's theory and CBL have similar underpinnings, as both emphasize the importance of developing knowledge and skills through action and reflection (Croft et al., 2021; Hunt, 2011; Kolb, 1984).

**Constructivism and the Zone of Proximal Development.** In addition to Dewey's and Kolb's experiential learning theories, other researchers made claims about the relationship between experience and education. Piaget's (1972) constructivism theory contended that rather than simply listening to what teachers tell them, children actively construct knowledge from what they experience (Piaget & Inhelder, 1972). With this theory in mind, Jerome Bruner (1960) recommended that teachers allow children to understand new concepts by designing

instructional experiences that encourages them to reflect and use existing knowledge and capabilities. Furthermore, the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), a concept introduced by Lev Vygotsky (1978), emphasized that “individuals learn best when working together with others during joint collaboration and it is through such collaborative endeavors with more skilled persons that children learn and internalize new concepts, psychological tools, and skills” (Shabani et al., 2010, p. 238). CBL reflects these theories by providing students with opportunities to develop academic skills in collaborative, experiential ways.

**Multiple Intelligences.** Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences provided an explanation as to why traditional lecture methods are not successful with many students. Gardner (1999) defined intelligence as “a biopsychological potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture” (pp. 33-34). He maintained that within the human mind, there “exists several relatively autonomous human intellectual competencies, also known as human intelligences” (Gardner, 2004, p. 8). Gardner classified these intelligences into nine categories: Verbal-Linguistic Intelligence, Mathematical-Logical, Musical, Visual-Spatial, Bodily-Kinesthetic, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, Naturalist, and Existential. According to Shearer and Luzzo (2009), “Gardner believed that most real-world activities require a combination of different intelligences working in concert for success” (p. 4). In a traditional setting, teachers only engage two intelligence types, verbal-linguistic and logical-mathematical, leaving children who struggle in those categories uninterested and often undereducated (Gardner, 2004). Gardner (2004) insisted that by creating learning experiences that emulate the real world all students could be engaged and challenged in each intelligence category.

Researchers have conducted studies on the multiple intelligences theory to discover its impact on student achievement. Sellars (2008) implemented programs of teaching and learning utilizing Gardner’s multiple intelligences theory. As a result, educational outcomes improved, and students’ motivation and work skills became more efficient. In like manner,

Özdemir et al. (2006) investigated whether there was a significant difference between multiple intelligence instruction and traditionally designed instruction. They found that “multiple intelligence instruction led to the better acquisition and retention of knowledge for the students in the experimental group” (Özdemir et al., 2006, p.77). The students in the experimental group scored higher than those in the control group on post-assessments both immediately after instruction and two months later. Furthermore, the experimental group’s mean scores increased in the area of interpersonal intelligence, which directly connects to the 21st-century skills of collaboration and communication (Ozdemir et al, 2006). Through the implementation of CBL activities, student-driven real-world experiences can also develop multiple types of intelligences.

**Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy.** Culturally sustaining pedagogy can be viewed as a combination of culturally relevant, culturally responsive, and critical consciousness pedagogies. This pedagogical theory asserts that marginalized students’ individual cultures should be included in the curriculum and used to liberate themselves and others from oppressive conditions (Jacob et al. 2018; McCarty & Lee, 2014). Culturally relevant pedagogy refers to instructional strategies in which students’ cultural backgrounds are included in the materials that are used to help them demonstrate mastery of standard academic skills (Ladson-Billings, 1995a; Ladson-Billings, 1995b; Ladson-Billings, 2022; Delpit, 2012). In addition to reflecting multiple cultures, culturally sustaining pedagogy implements multicultural practices into the curriculum.

Gay (2018) defined culturally responsive teaching as “using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them” (p. 36). Moreover, Hammond (2015) used brain-based and multicultural research to emphasize that since most culturally-marginalized students learn in a communal manner within the natural setting, culturally responsive instruction should create learning experiences that are community-centered. Additionally, culturally sustaining pedagogy is focused on ensuring



communities' diverse ways of culturally being are maintained, celebrated, and uplifted. According to Freire (1970), students develop their critical consciousness by engaging in learning activities that allow them to recognize and take action against oppressive social forces. CBL can be a culturally sustaining approach to instruction by using academic and 21st-century skills to help marginalized students collaborate with their communities to liberate them.

### ***Experience-Based Learning Models***

Since Dewey, Vygotsky, and Piaget's assertions, many educators and education researchers have embraced the philosophy of children learning when they are actively involved in the learning experience. Many have studied the relationship between experience and education and created terms and models for implementing experience-based learning in the classroom (Smink & Schargel, 2004; Holubova, 2008; Albanese et al., 2019). Some of the most popular models include active learning, project-based learning, and problem-based learning.

**Active Learning.** Active learning creates opportunities for children to be eagerly engaged and involved in learning activities (Smink & Schargel, 2004; Tong, 2001). These learning activities use student-centered interdisciplinary approaches that incorporate technology and address real-world problems to help students learn effective decision-making, leadership, and interpersonal skills (Smink & Schargel, 2004). In traditional classroom settings, students are often passive learners who do not receive exposure to these types of skills. According to Tong (2001), passive learners gather information by sitting and listening to a teacher, whereas active learners ask teachers questions, receive answers, and ask further questions depending on the response.

Fink (1999) introduced an active learning model that suggested that all learning activities involve some form of experience or dialogue. He asserted that there are two main kinds of dialogue, "Dialogue with Self" and "Dialogue with Others," and two main kinds of experience, "Observing" and "Doing." By giving students opportunities to reflect, collaborate,

watch an act as it is performed, and then perform the act themselves, they can absorb key concepts in multiple ways while developing their critical thinking skills.

**Project-Based Learning.** Project-based learning is another instructional methodology that provides students with opportunities to use creativity and critical thinking skills to learn important content. According to Holobova (2008), “Project-based learning is based on the constructivist learning theory which finds that learning is deeper and more meaningful when students are involved in constructing their own knowledge” (p. 29). By using this approach, students learn vital skills by completing actual projects. Opportunities for groups of students to explore meaningful questions by gathering information and critically thinking are created when this model of instruction is implemented. Furthermore, project-based learning strategies can encourage students to use creative and academic skills to create culminating projects that solve real-world problems (Miller & Twum, 2017; Lewis, 2021; Vander Ark et al., 2020).

Hernandez-Ramos and De La Paz (2009) conducted a study to discover how students were affected by project-based learning compared to traditional methods of instruction. They found that students in the intervention group learned more and demonstrated better attitudes toward learning and working with others. Furthermore, the students stated that they enjoyed the learning approach and felt they could use the skills learned for other projects. Wilhelm et al., (2008) argued that “classroom environments rich in project work provide opportunities for students to engage in contextualized problem-solving, make interdisciplinary connections, develop reasoning skills, and accurately represent and communicate concepts” (p. 220).

**Problem-Based Learning.** Problem-based learning allows students to use real-world issues to support student learning. The model was founded on the premise that students comprehend more when they make meaning of content by solving problems instead of simply collecting facts (Rhem, 1998). As opposed to subject-based learning, where students are told information, expected to memorize it, and then reiterate it on tests, problem-based learning

allows students to reflect on what they know, discover what they need to know, and work in teams to solve problems (Spence, 2001).

Drake and Long (2009) examined how students were affected by problem-based learning compared to traditional learning. They found that the students exposed to the problem-based learning experience performed better on tests, identified more problem-solving strategies, and retained more content information in the long run. Albanese et al. (2019) recommended that when developing problem-based lessons, teachers should “include experiences that allow students to disagree, work through disagreements, and ultimately solve problems jointly that are too complex to solve individually” (p. 1143). Therefore, problem-based learning strategies help children utilize critical thinking skills and allow students to develop collaboration skills.

Mayer (2004) argued that many educators relied solely on pure discovery approaches to help students construct knowledge from experiences and that these strategies consequently limited children's acquisition of critical information. He contended that activity and discussion would be useless if students do not discover the content fundamentals. As a result, Mayer stated, “a challenge facing educational researchers is to discover instructional methods that promote appropriate processing in learners rather than methods that promote hands-on activity or group discussion as ends in themselves” (p. 15). Therefore, it is imperative that teachers implement experience-based lessons that allow students to be actively involved in their learning while still utilizing teachers' expertise in the content to ensure that they receive vital information.

These methods of helping students acquire critical information move away from the traditional method of lecturing and memorization and instead employ strategies that allow all students to think critically while engaging and challenging several intelligence types and learning styles simultaneously. The recurring characteristics that make these models successful include critical thinking, collaboration, trust, reflection, querying, drawing on past knowledge, engagement, and relevance.

### ***Advantages of Experience-Based Learning over Traditional Learning***

CBL and its advantage over other traditional approaches may be better understood by examining the difference between modern and traditional learning. Modern learning employs experience-based learning approaches that are active and student-centered by allowing students to lead learning activities, collaborate with others, actively participate in the learning process, and participate in decision-making (Sawant & Rizvi, 2015; Zhao, 2020). More importantly, such classrooms often interact with the community more. Garrett (2008) explained that this approach implies building partnerships with community members, thus broadening learning opportunities for students. Active, student-centered learning implies independence and individual accountability, allowing students to acquire various soft skills such as analyzing, decision-making, communication, teamwork, etc. (Sawant & Rizvi, 2015).

In contrast, traditional learning means that students learn in a setting where teachers take complete control over the process. Teachers decide when, how, and what is studied and determine the pace of learning (Sawant & Rizvi, 2015). Traditional instruction is teacher-centered, meaning that teachers are the main participants who talk and act, while students passively receive the information (Great Schools Partnership, 2014). In traditional classrooms, cooperation and participation are discouraged, and there is little opportunity to practice, interact, and innovate (Sawant & Rizvi, 2015).

Characteristics of the two approaches determine their overall effectiveness, particularly in terms of skills development. While some teachers may consider the traditional teaching model to be the best option for large classrooms where discipline is needed to deliver the knowledge effectively, it is believed that this model suppresses learners' independence, initiative, and innovative ability, which are essential 21st-century skills (Sun et al., 2019; Tang & Lim, 2018). On the other hand, student-centered learning is better for developing students' planning skills, independence, interdependence, self-awareness, and reflection (Tang & Lim, 2018). Students in classrooms where active learning is dominant become self-sufficient learners

able to build on their knowledge and apply it outside the classroom (Lewis, 2021; Vander Ark et al., 2020; Blumberg, 2012). Thus, when it comes to the development of 21st-century skills, active, student-centered learning should be prioritized over traditional learning.

### **Community-Based Learning**

For over a century, education scholars have asserted that decreasing traditional passive learning activities and increasing experiential learning activities will keep students engaged in the learning process and prepare them for life (Dewey, 1916; Dewey, 1938; Kolb, 1984; Piaget & Inhelder, 1972; Vygotsky, 1978). CBL is a pedagogical approach defined as “a form of experiential education in which students interactively engage in activities that address human and community needs as part of structured opportunities, intentionally designed to promote student learning and development” (Flecky, 2011, p. 2). The Irish National Strategy for Higher Education defined CBL as a teaching and learning strategy involving community service and student instruction and reflection and maintained that CBL enriches the learning experience, strengthens communities, and teaches civic responsibility (Hunt, 2011).

Great Schools Partnership (2014) defined CBL as “a wide variety of instructional methods and programs that educators use to connect what is being taught in schools to their surrounding communities, including local institutions, history, literature, cultural heritage, and natural environments” and asserted the four general approaches are:

- **Instructional connections:** Activities connecting content to students’ surrounding communities occur within the school building.
- **Community integration:** In addition to instructional connections, community resources are brought into the school to enhance learning.
- **Community participation:** In addition to community integration, students go into the community to enhance learning.

- Citizen action: In addition to community participation, the audience for, and potential beneficiaries of, students' work include community organizations and the general public.

The community integration, community participation, and citizen action approaches to CBL can provide educators with opportunities to incorporate culturally sustaining, active, problem-based, and project-based models into the curriculum (Damon, 2020).

A definition by Carlisle et al. (2017) presented this approach as “a teaching practice that incorporates student volunteerism, experiential learning, and curriculum for academic credit” (p. 1). Similarly, Clifford and Reisinger (2018) viewed CBL as any activity in which the community is involved as a partner in the learning process. CBL is also considered an active, student-centered approach that allows students to construct knowledge and demonstrate proficiency in the standards by keeping them engaged in real-world activities through community action (Flecky, 2011; Jagla & Tice, 2019; Lewis, 2021). Furthermore, CBL models support students' development of life and work skills required for thriving in a global 21st century (Carlisle et al., 2017; Kimonen & Nevalainen, 2020; Vander Ark et al., 2020). The expectation behind CBL is that community involvement will help students understand the academic content better, while the academic content will facilitate practical learning, also contributing to community development (Jagla & Tice, 2019). In essence, CBL responds to schools' fragmented and abstract education as it draws upon interdisciplinary knowledge and helps students comprehend and address real issues affecting their communities (Newman, 2011).

Community-based learning has many synonyms and may take a variety of forms. According to Melaville et al. (2006), synonyms included “academically based community service, civic education, environmental education, place-based learning, service learning, and work-based learning” (p. 2). Further, Carlisle et al. (2017) asserted that CBL incorporates “problem-based service-learning, direct service-learning, and community-based research” (p. 2).

Kimonen and Nevalainen (2020) noted that it is important to differentiate between CBL and other activities such as volunteerism or community service work. These scholars insisted that CBL implies that students are required to participate by their school, are involved in activities planned by educators, receive clear expectations, and undergo formal evaluation of their work (Kimonen & Nevalainen, 2020). Some researchers see only a semantic difference in these terms, while others argue that they define different activities (Billig & Waterman, 2014; Delano-Oriaran et al., 2015). Variations in definitions and activities make it challenging to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs (Kimonen & Nevalainen, 2020). However, for the purposes of this study, CBL refers to any academic instruction that extends beyond the classroom to involve members of students' communities.

Studies show multiple advantages of CBL concerning skills development and student personal growth. This relevant and engaging approach to learning has been shown to strengthen students' ability to demonstrate proficiency in the standards (Lewis, 2021; Miller & Twum, 2017; Wang et al., 2016). In addition to supporting academic success, this pedagogical approach has been linked to enhanced volunteerism and the development of interpersonal, leadership, and life skills (Carlisle et al., 2017). CBL was reported to improve confidence and self-awareness, enhance personal and professional skills, and contribute to civic engagement, thus leading to positive social change (Carlisle et al., 2017). Guo-Brennan et al. (2020) agreed with these findings, adding that CBL allowed students to understand course content better and gave them a sense of personal value and civic responsibility. In a study conducted by Omar et al. (2018), students reported that a service-learning activity positively affected their employability skills. Furthermore, Ibrahim (2010) found that CBL promoted self-examination and reflection and helped young people find meaning in life.

CBL benefits multiple stakeholders, including students, educators, and local communities, as it promotes engagement and participation on social and academic levels (Vander Ark et al., 2020; Rock, 2021). Lewis (2021) reported that these opportunities for civic

engagement prepared students to be citizens of the global community. Additionally, Linnemanstons and Jordan (2017) stated that students developed more robust ties to their communities due to engaging in CBL activities. In Miller and Twum's (2017) study, students used academic skills to address problems facing their communities. Furthermore, by providing students with opportunities to work communally to address issues of importance to them, CBL is also culturally responsive and relevant, as defined by Hammond (2015) and Delpit (2012). The literature shows that CBL is tremendously valuable for many reasons.

### ***Community-Based Learning and 21st-Century Skills Development***

Twenty-first-century skills are abilities identified as critically important to success in today's global society, especially in collegiate programs and contemporary careers and workplaces (Great Schools Partnership, 2014; P21 Framework for 21st Century Learning, 2019; Stauffer, 2022). Developing these skills is necessary for students to enter the workforce prepared for an evolving 21st century and beyond (P21 Framework for 21st Century Learning, 2019). Synonyms for 21st-century skills include soft skills, technical skills, applied skills, behavioral skills, career readiness competencies, non-cognitive skills, cross-curricular skills, cross-cutting career competencies, cross-disciplinary skills, human skills, interdisciplinary skills, transferable skills, and transversal skills (Great Schools Partnership, 2014).

Critical thinking, Collaboration, Communication, and Creativity are 21st-century skills commonly known as the 4Cs (P21 Framework for 21st Century Learning, 2019; Stauffer, 2022). Stauffer (2022) categorizes these skills as Learning Skills. However, P21 Framework for 21st Century Learning (2019) identified the 4Cs as Learning and Innovation Skills. Information Literacy, Media Literacy, and ICT (Information, Communications, and Technology) Literacy are abilities categorized as Literacy Skills by Stauffer (2022) and Information, Media, and Technology Skills by P21 Framework for 21st Century Learning (2019). Finally, Flexibility and Adaptability, Initiative and Self-Direction, Social and Cross-Cultural Skills, Productivity and



Accountability, and Leadership and Responsibility are categorized as Life and Career Skills by P21 Framework for 21st Century Learning (2019). However, Stauffer (2022) listed these abilities as Flexibility, Leadership, Initiative, Productivity, and Social Skills and placed them under the category, Life Skills.

CBL helps students develop these critical skills needed in 21st-century post-secondary institutions and careers. According to Tijsma et al. (2020), critical thinking and problem-solving competencies that are extremely valuable can only be acquired through engagement with society and the community. Scholars argued that CBL develops communication skills, interpersonal skills, cultural understanding, reflection, etc., which are cited, among other soft skills, as vital for the 21st-century labor market (Ball et al., 2016; National Academy of Sciences, 2021; Tijsma et al., 2020). Similarly, Aker et al. (2018) stressed the importance of CBL as a tool to develop 21st-century skills such as global awareness, leadership, and interpersonal skills.

In Lewis' (2021) study on teachers' perception of a place-based education program, teachers identified socialization, collaboration, and problem-solving as soft skills developed due to students' participation in the program. These findings were also reflected in a study conducted by Miller and Twum (2017), where teachers reported that students built a capacity to problem solve and collaborate due to interacting in CBL experiences. Dunn et al. (2015) conducted a descriptive study of students to determine the effects of service-learning on students' skills development. The survey revealed that students believed their interpersonal skills, citizenship, personal responsibility, and practical skills improved due to their learning experience (Dunn et al., 2015).

### ***Criticisms of Community-Based Learning***

Some studies, however, provide conflicting evidence as to the effectiveness of CBL. For example, Flores (2018) used a sample of at-risk elementary school students and engaged them in a 3-week service-learning project. Results showed no statistically significant difference in

civic engagement among those who participated in the program and those who did not. Flores (2018) suggested that the poor outcomes may be explained by the fact that teachers were not trained to implement a service-learning project.

Hernandez (2016) contributed to the criticism of service-learning from the theoretical perspective by using bicultural pedagogy and critical decolonizing interpretive methodology. The researcher argued that service-learning mostly benefits students instead of helping vulnerable communities liberate themselves from the vicious cycle of oppression and disadvantage (Hernandez, 2016). Hernandez is not alone in criticizing the very nature of CBL, as Mitchell (2008) also pointed to the flaws of this pedagogical approach, stating that it is a kind of “forced volunteerism” that reinforces established hierarchies. However, this study looked at the topic from a broader, sociological perspective and did not address the effectiveness of service-learning for 21st-century skill development. Mitchell (2008) also suggested that CBL should be implemented with “care and consciousness” (p. 51).

### ***Barriers to Implementing Community-Based Learning***

While very little research has been conducted to explore the barriers that prevent teachers from implementing CBL models into their curriculum, there are common themes among studies on the topic. Time, knowledge, and support were identified as the core factors limiting the successful implementation of community-based instruction in schools. (Wang et al., 2016; Linnemanstons & Jordan, 2017; Miller & Twum, 2017; Vander Ark et al., 2020; and Lewis, 2021).

**Knowledge.** In Lewis’ (2021) qualitative study of teachers’ barriers to implementing a service-learning program, teachers noted that successful implementation was prevented due to curriculum misalignment and insufficient strategic planning. Teachers emphasized that they needed to know how to build upon current practices, provide authentic learning opportunities, and learn and plan as a team to address this lack of knowledge (Lewis, 2021). The importance of

knowledge was also echoed in Wang et al.'s (2016) qualitative study on the perceptions of teachers in community-school collaborative classrooms. In this study, teachers expressed a strong knowledge of teaching aids and practical teaching and learning as necessary for the successful implementation of engaging, collaborative community activities (Wang et al., 2016).

According to Vander Ark et al. (2020), place-based education is best when educators know how to design a systematic approach to education that allows communities to serve as interdisciplinary, learner-centered, inquiry-based, and globally conscious learning ecosystems. In addition to possessing knowledge of diverse teaching and learning methods, a qualitative study on teachers' experiences with place-based education revealed that a strong understanding of the local community was pivotal to successful implementation (Miller & Twum, 2017). These experiences align with Vander Ark et al.'s (2020) insistence that to address the barrier of inadequate skills, effective implementation of CBL models requires six phases of professional learning. The phases were Inquire into Place, Identify Challenges, Revise & Implement Curriculum, Build Student Ownership & Skills, Collaborate with Peers through an Interdisciplinary Approach, and Measure Outcomes & Successes (Vander Ark et al., 2020). Therefore, a lack of adequate knowledge has been shown to be a barrier to successfully implementing CBL into the curriculum.

**Time.** Along with inadequate knowledge, inadequate time was also a common theme in the literature concerning barriers to implementing CBL models of learning (Lewis, 2021; Vander Ark et al., 2020; Linnemanstons & Jordan, 2017). In a study evaluating perceptions of a place-based education program, teachers identified scheduling as a hindrance to successful implementation (Linnemanstons & Jordan, 2017). In Lewis' study (2021), scheduling was also mentioned as a barrier because service-learning was implemented as an add-on to the state-based standards-centered curriculum. Participants further noted that parents disapproved of adding extra instructional periods, negatively impacting parental consent. Moreover,

Linnemanstons and Jordan (2017) found that even the scheduling of standardized tests impacted the implementation of the CBL model.

In addition to inadequate time for scheduling, inadequate time for planning, preparation, and implementation was also identified as a challenge to extending instruction beyond the classroom. In Lewis (2021), teachers identified time for planning and preparation as being directly connected to the communication needed for service learning to be implemented into the state-based curriculum; they stressed that it could take a year to dissect the curriculum and up to a year for planning. Vander Ark et al.'s (2020) recommendation for addressing this issue was for school administrators to commit to long-term implementation.

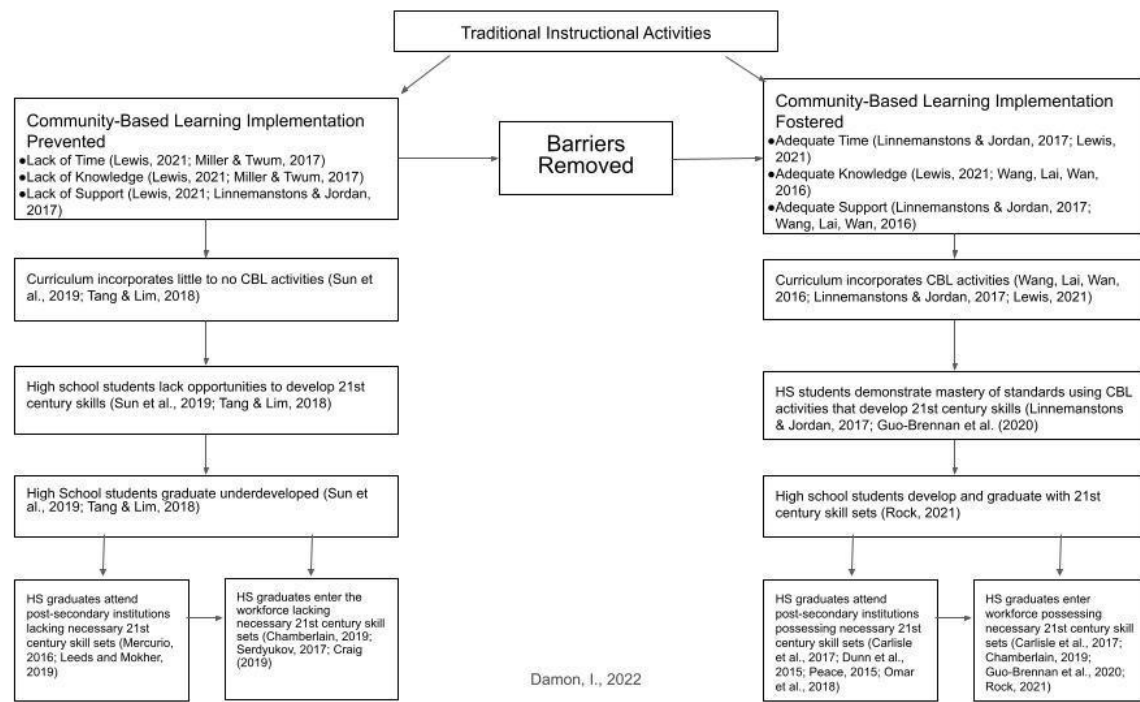
**Support.** The barriers of inadequate knowledge and time are further exacerbated when support is inadequate. In Lewis's (2021) study, teachers with place-based education experience stated that a lack of administrative support prevented them from successfully implementing CBL activities into their instructional practices. They identified a lack of instructional leadership along with field trips and expenses being discouraged as major barriers to the effective implementation of service-learning experiences (Lewis, 2021). Furthermore, in Linnemanstons and Jordan's (2017) study, one of the most common responses to barriers was the need for additional resources and financial support.

In addition to administrative support, researchers also found that a lack of support from other stakeholders negatively impacted the effectiveness of CBL implementation. In the study conducted by Miller and Twum (2017), teachers noted that convincing administrators and students challenged implementation. Additionally, teachers stated that coworkers could hinder the effective development of these activities (Linnemanstons & Jordan, 2017). Moreover, teachers identified a lack of parental support as a hurdle to successful implementation (Lewis, 2021). These studies demonstrate that a lack of support from administrators and other stakeholders can hinder the successful implementation of CBL.

Stakeholder support was identified as pivotal in planning and implementing service-learning (Lewis, 2021). Teachers in Wang et al.'s (2016) study reported community support as a key factor in fostering collaborative community engagement activities. This sentiment was also prevalent in Linnemanstons and Jordan's (2017) study, where teachers expressed support from principals and superiors as critical, including during professional development. The literature demonstrated that teachers must have adequate support with adequate time to attain the adequate knowledge needed to extend learning beyond the classroom.

### **Conceptual Framework: Barriers to Implementing CBL**

As shown in the literature above, the ability to implement CBL can directly impact students' opportunities to develop 21st-century skills in school. Figure 1 reflects this concept by demonstrating that students graduate from high school lacking the necessary 21st-century skill sets when the implementation of CBL is prevented. However, when the barriers to implementing CBL are removed, high school graduates enter the workforce possessing these critical 21st-century skill sets.

**Figure 1***Conceptual Framework***Summary and Gaps in Knowledge**

It is evident from the research presented in this chapter that labor market requirements in the United States have changed and the educational system has not kept up. Today's high school graduates should possess various technical and soft skills to survive in the digital age. Community-based learning is a solution as it enhances the 21st-century skills needed for lifelong learning and employment. However, with the limited implementation of CBL, it is vital to understand the barriers to its implementation in order to increase CBL instruction in schools. Although some researchers have investigated the challenges teachers faced with implementing structured CBL programs, there is a gap in the literature concerning NYC public high school teachers' experienced and perceived barriers to implementing CBL, regardless of knowledge and

experience with the instructional approach. This gap in knowledge was worth further research and served as a justification for the investigation of NYC public high school teachers' perceptions of the barriers to implementing community-based learning activities into curriculums. The study's methodology and design will be discussed in the next chapter.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

As single-skill set jobs are becoming extinct, employees can no longer only possess the technical knowledge of their industry but must also be well versed in a variety of cross-cutting career competencies that robots cannot procure. Employees are expected to possess these skills before entering the workforce; therefore, intentional development of these skills needs to occur at the high school level. One way high schools can develop these skills within students is by implementing CBL activities that allow students to develop academic skills, communities, as well as 21st-century skills simultaneously.

To support teachers with developing students' 21st-century skills through CBL, it was vital to investigate the factors that prevent teachers from including community members as partners in the learning process. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to fill the gap in knowledge concerning the barriers that prevent teachers from implementing CBL into their curriculum. Answers to the following question were sought to address the purpose of the study:

What barriers prevent New York City public high school teachers from implementing community-based learning into their curriculum?

In this qualitative phenomenological study, semi-structured interviews were used to explore 10 New York City public high school teachers' perceptions of the barriers to implementing CBL into the curriculum. The methodology and design, setting and context, sample and data sources, instruments and procedures, data analysis, the role of the researcher, and ethical assurances employed in this research will be discussed in this chapter.

#### **Research Methodology and Design**

The problem that prompted this study was that students are graduating from high school lacking the 21st-century skill sets needed in contemporary careers. Because the purpose of this study was to explore NYC public high school teachers' perceptions of the barriers preventing the implementation of CBL into the curriculum, a qualitative phenomenological study design using



semi-structured interviews was employed. Qualitative researchers analyze people's interpretations and constructions of meaning from personal experiences (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Furthermore, researchers utilize phenomenological study designs to "understand their participants' worlds from the participants' points of view" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019, p. 96). Therefore, a qualitative phenomenological approach was selected to allow teachers to reflect upon their personal experiences in education to share their perspectives on the barriers to including the community as a partner in the learning process.

### **Research Setting/Context**

The setting for this study was the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE), the largest school district in the United States. NYCDOE is a metropolitan school district located in Northeastern United States. Over 1 million students are enrolled in the K-12 system, with student populations consisting of 41% Hispanic, 25% Black, 17% Asian, and 15% White K-12 students (NYCDOE, 2022). District-wide demographics also include 73% economically disadvantaged students, 20.8% students with disabilities, and 13.3% English language learners (NYCDOE, 2022). However, while most students are of color, most teachers are not. According to Elsen-Rooney (2020), of the approximately 75,000 teachers in the district, 17% were Hispanic, 17% were Black, 7% were Asian, and 56% were White. While the teacher pool is still predominantly white, there are thousands of teachers within the system that are not white. Therefore, this population of teachers provided an opportunity to understand the perspectives of a diverse set of teachers who serve a diverse set of students.

### **Research Sample and Data Sources**

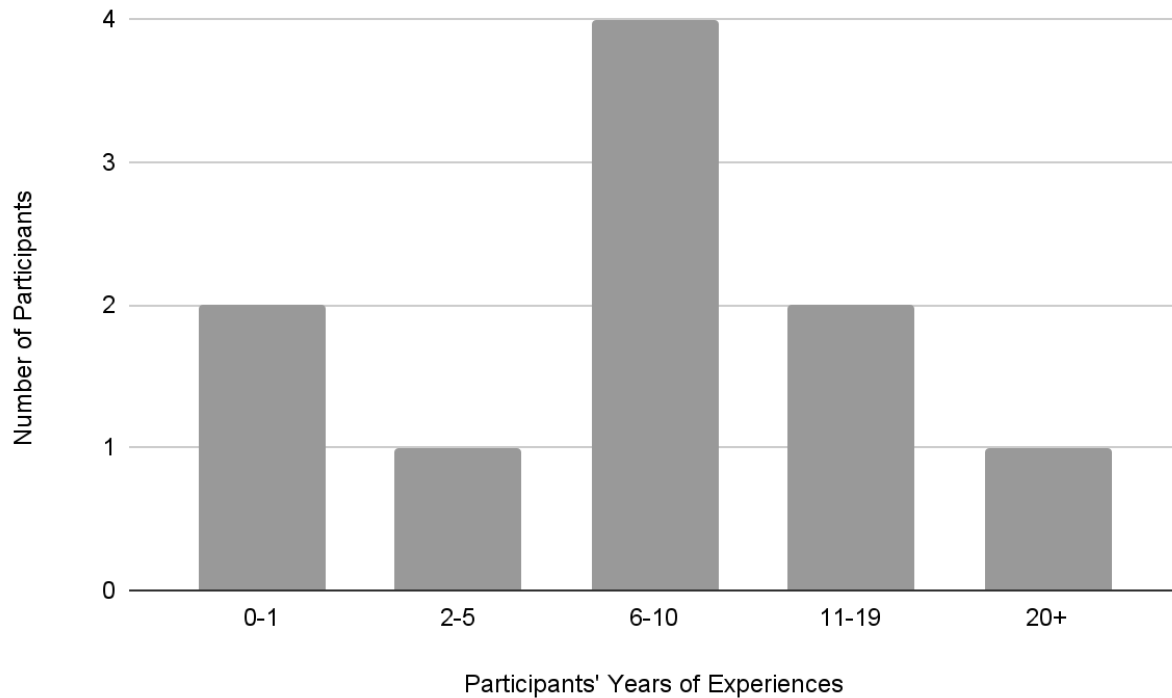
Teachers were recruited via a private online group for teachers employed by the New York City Department of Education and other NYC teachers' union members, The United Federation of Teachers (UFT). The population of the group was over 24,000 at the time of

recruitment. Prior to submitting the recruitment post to the group, permission to recruit from the group was granted by two of the group's administrators. Upon approval from Gwynedd Mercy University's IRB, the recruitment post was submitted to the group. The recruitment post provided a brief summary of the study, the target sample, and a link to the participant consent form (see Appendix A). In addition to recruiting from the online group, the snowball approach was also utilized by asking study participants and others to refer and share the consent form with other NYC public high school teachers.

The consent form informed potential participants of the study's parameters and their rights as participants in the study (see Appendix B). Participants expressed their willingness to participate in the study by entering their email addresses or phone numbers at the bottom of the consent form. They were contacted to confirm their experience as public high school teachers and schedule the interviews. Participants' levels of experience with teaching at the high school level within the NYC Department of Education system ranged from less than one year to over 20 years (see Figure 2). Participants were then sent a calendar invite that included a Zoom meeting link. Once consent, confirmation of eligibility, and scheduling were completed for 10 participants, members of the online group were informed that the recruiting process had ended and that the online consent form would be unavailable moving forward.

**Figure 2**

*Years of Experience as an NYC Public HS Teacher*



## **Instruments and Procedures**

### ***Instrumentation***

In qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Therefore, the instrumentation for this study consisted of researcher-created semi-structured interview questions designed to gain knowledge of teachers' perceptions of the barriers preventing the implementation of CBL. Participants were not required to have experience or even prior knowledge of CBL to participate in the study. However, because CBL was the focus of the study, using Google Slides, participants were first provided with a general definition of CBL and the four primary types of CBL as cited by Great Schools Partnerships (2014) (see Appendix C). The latter three types of CBL were highlighted to emphasize that students directly interacting

with the community was this study's focus. Next, participants were shown Clifford & Reisinger's (2018) definition of CBL to stress the role of the community as a partner in the learning process. This slide also shared Jagla and Tice's (2019) explanatory rationale for this form of CBL. Finally, the slide provided brief examples of how this form of CBL can be utilized in Math, English, Science, and Social Studies classes (see Appendix D). This slide remained on the screen for the duration of the interview.

As shown in Appendix E, interview questions were designed to understand teachers' perceptions of the barriers to including the community as a partner in the learning process, regardless of their experience with this form of CBL. For example, participants who expressed having experience with including the community as a partner in the learning process were asked to share their experiences with barriers. On the other hand, participants, who did not have experience with including the community as a partner in the learning process, were asked about potential barriers they could face with implementing this approach. Occasionally, participants expressed having experiences with including the community as a partner in the learning process; however, when asked to elaborate, their shared experiences were more reflective of instructional connections than of community integration, community participation, or civic action. Participants were asked what barriers they might face with incorporating the community into future lessons in these instances. Participants who expressed being newly interested in this form of CBL due to participating in the study were also asked what barriers they might face with incorporating the community into future lessons. Finally, participants who maintained no interest in including the community as a partner in the learning process were asked to explain why they were disinterested. This question was included in the event that these participants' rationales were informed by perceived barriers.

### ***Study Procedures***

NYC public high school teachers participated in the interview via the online video conferencing platform, Zoom. Before the recording began, participants were reminded that the interview would be recorded and transcribed by the Zoom platform and would also be recorded using a phone as a backup. After the recording started, participants were thanked for participating and given a brief explanation of the study and its process. Next, participants were shown the slide with the general definition of CBL and the four types, emphasizing that this study's focus was on students directly interacting with the community (see Appendix C). Participants were then shown a slide with a more concise definition, explanatory rationale, and examples demonstrating the role of the community as a partner in the learning process (see Appendix D). The words "including the community as a partner in the learning process" were used throughout the study to constantly emphasize the role of the community as a part of the process of students learning. By consistently keeping the interview questions focused on the research question, the trustworthiness of the instrument was strengthened. Before asking the interview questions, participants were asked if they had any questions and were informed that the current slide would remain on screen for the duration of the interview. A protocol checklist with the above process and interview questions was created and used to ensure consistency across all interviews (see Appendix F).

Every participant was asked the same first question; however, depending upon responses, various clarifying and subsequent questions were asked to understand teachers' perceptions of barriers to involving the community as a partner in the learning process (see Appendix E). Once barriers to previous or potential experiences involving the community as a partner in the learning process were expressed, participants were informed that the interview had concluded and asked if they had anything else they wanted to share. After participants shared their final thoughts, the recording ended, and the participants were thanked for participating in the study. Throughout the interview, notes were taken on the checklist

document and utilized for clarifying questions as needed. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2019), this process allows the researcher to note phenomena of vital interest; therefore, after each Zoom meeting concluded, notes about the interview process were recorded on a memo.

### **Data Analysis**

Zoom, an online video conferencing platform, was utilized to record and transcribe the interviews. Immediately after the interviews were recorded and transcribed, the files were downloaded from the password-protected Zoom file cloud to the password-protected computer of the researcher. The files did not contain any identifying information and were promptly renamed to reflect the number of the corresponding interview. For example, the first interview recording and transcript were renamed “HST1”, which stood for High School Teacher #1. In like manner, the second interview recording and transcript were renamed “HST2.” This process was replicated for every interview, with the final interview recording and transcript being renamed “HST10.” These names were also placed at the top of each checklist document used for notetaking during interviews. This process allowed for interviews to remain easily accessible and organized. All files were placed in one folder on the password-protected computer.

After each interview, the transcribed document was downloaded as a .txt and copied and pasted into a Google Doc document. The recording was then played as the Google Doc was read and revised to correct any errors made by the transcribing program. After revisions were complete, the transcript was further refined to put participants’ answers to each question into passages with start and end times at the top of each passage. After each transcript was grouped into passages of participants’ answers to the interview questions, the transcript was shared with the participant, requesting they share any comments or concerns about the transcript within 48 hours (see Appendix G). According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2019), this process, known as member checking, strengthens the studies’ credibility. Therefore, by requesting participant feedback, the study’s trustworthiness was reinforced. After the 48-hour window closed and

applicable updates were made, the transcript was printed for analysis. Printed transcripts were stored in a locked file, and all Google Docs files were stored in a folder in the password-protected Google Drive account.

A thematic analysis was conducted for each printed transcript. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2019), a thematic analysis allows the researcher to understand the commonalities between the participants' rich descriptions. Therefore, by analyzing the data for themes, the transferability of the study's findings was deepened. During the initial reading of the printed transcript, summaries of each passage were written on the document's margin. Next, margin summaries were recorded on a table created in Google Sheets to organize summaries, codes, sub-themes, and themes for each participant (see Appendix H). Each participant's table of data was uniquely color-coded to keep data organized and aligned. After all summaries were recorded on the participant's table, each summary was analyzed, and each identified code, subtheme, and theme was recorded next to the corresponding summary.

Knowledge, time, and support were identified as overarching themes in the literature review addressing the barriers to the implementation of CBL into the curriculum; therefore, when these themes showed up during the analysis of summaries, these words were bolded. In addition to placing knowledge, time, and support in bold, "lack" and "need" were also bolded to differentiate between participants' descriptions of barriers from the perspective of factors missing and from the perspective of factors needed for successful implementation. Additional themes, such as COVID19, complacency, concerns, and process that did not emerge from the literature, were also identified and listed. Upon completion of tables for all participants, all data were grouped together and then sorted by like themes, sub-themes, and finally, codes (see Appendix H). Continuous data analysis led to revisions that concluded in two primary themes, four secondary themes, and 45 tertiary themes (see Appendix I).

### **Role of the Researcher**

As a former teacher and community-based education consultant, I have actively supported CBL models. As a teacher, I frequently implemented instructional connections by incorporating content into the curriculum that allowed students to explore issues affecting their communities at the local, national, and global levels. I also used standards as tools to help students take action toward improving their communities. For example, when strengthening students' rhetorical writing skills, students submitted rhetorical essays to online change organizations, like change.org, to impact change in an area of interest. I also implemented a district-wide CBL project for a program focused on empowering young women of marginalized groups.

Furthermore, I provided direct CBL support to teachers and conducted professional development series at the school and NYC city-level to help teachers learn about CBL. I have also been interviewed in newspapers, online journals, and podcasts to discuss my experiences with CBL and wrote an opinion editorial about CBL. Additionally, I was recognized as an Education Hero by Time Magazine (Aguilera et al., 2021) as well as on a National Press Foundation panel with the US Secretary of Education, Miguel Cardona (National Press Foundation, 2021). As a Community-Based Education consultant, I am in the process of creating CBL programs to support teachers, schools, districts, community-based organizations, and other education stakeholders in the development of CBL projects. I plan to use the findings of this research to inform the development of these programs.

Despite being an advocate for CBL, even my own implementation as a teacher was limited due to a lack of knowledge, time, and support. In addition to my personal experiences with limitations, I have witnessed the school-wide infrequency of opportunities for students to interact with members of their communities in a way that allows them to develop academic skills, 21st-century skills, and communities simultaneously. These observations led me to conclude that many educators may be unfamiliar with CBL. As a result of this assumption, I



shared a broad definition of CBL, an explanation of the main types of CBL, a more specific definition of CBL that was reflective of the study's focus, an explanatory rationale of this form of CBL, as well as examples of how this approach can be implemented for some core courses at the high school level. I made this decision to reduce the likelihood of participants misunderstanding the lens through which I viewed CBL for the purposes of this study.

### **Ethical Assurances**

IRB approval was given before recruiting participants and collecting data. This study presented less than minimal risk to participants. Sharing perceptions on barriers to involving the community as a partner in the learning process did not cause harm or discomfort to participants. Moreover, the benefit of understanding how to support teachers in fostering CBL environments is a substantial variable directly related to increased learning. As such, the benefit of this study outweighed the risk.

Confidentiality was maintained throughout the study by not mentioning the participants' names during interviews, saving recordings and transcripts using pseudonyms HST1, HST2, etc., and using pseudonyms during the notetaking process. A list of participants' names and corresponding pseudonyms was stored in a locked file, along with annotated transcripts. Recordings and digital transcripts were stored on a password-protected computer. Consent forms and tables of summaries, codes, sub-themes, and themes were stored in a password-protected Google Drive account. During the literature review, "knowledge, time, and support" were critical themes identified in the analysis of barriers to the successful implementation of CBL. These findings informed a lens through which the researcher analyzed data collected during interviews. However, bias was minimized during the coding process as themes differing from those reflected in the literature were also identified and listed.

**Summary**

The purpose of this study was to fill the gap in knowledge concerning the perceived barriers to implementing CBL into the curriculum from the perspective of 10 New York City public high school teachers. In this qualitative phenomenological study, semi-structured interviews were used to seek answers to the following question: What barriers prevent New York City public high school teachers from implementing community-based learning into their curriculum? The collected data was analyzed for codes, sub-themes, and themes and then synthesized. The findings that emerged from the thematic analysis and synthesis of the data will be discussed in the next chapter.

## **Chapter 4: Findings**

High school students are graduating lacking the 21st-century skills needed for careers and life. However, the literature shows that CBL supports students in the development of academic and 21st-century skills as they collaborate with their communities. The purpose of this study was to fill the gap in knowledge concerning teachers' perceptions of the barriers that prevent the implementation of CBL into the curriculum. Therefore, this research sought to answer the question, what barriers prevent New York City public high school teachers from implementing community-based learning into the curriculum? The study examined this question by investigating NYC public high school teachers' perceptions of the barriers to implementing CBL into the curriculum. This chapter will discuss the trustworthiness and findings of the collected data.

### **Trustworthiness of the Data**

In qualitative research, it is necessary to identify how the trustworthiness of the data was established through credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). This study's credibility was established in Chapter 3 during the discussion of member checking and the role of the researcher regarding bias and prior in-depth understanding of CBL. Furthermore, in this chapter, a thick description of responses from multiple sources will further strengthen credibility. Dependability was established via a well-articulated and transparent description of the data collection process section of Chapter 3. In this chapter, this study's confirmability will be strengthened with illustrations of the collected data and the matrix of all data in Appendix I. Moreover, critical reflection and reflexivity were conducted throughout the process of collecting, analyzing, and reporting the data to deepen confirmability further. Finally, outlining the sampling strategy and details of the study's setting and participants in Chapter 3 and providing in-depth and rich descriptions of the research in this chapter established the transferability of this study.

## **Findings**

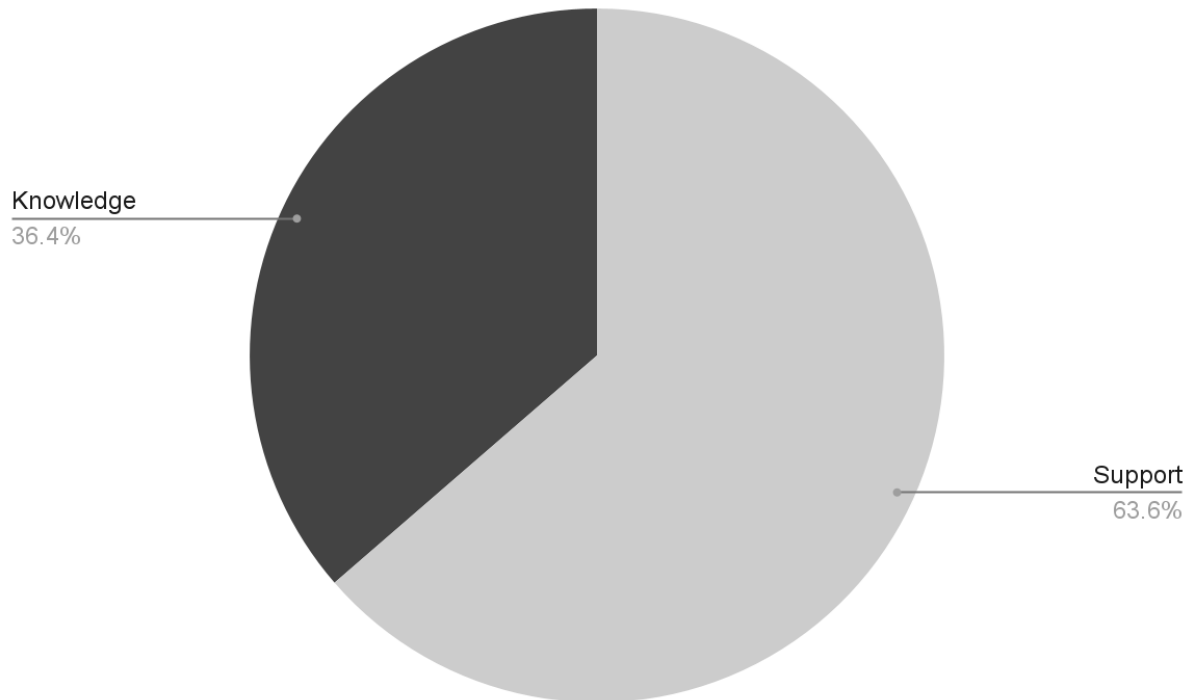
This study investigated NYC public high school teachers' perceptions of the barriers to implementing CBL into the curriculum. As a result of ten semi-structured interviews, 88 unique responses were extracted, coded, and analyzed. Five of the 88 responses led to an additional 11 primary, secondary, and tertiary theme sets; thus, the data consisted of 99 responses. Some participants had teaching experience at various levels and within other school systems; however, for this study, the focus was on perceptions as a result of teaching experience in NYC public high schools.

### **Research Question: Barriers to Implementing CBL into the Curriculum**

Of the 99 responses analyzed to answer the research question, support and knowledge were the primary themes to emerge from the data, with 63 and 36 responses, respectively (see Figure 3). Lack support and need support were the secondary themes of support, while lack knowledge and need knowledge were the secondary themes of knowledge. The tertiary themes for each secondary theme were grouped by types of stakeholders: teachers, administrators, students, community partners, and other stakeholders.

**Figure 3**

*Barriers to Implementing CBL: Primary Themes*



This section will begin with the findings for the more prominent primary theme, support. Participants' examples of why support is a barrier to implementing CBL will be discussed according to their perceptions of what stakeholders lack and need. The smaller primary theme, knowledge, will also be discussed according to participants' perceptions of what stakeholders lack and need. Table 1 shows the number of responses for primary, secondary, and tertiary themes.

**Table 1***Number of Responses for Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Themes*

| <b>Stakeholders<br/>(TT)</b>                                                 | <b>Lack<br/>Support<br/>(ST)</b> | <b>Need<br/>Support<br/>(ST)</b> | <b>Support<br/>Total<br/>(PT)</b> | <b>Lack<br/>Knowledge<br/>(ST)</b> | <b>Needs<br/>Knowledge<br/>(ST)</b> | <b>Knowledge<br/>Total<br/>(PT)</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Teachers</b>                                                              | 31                               | 10                               | <b>41</b>                         | 14                                 | 3                                   | <b>17</b>                           |
| <b>Admin</b>                                                                 | 3                                | 2                                | <b>5</b>                          | 5                                  | 1                                   | <b>6</b>                            |
| <b>Students</b>                                                              | 8                                | 3                                | <b>11</b>                         | 2                                  | 0                                   | <b>2</b>                            |
| <b>Community<br/>Partners</b>                                                | 3                                | 0                                | <b>3</b>                          | 6                                  | 3                                   | <b>9</b>                            |
| <b>Other<br/>Stakeholders</b>                                                | 0                                | 3                                | <b>3</b>                          | 0                                  | 2                                   | <b>2</b>                            |
| <b>Total</b>                                                                 | <b>45</b>                        | <b>18</b>                        | <b>63</b>                         | <b>27</b>                          | <b>9</b>                            | <b>36</b>                           |
| Theme Key:<br>PT= Primary Theme<br>ST= Secondary Theme<br>TT= Tertiary Theme |                                  |                                  |                                   |                                    |                                     |                                     |

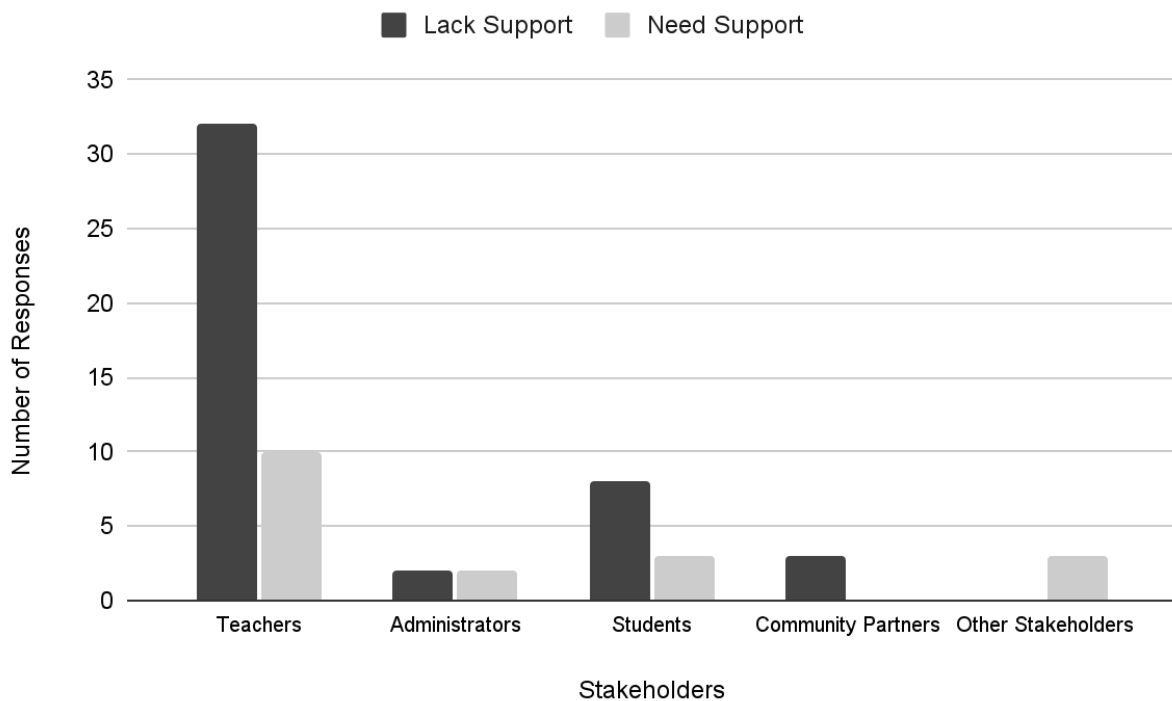
***Support***

Support was the most common primary theme to unfold from the data, with 63 out of 99 responses about barriers to implementing community-based learning. All study participants shared at least one response demonstrating support as a barrier to implementation. The secondary theme, lack support, yielded 45 responses, while the secondary theme, need support,

yielded 18 responses. Furthermore, combined secondary themes for support yielded 41 responses for teachers, five for administrators, 11 for students, three for community partners, and three for other stakeholders (see Figure 4).

**Figure 4**

*Frequency of Stakeholder Groups Mentioned (Support)*



**Support for Teachers.** With 41 responses, teachers were identified as the largest group of contributors to have support as a barrier to implementing CBL. Lack support and need support received 31 and 10 responses, respectively. Every study participant shared at least one response categorized as an example of support for teachers being a barrier to including the community as a partner in the learning process. Due to a large number of responses in this category, the barrier of support for teachers will be discussed according to the lack or need from various stakeholders.

***Support for Teachers from Administrators.*** Of the 41 total responses concerning teachers' lack of, and need for, support, 26 focused on support from administrators. HST4 stated, "sometimes administrators are not welcoming of outside partners or community partners." When reflecting on being denied collaborating on a project with the Mayor's office, HST10 stated, "my assistant principal didn't know why I was taking it to that extent; I could have did my project without that trip, he felt." Furthermore, when considering potential barriers to implementing CBL into the curriculum in the future, first-year teacher, HST7, expressed uncertainty about how to identify community partners with concerns like, "do I have to do it by myself to find the right people?" When involving the community as a partner, HST5 shared receiving pushback from administrators who insisted that she "stick to the curriculum." HST8 shared this sentiment on a larger level, stating, "[community-based] learning hasn't taken priority in our Department of Education."

In addition to concerns about the lack of support, participants also expressed thoughts about the support teachers need from administrators. HST3 stated, "I think that having to make teachers be psychologists, teachers, therapists- all of the above is a barrier in itself. I think they need to simplify the teacher position." Moreover, HST2 shared that administrators need to support teachers by "taking into consideration their time [and] their schedule." Finally, HST10 expressed a need for administrators to show support by making comments like, "Hey, I have this group I would like your class to work with."

***Support for Teachers from Teachers.*** Seven responses focused on teachers receiving support from other teachers as a barrier to implementing CBL. First-year teacher, HST3, shared that "getting some staff to buy in" would be a potential barrier to implementing CBL in the future. This experience was a direct barrier faced by HST5, who expressed difficulty with teachers challenging her choices by asking, "Why are you doing that?" In like manner, HST6 shared past experiences of "constantly being pooh-poohed [by teachers] as to why it won't work." HST6 also shared experiencing pushback about veering from traditional instruction



when dealing with co-teacher mindsets of “I was taught this way, and I was successful, [so] there’s nothing wrong with teaching this way.”

***Support for Teachers from Community Partners.*** From the data, five responses were extracted that focused on community partners’ lack of support for teachers as a barrier to implementing CBL. Both HST6 and HST9 shared experiences with plans to collaborate with community partners being thwarted during the COVID-19 pandemic. HST6 stated, “just as we were kind of finalizing this plan, the pandemic hit, and [we] never got to do that in person.” HST9 stated, “[the] pandemic hit, and we were not able to complete that project [with the local college].” In addition to lack of support from community partners due to the pandemic, participants stated other ways in which they experienced barriers. For example, HST9 reflected on the challenges experienced with implementing CBL because teachers were “not really clear on what the college wanted from students.” HST10 shared an experience with partner unavailability, stating, “When I got the green light, he wasn’t available.” Additionally, HST3 expressed that “getting the community to believe that I, as a teacher, have an inside perspective of the school” might be a barrier to the successful implementation of CBL.

***Support for Teachers from Other Stakeholders.*** In addition to teachers lacking and needing support from administrators, teachers, and community partners, study participants also mentioned support from students or parents in three responses. HST3 stated that a barrier he may face with implementing CBL is “getting the students to buy-in.” HST3 also stated that getting parents involved could be a barrier, asserting, “some parents are just far too busy or tired to get involved.” Moreover, HST1 also reflected that parents could be a barrier, saying, “with some parents, I do see them questioning why we’re removing ... William Shakespeare or Fahrenheit 451 ... and replacing it with something that’s more relevant to the kids.”

***Support for Administrators.*** Three participants shared five responses regarding support for administrators as a barrier to including community members as partners in the learning process. HST1 referenced that school administrators lack support from the district

level, stating, “The New York City Department of Education has a problem with looking at new ideas because if [the status quo] works, they choose to keep it.” HST4 also mentioned a lack of financial support from the district as a barrier to administrators, stating, “if finances are required, then finances could be an issue.” In addition to lack of support from the district level, school administrators lacking support from teachers was also identified as a barrier. HST3 referenced teacher attendance being a challenge when “a lot of ... staff [were] in and out ... on regular days” due to COVID 19 and asserted that school administrators need staff to successfully implement CBL, stating, “I think administration will buy in if it’s always a good idea, but it’s just, you always need the manpower.” Finally, HST1 stated that administrators need to identify “which teachers would be willing to implement this.”

**Support for Students.** From the data, 11 responses emerged referencing a lack of, or need for, support for students as a barrier to the successful implementation of CBL. Several teachers expressed that students lacked support with buying into or being interested in CBL activities. For example, HST9 said, “I’m concerned that I’m going to lose them if we take too long or don’t make it where they feel they have a handle on it.” HST3 identified “getting students to reengage into the school atmosphere or buying into teachers’ thoughts and ideas” as a barrier to implementing CBL. Additionally, support for students from community partners was shared as a barrier. Regarding an experience with a community partner, HST10 recalled, “I worked with this group before, and they didn’t seem as prepared to work with young people, even though it was for young people.” Furthermore, HST4 stated, “we are often told that when teaching Civics or American Government, we are not to engage with individuals who are running for office.”

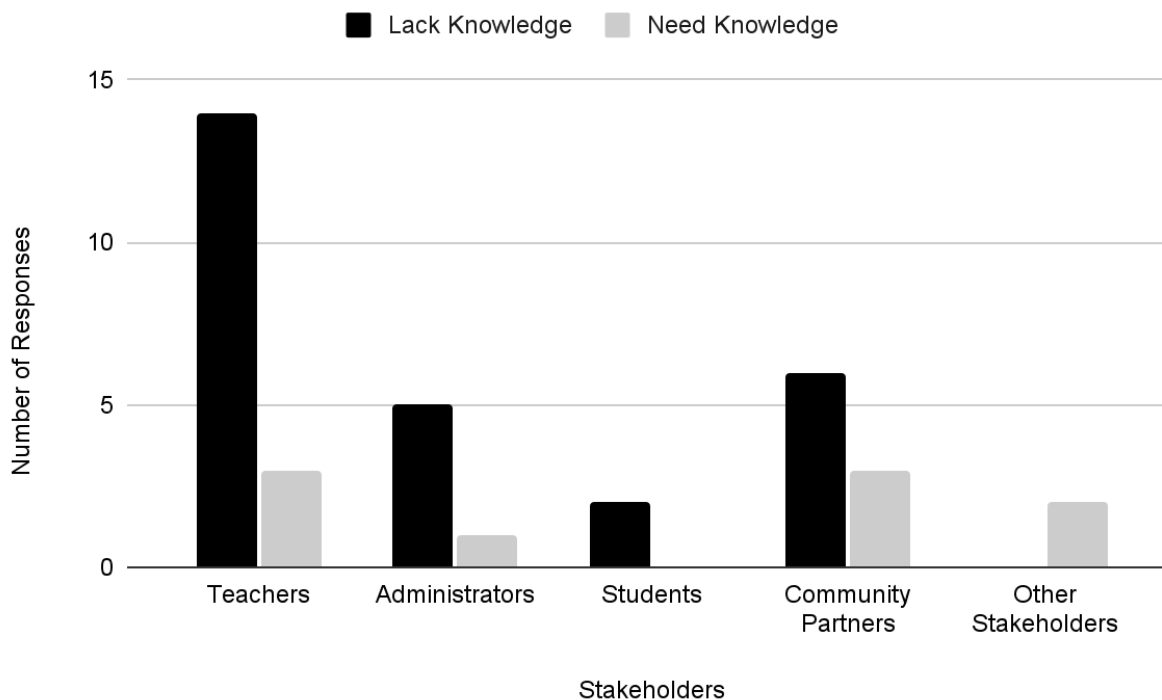
**Support for Community Partners.** Two participants provided three responses about the lack of support for community partners as a barrier to implementing CBL into the curriculum. HST2 stated that the community partner “may not have the time to dedicate to ... taking that level of detail.” HST4 reflected on this barrier, stating that “some of the barriers probably stem from lack of communication, whether from community partners or potential

community partners and the school.” HST4 went on to say that schools and community-based organizations “don’t necessarily work collaboratively with each other.”

**Support for Other Stakeholders.** Three teachers discussed the need for support for all stakeholders, in general, for CBL to be successfully incorporated into the curriculum. For example, HST1 stated, “that’s the majority of it, just administration; and then moving from administration into parents and which teachers would be willing to implement this.” HST2 asserted, “I think it needs to be done authentically and for the right reasons.” Finally, HST3 insisted, “we just need to let go of the negative connotations of teachers, of communities, of demographics, of cultures even and just ... strive for change.”

### ***Knowledge***

Knowledge was the least common primary theme to unfold from the data, with 36 out of 99 responses about barriers to implementing CBL. Nine of the 10 study participants shared at least one response demonstrating knowledge as a barrier. The secondary theme, lack of knowledge, yielded 27 responses, while the secondary theme, need knowledge, yielded 9. Furthermore, combined secondary themes for knowledge yielded 17 responses for teachers, six for administrators, two for students, one for parents, nine for community partners, and one for other stakeholders (see Figure 5).

**Figure 5***Frequency of Stakeholder Groups Mentioned (Knowledge)*

**Teachers’ Knowledge.** With 18 responses, teachers were identified as the largest group of contributors with knowledge as a barrier to implementing CBL. Lack knowledge and need knowledge received 15 and three responses, respectively. Six out of 10 study participants shared at least one response that was categorized as an example of teachers’ knowledge being a barrier to implementing community-based learning in the curriculum. This section will be organized by the expressed knowledge teachers need and knowledge teachers lack in the areas of content, planning, and process.

**Teachers Need Knowledge.** Two participants shared that teachers need knowledge of CBL to implement it successfully. According to HST1, “CBL would require extensive training ... for the educators.” HST8 stated, “there’s a lot of learning and unlearning to do.” HST8 went on to say, “the new learning has to take place with how do we plan for this” and that we need to look

at “curriculum,” “standards,” “what this course really means,” and “how does this connect to kids and the community.”

***Teachers Lack Content Knowledge.*** The data yielded five responses concerning teachers’ lack of content knowledge as a barrier to implementing CBL into the curriculum. HST8 stated that teachers “haven’t been taught how to make those connections to how ... kids can actually be in the community and working with the community to work on these skills.” HST8 went on to say, “we’re so skills-based driven that we’re not really thinking about the big picture.” This sentiment was echoed by HST1, who stated that teachers would prefer a traditional curriculum over CBL because “it’s ... the curriculum that we have been teaching for year and years ever since I was in high school,” and HST6, who said that in Math, “there’s a lot of standards involved and a lot of teachers have been taught a certain way.”

***Teachers Lack Planning Knowledge.*** Three teachers shared four responses about teachers’ lack of planning knowledge as a barrier to involving the community as a partner in the learning process. HST8 stated, “we’ve kind of been programmed to think, okay, I have to be here in the curriculum at this time, here in the curriculum at that time.” HST4 reflected on an experience with wanting to implement a community-based project from an after-school program into her course but struggled to do so because “logistically, it was impossible to make it relevant ... to the curriculum. When reflecting on an experience with not being able to implement CBL remotely, HST6 stated, “I was also remote the whole year. So I felt like ... How am I getting materials to 170 students or so? How am I doing this? ... So it was something that hasn’t materialized.”

***Teachers Lack Process Knowledge.*** First-year teacher, HST7, shared five responses regarding teachers lacking knowledge of the process for implementing CBL into the curriculum. She expressed that she would “love to include the community as a partner” in the learning process but did not “know where to start.” She went on to list concerns such as “does my school have specific individuals in mind?” and “can I just branch off on my own and do this?” HST7

expressed that administrators “like you to ask them first, or be in contact with them first before you ... bring anyone within the school.” She also shared that “finding a specific person that kind of might be on the same page with [the students]” could be a potential barrier.

**Administrators’ Knowledge.** Six responses referencing a lack of, or need for, administrative knowledge emerged from the data. For example, HST1 stated, “I believe it’s a lack of understanding from the administration. They are not understanding the importance of it, ... the need for it.” She added that CBL would be “more work for them” and that “they believe that it may be something that may cause more issues for them than benefits.” Similarly, HST2 discussed administrators’ reluctance due to the unknown impact on students, stating, “they don’t necessarily know, or even if they know the community partner, they may be leery to kind of send students there.” Additionally, HST6 shared experiences with instructional limitations due to what the administrator “thinks great teaching is.” Finally, HST3 expressed that the administrators needed to “have a better realization of what’s going on ... for students and staff.”

**Students’ Knowledge.** Two teachers shared responses to students’ lack and need for knowledge being a barrier to the successful implementation of CBL. When reflecting on the impact of the COVID19 pandemic, HST3 stated, “another barrier would be students not being in school for the past two years ... affected their level of working effectively in the classroom and also their ability to process cognitive work.” Furthermore, HST9 shared that students’ lack of knowledge was a barrier to the effective implementation of CBL, stating, “we’re having an issue with the kids understanding what proper research is, ... how they are going to move into choosing what kind of [research, and] how they are going to present this project.”

**Community Partners’ Knowledge.** Three participants shared nine responses that identified community partners’ lack of, or need for, knowledge as a barrier to including them in the learning process. HST10 reflected on a challenge with a community partner who was not “committed in understanding” nor “prepared to work with young people” and asserted that partners need to have an “understanding of the population that they [work] with to keep it

engaging so that students will be engaged.” In like manner, HST9 stated that the community partner working with her students needed to “understand that they’re dealing with high school students” to meet them where they are. When reflecting on experiences with collaborating with community partners, HST2 shared that community partners wanted to know “what is the liability” for working with students and needed to “understand the purpose.” HST2 insisted that “educating the community” was necessary for successful implementation.

**Other Stakeholders’ Knowledge.** In addition to teachers, administrators, students, and community partners lacking and needing knowledge, parents were also identified as a group of stakeholders who require knowledge for the implementation of CBL to be successful. HST1 shared, “I think that jumping into CBL would require ... introducing it to the parents of the students ... letting them know that this is the route that we’re going to be going in when teaching their kids.” HST1 added that parents “have to see it work for them to believe in the process.”

## **Summary**

This study explored NYC public high school teachers’ perceptions of the barriers preventing the successful implementation of CBL into the curriculum. As a result, 88 responses were extracted, coded, and analyzed, leading to 99 primary, secondary, and tertiary theme sets. From the collected data, themes of lacking and needing support emerged for teachers, administrators, students, community partners, and other stakeholders. Additionally, lack of knowledge and a need for knowledge were also linked to the same groups of stakeholders. Furthermore, support and knowledge for each of these groups were identified as needing to come from each of these groups (see Table 2). Next, in Chapter 5, an analysis of the findings and implications and recommendations will be addressed.

**Table 2**

Whom Stakeholders Need Support and Knowledge From

|                               | <b>Teachers</b> | <b>Admin</b> | <b>Students</b> | <b>Community<br/>Partners</b> | <b>Other<br/>Stakeholders</b> |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>Teachers</b>               | ✓               | ✓            | ✓               | ✓                             | ✓                             |
| <b>Admin</b>                  | ✓               | ✓            | ✓               | ✓                             | ✓                             |
| <b>Students</b>               | ✓               | ✓            | ✓               | ✓                             | ✓                             |
| <b>Community<br/>Partners</b> | ✓               | ✓            | ✓               | ✓                             | ✓                             |
| <b>Other<br/>Stakeholders</b> | ✓               | ✓            | ✓               | ✓                             | ✓                             |



## **Chapter 5: Implications, Recommendations, and Conclusions**

Students are graduating from high schools lacking the 21st-century skills needed for contemporary careers and lifestyles. Nevertheless, CBL can provide students with opportunities to support their communities while developing their academic and 21st-century skills. The purpose of this study was to fill a gap in knowledge concerning teachers' perceptions of the barriers to implementing CBL into the curriculum. Using semi-structured interviews, this qualitative phenomenological study sought to answer the question, what barriers prevent New York City public high school teachers from implementing community-based learning into the curriculum? This chapter will summarize the study and discuss the findings, implications, recommendations, and conclusions.

### **Summary of the Study**

Ten NYC public high school teachers participated in this study. Eighty-eight responses were extracted, coded, and analyzed from the data, yielding 99 theme sets. Support and knowledge emerged as the two primary themes for this study. The secondary themes for support were lack support and need support. In like manner, the secondary themes for knowledge were lack knowledge and need knowledge. Tertiary themes for all secondary themes reflected CBL stakeholders: teachers, administrators, students, community partners, and other stakeholders.

### **Discussion**

The literature review demonstrated that skills development in America was adequate for workforce needs during the agricultural and industrial eras. Nevertheless, a shift in approach to American education is needed as humanity continues to develop into a digitally global society with workforce needs that require students to graduate from high school possessing 21st-century skills, such as communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity. Many high schools are still using traditional, industrial-era approaches to teaching and learning that are leaving our

students inadequately prepared for careers and life. This study's theoretical review showed that experiential learning is grounded in fostering these 21st-century skills while supporting students' academic development. Furthermore, the literature supports that CBL models are a viable solution to addressing the problem of students graduating ill-prepared for post-secondary life by providing students with opportunities to develop their academic and 21st-century skills and their communities. Ten NYC public high school teachers were interviewed to understand better the barriers that may prevent teachers from implementing CBL into the curriculum. As a result, two primary themes, four secondary themes, and 45 tertiary themes emerged from the data. In this section, a discussion of the findings of this study and its correlation to the reviewed literature will be conducted.

With 63 out of 99 responses, support was the most significant primary theme identified as a barrier to the successful implementation of CBL. All participants' responses led to at least one example of how lacking or needing support could be a barrier to implementation. Moreover, examples of lacking or needing support are directly connected to five groups of stakeholders: teachers, administrators, students, community partners, and other stakeholders. Participants shared examples of how lacking support or needing support could prevent the implementation of CBL due to direct experience with barriers to implementation or predictions based on experience as public high school teachers within the NYC Department of Education school system.

In total, 43 responses indicated teachers lacking or needing support as barriers to successfully including community members as partners in the learning process. Twenty-six responses focused on teachers lacking or needing support from administrators; seven focused on support from other teachers, five on support from community partners, and three on support from other stakeholders. In addition to support for teachers, other stakeholders were identified as lacking or needing support as a barrier to successfully implementing CBL. Five responses focused on administrators lacking or needing support from administrators and teachers.

Similarly, 11 responses highlighted that students lacking or needing support from teachers and administrators could be a barrier to CBL implementation. Furthermore, three responses focused on community partners lacking support from their organizations and school administrators being potential barriers to incorporating the community into the curriculum. Lastly, three responses emphasized that other stakeholders need support from teachers, school administrators, and other stakeholders for CBL to be successfully implemented.

This study's findings directly align with the conceptual framework, highlighting that inadequate support was identified as a common barrier to the successful implementation of CBL. In Lewis's (2021) and Linnemanstons and Jordan's (2017) studies, teachers with CBL experience stated that a lack of administrative support prevented successful implementation. In addition to administrative support, researchers also found that a lack of support from other stakeholders, such as teachers, students, parents, community partners, and other stakeholders, negatively impacted the effectiveness of CBL implementation (Miller & Twum, 2017; Lewis, 2021; Linnemanstons & Jordan, 2017; Wang et al., 2016). Like this study's findings, these studies demonstrated that a lack of support from administrators, teachers, students, community partners, and other stakeholders could hinder the successful implementation of CBL.

Knowledge was the smallest primary theme to emerge from the data as a barrier to the successful implementation of CBL, with 36 out of 99 responses. Nine of the 10 participants' responses led to at least one example of how lacking or needing knowledge could be a barrier to implementation. Moreover, examples of lacking or needing knowledge are directly connected to the five groups of stakeholders mentioned above. Participants shared examples of how lacking knowledge or needing knowledge could prevent the implementation of CBL due to direct experience with barriers to implementation or predictions based on experience as teachers within NYC's public high school.

Participants shared 18 responses that indicated that teachers lacking or needing knowledge was a barrier to successfully including community members as partners in the

learning process. Three responses focused on teachers needing knowledge of CBL, five focused on teachers' lack of content knowledge, four on teachers' lack of planning knowledge, and five on teachers' lack of process knowledge. In addition to knowledge for teachers, other stakeholders' knowledge was also identified as a barrier to successfully implementing CBL. Six responses focused on administrators lacking or needing knowledge of students, teachers, CBL's benefits, CBL impact on students, CBL content, and the CBL process as factors that could prevent adequate implementation of CBL. Similarly, two responses highlighted that students lacking cognitive and skills knowledge could be a barrier to CBL implementation. Furthermore, nine responses focused on community partners lacking and needing knowledge of CBL, liability, responsibilities, and the process as potential barriers to incorporating the community into the curriculum. Lastly, two responses emphasized that other stakeholders need knowledge of CBL for it to be successfully implemented.

This study's findings directly align with the literature reviewed, as knowledge was identified as a common barrier to successfully implementing CBL. In Lewis' (2021) qualitative study, teachers noted that curriculum misalignment and insufficient strategic planning prevented successful implementation. Additionally, these participants stressed that knowing how to build upon current practices, providing authentic learning opportunities, and learning and planning as a team were necessary (Lewis, 2021). In Wang et al.'s (2016) study, a strong knowledge of teaching aids and practical teaching and learning was identified as necessary for the successful implementation of engaging, collaborative community activities. According to Vander Ark et al. (2020), knowledge of how to design a systematic approach to community-based education facilitated adequate implementation. In addition, Miller and Twum's (2017) qualitative study revealed that a strong understanding of the local community was also pivotal to successful implementation.

Knowledge and support were identified as the common themes to emerge from both the literature and this study. Although time was mentioned as a key theme during the review of the

literature, time was only mentioned three times during the study. However, in the study and the literature review, having the time needed to implement CBL into the curriculum emphasized the need for support.

Although this study was limited to participants with experience teaching in NYC public high schools, alignment with data from other studies on the topic supports the transferability of the data collected in this study to other settings. Regardless of participants' years of experience with teaching or CBL, primary themes of support and knowledge consistently emerged from the data. Albeit there are many differences between NYC and other cities around the nation, a need for support and knowledge is at the foundation of all educational practices. Henceforth, the findings of this study can be considered widely applicable to teachers across the country and the globe.

### **Implications**

This study sought to answer the question, what barriers prevent New York City public high school teachers from implementing community-based learning into the curriculum? From the study, support and knowledge emerged as primary themes, with lack and need as secondary themes for each. Teachers, administrators, students, community partners, and other stakeholders were identified as tertiary themes regarding the lack and need for support and knowledge as barriers to successful implementation. Furthermore, the study demonstrated that interconnections between all stakeholders could directly impact the effective implementation of involving the community as a partner in the learning process. As a result, these findings may be important for various stakeholders within the education community.

Teachers were identified as the largest group of stakeholders to need support and knowledge for the successful implementation of CBL to occur. These findings can be important for administrators at the school and district levels because the data shows how teachers expressed a need for support to effectively implement CBL. Furthermore, fellow teachers can

benefit from this research because they can better understand the need for and value of colleague support. Additionally, community partners can benefit from this study because it can provide insight into how teachers have experienced challenges with collaborating partners from the community. In like manner, other stakeholders, such as parents, can use this study to identify ways that teachers need support from them. Besides the stakeholders referenced in the study, other stakeholders such as policymakers, educators of pre-service teachers, curriculum developers, and education coaches can benefit from this data by better understanding the ways that teachers need support with moving from traditional teacher-centered environments to modern CBL environments that allow students to develop academic and 21st-century skills while supporting their communities.

In addition to the stakeholders mentioned above finding this data important to support teachers, these same stakeholders can use these findings to understand better how other stakeholders need support. The study revealed that all stakeholders are interconnected in impacting the successful implementation of CBL into the curriculum. Therefore, this study can support them in understanding some of the ways in which they each need support. For example, education stakeholders like the US President, the US Secretary of Education, governors, legislators, state and local education board leaders, and superintendents can utilize this study to understand better how support is needed to transform education throughout the United States. Furthermore, this study can be valuable to philanthropists interested in understanding how to support innovative educational practices. Everyone is directly impacted by education in American society; as a result, the transformation of American education into a system that allows students to use academic and 21st-century skills to improve their community will directly benefit all citizens in the long run. Therefore, this information can be of value to anyone interested in students graduating from high school prepared for life in an ever-evolving, global society.

## Recommendations for Practice

As stated in Chapter 3, I am an educator advocating for CBL. As a result of these findings, I now have a deeper understanding of the barriers that prevent teachers from implementing CBL into the curriculum. I am a Community-Based Education consultant focused on supporting teachers, school and district administrators, and community organizations with implementing CBL into the curriculum. The findings of this study will be utilized to create programs that are specifically designed to address these barriers when developing plans of action for implementation. I intend to develop plans in the following manner and also recommend that other schools and their supporters employ similar actions to facilitate the successful implementation of CBL:

- Create materials (texts, ebooks, ecourses, etc.) to support stakeholders in developing knowledge of CBL and how to support its implementation
- Collaborate with colleges and universities to develop pre-service teachers' knowledge of CBL
- Provide extensive training on the who, what, when, where, why, and how of CBL to teachers, administrators, students, parents, community partners (committed and potential), and other stakeholders directly involved in the affairs of the schools' communities via:
  - ◆ Professional development
  - ◆ Modeling
  - ◆ Team planning
  - ◆ Learning walks
- Conduct a needs assessment to identify how to best support the transformation
- Provide stakeholders with professional development on how to communicate and collaborate

- Support stakeholders with identifying how standards can be used as skills to help students support their communities
- Support stakeholders with identifying partners to include in the learning process
- Support stakeholders in collaboratively creating actions plans
- Support stakeholders with developing thematic and transdisciplinary CBL units
- Support stakeholders with developing CBL-centered assessment, curriculum, and instruction
- Provide stakeholders with CBL best practices checklists
- Support stakeholders in facilitating sustaining professional development
- Conduct periodic observations of CBL in action and provide feedback and support
- Provide ongoing guidance of CBL implementation to all stakeholders as needed

While there are other ways in which this study can be utilized to transform education, beginning with the steps mentioned above can dramatically improve education to help students use academic skills to develop their communities while strengthening the 21st-century skills needed to thrive in modern careers and life.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Future researchers can utilize this research to understand the historical relationship between education and workforce needs in America and why it is necessary to move towards a new way of teaching and learning that will prepare students for careers and life in the 21st century while helping them help their communities. Future researchers can also use this study to understand why teachers have not been able to successfully implement CBL into the curriculum. This research can also provide evidence of the types of support and knowledge that need to be addressed before the implementation of CBL can occur.



Research on CBL is still new and very limited; therefore, there are many ways to continue to deepen this research. For example, future researchers can conduct a quantitative study on a much larger scale to measure how many teachers agree that support and knowledge are necessary for CBL to be implemented into the curriculum. Moreover, because only 10 out of approximately 75,000 NYC teachers were interviewed for this study, future researchers can conduct more qualitative studies in NYC and other cities, states, and countries. This study interviewed teachers with varying levels of experience; therefore, in the future, the data collected from this study can be disaggregated by years of experience to further identify trends in perceptions. Similarly, future researchers can interview specific demographics of teachers to gain an in-depth understanding of perceptions from distinct groups. Researchers can also interview teachers based on experience with CBL to explore how their views may differ. In addition to exploring barriers from teachers' perspectives, it is essential to also study this phenomenon from the perspectives of other stakeholders such as administrators, students, community partners, parents, and other education stakeholders. Finally, on a broader level, the effectiveness of CBL needs to be studied qualitatively and quantitatively.

## **Conclusions**

A shift in educational approaches is desperately needed to move towards solving the problem of students graduating from high school ill-prepared for 21st-century careers and livelihoods. The literature shows that CBL has the potential to develop students' academic and 21st-century skill sets as they support their communities. Additionally, the conceptual framework demonstrated that unless barriers are removed, successful implementation will not be able to occur. Therefore, using semi-structured interviews, this qualitative phenomenological study sought to answer the question, what barriers prevent New York City public high school teachers from implementing community-based learning into the curriculum? Interviews with ten NYC public high school teachers resulted in 88 unique responses. From the data, support

and knowledge emerged as primary themes for barriers to implementing CBL, with 45 tertiary themes demonstrating lack and need as secondary themes. This study indicated that for community members to be included in the learning process, teachers, administrators, students, community partners, and other stakeholders must receive adequate support and knowledge. Therefore, strategic planning is recommended so all stakeholders can be provided with the support and knowledge needed to implement CBL into the curriculum effectively.

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**Appendix A: Recruitment Post**

Greetings Fellow Educators,

I am currently a doctoral student at Gwynedd Mercy University. I am conducting a study on NYC high school teachers' barriers to implementing community-based learning and am seeking participants. You do not have to know anything about community-based learning in order to participate.

If you are interested in learning more and/or would like to participate, please go to <https://forms.gle/gaUwpqLRQbyWJhM5A>. Please feel free to share with other NYC public high school teachers who may be interested in participating.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Ife Damon

## Appendix B: Adult Consent Form

Thank you for your interest in my study. Below is a consent form that outlines the study. Please review this information and if you are interested in participating enter you email and/or mobile number at the bottom of the form. I will then contact you to set up a time for the interview.

GWYNEDD MERCY UNIVERSITY

Gwynedd Valley, Pennsylvania

Title of Study: Barriers to fostering a community-based learning environment in NYC public high schools

Principal Investigator: Ife Damon

Email address: damon.i1@gmercyu.edu

Study Contact telephone number: xxx-xxx-xxxx

Study Contact Email: damon.i1@gmercyu.edu

What are some general things you should know about research studies?

- You are being asked to take part in a research study. To join the study is voluntary. You may refuse to join, or you may withdraw your consent to be in the study, for any reason, at any time, without penalty.
- Research studies are designed to obtain new knowledge. This new information may help people in the future. You may not receive any direct benefit from being in the research study. There also may be risks to being in research studies.
- Details about this study are discussed below. It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about being in this research study.

- You will be given a copy of this consent form. You should ask the researchers named above, or staff members who may assist them, any questions you have about this study at any time.

What is the purpose of this study?

- The purpose of this research study is to learn about the barriers that prevent NYC high school teachers from implementing community-based learning into their curriculum.
- You are being asked to be in the study because you are a teacher in NYC.

Are there any reasons you should not be in this study?

- You should not be in this study if you are not an NYC DOE high school teacher.

How many people will take part in this study?

- If you decide to be in this study, you will be one of approximately 10 people in this research study.

How long will your part in this study last?

- If you decide to be in this study, your interview will last approximately 30 - 60 minutes and will take place via Zoom. You will also be asked to review and validate the transcript of the interview.

What will happen if you take part in the study?

- You will participate in a one-to-one interview with the principal investigator.
- During the interview you will be asked approximately 3-6 questions. Clarifying questions may be asked depending on responses.
- The interview will be recorded and transcribed.
- You will also be asked to review and validate the interview transcript.

What are the possible risks or discomforts involved from being in this study?

- There are no known risks involved from being in this study.

How will your privacy be protected?

- Interviews will not be identified by name; however, codes for each participant will be created and stored with the participants' data. This will allow the researcher to identify which comments came from which participant. The document with participants' names and corresponding codes will be kept separate from all data in a locked cabinet in the PI's home. Only the primary investigator will have access to individually identifiable data. Video recordings and transcripts will be saved in the primary investigator's password-protected digital storage. Data will be maintained and secured for three (3) years following the completion of the study.
- Participants will not be identified in any report or publication about this study. Although every effort will be made to keep research records private, there may be times when federal or state law requires the disclosure of such records, including personal information. This is very unlikely, but if disclosure is ever required, Gwynedd Mercy University will take steps allowable by law to protect the privacy of personal information. In some cases, your information in this research study could be reviewed by representatives of the University, research sponsors, or government agencies for purposes such as quality control or safety.

Will you receive anything for being in this study?

- You will not receive anything for taking part in this study.

Will it cost you anything to be in this study?

- There will be no costs for being in the study.

What if you are a GMERCYU student?

- You may choose not to be in the study or to stop being in the study before it is over at any time. This will not affect your class standing or grades at Gwynedd Mercy University. You will not be offered or receive any special consideration if you take part in this research.

What if you are a GMERCYU employee?

- Taking part in this research is not a part of your University duties, and refusing will not affect your job. You will not be offered or receive any special job-related consideration if you take part in this research.

What if you have questions about this study?

- You have the right to ask and have answered, any questions you may have about this research. If you have questions or concerns, you should contact the researchers listed at the top of this form.

What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

- All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Institutional Review Board at 215-646-7300, Academic Affairs Office, extension 21791.

**Appendix C: CBL and Primary Types of CBL**

**Community-Based Learning (CBL)**

*Instructional activities that connect what is being taught in schools to students' surrounding communities.*

(Great Schools Partnership, 2014)

**Instructional connections:** Activities connecting content to students' surrounding communities take place within the school building.

**Community integration:** Community resources are brought into the school to enhance learning.

**Community participation:** Students go into the community to enhance learning.

**Citizen action:** The audience for, and potential beneficiaries of, students' work include community organizations and the general public.

(Great Schools Partnership, 2014)

## Appendix D: Community as Partner and Examples

### Community-Based Learning (CBL)

*Any activities in which the **community** is involved as a **partner in the learning** process.*

(Clifford & Reisinger, 2018)

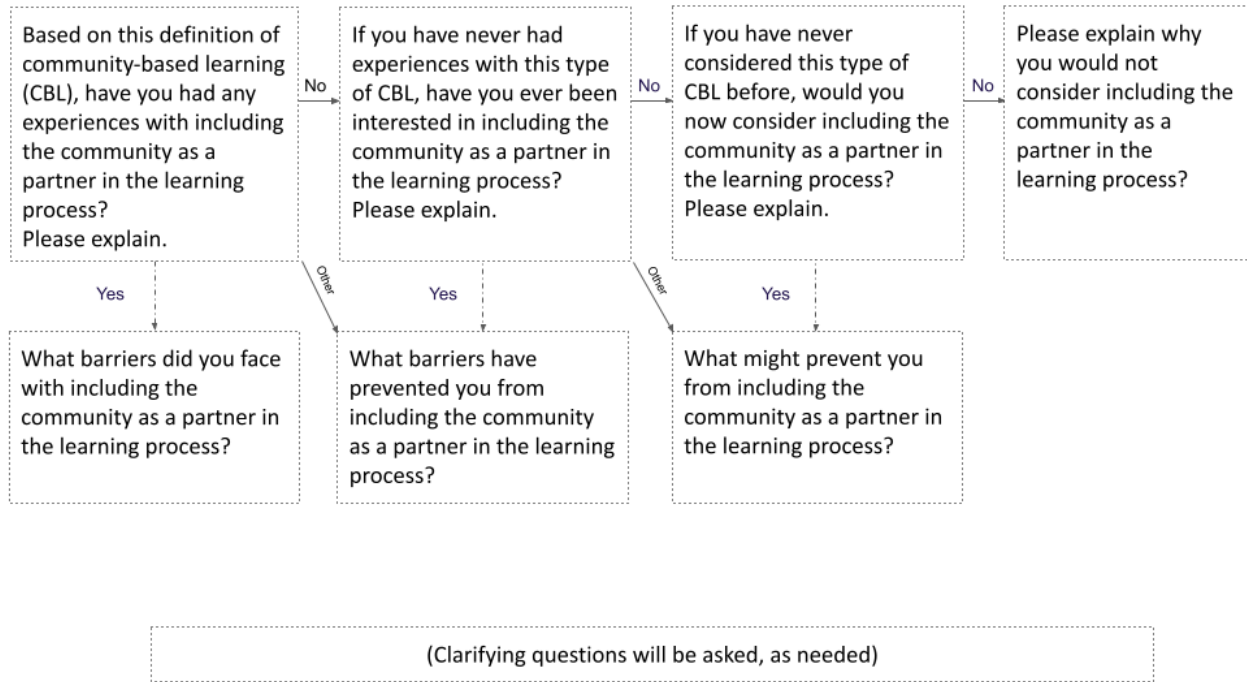
The expectation behind CBL is that **community involvement** will help **students understand the academic content** by using the academic content to **facilitate practical learning** and **contribute to community development**.

(Jagla & Tice, 2019)

#### Examples of CBL

- ★ Completing projects with engineers, construction workers, and fashion designers in Geometry class.
- ★ Completing projects with marine biologist, doctors, and state parks in Biology class.
- ★ Completing projects with reporters, psychologist, and sociologists in History Class.
- ★ Completing projects with activists, lawyers, and politicians in English class.

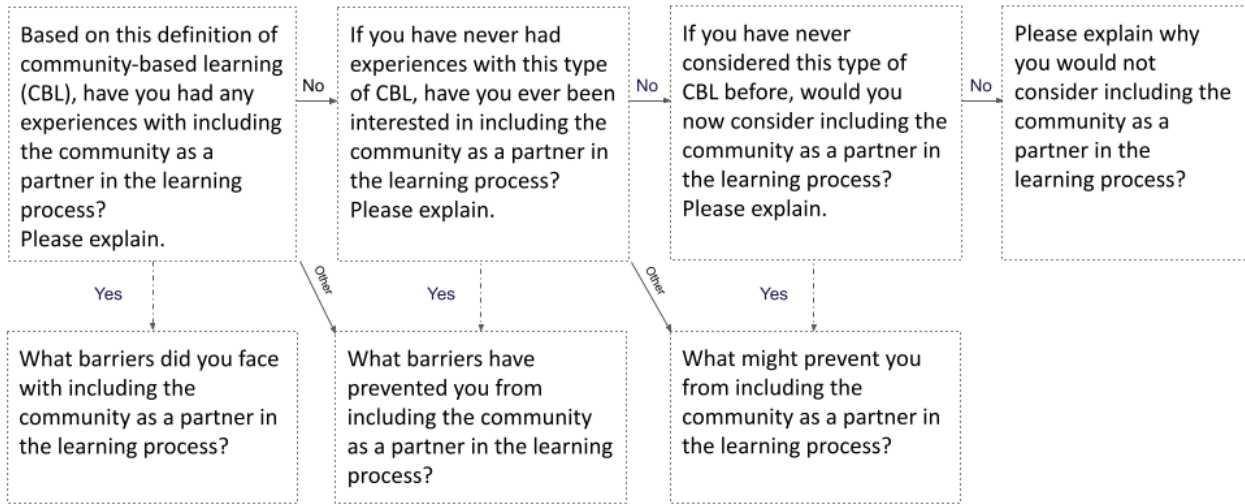
**Appendix E: Interview Questions**





**Appendix F: Interview Protocol and Questions****Interview with HS Teacher #\_\_ (HST\_\_)**

- NYC DOE HS Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Years Experience \_\_\_\_\_ Subject \_\_\_\_\_
- “This meeting will be recorded and transcribed using Zoom w/ my phone recording as a backup”
- Zoom CC on
- Phone recorder on
- Zoom recorder on
- “Thank you for participating in this study. As you saw on the consent form, this study is focused on the barriers that prevent NYC Public HS teachers from implementing CBL in the curriculum. Experience with CBL is not required in order to participate. Depending on your answers, I will ask 2-4 questions, as well as clarifying questions, as needed.”
- General definition - “In general, CBL is defined as ...”
- Study-specific definition - “For the purposes of this study, CBL is defined as ....”
- “Do you have any questions before we begin?”
- “I will leave the definition, explanation, and examples on the screen throughout the interview.”



(Clarifying questions will be asked, as needed)

- “Before we end, is there anything else that you would like to share?”

Interview Notes:

**Appendix G: Letter to Request Participant Review of the Transcript**

Thank you again for taking the time to share your perception about barriers to implementing community-based learning. Please take a moment to review the transcript and if you have any comments or concerns, please let me know within 48 hours.

Thank you,

Ife Damon

Gwynedd Mercy University”

**Appendix H: Summaries, Codes, Subthemes, and Themes**

| <b>HST1 Passage Summaries</b>                                       | <b>HST1 Codes</b>                    | <b>HST1 Subthemes</b> | <b>HST1 Themes</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 5. Lack of understanding from admin                                 | 5. Lack of admin knowledge           | Lack of knowledge     | Knowledge          |
| 5a "More issues than benefits" mindset                              | 5a Lack of admin knowledge           | Lack of knowledge     | Knowledge          |
| 6. Current, traditional curriculum is easier                        | 6. Hard work                         | Process Concerns      | Concerns/Process?  |
| 7. Admin fear too much work                                         | 7. Fear of hard work                 | Process Concerns      | Concerns/Process?  |
| 8. DOE sees current growth as sufficient enough to keep traditional | 8. Complacent system/district        | Ok with status quo    | Complacent         |
| 9. Extensive training for parents and educators is needed           | Parents and educators need knowledge | Need knowledge        | Knowledge          |
| 10. Parents challenge removing traditional (Buy in)                 | 10. Lack of support from parents     | Lack of support       | Support            |

|                                                                             |                                 |                       |                               |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 11. Have to convince people- they need to see it work to believe it         | 11. Need stakeholder knowledge  | Need knowledge        | Knowledge                     |
| 12. Contributors to barriers: admin, parents, and finding willing teachers. | 12. Lack of stakeholder support | Lack of support       | Support                       |
| 12. Contributors to barriers: admin, parents, and finding willing teachers. | 12. Need Teacher support        | Need support          | Support                       |
| 12. Contributors to barriers: admin, parents, and finding willing teachers. | 12. Need parental support       | Need support          | Support                       |
| <b>HST2 Passage Summaries</b>                                               | <b>HST2 Codes</b>               | <b>HST2 Subthemes</b> | <b>HST2 Themes/Categories</b> |
| 3. Educating Community on process                                           | Community needs knowledge       | Need knowledge        | Knowledge                     |
| 4. Partner's liability concerns                                             | 4 Liability concerns            | Liability concerns    | Concerns/Liability???         |
| 5. Need permission/ agreements                                              | 5. Permission needed            | Permission process    | Process                       |

|                                                       |                                       |                    |           |
|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| 6. Admin reluctance due to unknown impact on students | 6. Admin concerns for students        | Admin concerns     | Concerns  |
| 7. Admin pushback                                     | 7. Lack of Admin Support              | Lack of Support    | Support   |
| 8. Admin not wanting involvement or responsibility    | 8. Lack of Admin Support              | Lack of Support    | Support   |
| 9. Tedious process                                    | 9. Too much work                      | Process challenges | Process   |
| 10. A lot of work                                     | 10. Too much work                     | Process challenges | Process   |
| 11. Admin don't want responsibility                   | 11. Lack of Admin Support             | Lack of Support    | Support   |
| 12. Community partners may not have enough time       | 12. Lack of community partner time    | Lack time          | Time      |
| 13. Partners need education                           | 13. Community partners need knowledge | Need knowledge     | Knowledge |
| 14. Teacher time needed to recruit partners           | 14. Teachers need time                | Need time          | Time      |

|                                                                 |                                          |                       |                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 14. Teacher time needed to recruit community partners           | 14. Teachers need process support        | Need process support  | Process               |
| 14. Teacher time needed to recruit community partners           | 14. Teachers need support                | Need support          | Support               |
| 15. Lack of knowledge can cause concerns for community partners | 15. Lack of community partners knowledge | Lack of knowledge     | Knowledge             |
| 16. Completing paperwork                                        | 16. Paperwork                            | Process               | Process               |
| 17. Partner responsibility concerns                             | 17. Responsibility concerns              | Liability concerns    | Concerns/Liability??? |
| 18. Needs to be authentic and for the right reasons             | 18. Implementation needs support         | Need support          | Support               |
| <b>HST3 Passage Summaries</b>                                   | <b>HST3 Codes</b>                        | <b>HST3 Subthemes</b> | <b>HST3 Themes</b>    |
| 2. Students buying in to teachers                               | 2 Teachers need support                  | Need support          | Support               |
| 3 Getting students to be engaged                                | 3 Students need support                  | Need support          | Support               |

|                                                                                               |                                     |                        |           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------|
| 4 Staff attendance due to COVID                                                               | 4 Admin need support                | Need support           | Support   |
| 4 Staff attendance due to COVID                                                               | 4 Sick staff                        | Short staffed          | COVID     |
| 5 Virtual learning has affected students' work skills and cognitive abilities                 | 5 Lack of student knowledge         | lack of knowledge      | Knowledge |
| 6 Getting students and staff to buy in                                                        | Need support from student and staff | Need Support           | Support   |
| 7 Need manpower                                                                               | 7 Need teachers                     | Need support           | Support   |
| 8 Parents are too busy                                                                        | 8 Lack of support from parents      | Lack of support        | Support   |
| 9 Community belief in teachers' expertise                                                     | 9 Lack of support from community    | Lack of support        | Support   |
| 10 Putting it into action                                                                     | 10 Doing the work                   | Completing the process | Process   |
| 11 Admin needs to understand from students and teachers levels to meet them where they are at | 11 Administrative knowledge needed  | Need knowledge         | Knowledge |



|                                                                                         |                                      |                       |                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 12 School food isn't enjoyable and impacts students engagement                          | 12 Students need support             | Need support          | Support            |
| 13 Teachers have too much on their plates                                               | 13 Teachers need support             | Need support          | Support            |
| 14 Hard for teachers to build relationships with so many students                       | 14 Teachers need support             | Need support          | Support            |
| 15 Need to let go of negative connotations of Ts, communities, demographics, & cultures | 15 Stakeholders need support         | Need support          | Support            |
| <b>HST4 Passage Summaries</b>                                                           | <b>HST4 Codes</b>                    | <b>HST4 Subthemes</b> | <b>HST4 Themes</b> |
| 3 Lack of communication                                                                 | 3 Lack of support with communication | Lack of support       | Support            |
| 4 Lack of collaboration due to conflicts of interest                                    | 4 Lack of support with collaboration | Lack of support       | Support            |
| 5 Logistical challenges to making connections to content                                | 5 Lack of implementation knowledge   | Lack of knowledge     | Knowledge          |

|                                                                      |                                           |                           |                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| 5 Logistical challenges to making connections to content             | 5 Lack of implementation knowledge        | Lack of process knowledge | Process            |
| 6 Would like students to collab with elected officials               | 6 CBL plans                               | -                         | -                  |
| 7 Unable to engage with officials running for office                 | 7 Lack of support for teachers            | lack of support           | Support            |
| 8 Admin not welcoming to outside partnerships coming into the school | 8 Lack of support for teachers            | lack of support           | Support            |
| 9 Finances                                                           | 9 Lack of financial support               | lack of support           | Support            |
| <b>HST5 Passage Summaries</b>                                        | <b>HST5 Codes</b>                         | <b>HST5 Subthemes</b>     | <b>HST5 Themes</b> |
| 1 Challenged by colleagues ("why??")                                 | 1 Lack of support from colleagues         | Lack of support           | Support            |
| 2 Lacked support from Admin and Teachers                             | 3 Lack of support from admin and teachers | Lack of support           | Support            |

|                                                              |                                                   |                            |                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| 3 Admin preferred sticking to the curriculum                 | 3 Lack of support from admin - status quo         | Lack of support            | Support            |
| 3 Admin preferred sticking to the curriculum                 | 3 Lack of support from admin - status quo         | Lack of support            | Complacency        |
| <b>HST6 Passage Summaries</b>                                | <b>HST6 Codes</b>                                 | <b>HST6 Subthemes</b>      | <b>HST6 Themes</b> |
| 1 COVID 19 prevented CBL opportunity                         | 1 Pandemic restricted access to CBL opportunities | Covid restrictions         | COVID              |
| 2 Not knowing how to implement, remotely                     | 2 Lack of knowledge on how to implement           | Lack of knowledge          | Knowledge          |
| 3 Visitors not allowed in building due to COVID restrictions | 3 Partnership restrictions due to COVID           | Covid restrictions         | COVID              |
| 4 Admin favorite teachers not supportive of innovative ideas | 4 Lack of support from colleagues                 | Lack of support            | Support            |
| 5 Other teachers prefer to stick with the status quo         | 5 Lack of support from teacher - status quo       | Teachers prefer status quo | Support            |

|                                                                                                               |                                             |                            |            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------|
| 5 Other teachers prefer to stick with the status quo                                                          | 6 Lack of support from teacher - status quo | Teachers prefer status quo | Complacent |
| 6 Not enough autonomy as a teacher.                                                                           | 6 Lack of support from admin                | Lack of support            | Support    |
| 7 Admin has a traditional view of what good teaching is                                                       | 7 Lack of admin knowledge                   | Lack of knowledge          | Knowledge  |
| 7 Admin has a traditional view of what good teaching is                                                       | 7 Lack of support from admin                | Lack of support            | Support    |
| 8 Courses connected to high stakes tests are expected to stick to the curriculum                              | 8 Lack of support for teachers              | Lack of support            | Support    |
| 9 Co-teacher not on board with new ideas                                                                      | 9 Lack of support from colleagues           | Lack of support            | Support    |
| 10 Math involves a lot of standards and teachers may only feel comfortable with teaching how they were taught | 10 Lack of teacher knowledge                | Lack of knowledge          | Knowledge  |

| <b>HST7 Passage Summaries</b>                         | <b>HST7 Codes</b>                      | <b>HST7 Subthemes</b>     | <b>HST7 Themes</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Don't know where to start                           | 1 Lack of teacher knowledge            | Lack of knowledge         | Knowledge          |
| 2 Connecting community interaction to content         | 2 Lack of teacher knowledge            | Lack of knowledge         | Knowledge          |
| 3 Knowing how to build partnerships                   | 3 Lack of teacher knowledge            | Lack of knowledge         | Knowledge          |
| 4 Knowing who is responsible for bringing partners in | 4 Lack of process knowledge            | Lack of knowledge         | Knowledge          |
| 4 Knowing who is responsible for bringing partners in | 5 Lack of process knowledge            | Lack of process knowledge | Process            |
| 5 Knowing if partners are allowed to come in          | 5 Lack of support for teachers         | Lack of support           | Support            |
| 5 Knowing if partners are allowed to come in          | 5 Lack of teacher knowledge            | Lack of knowledge         | Knowledge          |
| 6 Will students find it worthwhile?                   | 6 Lack of support for students- buy in | Lack of support           | Support            |
| 7 Finding partners that will engage students          | 7 Lack support from stakeholders       | Lack of support           | Support            |

|                                                                                               |                                         |                         |                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 7 Finding partners that will engage students                                                  | 7 Lack teacher knowledge                | Lack of knowledge       | Knowledge          |
| <b>HST8 Passage Summaries</b>                                                                 | <b>HST8 Codes</b>                       | <b>HST8 Subthemes</b>   | <b>HST8 Themes</b> |
| 1 Lack of focus and planning for CBL                                                          | 1 Lack of knowledge                     | Lack of knowledge       | Knowledge          |
| 2 Teachers haven't been taught how to connect community to content                            | 2 Lack of teacher knowledge             | Lack of knowledge       | Knowledge          |
| 3 Teacher's struggle with how to let students explore the "why"                               | 3 Lack of teacher knowledge             | Teachers lack knowledge | Knowledge          |
| 4 Teachers need to unlearn traditional approaches and learn CBL approaches                    | 4 Teachers need knowledge               | Need Knowledge          | Knowledge          |
| 5 Teachers have been programmed to think that they have to follow a certain curricular format | 5 Lack of teacher knowledge- status quo | teacher complacency     | Complacency        |

|                                                                                               |                                         |                       |                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 5 Teachers have been programmed to think that they have to follow a certain curricular format | 5 Lack of teacher knowledge- status quo | Lack of knowledge     | Knowledge          |
| 6 Teacher need to be taught how to plan for CBL                                               | 6 Teachers need knowledge               | Need Knowledge        | Knowledge          |
| 7 CBL hasn't been a priority in DOE                                                           | 7 Lack of support from district         | Lack of support       | Support            |
| 8 Teachers are overwhelmed with meeting standards for Regents exam                            | 8 Lack of support from admin            | Lack of support       | Support            |
| <b>HST9 Passage Summaries</b>                                                                 | <b>HST9 Codes</b>                       | <b>HST9 Subthemes</b> | <b>HST9 Themes</b> |
| 1 COVID pandemic prevented implementation of CBL with the local college                       | 1 COVID restrictions                    | COVID restrictions    | COVID              |
| 3 Unclear expectations from the community partner                                             | 3 Lack of teacher knowledge             | Lack of knowledge     | Knowledge          |

|                                                                            |                                       |                        |                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| 3 Unclear expectations from the community partner                          | 3 Lack of support for teachers        | Lack of support        | Support             |
| 4 Students lack the knowledge needed to complete the project               | 4 Lack of student knowledge           | Lack of knowledge      | Knowledge           |
| 5 Students may lose interest if it takes too long                          | 5 Lack of support for students        | Lack of support        | Support             |
| 6 Students may lose interest if they don't have confidence they can do it  | 6 Lack of support for students        | Lack of support        | Support             |
| 7 College needs to understand the students and meet them where they are at | 7 Lack of community partner knowledge | Lack of knowledge      | Knowledge           |
| <b>HST10 Passage Summaries</b>                                             | <b>HST10 Codes</b>                    | <b>HST10 Subthemes</b> | <b>HST10 Themes</b> |
| 1 Getting students to value the project                                    | 1 Lack of support for students        | Lack of support        | Support             |
| 2 Assistant principal didn't support project                               | 2 Lack of support for teachers        | Lack of support        | Support             |



|                                                                |                                           |                   |           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------|
| idea and denied field trip                                     |                                           |                   |           |
| 3 Community partner was not available to collaborate           | 3 Lack of support for teachers            | Lack of support   | Support   |
| 4 Students' mindsets didn't allow them to see the relevance    | 4 Lack of support for students            | Lack of support   | Support   |
| 5 Partner was not committed to understanding the students      | 5 Lack of support from community partners | Lack of support   | Support   |
| 5 Partner was not committed to understanding the students      | 5 Lack of community partner knowledge     | Lack of knowledge | Knowledge |
| 6 Partner wasn't prepared to work with students                | 6 Lack of community partner knowledge     | Lack of knowledge | Knowledge |
| 7 Partners need to understand students in order to engage them | 7 Partners need knowledge                 | Need knowledge    | Knowledge |
| 8 Admin needs to make CBL a priority                           | 8 Lack of support from admin              | Lack of support   | Support   |

BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTING COMMUNITY-BASED CURRICULUM

|                                                          |                                        |                        |                |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| <p>9 Admin needs to bring partners into the building</p> | <p>9 Need admin support</p>            | <p>Need support</p>    | <p>Support</p> |
| <p>10 Teachers lack support from Admin</p>               | <p>10 Lack of support for teachers</p> | <p>Lack of support</p> | <p>Support</p> |

**Appendix I: Response Summaries with Corresponding Themes**

| <b>HST Number</b> | <b>Response Summary</b>                                          | <b>Tertiary Theme</b>                                     | <b>Secondary Theme</b> | <b>Primary Theme</b> |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>HST2</b>       | Community partners may not have enough time                      | Lack of support for community partners' time              | Lack support           | Support              |
| <b>HST4</b>       | Lack of collaboration due to conflicts of interest               | Lack of support for community partners with collaboration | Lack support           | Support              |
| <b>HST4</b>       | Lack of communication                                            | Lack of support for community partners with communication | Lack support           | Support              |
| <b>HST1</b>       | DOE sees current growth as sufficient enough to keep traditional | Lack of support for admin from district due to status quo | Lack support           | Support              |
| <b>HST4</b>       | Finances                                                         | Lack of support for process for admin from district       | Lack support           | Support              |
| <b>HST3</b>       | Staff attendance due to COVID                                    | Lack of support for admin from teachers                   | Lack support           | Support              |
| <b>HST10</b>      | Getting students to value the project                            | Lack of support for students                              | Lack support           | Support              |

|              |                                                                         |                                                      |              |         |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------|
| <b>HST10</b> | Students' mindsets didn't allow them to see the relevance               | Lack of support for students                         | Lack support | Support |
| <b>HST9</b>  | Students may lose interest if it takes too long                         | Lack of support for students                         | Lack support | Support |
| <b>HST9</b>  | Students may lose interest if they don't have confidence they can do it | Lack of support for students                         | Lack support | Support |
| <b>HST7</b>  | Students don't find it worthwhile                                       | Lack of support for and from students- buy in        | Lack support | Support |
| <b>HST10</b> | Partner was not committed to understanding the students                 | Lack of support for students from community partners | Lack support | Support |
| <b>HST7</b>  | Finding partners that will engage students                              | Lack of support for students from community partners | Lack support | Support |
| <b>HST4</b>  | Unable to engage with officials running for office                      | Lack of support for students from community partners | Lack support | Support |
| <b>HST10</b> | Teachers lack support from Admin                                        | Lack of support for teachers from admin              | Lack support | Support |

|              |                                                                                |                                         |              |         |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|--------------|---------|
| <b>HST10</b> | Assistant principal didn't support project idea and denied field trip          | Lack of support for teachers from admin | Lack support | Support |
| <b>HST7</b>  | Knowing how to get partners                                                    | Lack of support for teachers from admin | Lack support | Support |
| <b>HST1</b>  | Contributors to barriers: admin, parents, and finding willing teachers.        | Lack of support for teachers from admin | Lack support | Support |
| <b>HST4</b>  | Admin not welcoming to outside partnerships coming into the school             | Lack of support for teachers from admin | Lack support | Support |
| <b>HST6</b>  | Courses connected to high stakes tests are expected to stick to the curriculum | Lack of support for teachers from admin | Lack support | Support |
| <b>HST2</b>  | Admin don't want responsibility                                                | Lack of support for teachers from admin | Lack support | Support |
| <b>HST6</b>  | Not enough autonomy as a teacher.                                              | Lack of support for teachers from admin | Lack support | Support |
| <b>HST6</b>  | Admin has a traditional view of what good teaching is                          | Lack of support for teachers from admin | Lack support | Support |
| <b>HST2</b>  | Admin pushback                                                                 | Lack of support for teachers from admin | Lack support | Support |

|              |                                                                  |                                                           |              |         |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------|
| <b>HST8</b>  | Teachers are overwhelmed with meeting standards for Regents exam | Lack of support for teachers from admin                   | Lack support | Support |
| <b>HST10</b> | Admin needs to make CBL a priority                               | Lack of support for teachers from admin                   | Lack support | Support |
| <b>HST2</b>  | Tedious process                                                  | Lack of support for teachers from admin                   | Lack support | Support |
| <b>HST6</b>  | Visitors not allowed in building due to COVID restrictions       | Lack of support for teachers from admin                   | Lack support | Support |
| <b>HST2</b>  | Admin not wanting involvement or responsibility                  | Lack of support for teachers from admin                   | Lack support | Support |
| <b>HST5</b>  | Admin and teachers preferred sticking to the curriculum          | Lack of support for teachers from admin due to status quo | Lack support | Support |
| <b>HST5</b>  | Lacked support from Admin and Teachers                           | Lack of support for teachers from admin                   | Lack support | Support |
| <b>HST8</b>  | CBL hasn't been a priority in DOE                                | Lack of support for teachers from district admin          | Lack support | Support |
| <b>HST5</b>  | Lacked support from Admin and Teachers                           | Lack of support for teachers from teachers                | Lack support | Support |

|             |                                                            |                                                              |              |         |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------|
| <b>HST5</b> | Challenged by colleagues ("why??")                         | Lack of support for teachers from teachers                   | Lack support | Support |
| <b>HST6</b> | Admin favorite teachers not supportive of innovative ideas | Lack of support for teachers from teachers                   | Lack support | Support |
| <b>HST6</b> | Co-teacher not on board with new ideas                     | Lack of support for teachers from teachers                   | Lack support | Support |
| <b>HST5</b> | Admin and teachers preferred sticking to the curriculum    | Lack of support for teachers from teachers due to status quo | Lack support | Support |
| <b>HST6</b> | Other teachers prefer to stick with the status quo         | Lack of support for teachers from teachers due to status quo | Lack support | Support |
| <b>HST1</b> | Parents challenge removing traditional (Buy in)            | Lack of support for teachers from parents                    | Lack support | Support |
| <b>HST3</b> | Parents are too busy                                       | Lack of support for teachers from parents                    | Lack support | Support |
| <b>HST3</b> | Community belief in teachers' expertise                    | Lack of support for teachers from community                  | Lack support | Support |
| <b>HST9</b> | Unclear expectations from the community partner            | Lack of support for teachers from community partner          | Lack support | Support |

|              |                                                                                            |                                                     |              |         |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------|
| <b>HST6</b>  | 1 COVID 19 prevented CBL opportunity                                                       | Lack of support for teachers from community partner | Lack support | Support |
| <b>HST9</b>  | COVID pandemic prevented implementation of CBL with the local college                      | Lack of support for teachers from community partner | Lack support | Support |
| <b>HST10</b> | Community partner was not available to collaborate                                         | Lack of support for teachers from community partner | Lack support | Support |
| <b>HST3</b>  | Need manpower                                                                              | Admin need support from teachers                    | Need support | Support |
| <b>HST1</b>  | Contributors to barriers: admin, parents, and finding willing teachers.                    | Admin need support from teachers                    | Need support | Support |
| <b>HST2</b>  | Needs to be authentic and for the right reasons                                            | Other Stakeholders needs implementation support     | Need support | Support |
| <b>HST1</b>  | Contributors to barriers: admin, parents, and finding willing teachers.                    | Other Stakeholders need support from parents        | Need support | Support |
| <b>HST3</b>  | Need to let go of negative connotations of teachers, communities, demographics, & cultures | Other Stakeholders need support from stakeholders   | Need support | Support |



|              |                                                                |                                            |              |         |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|--------------|---------|
| <b>HST3</b>  | School food isn't enjoyable and impacts students engagement    | Students need support from admin           | Need support | Support |
| <b>HST3</b>  | Getting students to be engaged                                 | Students need support from teachers        | Need support | Support |
| <b>HST3</b>  | Students buying in to teachers                                 | Students need support from teachers        | Need support | Support |
| <b>HST10</b> | Admin needs to bring partners into the building                | Teachers need support from admin           | Need support | Support |
| <b>HST3</b>  | Teachers have too much on their plates                         | Teachers need support from admin           | Need support | Support |
| <b>HST3</b>  | Hard for teachers to build relationships with so many students | Teachers need support from admin           | Need support | Support |
| <b>HST2</b>  | Teacher time needed to recruit community partners              | Teachers need support with time from admin | Need support | Support |
| <b>HST3</b>  | Putting it into action                                         | Teachers need process support from admin   | Need support | Support |
| <b>HST2</b>  | Completing paperwork                                           | Teachers need process support from admin   | Need support | Support |

|             |                                                             |                                             |                |           |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------|
| <b>HST2</b> | Need permission/<br>agreements                              | Teachers need process<br>support from admin | Need support   | Support   |
| <b>HST2</b> | Teacher time needed to<br>recruit community<br>partners     | Teachers need process<br>support from admin | Need support   | Support   |
| <b>HST3</b> | Getting students and staff<br>to buy in                     | Teachers need support<br>from teachers      | Need support   | Support   |
| <b>HST3</b> | Getting students and staff<br>to buy in                     | Teachers need support<br>from students      | Need support   | Support   |
| <b>HST1</b> | "More issues than benefits"<br>mindset                      | Lack of admin knowledge<br>of benefits      | Lack knowledge | Knowledge |
| <b>HST1</b> | Lack of understanding<br>from admin                         | Lack of admin knowledge<br>of benefits      | Lack knowledge | Knowledge |
| <b>HST2</b> | Admin reluctance due to<br>unknown impact on<br>students    | Lack of admin knowledge                     | Lack knowledge | Knowledge |
| <b>HST6</b> | Admin has a traditional<br>view of what good teaching<br>is | Lack of admin knowledge<br>of content       | Lack knowledge | Knowledge |
| <b>HST1</b> | Admin fear too much work                                    | Lack of admin knowledge<br>of process       | Lack knowledge | Knowledge |

|              |                                                                          |                                                       |                |           |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------|
| <b>HST2</b>  | Lack of knowledge can cause concerns for community partners              | Lack of community partner knowledge of process        | Lack knowledge | Knowledge |
| <b>HST2</b>  | Partner's liability concerns                                             | Lack of community partner knowledge of liability      | Lack knowledge | Knowledge |
| <b>HST2</b>  | Partner responsibility concerns                                          | Lack of community partner knowledge of responsibility | Lack knowledge | Knowledge |
| <b>HST10</b> | Partner was not committed to understanding the students                  | Lack of community partner knowledge of students       | Lack knowledge | Knowledge |
| <b>HST10</b> | Partner wasn't prepared to work with students                            | Lack of community partner knowledge of students       | Lack knowledge | Knowledge |
| <b>HST9</b>  | College needs to understand the students and meet them where they are at | Lack of community partner knowledge of students       | Lack knowledge | Knowledge |
| <b>HST9</b>  | Students lack the knowledge needed to complete the project               | Lack of student knowledge for process                 | Lack knowledge | Knowledge |
| <b>HST3</b>  | Virtual learning has affected students' work                             | Lack of student knowledge of process                  | Lack knowledge | Knowledge |

|             |                                                                                                            |                                                        |                |           |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------|
|             | skills and cognitive abilities                                                                             |                                                        |                |           |
| <b>HST8</b> | Teachers have been programmed to think that they have to follow a certain curricular format                | Lack of teacher knowledge of content due to status quo | Lack knowledge | Knowledge |
| <b>HST1</b> | Current, traditional curriculum is easier                                                                  | Lack of teacher knowledge of content                   | Lack knowledge | Knowledge |
| <b>HST6</b> | Math involves a lot of standards and teachers may only feel comfortable with teaching how they were taught | Lack of teacher knowledge of content                   | Lack knowledge | Knowledge |
| <b>HST8</b> | Teachers haven't been taught how to connect community to content                                           | Lack of teacher knowledge of content                   | Lack knowledge | Knowledge |
| <b>HST7</b> | Connecting community interaction to content                                                                | Lack of teacher knowledge of content                   | Lack knowledge | Knowledge |
| <b>HST8</b> | Teacher's struggle with how to let students explore the "why"                                              | Lack of teacher knowledge of planning                  | Lack knowledge | Knowledge |
| <b>HST6</b> | Not knowing how to implement, remotely                                                                     | Lack of teacher knowledge of planning                  | Lack knowledge | Knowledge |

|             |                                                                                            |                                       |                |           |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|-----------|
| <b>HST4</b> | Logistical challenges to making connections to content                                     | Lack of teacher knowledge of planning | Lack knowledge | Knowledge |
| <b>HST8</b> | Lack of focus and planning for CBL                                                         | Lack of teacher knowledge of planning | Lack knowledge | Knowledge |
| <b>HST7</b> | Knowing who is responsible for bringing partners in                                        | Lack of teacher knowledge of process  | Lack knowledge | Knowledge |
| <b>HST7</b> | Don't know where to start                                                                  | Lack of teacher knowledge of process  | Lack knowledge | Knowledge |
| <b>HST7</b> | Knowing how to build partnerships                                                          | Lack of teacher knowledge of process  | Lack knowledge | Knowledge |
| <b>HST7</b> | Finding partners that will engage students                                                 | Lack of teacher knowledge of process  | Lack knowledge | Knowledge |
| <b>HST7</b> | Knowing if partners are allowed to come in                                                 | Lack of teacher knowledge of process  | Lack knowledge | Knowledge |
| <b>HST3</b> | Admin needs to understand from students and teachers levels to meet them where they are at | Admin need knowledge                  | Need knowledge | Knowledge |
| <b>HST2</b> | Partners need education                                                                    | Community partners need knowledge     | Need knowledge | Knowledge |

|              |                                                                          |                                             |                |           |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------|
| <b>HST10</b> | Partners need to understand students in order to engage them             | Community partners need knowledge           | Need knowledge | Knowledge |
| <b>HST2</b>  | Educating Community on process                                           | Community partners need knowledge           | Need knowledge | Knowledge |
| <b>HST1</b>  | Have to convince people- they need to see it work to believe it          | Other Stakeholders (parents) need knowledge | Need knowledge | Knowledge |
| <b>HST1</b>  | Extensive training for parents and educators is needed                   | Other Stakeholders (parents) need knowledge | Need knowledge | Knowledge |
| <b>HST1</b>  | Extensive training for parents and educators is needed                   | Teachers need knowledge                     | Need knowledge | Knowledge |
| <b>HST8</b>  | Teachers need to unlearn traditional approaches and learn CBL approaches | Teachers need knowledge                     | Need knowledge | Knowledge |
| <b>HST8</b>  | Teachers need to be taught how to plan for CBL                           | Teachers need knowledge                     | Need knowledge | Knowledge |