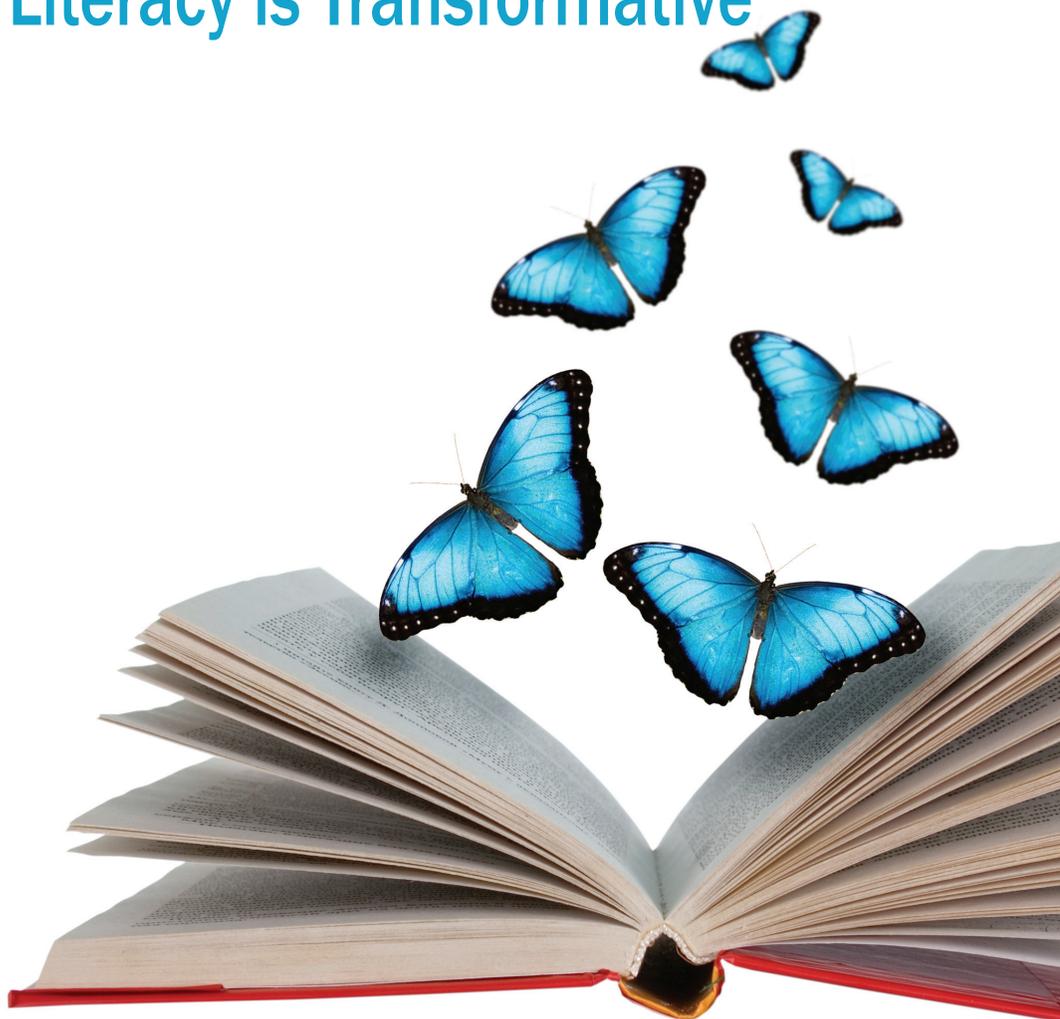


Association of Literacy Educators and Researchers Yearbook, Volume 35

Literacy is Transformative



Editors:

Susan Szabo

Linda Martin

Timothy Morrison

Leslie Haas

Lizabeth Garza-Garcia



LITERACY IS TRANSFORMATIVE



The Thirty-Fifth Yearbook A Doubled Peer Reviewed Publication of the Association of Literacy Educators and Researchers

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This is the last ALER Yearbook that the editorial team of Susan Szabo, Linda Martin, Timothy Morrison, Merry Boggs, and Leslie Haas has co-edited. We would like to acknowledge the tremendous work of so many of our colleagues who have given their time and their expertise to make this Yearbook possible.

As always, we have many people to THANK for the completion of this volume. First, we wish to thank all those authors who worked diligently through the editing process in order to share their research, thoughts, and stories of their good work to add to the body of literacy knowledge. Second, we wish to thank the keynote speakers for their inspirational and motivational words of wisdom both at the conference and in their articles. Third, we would like to thank our editorial board members, as they continue to provide detailed editing suggests to both new and seasoned authors with ideas for revision. This helps create many high quality articles and continues to add rigor to this Yearbook's publication. Finally, we are grateful to the members of the Board of Directors who have continually supported the editorial team and the publication of the Yearbook, as well as Sylvia Reed, the Publication Committee Chairperson. And finally, we would like to thank our graduate assistant Lizabeth Garza-Garcia.

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SS, LM, TM, & LH

INTRODUCTION

For our 56th annual meeting, the Association of Educators and Researchers met in Grand Rapids, Michigan at the Amway Grand Hotel. Each year, our conference attracts attendees from within the United States and beyond its borders. Attendees come from an array of educational settings, hold various roles, and assume numerous types of responsibilities. Our annual conference is recognized for its congeniality and camaraderie among the attendees. The conference allows us to make connections, to learn from each other and to push our thinking as we grow both as professionals and people. This year's conference theme was *Literacy Is Transformative*, which we also used as the title for this year's Yearbook, Volume 35.

This organization has long been the home of some of our nation's most notable literacy experts. At the Grand Rapids conference, these literacy professionals once again engaged us in dialogue of the utmost importance through their presentations and informal conversations throughout the conference. The articles included in this volume are representative of these dialogues that can lead to transformation, possibilities, and risk.

The Yearbook begins with the article representing John Smith's presentation to the membership. In his presidential address, John shared with the membership his experiences as a literacy volunteer to help Annie, a sixty year old widow, learn how to read. In his speech, entitled *Teaching Annie to Read*, John talked about how he deviated from the workbooks he was given by the Literacy Council, asked Annie to bring her Bible, and how they started reading using shared reading. In addition, he talked about the many lessons he learned over the two years of tutoring and how Annie became a friend to his family and a favorite among his office staff.

The second section reveals the specifics of a special group of presenters, the invited keynote addresses. The first article represents the speech given during the General Assembly entitled, *Transformative Practices for Literacy Teaching and Learning: A Complicated Agenda for Literacy Researchers*, by Taffy Raphael.

In her speech, she talked about how literacy leadership needed to reach out to the community so that shared leadership could develop reforms designed to improve students' literacy achievement. Taffy talked about transformation at the federal level with the development of the common core curriculum and moved to transformation at the school level. She ended by talking about Seven-Levels to success. The second speaker was Laurie Elish-Piper, who addressed the attendees at the annual Newcomers Luncheon. Her presentation was entitled *The Transformative Power of ALER: Growing Professionally through Mentoring, Collegiality, and Friendship*. She shared with the attendees that ALER was her favorite professional organization, as it is the friendliest, most supportive, and most focused professional development group for literacy education. She talked about the “nuts and bolts” of ALER, the awards and grants that support ALER members, as well as ways members (new and old) could become active and support ALER. The third speaker was Nell Duke, who addressed the attendees at the Awards Breakfast. Her keynote speech was entitled *The Students' Literacy Lives through Reading and Writing for Real-World Purposes*. She talked about how the Common Core State Standards draw attention to reading purpose and call for engaging students in writing for a variety of tasks, purposes, and audiences, including external, sometimes unfamiliar audiences. She also talked about the importance of preparing preservice and practicing teachers to create contexts in which students read and write for real-world purposes, as transforming students' literacy lives entails transforming our own practices as teacher educators. Finally, Robert J. Rickelman was the J. Estill Alexander Forum speaker. His speech, *Tapping into the Common Core Standards*, addressed what our preservice and inservice teachers should be learning and doing in our teacher preparing programs, and what resources are already available to help teacher educators planning lessons and assessments related to the common core standards.

The third section of the Yearbook contains our award winners' research. The dissertation winner, Michael Manderino from Northern Illinois University, entitled his research *Transforming Literate Practices for Adolescents: Intersecting Disciplinary Literacy and New Literacies*. His study investigated the ways that students processed multiple multimodal sources for historical inquiry using think-aloud protocols. Findings suggest that less proficient readers exhibited similar reading processes as well as disciplinary thinking skills as they worked across multiple multimodal texts.

The fourth section of the Yearbook contains the speeches of the ALER's membership award winners. The Albert J. Mazurkiewicz Special Services Award is awarded to members for special service and/or significant contributions to ALER. This year, the award went to Mary Beth Sampson for her 20+ years of

serving on the ALER Board in one capacity or another. The Laureate Award is awarded for mentoring/ teaching, and longevity in ALER. This year, the award went to Judy Richardson.

The remaining sections of the volume contain articles that have been sorted into three overarching categories: *Transforming K-12 Teachers' Literacy Practices*, *Transforming Preservice Teachers' Literacy Practices*, and *Transforming Literacy Practices from a Student Perspective*. The articles within each of these sections are a great read.

It is our hope that the “scholarship of teaching” represented by our keynote speakers, our award winners, and our authors will provide new insights and possibilities that will support and extend literacy research.

SS, LM, TM, & LH

PRESIDENTIAL
ADDRESS

TEACHING ANNIE TO READ

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Dr. John A. Smith

University of Texas at Arlington

Abstract

Dr. John A. Smith is professor and chair of the Department of Curriculum & Instruction at the University of Texas at Arlington. He holds a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from Brigham Young University, a master's degree in Elementary Curriculum from the University of Utah, and a doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

His 10 years of elementary classroom teaching experience include 1st, 2nd, and 5th grades and serving as a Chapter 1 reading teacher. Dr. Smith also taught at-risk students entering kindergarten and 1st grade for three summers at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Dr. Smith served three years as Reading Coordinator for the Chapel Hill City School District, during which time the district's Chapter 1 program was recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as an Exemplary Program. Dr. Smith taught reading methods courses for 20 years at Utah State University and is in his fifth year at UT Arlington.

Dr. Smith has worked extensively with teachers in elementary school classrooms as a Reading Excellence Act reading coach and as a Reading First technical assistant. Dr. Smith's research has included studies of comprehension strategy instruction and the use of children's literature in content-area reading instruction. He has written grants that have supported Early Reading First, Reading First, and other professional development projects. Dr. Smith's teaching awards include Utah State University College of Education Teacher of the Year, USU Department of Elementary Education



Teacher of the Year, USU Extension Program Teaching Award, and the Mortar Board "Top Prof" award.

I met Annie for the first time many years ago in an empty room in the basement of her First Baptist Church. She was sixty years old, widowed, had no children, and lived alone in government housing. Her husband had also not been able to read. When I asked Annie why she wanted to learn to read, she replied that she wanted to be able to "get along better," but mostly she wanted to read her Bible.

Being a reading educator, my interest in literacy led me to volunteer with the local literacy council, where I was assigned to teach Annie. She and I agreed to meet twice a week.

My goal for our first reading lesson was to find out how much, if anything, Annie could already read. I had brought with me an informal reading inventory, and opened it to the first word list (pre-primer level) and asked her to begin reading. Out of the twenty words on that preprimer list, Annie recognized only three. I thought perhaps she could do a little better if the words were in the context of a story, so I gave her the first pre-primer level passage to read. She hesitated and fumbled so badly, that after the first line I had her stop, and I put my materials away. It was plain to me that Annie simply could not read, period.

When the volunteers at the Literacy Council gave me Annie's name and phone number, they also gave me a set of workbooks designed for teaching adults to read. These workbooks did not work for Annie and me. There were two reasons for this. First, the writing in the workbooks was extremely artificial and stilted. Sentences like "Cal Hill gave Jill Hill a bill" were confusing and insulting to Annie.

The second reason the workbooks proved unusable was that they encouraged Annie to figure out words by only using the sounds of the letters. This was particularly frustrating to Annie because she and I frequently didn't pronounce our words and letters the same way. For example, one day while reading together, we came to a sentence which read, The squirrel likes to climb the tree. Annie couldn't figure out the word 'climb.' After providing a few clues, I finally told her that the word was 'climb.' She looked at me strangely as if I were speaking a foreign language. I repeated the word 'climb,' then the entire sentence, The squirrel likes to climb the tree. Suddenly, she lit up and said, Oh, you mean 'clam,' the squirrel likes to 'clam' the tree. Because of this and other differences in pronunciation, it was apparent that emphasizing initial reading by letter sounds only would be too tedious, confusing, and discouraging for Annie.

So, we decided to try another approach. I asked Annie to bring her Bible to our next reading lesson, and we launched into a version of shared reading. In practice, this approach involved finding meaningful passages in Annie's Bible that she wanted to read, audio recording them on her cassette recorder, working together on the passages during our lessons, and having her practice reading the passages along with the recordings at home each night.

Our reading lessons followed a predictable pattern. I would read a selected passage aloud to her slowly and expressively, and made an audio recording of it. I then explained the passage to her: setting, characters, events, and theme. I often felt like a Sunday School teacher. Then I would read the passage aloud again several times, pointing to the words and inviting Annie to read aloud with me. Through successive readings I would gradually transfer the responsibility of reading the passages to Annie. Much like a piano teacher, I worked with Annie on each passage until she was able to read it with good fluency, phrasing, and expression. Then, after she had learned to read a passage, we would move on to another passage, frequently returning to each passage for review. We complemented the Bible passages with simple word work, making and manipulating spelling patterns with alphabet letters written on Post-It notes, then finding these spelling patterns in the passages she was learning to read.

To provide some variety, I decided to also have Annie begin learning to read simple stories from a variety of primer level children's books. We began with the book *Mouse Tales* by Arnold Lobel. This book contains six very clever short stories for beginning readers.

As Annie read from her Bible passages or children's stories, I would either tell her the words she didn't know or else give her clues so that she could figure them out for herself. We reviewed the harder parts of the passages repeatedly until I was sure that she could remember them when she studied them again at home. After having gone through the first story or passage, we'd repeat the procedure with the second one. After our 60-75 minutes together, I gave Annie her assignments for the next lesson.

After several months of these lessons, Annie came to me one day with a huge smile on her face. She proudly told me that last Sunday she had read aloud from her Bible in her Sunday School class. She excitedly described to me how her friends' mouths had dropped open in wonder as she began to read aloud fluently and expressively and explained the passage to them. She told me how a friend of hers got all upset because she had been taking reading lessons longer than Annie and "still couldn't read a thing." This is not to imply that Annie could easily read the Bible on her own at that point, but she could read some portions of it, and that was a start.

I then asked Annie if she'd like to read a story to a kindergarten class. This idea appealed to her, so I made arrangements with a teacher at a nearby school. One week later, Annie went to the kindergarten and had the time of her life reading *The Journey* from the Arnold Lobel book, *Mouse Tales*. After she read to the students, she helped them with their book reports (drawing pictures of their favorite parts of the story). The kids gave her a tremendous amount of adoration and positive reinforcement. The teacher enjoyed Annie's reading so much that she invited Annie to come back the next week. For the next two years Annie prepared a story and read to the kindergarten students each Monday morning. They adopted her as their Grandmother.

Our reading lessons lasted for two years until my career took me to another city. During those years, Annie became a true friend to my family and a favorite among the people in my office (the secretaries even gave her a birthday party). Our reading lessons, though focused around children's stories and her Bible, also included activities such as writing stories about her niece and nephew, reading through newspaper ads, examining bus schedules, driving around town reading signs and billboards, taking reading trips to the grocery store, and doing math problems on the calculator she bought.

Most of the credit for Annie's success is her own. Her tenacious indomitable spirit seldom got discouraged. She knew that learning to read is difficult, but she put forth the necessary effort. Annie learned a lot through our reading lessons, but I know for a fact that I learned a lot more.

KEYNOTE
ADDRESSES

TRANSFORMATIVE PRACTICES FOR LITERACY TEACHING AND LEARNING: A COMPLICATED AGENDA FOR LITERACY RESEARCHERS

GENERAL ASSEMBLY SPEAKER

Taffy E. Raphael

University of Illinois at Chicago & SchoolRise LLC

Kathryn H. Au

SchoolRise LLC

Jacquelynn S. Popp

University of Illinois at Chicago

Abstract

Taffy E. Raphael, Ph.D., Professor of Literacy Education at the University of Illinois at Chicago and President of SchoolRise LLC, conducts research on literacy and school change. She directed Partnership READ, a nine-year project to improve literacy instruction through professional development, receiving the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education's Best Practices Award for Effective Partnerships. She received International Reading Association's Outstanding Teacher Educator in Reading Award, Distinguished Alumni Awards from both the University of Illinois



at Urbana-Champaign and the University of North Carolina - Greensboro, and the Literacy Research Association Oscar Causey Award for Lifetime Contributions to Literacy Research. A member of the Reading Hall of Fame, she served on the Board of Directors of International Reading Association and the Board, Treasurer, and President of Literacy Research Association.

Lewis-Spector and Jay, in their 2011 Association of Literacy Educators and Researchers white paper on literacy leadership for the 21st century, argue that to achieve high standards for all, literacy leadership needs to extend beyond “designated building or district leaders” to “shared leadership among stakeholders within and outside schools” (Lewis-Spector & Jay, 2011, p. 2). Their call to widen the lens of responsibility for literacy leadership combined with the “transformation” theme of this ALER annual meeting led us to examine educational transformation within two spheres of influence—federal policies and schools—on teachers’ practice. We discuss a vision of teachers’ work within these two systems that are attempting reform. The overarching theme we explore is that of *sustainable* versus *episodic* approaches to reform designed to improve students’ literacy achievement.

We define sustainable approaches as those that are long-term and systemic in nature. Sustainable approaches involve simultaneously addressing the needs of multiple constituencies and contextual complexities, seeking to involve participants in developing solutions while steadily building their ownership over improvement efforts. In contrast to sustainable approaches, episodic approaches are more short-lived and narrowly focused in nature. From our perspective, these approaches tend to focus on leverage through specific points of entry, with externally designed solutions emphasizing compliance, to be implemented by participants. We argue for sustainable approaches because of evidence that success in literacy improvement requires continuous, disciplined effort over a period of time (Mosenthal, Lipson, Torncello, Russ, & Mekkelsen, 2004). Next, we will discuss implications from the differences between sustainable and episodic approaches to literacy improvement.

Our nation’s educational system consists of multiple layers of decision-makers from local to federal levels. However, teachers are usually the primary focus in discussions of accountability for student performance. This phenomenon has become even more pronounced with recent discussions about standardizing – and making high stakes – teacher performance evaluations. While policies indicate that all evaluations are designed to improve instruction, we are skeptical about the success of evaluation-driven systemic change when the focus is on one set of players (i.e., teachers). From our own research with over 100 schools, we have found that teachers’ success is limited in schools without key elements in

place, and schools have difficulty sustaining change if they are at odds with state and federal policies. The reverse is also true. At the federal level, when policies designed to effect change are enacted, transformation is unlikely when schools' and teachers' expectations and goals do not align (Dutro, Fisk, Koch, et al., 2002; Cohen, 1990). In our opinion, the current over-emphasis on the role of teachers without looking at the larger contexts surrounding teachers' work is characteristic of an episodic approach to change, one that is unlikely to produce the desired changes in literacy achievement.

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Our country's current shift toward national standards (albeit without labeling them as such) – the Common Core State Standards Initiative (2010) – and related new high stakes tests (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, 2013; Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, 2013) represents its primary attempt to enact policies that insure our graduates can thrive in a global economy (Schmidt, Houang, & Shakrani, 2009; Tucker, 2011; Zhao, 2012). Concern in the U.S. stems from current international comparisons showing that relative to students and schools across the world, our students are viewed as coming up short (Mullis, Martin, Foy, & Drucker, 2012; OECD, 2011). Implementing the Common Core (or CCSS) is a major force for school change designed to improve instruction and the quality of students' performance. Success in addressing this issue will require a long-term, sustainable effort; yet, sustainable change occurs only when schools and teachers are on board and have ownership of the change process.

In the past 15 years, the authors along with our colleagues have helped schools engage in long-term, sustainable change initiatives to promote transformations at school and teacher levels using a standards-driven approach called the Standards-Based Change (SBC) Process (Au, 2005; Au & Raphael, 2011; Raphael, Au, & Goldman, 2009; Raphael, 2010). This constructivist approach to professional development (Raphael, Vasquez, Fortune, Gavelek, & Au, in press) emphasizes deep engagement in a universal design process, establishing a clear vision of the graduate, related grade level benchmarks, and evidence systems to inform instructional decisions (Au, Strode, Vasquez, & Raphael, in press). The successes we have seen as our schools developed into cohesive professional learning communities, with rising student engagement and achievement levels, make us optimistic. We believe that, if implemented carefully, the Common Core can provide an opportunity for positive, sustainable change to be initiated in many schools. It has the potential for professional development leading to deep learning, avoiding the potential problem of new policies being ignored or practiced in a way that does not reflect reformers' intentions (Cohen, 1990).

Understanding the contexts in which effective professional development can occur is a first step towards achieving success and sustainable improvement. We first discuss the federal context within which schools are situated. Then we describe the SBC Process as an example of a professional development model designed to promote sustainable change. We draw on examples from schools in Hawaii, Oregon, Michigan, and Chicago to illustrate key components of school transformation. In our concluding comments, we discuss the value of investing in such models, despite their demands, for long-term, sustainable school reform in literacy that meets the needs of diverse schools, teachers, and learners.

TRANSFORMATION AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL: THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

In interpreting the potential of a major national initiative such the Common Core, it is informative to examine highly effective educational systems in other countries (i.e., those producing students who perform at consistently high levels on PISA, PIRLS, and TIMSS assessments). Evidence from student performance on assessments suggests that such educational systems foster transformative literacy—literacy for understanding, use, and reflection on written texts as well as literacy to achieve individual goals and participate in society. These systems share five features (Schmidt et al., 2009; Tucker, 2011): (a) professionalism, (b) comparable salaries, (c) approach to recruitment, (d) local assessments, and (e) common standards.

With regard to professionalism, highly effective educational systems view teaching as a calling. Teachers and the teaching profession are respected and those who serve as teachers feel valued. Through salaries that are comparable to other professions – law, medicine, engineering – these countries, in the colloquial expression, “put their money where their mouth is,” conveying to teachers and the public that the profession is important in their society. Teachers are recruited from the top performing 10% of the student population, made possible both by the professionalism of the field and the related salary competitiveness. Once recruited, these top students commit to the profession, engaging in a rigorous program of study to become a teacher. A highly visible program in the United States, Teach for America, stands in contrast. While recruitment of high performing students is key, there the similarity ends. These recruits receive a few months of formal teacher education and are asked to make only a two-year commitment. Furthermore, the retention rate is lower than for teachers from mainstream teacher preparation programs (Donaldson & Johnson, 2011) for a variety of reasons (e.g., some participants view the program as a stepping-stone to more lucrative and highly valued careers).

Also in contrast to the United States, countries with highly effective educational systems emphasize local assessments rather than annual high-stakes tests with accompanying externally-developed and mandated ‘benchmark’ tests. Having recruited, educated, and retained highly qualified professionals, they respect the knowledge of teachers and their ability to make instructional decisions based on these local assessments. The teachers know what their students must achieve because of common standards: clear, shared goals that describe where students must be at the end of the year. They know that as professionals, they are responsible for making the decisions to insure that students meet these goals (Darling-Hammond & McCloskey, 2008).

In the U.S., the rationale (by policymakers) for implementing the Common Core is that countries with highly effective educational systems have centralized standards. Given its narrow focus, this rationale can be seen to grow from an episodic approach to improvement. In attempting to improve the curriculum in the U.S., we should acknowledge that we are focusing with the Common Core on only one of the five parts of the puzzle. In national educational policy, without all the other pieces in place (such as emphasis on local assessments rather than standardized tests), it remains an open question whether the U.S. can achieve the same results as other countries considered highly effective. Further, while many aspects of the Common Core are promising, there is unevenness in the research base that would give us confidence in these standards leading to improved student progress (Pearson, in press).

In a document analysis of the Common Core, Pearson identified these five key assumptions that appear to be the basis for the Common Core: (a) we know how learning progresses, (b) literacy development is most likely when taught in service of disciplinary learning, (c) standards make learning goals visible but teachers control how to help students achieve these goals, (d) texts need to be challenging, and (e) comprehension includes knowing what the text *says*, what it *means*, and how texts can be used to meet a broad range of goals.

Pearson examined the strength of the research base underlying each of these assumptions, the clarity with which it is represented within the standards, and from those two factors the likelihood that the Common Core could or would be implemented with fidelity. Some of the assumptions, such as the emphasis on teachers' prerogative, have a fairly strong research base. However, Pearson notes that documents such as the *Publisher's Criteria* (Coleman & Pimentel, 2011) narrow professional choice and may work against the intent of the initiative. Other assumptions are more problematic. For example, the learning progressions themselves have a very weak research base, with relatively low clarity.

Without a compelling research base for the standards, wholehearted adoption leads to frustration, as they are likely to be revised or replaced – based on recent experiences, just as a school has become comfortable with them – undermining the sustainability of the change effort. Any given set of standards does not last long; in many states (e.g., Hawaii, Illinois, Texas), there have been at least three new standards initiatives in the past 15 years. We believe that educators would be wise to use the advent of the Common Core as a prime opportunity for initiating a sustainable approach to change at the school level, viewing the document as an important resource against which the present literacy curricula can be evaluated. This would be in contrast to treating the Common Core as a hard and fast directive for what and how to teach, which is the route typically taken when standards are associated with an episodic approach to change.

A second caution stems from the potential danger of modeling curriculum in the U.S. after highly effective educational systems in other countries, when these countries do not rely on student achievement on standardized tests as their sole measure of effectiveness. Zhao (2012) warns that countries that have traditionally scored high on standardized assessments are actually not the same countries that flourish economically. Ironically, economically successful countries (e.g., United States, United Kingdom, Australia) historically have had neither a centralized curriculum nor national standards. Zhao asserts that standardized testing diminishes thinking and creativity. Our country is moving to more standardization and a more centralized system, based primarily on the importance of higher test scores. In contrast, Zhao (2012) calls for a system that enhances

creativity and curiosity, supports risk taking, and encourages an entrepreneurial spirit. He maintains that the goal of education should not be to create good test-takers, but productive and progressive thinkers as represented in the U.S. by entrepreneurs and creative leaders such as Steve Jobs, Maya Angelou, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Thomas Edison. To Zhao's arguments, we would add that an over-reliance on raising test scores is likely to foster change of an episodic rather than sustainable nature. Test scores are not the only or even most highly prized outcome for many students, families, and educators, given that many colleges value students' well-rounded interests and passion for learning as much as their academic performance (Strauss, 2009).

Even with these cautions in mind, the Common Core initiative offers some reasons for celebration. First, the standards bring much needed attention to high levels of student thinking, representing a marked shift away from overemphasis on basic skills. Second, the Common Core is efficient in providing a vision of student outcomes while placing the responsibility for making curricular decisions in the hands of the teachers. In contrast to the recent past with many state standards listing hundreds of specific learning goals, the Common Core standards are streamlined and the document provides a limited number of samples. Instead of a detailed list of what students need to accomplish at each grade level, the sample standards give educators a picture of learning goals at each grade level. Thus, teachers are ultimately held responsible for determining how the domains are substantiated for students in their schools at their grade level. Giving teachers this level of autonomy more closely approximates the professionalism credited to educators in effective systems in other countries. If teachers are simultaneously provided professional development experiences to hone their ability to align instruction and student performance for each learning goal, the Common Core has the potential to become a powerful resource for educators and the occasion for stimulating sustainable improvement efforts. The degree to which such potential is realized will be influenced by the school context in which the change process is embedded.

TRANSFORMATION AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL: LESSONS FROM RESEARCH

While the global and national policy contexts set the stage for improving literacy education in a broad conceptual way, the school context is where the action occurs and where a change effort is enacted and made sustainable. The considerable research base on school change provides the basis for how to approach the change process in a way that makes the investment of time and energy worthwhile (i.e., so that it is sustainable).

Just as it is useful to learn from comparative studies of effective educational systems in other countries, research on what distinguishes more and less successful schools (measured by test scores, teacher satisfaction, curriculum coherence, etc.) can be used to inform the school change process. In their review of research on school change, Taylor, Raphael, & Au (2011) summarize attributes of schools identified as successful. These attributes include strong leaders, a culture of professionalism where teachers had local control and choices about what instructional approaches and assessments to use, and an emphasis on student self-efficacy. This research on effective schools provides a solid foundation for identifying what works. However, Taylor and her colleagues note that knowing what is effective in some schools doesn't mean struggling schools can simply reorganize and enact similar practices to make the desired change. As Purkey and Smith (1983) stated several decades ago, "it is one thing to demand that all schools be effective; it is an entirely different matter to assume . . . that what has positive effects in one setting will invariably have the same effects in another" (p. 493).

School change in literacy initially was driven by curriculum-based reform. These reforms tended to be programmatic (e.g. America's Choice; Success For All), and research detailing the strengths and challenges of these reforms further informed understandings of the change process (Taylor et al., 2011). The curriculum-based programs were straightforward and designed to be relatively easy for schools to implement, with built-in accountability through assessments, curriculum, and instructional pacing guides. However, even in schools showing gains in students' local test scores, in national comparisons achievement tended to remain below national norms. Furthermore, even schools initially strong in implementing a particular reform program often proved unable to sustain change. Darling-Hammond (2007) hypothesizes that schools implementing such externally developed programs may not sustain progress because of a lack of teacher ownership over the curriculum. The lack of flexibility in reform programs minimizes opportunities for teachers to adapt the curriculum to fit the particular needs of students. Furthermore, a dependency on externally constructed curriculum tends to "de-professionalize and disempower teachers" (Raphael & Au, 2012, p. 24).

Research in effective schools and curriculum reform has led to studies focusing on what is needed to help unsuccessful schools become effective sites for sustaining innovations leading to improved literacy teaching and learning. In this work, professional development (for teachers, curriculum leaders, administrators) is at the core. The effective schools and curriculum reform research provided pieces of the puzzle, while current research examines how these various pieces of the puzzle come together for successful school transformation.

The review by Taylor et al. (2011) identified six features shared by successful school change projects across the world. Each successful project:

- Involved an external partner
- Emphasized one whole school community (versus a number of different internal communities) collaborating on a common initiative and emphasizing mutual problem solving
- Emphasized reflection on practice tied to the concept of changing instruction (e.g., not simply looking at student data, but using that data to inform teaching)
- Involved learning that was tailored to the schools' unique needs, and
- Included ongoing learning for leaders, notably principal leadership.

A RESEARCH-BASED APPROACH TO SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL CHANGE: THE SBC PROCESS

The Standards Based Change (SBC) Process, developed by Au and Raphael, is one of these successful school change projects, consistent with these six features just stated. The SBC Process grew from a desire to understand what it took to customize reform for individual schools across a wide variety of settings and serving an array of learners. The initial research focused on Hawaii, the 10th largest district in the United States (Au, 2005) and Chicago, the 3rd largest (Raphael, 2010).

Seven Levels to Success

Au and Raphael's research on the SBC Process led to the Seven Levels to Success, a developmental model of school change, with incremental markers for schools working toward sustainable improvement (Raphael, Au, & Goldman, 2009) (see Table 1).

The theory of action underlying this model begins with making visible the school's collective identity (Weber & Raphael, 2013) and constructing the infrastructure consistent with helping the school achieve that identity. This infrastructure supports the design process for creating a coherent curriculum (Newmann, Smith, Allenworth, & Bryk, 2001) guiding assessment and instruction and the identification and organization of resources to support teaching and learning (i.e., classroom practices). With high quality classroom practices

TABLE 1 Seven Levels to Success

Level	Major Task	School Activity
1 Recognizing a Need	School leaders gain knowledge of the SBC Process and learn the steps leaders must take to support progress	Leaders and teachers participate in the Needs Assessment. Leaders attend leadership seminars to build their knowledge of literacy, leadership, and the SBC Process.
2 Organizing for Change	School leaders build their infrastructure to support school improvement with the SBC Process	Leaders strengthen the school's infrastructure (e.g., time to meet, committee structures). Grade level or department liaisons strengthen their knowledge of literacy, leadership, and the SBC Process. Norms are established.
3 Working on the Building Blocks	Introduce the SBC Process components to the whole school	PLC articulates the school's literacy philosophy and vision of the graduate. Grade level and disciplinary teams discuss their contributions to ensuring students' progress toward that vision.
4 Pulling the Whole School Together	Complete all the components of the SBC Process	Grade level and disciplinary teams in collaborative work groups create and align benchmarks within key strands, align with external standards as needed, and construct their evidence systems for tracking and sharing school-wide student progress and instructional adjustments for progress up the staircase.
5 Sharing Results	Regular intervals of whole-school sharing student results	Whole-school sharing and analysis of student progress occurs regularly (beginning of school year for planning, mid-year checks and adjustments, end-of-year for analysis and reflection for sustainable improvement.
6 Implementing the Staircase Curriculum	Create grade level or department guides to document the staircase curriculum	Teachers organize their work into curriculum guides before moving to next school subject area. Guides are organized in terms of: (a) Overview with whole-school philosophy, vision, norms, (b) Grade level benchmarks, (c) evidence system, (d) instructional and learning strategies, and (e) resources.
7 Engaging Students and Families	Formal involvement of students, families, and community members in student progress	Portfolios for student progress, student-led parent-teacher conferences.

[Updated from Raphael, Au, & Goldman (2009) and reprinted from Raphael & Au (2012)]

in place, teachers focus on improving students' engagement, achievement, and ultimately, their ownership of the learning process. Driven by this theory of action and the Seven Level model, the SBC Process provides support for schools to build teacher knowledge and develop a "content rich curriculum, aligned with high expectations" through an "infrastructure that supports collaborative work groups with a common vision of the high quality graduate each and every staff member commits to attaining" (Raphael & Au, 2012 p. 20).

Just as a roadmap is used to plan a trip, the Seven Level model is used to guide schools on each leg of their journey as they construct their staircase curriculum in a designated area (e.g., comprehension, writing, literate thinking). At each level, schools have specific tasks they are expected to complete, such as those related to establishing a strong infrastructure or sharing assessment results. The exact means that participants use to accomplish these tasks may differ, depending on the resources and circumstances at any given school, but the tasks to be completed remain the same and are clear and consistent.

The overarching, long-term goal of sustainable reform represents the final destination of the journey. With this goal in mind, like a long-distance trip, indicators along the way mark the degree to which one is staying on track. The long-term goal for schools engaging with the SBC Process is to create a professional learning community able to engage in ongoing, continual improvement in all core subject areas, although the process usually starts with literacy. The following sections provide a closer look at how schools progress through the Seven Levels, as they work toward sustainable improvement.

School Transformation through the Seven Levels

Needs assessment. When we begin a professional development partnership with a school, we start by determining the school's present standing on the Seven Levels to Success and the school's needs relative to their standing. We determine a school's needs based on three clusters of dimensions identified in the research literature as key contributors to improving teaching and learning, and doing so in a sustainable way. The first cluster consists of four dimensions related to school identity and infrastructure. These dimensions include *school leadership* (Mitchell & Sackney, 2006; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001), *literacy leadership* (Wampole & Blamey, 2008), *professional learning community* (DuFour, Eaker, & DuFour, 2005; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006), and *professional development* for the school as a community (Dillon, O'Brien, Sato, & Kelly, 2011; Fisher & Frey, 2007). The second cluster consists of three dimensions related to classroom practices. These dimensions include: 1) *assessment systems*, 2) *instructional strategies and* 3) *tools*, and *curricular resources* (Fisher & Frey, 2007; Kamil, Mosenthal,

Pearson, & Barr, 2000). The third cluster consists of two dimensions related to student outcomes: 1) *engagement* and 2) *achievement* (Guthrie, Klauda, & Ho, 2013).

Results of needs assessments conducted at over 100 schools show that no two schools are exactly alike; each school shows a unique pattern of strengths and weaknesses. A thorough understanding of a school's starting point—its present standing as on the Seven Levels—helps us determine specific steps the school can take to progress to the next level and allows us to avoid wasting precious time because we have over- or underestimated a school's capacity for sustainable change. Thus, the needs assessment provides the basis for customizing professional development to fit each school's specific circumstances (from redesigning their school improvement plan to knowledge-building activities designed for administrators, curriculum leaders, and teachers), in keeping with the purpose of helping the school advance on the Seven Levels to Success. Our goal is help the school advance to Levels 6 and 7, the levels at which there can be sustained gains in student achievement.

We collect a combination of self-report, artifacts, and testing data, and then analyze these data using time-tested qualitative and quantitative approaches to determine the school's entering level. After we have analyzed the evidence and prepared a comprehensive report, we meet with the school's leaders to debrief about the findings and present our recommendations about the tasks that need to be accomplished to advance the school through the Seven Levels. We work collaboratively with the school's leaders to develop a plan for accomplishing specific tasks over the next year and then sketch out a multi-year plan. The focus of planning is how professional development will proceed from year to year, with the purpose of building capacity for carrying out literacy improvement efforts at the school level. We follow a capacity building approach to promote sustainability of improvement efforts, knowing that ongoing dependency on an external partner is typical of episodic rather than sustainable approaches.

Levels 1 and 2: Creating or tweaking infrastructure. Almost all schools start their journey with the SBC Process at Level 1 or 2, according to their results on the needs assessment. This means that our initial work, as external partners, involves helping the school create the strong infrastructure required to sustain a multi-year literacy improvement effort. Our approach to infrastructure development is based on our research, which indicates that Three Pillars are key to sustainable change (Au, Strode, Vasquez, & Raphael, in press). The Three Pillars are: (1) a strong principal who is an instructional leader, (2) a trusted, knowledgeable, and effective curriculum leader, and (3) a vertical leadership team consisting of teacher leaders representing every major constituency in the school. In

elementary schools, these constituencies are usually grade levels plus the special education department. In secondary schools, the constituencies are often departments but they might be career pathways, academies, or similar groups.

We begin by making sure the principal understands the importance of focusing the school's resources on SBC Process work. Typically, principals have been accustomed to dividing resources across so many initiatives that it has not been possible for the school to do a good job in any particular curriculum area. We ask principals to break this counterproductive pattern by providing teachers with the time and resources, such as professional development, needed to implement literacy improvements at a high level of quality.

We spend considerable time coaching the key curriculum leader, because this person has the responsibility for overseeing the details of the school's work with the SBC Process. While the support of the principal is obviously important, the principal usually does not have the time to attend to all the particulars of SBC Process implementation, such as making sure that all grade levels have completed drafts of their benchmarks. As external partners, we maintain ongoing email and phone communication with the key curriculum leader. However, at a typical school, we are only present on-site 4 – 8 days per year; this schedule is deliberately designed to build the school's capacity and prevent over-reliance on an external partner. The key curriculum leader oversees the school's progress during the times between our visits, and as this individual's ability to lead the SBC Process work at the school level grows an important component of sustainability falls into place.

As a sustainable approach to literacy improvement, the SBC Process requires the active involvement of all teachers in the school-wide professional learning community. We begin the work of reaching out to all teachers by providing extensive professional development to the vertical leadership team, consisting of teacher leaders as mentioned above. These teacher leaders serve as the main group assisting the key curriculum leader in advancing the SBC Process and bringing all teachers into the school-wide professional learning community. At almost all schools, teachers have not worked together across all grade levels to develop their own curriculum. To prepare teachers for this venture, we work with the vertical leadership team to help the school establish the norms that will insure high functioning collaborative work groups (usually grade levels or departments). The norms established by the teachers at a K-5 school in Oregon capture their commitment to respect one another, focus, and engage with the process:

- Being open minded, supportive, positive and flexible
- Addressing concerns with the whole group respectfully & above board

- Respecting individual participation styles through active and meaningful work
- Staying focused on our needs
- Being an engaged participant

Our experience working with many schools on the SBC Process has convinced us of the critical importance of spending ample time on the first two levels in the Seven Level model, to establish a solid foundation for improvement. Contrary to our advice, some schools have attempted to reach higher levels without taking the time to establish the infrastructure needed to support a sustainable literacy improvement effort. For example, we have seen schools try to “jump” to more advanced levels, such as working on changes to their curriculum and instruction (levels 4 and 5) before they were ready. In some cases these schools were able to produce short-term achievement gains over the course of year. However, their efforts collapsed the following year because they lacked the strong leadership and organizational structure needed to keep improved practices in place. In essence, by taking shortcuts, these schools reverted from a sustainable approach to an episodic approach, with predictably poor long-term results.

The images in Figure 1 represent two very different school infrastructures. The image on the left represents the typical school structure. The principal and key curriculum leader drives the curriculum and professional development and direct teachers to follow their recommendations. In this fragile system, a change

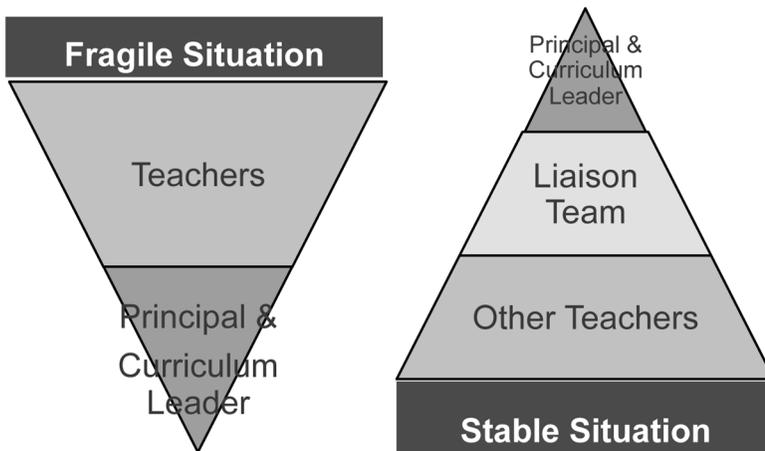


Figure 1

Fragile Versus Stable School Situations

in one of the key players (principal or key curriculum leader) all too readily leads to the collapse of the entire effort. As shown in the image on the right, the SBC Process moves schools toward the more stable and sustainable situation. In schools with a strong infrastructure, all players have a voice and are actively involved in the literacy improvement effort to upgrade teaching and learning in the school. The vertical leadership team works closely with teachers and the key curriculum leader, and the key curriculum leader is in constant communication with the principal, so all members are represented in discussions of literacy improvement and kept informed of the school's directions. A consistent, open flow of communication reflects the professionalism that is characteristic of highly effective educational systems. It increases teachers' buy-in and promotes timely decision-making, factors critical to the sustainability of improvement efforts.

Levels 3, 4, and 5: Constructing and enacting the vision and curriculum. Once the school's infrastructure is in place, it allows teachers to engage in meaningful conversations about a collective vision for their graduating student. Teachers articulate their description of a graduate from their school that reflects the school's collective identity. In Hawaii, teachers at a suburban elementary school created the following vision of their graduates:

Manana Elementary School is a place where students, families, staff and community come together as an 'ohana (family) to actively participate and support one another in pursuit of success. We offer rigorous curricular and extra-curricular opportunities to develop technologically competent individuals, who will apply their knowledge now and in the future. Our students are passionate forward thinkers who take initiative of their learning and exercise socially responsible behavior while striving for intellectual, emotional, and physical excellence.

Once this overall vision of the graduate is in place, we work with teachers on a literacy-specific subset of this vision, based on the school's chosen focus of reading, writing, or literate thinking. This literacy-specific vision of the excellent student aligns with the school's vision of the graduate. For example, here is the same school's vision of the excellent writer:

Manana Elementary School graduates are experienced in the writing process and strive to perfect the writer's craft. They express their individuality while writing meaningfully across genres for a variety of purposes and audiences.

To take another example, the vision of the excellent graduating writer developed by teachers at a Chicago K-8 school stated that students would possess “the necessary skills and strategies to communicate effectively in all realms of literacy for the purpose of being a critical thinker, problem solver, and advocate in a continuously changing world.” This vision is consistent with the goals represented in the Common Core (e.g., college and career readiness) but was customized by teachers to address their aspirations for their students, most of whom are Latino and speak Spanish as their primary language. Like teachers working in highly effective educational systems around the world, establishing a clear vision provides the school with a visible outcome and guides subsequent work detailing what it will take to achieve this outcome.

Guided by these vision statements, schools functioning at the middle sections of the Seven Levels to Success (Levels 3 - 5) use their collaborative work groups to build the components in the SBC Process To Do Cycle: (1) a staircase curriculum, consisting of grade by grade end-of-year benchmarks, (2) an evidence (assessment) system to track students’ progress toward these benchmarks, and (3) evidence-based instruction in keeping with teachers’ analyses of student performance. To promote sustainability, it is important for teachers to take an active role in constructing these three components and customizing them for their students and their school. In episodic approaches to literacy improvement, teachers are generally asked to take externally developed components and implement them, without adjustments, in their school. This is described as implementing an externally developed program with fidelity. We have found the constructivist orientation of the SBC Process to be better at promoting sustainable improvement for a number of reasons.

One way that the SBC Process contributes to sustainability is by allowing teachers to gain a deep understanding of curriculum, assessment, and instruction. For example, in terms of the staircase curriculum, we ask teachers to determine the benchmarks or end-of-year outcomes for their grade levels. We involve teachers in a step-by-step process of drafting benchmarks, based on their students’ needs, that are consistent with relevant external standards, such as the Common Core. We then have teachers engage in a process of internal alignment. Teachers work across grade levels within the school to make sure that benchmarks at each grade build on those that come before and lead up to those that follow. By the time external and internal alignment activities have been completed, teachers have a deep understanding of the benchmarks for their grade level, as well as a good working understanding of the benchmarks for all grades in their school.

In the next steps in the SBC Process to Do Cycle, we guide teachers in a similar, step-by-step fashion to construct their own evidence system and

evidence-based teaching. Teachers first develop an evidence system including performance tasks and rubrics. As with the benchmarks, these performance tasks are aligned to relevant external sources. For example, Hawaii is a member of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), so teachers align their own performance tasks with samples available on the SBAC website. Needless to say, teachers find it challenging to develop suitable performance tasks and rubrics, especially for benchmarks in areas of higher level thinking, such as reading comprehension and critical response. However, teachers persist with this work because they established the benchmarks and want to know how well students are progressing in meeting these targets. Once the evidence system is in place and performance task results can be obtained, teachers can see whether students are making satisfactory progress toward meeting the benchmarks. The third component, evidence-based teaching is a logical next step, because it enables teachers to address the literacy learning of students at all levels of performance - whether working on, meeting, or exceeding benchmarks, according to the rubric. This professionalism that is emphasized as teachers construct systems to support educational decision-making is characteristic of those highly effective educational systems described earlier and, in schools that have enacted this model, not surprisingly lead to stronger outcomes for students.

With evidence-based teaching in place, one advantage to the SBC Process comes into play: teachers attribute gains in student outcomes to their own efforts. As teachers work to develop their school's own curriculum, assessment, and instruction components, they see how these three components relate to one another. This gives teachers the ability to use the three components to promote their students' literacy learning. At the end of their school's first year with the SBC Process, teachers often approach us with comments such as, "I now understand how everything fits together, and I know I can help my students get farther next year." When we work in schools that have tried one external program after another without success, we see that teachers feel powerless and skeptical about their own ability to promote students' learning. When they see the results they can obtain with the SBC Process, using components they developed themselves, they regain their professional confidence. As they start to see gains in students' literacy learning, they know that they are on the right track and become committed to continuing the work. Sustainability becomes more likely when teachers see that their students are benefiting from the SBC Process.

A second advantage to engaging in the SBC Process is that everyone in the school-wide professional learning community strives toward the same vision, which further supports sustainability. Guided by the SBC Process, teachers work closely together within grade levels and departments. They also engage in regular

opportunities to learn about student performance results within grade levels and departments other than their own, and to see how literacy curriculum, assessment, and instruction are functioning across the whole school.

In an SBC Process evidence system, the performance tasks are administered three times a year, with school-wide sharing of these pretest, mid-year, and posttest results. In the fall, teachers use the results to plan for the immediate future and lay out general plans for the year. They determine areas in which students may need extra support and enlist relevant resources (e.g., special education teacher, bilingual or ELL support, peer tutors). They select and organize instructional resources. Midyear, when the system is administered a second time, teachers use the results to check on progress and make those mid-year corrections necessary to ensure all students have the best opportunity to achieve the end-of-year benchmarks. Sharing of results of the post-test or year-end administration is an occasion for celebrating student progress as well as for identifying improvements to curriculum, assessment, and instruction for the following year.

What sets this evidence system apart from typical benchmark tests is that it emphasizes local assessments characteristic of highly effective educational systems, accompanied by public conversations designed to inspire critical analysis within grade level teams and across the school as they examine the effectiveness of their system. Following administration of each assessment, there is a whole-school session in which grade levels share with one another what their students have accomplished to date and the specific instructional plans they are planning to enact for students at different achievement levels, particularly for students not on track for attainment of the end-of-year benchmarks.

For example, the grade 6 teachers at a suburban school in Hawaii discovered during a sharing session that their performance task was at the same level of difficulty as that for grade 5. The grade 6 teachers told their colleagues that they would be developing a new, more challenging performance task for implementation in the new school year. The other teachers were encouraged by the fact that the grade 6 teachers were reaching for a higher level of achievement, building on the foundation put in place by earlier grades.

This example illustrates a third advantage of the SBC Process in terms of sustainability. The grade 6 teachers benefitted from the school-wide sharing session by seeing that they could raise their expectations for students' performance. Had these teachers not been participating in and receiving the support of a school-wide professional learning community, they would not have known how they could contribute to their students' growth as literacy learners and to the elevation of their school's expectations. Knowing that their school is moving

forward together gives teachers a positive attitude toward the literacy improvement effort and thus improves the chances for a sustained effort.

Levels 6 and 7: Documenting the curriculum and building ownership. As schools enter the advanced levels of the Seven Levels to Success (Levels 6 and 7), the emphasis is on giving teachers the time and support needed to document the many improvements they have made to their curriculum, assessment, and instruction through the SBC Process. As they were working their way through Levels 3 - 5, teachers created many products, such as vision statements, benchmarks, performance tasks, and rubrics. Typically, they have collected these in a thick binder. As the school enters Level 6, we guide teachers to organize these products following Tyler's (1950) time-tested categories of goals for student learning (vision statements, benchmarks), assessment (evidence system, including performance task and rubrics), instructional strategies (evidence-based teaching), and instructional materials (such as novels that students read). Teachers and schools have the option of organizing their products online (through a website or wiki or using mapping software) or in hard copy (in three-ring binders).

Curriculum documentation serves the important function of giving teachers a product to show for the considerable time and thought they have invested in working through the SBC Process. It is at this point that teachers can look back and see all that they have accomplished. Furthermore, by organizing their products, identifying gaps in their work, and so forth, teachers improve their understanding of the details of their curriculum, assessment, and instruction. Because they have the opportunity to review the curriculum documentation of the other grades and departments, they gain a better picture than ever before of teaching and learning across the whole school. In terms of sustainability, a fourth advantage of the SBC Process becomes evident at this juncture: the ownership teachers feel over their school's improved literacy curriculum. They find satisfaction as well in seeing consistent gains in student achievement that can now be sustained year after year. And they have the resources organized for ease of use over time.

In our experience, consistent with the research literature on effective professional development (Newmann, King, & Youngs, 2000), teachers with voice and ownership over the improvement process are more open to active engagement during professional development activities and seek out opportunities for advanced study. For example, an optional Fellows Program for masters level work in literacy instruction, offered as part of the work in Chicago for six years, attracted 15 to 30 teachers a year, with over 35% going on to complete their masters degrees and to obtain certification as a reading specialist.

Once teachers have taken ownership of the curriculum, they can see that the logical next steps center on building their students' ownership of literacy and literacy learning. We guide teachers to make sure that students understand the benchmarks for their grade level as well as the rubrics for performance tasks, which should be presented in student-friendly language. Student portfolios are implemented in coordination with the three-times-per-year administration of performance tasks. Schools have the option of scheduling three-way conferences during which students go over the contents of their portfolios and discuss their progress with their parents. Students take ownership, as they understand what they need to learn, evaluate their own performance, share their progress with others, and set goals for future learning.

Gradually, teachers are able to make the curriculum transparent not only to students but to their parents as well. At a meeting at a K-6 school in Hawaii, one of the mothers, a high school math teacher, commented on her children's achievement as writers. Her older child had been in the school when it had just started to use the SBC Process to improve its writing curriculum. However, her younger child had experienced the improved curriculum from grades K – 4. This mother commended the teachers because she could see continuity in instruction from grade to grade, resulting in a high level of writing proficiency for her younger child. This illustrates a fifth benefit to sustainability of the SBC Process: it can potentially lead to student and parent ownership of the curriculum, extending the learning community beyond the teachers.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Through our research and work as external partners, we have come to appreciate the difference between sustainable and episodic approaches to change. Our nation, in a familiar refrain, is calling for action to lead to school improvement. Yet, as Payne (2008, p. 47) has written, "...most of what we call school reform has not had the depth nor the intensity to cut into the deeper tangle of problems," leading to (reflected in the title of his book) "so much reform, so little change." Episodic solutions have yet to lead our country's schools, teachers, and students to ongoing improvements in literacy achievement. They have yet to close the persistent gap in achievement between students from linguistically, economically, and culturally diverse families and those from mainstream homes. We believe in the promise of sustainable change initiatives, particularly when enacted to move students to high levels of thinking, college and career readiness, and long-term personal satisfaction. While Common Core can set the types of goals we want for our student it will take teacher ownership and commitment as they address the needs of their specific students for our country to move in the directions we

desire. Based on our research with quite a diverse set of schools, we have learned three powerful lessons for supporting the type of work that moves beyond episodic initiatives to those that lead to sustainable change.

First, we believe that it is critical to absolutely trust the process. When we've made exceptions, such as assuming schools can move to more advanced developmental stages without a strong infrastructure, we've failed every time. However, when schools trust the process and do the necessary work at each stage of development, we continually observe steady growth in schools. What this indicates to us very strongly is that in trusting the process, trusting the research findings on which it is based, we provide the basis for a school to engage in a sustainable change process.

Second, transformation at any level cannot occur without high functioning, collaborative work groups. These collaborative groups may benefit from the work of others (e.g., federal support and national committees that helped to create a set of common standards; examples of successful professional development from other schools). But, sustainability requires ownership, and ownership cannot occur without the opportunity and active engagement with our immediate colleagues. It is not sufficient for schools to be organized 'on paper.' Groups must actually function well together. If tension exists between two grade levels, making vertical meetings challenging, it must be addressed since a school is only as strong as its weakest link. And, we owe all students, but especially those who depend on school for learning, high quality, coherent instruction throughout their school career.

The third lesson from our work with schools is that when schools reach advanced levels of development and are able to sustain change initiatives (i.e., use their system for continual improvement), our role as an external partner changes, but does not end. We help schools develop their capacity to identify their own needs and seek out ways to improve, and find that as schools face new challenges (e.g., new sets of standards come out, new assessments are required, a curricular area is to be developed or refined), we are often called on once again. Our relationship with the school provides them with help should they need it. As Lewis-Spector and Jay (2011) have suggested, what's critical is shared leadership. And to that we would add, a deep understanding of how to support these multiple layers as they seek to improve in an ever-changing context.

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THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF ALER: GROWING PROFESSIONALLY THROUGH MENTORING, COLLEGIALITY, AND FRIENDSHIP

GIVEN AT THE NEW COMERS LUNCHEON

Laurie Elish-Piper
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Abstract

Laurie Elish-Piper is a Presidential Teaching Professor and Literacy Clinic Director in the Department of Literacy Education. Prior to her current position in higher education, Laurie worked as an elementary and middle school teacher and an educational therapist in a clinical setting. Laurie's research, publications, and presentations focus on literacy coaching, readers' rights, family literacy, and parent involvement. Her recent research has focused primarily on the relationship between literacy coaching and student reading and writing achievement and has resulted in multiple publications and presentations with her colleagues.



I have been an active member of the Association of Literacy Educators and Researchers for twenty years. I have been a presenter, reviewer, division chair,

member of the Board of Directors, member of the Executive Committee, and President of ALER. In these many roles, I have come to know this organization and its members well, and I can honestly say that it is my favorite professional organization. It is the friendliest, most supportive, and most focused professional development group for literacy teacher education. Additionally, ALER offers great value for its members. Membership and conference registration rates are among the lowest in the profession, but the quality is high in terms of our conference, journal, yearbook, awards, initiatives, and opportunities for networking and leadership.

I attended my first College Reading Association (CRA; now ALER) conference in 1993 in Richmond, Virginia. It was, in fact, my first professional conference and my first presentation. I was heartened that people attended the 8:00 AM session we presented, and I was a bit star-struck to meet big names in the field like Jerry Johns, Linda Gambrell, Donna Alvermann, and Norm Stahl. I was thrilled to have real conversations with them and other members, and I was amazed at how kind, supportive, and friendly everyone was to me, a brand new doctoral student member! I have attended every conference since then except in 1998 when my son was born in mid-August. The spirit of collegiality and support in this organization causes many of us to come back to the conference year after year, to urge our new colleagues to join, and to build meaningful professional collaborations with other members.

GETTING TO KNOW ALER: THE NUTS AND BOLTS

New members might ask, “What is ALER, and what does it offer for its members?” In the next few paragraphs, I’ll provide a brief overview of the organization. I also highly recommend visiting the organization’s website at <http://www.aleronline.org> for more detailed information. The Association of Literacy Educators and Researchers (ALER) was previously known as the College Reading Association (CRA) until 2009. As the organization approached its 50th anniversary, the membership voted to select a new name to reflect a broader focus on literacy at all levels. The organization’s goals are: 1) To promote standards and competency within the profession; 2) To stimulate the self-development and professional growth of teachers and reading specialists at all educational levels; 3) To encourage the continuing improvement of college and university curricula and encourage preparation programs for teachers and reading specialists; and 4) To encourage the continuing improvement of administrative, clinical, diagnostic, and instructional practices related to the learning process. ALER is organized around four divisions: Adult Learning, Clinical Research and Practice,

College Literacy, and Teacher Education. Members may join as many of the divisions as they wish, and each division engages in a variety of activities including the annual division meeting at the conference, collaborative research, newsletters, and networking opportunities.

ALER provides a variety of publications to support its members. The organization publishes the highly regarded journal, *Literacy Research and Instruction*. The organization also publishes the peer-reviewed *ALER Yearbook* and the quarterly newsletter, *Literacy News*. In addition, the Adult Learning Division publishes the online journal, *Exploring Adult Literacy*. ALER recently published a 50th Year History of the Organization (for more information, visit: <http://www.aleronline.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=23>). In 2011, ALER published its first white paper, *Literacy Leadership for the 21st Century* (available at: <http://aler.affiniscape.com/associations/12847/files/ALER%20White%20Paper%20on%20Literacy%20Leadership%20Final.pdf>) and a new white paper, *Literacy in the Era of the Common Core State Standards*, is in development. These publications provide information for members and also outlets for their scholarly work. As is true for many ALER members, my first publication was in the organization's yearbook, and I highly recommend that newer members consider submitting their work to ALER outlets for review and possible publication.

The organization's annual conference is held from Thursday evening until Sunday morning during the first weekend in November. Upcoming locations include Dallas, Texas (2013), Del Ray Beach, Florida (2014), Costa Mesa, California (2015), Myrtle Beach, South Carolina (2016), and St. Petersburg, Florida (2017). All new members are welcome to submit proposals and to volunteer to serve on the program committee to review proposals. Once you are at the conference, I encourage you to introduce yourself, to talk with seasoned members of the organization whose work you have followed, and to attend the social events like the opening reception, Saturday evening event, and Presidential reception so you can begin to form your ALER professional network of colleagues and friends. I can honestly say that I met many of my closest professional collaborators at the annual conference, and I suspect that same will be true for you too.

SUPPORTING ALER MEMBERS: AWARDS AND GRANTS

ALER is all about supporting its members, and it offers a variety of awards and grants. The organization's awards are summarized in Table 1, and as you will note, the awards include some for newer members and others for more seasoned members. For more information, visit the "Awards" tab of the website.

TABLE 1 ALER Awards and Grants

Award	Description
J. Estill Alexander Future Leaders in Literacy Awards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master's Research Paper Award • Dissertation Award 	Awards given to the outstanding Master's Research paper and the outstanding Dissertation.
A.B. Herr Award	Recognizes a professional educator who has made outstanding contributions to the field of reading.
Albert J. Mazurkiewicz Special Services Award	Recognizes special service and/or significant contributions to ALER.
ALER Laureate Award	Recognizes an ALER member who has influenced other reading professionals through mentoring, teaching, and other activities; has longevity and active participation in the organization; and engages in scholarship with students, teachers, and other professionals.
Jerry Johns Promising Researcher Award	Honors and supports research by a junior ALER member whose work is beyond the dissertation stage. The award of recognizes research that addresses significant questions for reading/literacy and extends understanding of its development, assessment, and/or instruction from early childhood to adult level.
Judy Richardson Literacy as Living Legacy Award	Supports a literacy project related to an existing need in a community or school that typically is not supported by other public or private funds.
Literacy Teacher Education Grant	Provides up to \$2,500.00 to support a research study that addresses significant questions in literacy teacher education.

ENGAGING ALER MEMBERS: EXPERIENCES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Shortly after I was asked to deliver the New Member Luncheon Address, I decided I needed to represent and share more than just my own experiences in the organization. To that end, I emailed over 20 long-time ALER members and leaders, and asked them to respond to the following prompt, "Please send me a

President and ALER Laureate Award winner noted, “Many current leaders in literacy education began their careers attending and presenting at ALER. Many also made connections to people who would become lifelong friends and future collaborators. Take advantage of getting to know the person sitting next to you at the conference. You might end up doing great work together!” Finally, Mary Roe, former President, summed up her experiences in this way—ALER is “a community of scholars who truly value and care for each other, providing a place to learn and grow. And of this, I am certain.”

FINAL THOUGHTS

As I reflect on my own experiences as an ALER member for 20 years, I realized that ALER is the site of many of my professional “firsts.” These include my first professional presentation, my first publication, my first committee service, my first proposal reviewing experience, my first editorial board experience, my first cross-institutional collaboration, and my first leadership opportunity. I hope that your membership in the organization will be as productive, rewarding, and enjoyable as mine has been. I encourage you to experience your professional “firsts” in ALER and to build your own network of colleagues, friends, mentors, and mentees. If you do, I suspect that you too will look forward to the annual conference as a kind of “coming home” to visit, share, learn, and recharge for the coming year. Welcome to ALER, and I look forward to meeting you and working with you in the future.

TRANSFORMING STUDENTS' LITERACY LIVES THROUGH READING AND WRITING FOR REAL-WORLD PURPOSES

AWARDS BREAKFAST KEYNOTE

Nell K. Duke

University of Michigan

Abstract

*Nell K. Duke, Ed.D., is a professor of language, literacy, and culture and faculty associate in the combined program in education and psychology at the University of Michigan. Duke's work focuses on early literacy development, particularly among children living in poverty. Her specific areas of expertise include development of informational reading and writing in young children, comprehension development, and instruction in early schooling, and issues of equity in literacy education. She currently serves as Co-Principal Investigator on projects funded by the Institute of Education Sciences, the National Science Foundation, and the Spencer Foundation. She has received honors including the American Educational Research Association Early Career Award and the Michigan State University College of Education Excellence in Teaching Award. Her recent, co-authored publications include *The ABCs of Emergent Literacy*, which includes a video and viewing guide, the book *Reading and Writing Genre with Purpose in K–8 Classrooms*, and the forthcoming *Handbook of Effective Literacy Instruction: Research-based Practice K–8*, which has been carefully designed to be accessible and practical for pre-service and practicing teachers. She also serves as editor of *The Research-Informed**



Classroom book series and co-editor of the book Literacy Research Methodologies. Duke has a strong interest in improving the quality of education research training in the US.

The theme of the 2012 ALER conference was “Literacy Is Transformative.” The central premise of my presentation was that one way to make literacy transformative for students is by engaging them in reading and writing for purposes like those for which people read and write outside of the context of schooling. That is, rather than reading a text because the teacher told them to, students are reading a text because they expect to enjoy it or because it addresses a need, problem, or question the students have. Rather than writing a text because they are expected to, they are writing a text because they have an audience they want or need to reach with that text. For example, students might research and write booklets about local food products to distribute at a farmers’ market or write a proposal to a local government official arguing for improvements in a local park (Halvorsen, et al., 2012).

Engaging students in reading and writing texts for real-world purposes is supported by theory and research. Theory suggests that genres, or “recurring and recognizable communication(s) with particular communicative purposes and particular features to accomplish those purposes” (Duke, Caughlan, Juzwik, & Martin, 2012, p. 6), come from and are defined by specific rhetorical situations (Miller, 1984). We teach genre best, the thinking goes, when we create those situations in our classrooms. Studies have found that reading and writing performance improves when more real-world purposes, texts, and audiences for reading and writing are established. For example, in one study, second and third graders in classrooms in which informational text and procedural text reading and writing involved more real-world texts for real-world purposes showed higher growth on several reading and writing measures (Purcell-Gates, Duke, & Martineau, 2007). In another study, opportunities to write for an audience beyond the teacher led to compositions from seventh-grade students’ that were stronger in content, organization, vocabulary, language use, mechanics, and overall (Cohen & Riel, 1989; see also, e.g., Roen & Willey, 1988). Measures of motivation and engagement also show benefits of opportunities to read and write for reasons that go beyond simply learning to read and write (e.g., Guthrie, McRae, & Klauda, 2007).

The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (CCSS; National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010) emphasize reading “a broad range of high-quality, increasingly challenging literary and informational texts” (p. 10) and drawing students’ attention to text purpose, as in anchor standard #6 for reading: “Assess how point

of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text” (pp. 10 and 35). Engaging students in reading and writing a variety of texts for compelling, real-world purposes should facilitate meeting this standard. For writing, anchor standard #4 expects that students will “Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to *task, purpose, and audience*” (pp. 18 and 31, emphasis added). This will require change in many classrooms, as the *task* is typically the “assignment,” the *purpose* is typically to receive a grade or do what one is told, and the *audience* is typically the teacher and perhaps some classmates (Duke, 2000). Language in the CCSS suggests that teachers and classmates are insufficient as the only audience for students write over the course of the school year, as “To build a foundation for college and career readiness, students . . . learn to appreciate that a key purpose of writing is to communicate clearly to an *external, sometimes unfamiliar* audience, and they begin to adapt the form and content of their writing to accomplish a particular task and purpose” (p. 18, emphasis added). To address the CCSS, we need to engage students in a greater variety of reading and writing tasks for a greater variety of purposes and audiences.

IMPLICATIONS FOR LITERACY TEACHER EDUCATION

A shift to engaging students in more real-world reading and writing has a number of implications for pre-service and in-service teacher education. The most obvious implication is the need to teach prospective and practicing teachers how to create contexts in which students read and write for real-world purposes. One starting point is to teach teachers to analyze any given literacy activity with three questions: (1) What is the students’ purpose for reading and writing? If the answer is solely ‘to practice’ or ‘to prepare them for the next grade,’ or the like, that may be an indication the activity does not have a strong purpose beyond the schooling context. (2) What is the audience for the reading or writing? In the case of reading, an audience is not always necessary. For example, students reading science text to themselves as they conduct research to prepare a presentation for a local nature center would be considered a real-world reading activity despite the lack of an audience for the reading itself. However, an audience for students’ reading some of the time, as in readers’ theater for example, seems well advised (e.g., Millin & Rinehart, 1999). In the case of writing, the audience should be comprised of people who genuinely want to engage with the text for the purpose for which that text was written. For example, the audience for an informative/explanatory text should want or need to know the information the text provides, the audience for a procedural or how-to text should want or need

to know how to do something that the text teaches. (3) What is the text being read or written? Is this a text the same as or very similar to texts that people read and write outside of the context of schooling? While textbooks, worksheets, and other school-only texts may have their place, the Purcell-Gates et al. (2007) study cited earlier, among others, suggests that some reading and writing include genres not so limited to a schooling context.

Teacher educators can model fostering real-world purposes for reading and writing through their own syllabi and assignments. For example, rather than having practicing teachers keep a journal about or turn in summaries of their readings (an activity in which few people engage outside of a schooling context), teachers can write memos about their readings for audiences that would be genuinely interested in the key points of the readings and their implications (e.g., fellow teachers, district administrators, parent volunteers). Rather than assigning a “term paper”—a school-based genre—preservice or practicing teachers in a course could negotiate, on a case-by-case basis, to turn in a product that has a larger purpose and audience, such as the draft of a manuscript they will submit to a practitioner journal, a website for fellow current or future teachers on a topic they have studied, or an annotated unit to submit to their district’s curriculum director.

As current or future teachers begin to grasp the concept of real-world purposes for reading and writing, a powerful activity is to engage them in reworking common classroom literacy activities to have more real-world purposes. For example, teachers could be challenged to turn the traditional “book report” students are typically assigned to write for their teacher for a grade into an assignment involving writing a more real-world text (e.g., a book review) for a more real-world audience and purpose. From this, students could develop whole units of study that involve real-world purposes, audiences, and texts for reading and writing.

Teaching prospective and practicing teachers about real-world reading and writing has another set of implications for teacher educators—the need to spend much more time developing teachers’ knowledge of genre. As noted earlier, genres are “recurring and recognizable communication(s) with particular communicative purposes and particular features to accomplish those purposes” (Duke, et al., 2012, p. 6). Thinking carefully about the communicative purposes of students’ reading and writing activities entails thinking about genre. Current and future teachers need to be aware of the different purposes of different genres, as in the following:

- Narrative genres: to share and interpret experiences
- Dramatic genres: to show characters live through conflicts and interactions

- Persuasive genres: to influence the target audience's ideas or behaviors
- Informative/explanatory genres: to convey information about the natural or social world to people who want or need to know that information
- Procedural genres: To teach people how to do something they don't know how to do and want or need to know how to do

Moreover, teachers need to be aware of the text characteristics and reading and writing strategies that arise from these purposes. For example, informative/explanatory texts have a variety of characteristics designed to help readers find information they want or need to know (e.g., Pappas, 2006). These characteristics allow readers to search the text and to read nonlinearly. In contrast, procedural texts do not have such features. They are designed to be read linearly, in order from beginning to end, and in fact commonly have features to facilitate that (e.g., steps that are lettered or numbered; Purcell-Gates, Duke, & Martineau, 2007). Similarly, while the writing of informative/explanatory text is likely to involve considerable textual research, the writing of procedural text is more likely to include actually carrying out the procedure, taking mental or physical notes in the process. These examples illustrate that that reading and writing are genre-specific to a substantial degree (Duke & Roberts, 2010). Just as a deeper understanding of how sounds and letters relate in English helps teachers to be more effective (e.g., McCutchen, Green, Abbott, & Sanders, 2009), a deeper understanding of the characteristics of and strategies for reading and writing specific genres may make teachers more effective.

CONCLUSION

Theory and research point to the promise of engaging students in reading and writing for the purposes for which people read and write outside the context of schooling. The Common Core State Standards draw attention to reading purpose and call for engaging students in writing for a variety of tasks, purposes, and audiences, including external, sometimes unfamiliar audiences. Preparing pre-service and practicing teachers for these realities will require teaching them how to create contexts in which students read and write for real-world purposes. It will also require teaching more about genre—about specific purposes, characteristics, and strategies for reading and writing specific kinds of text. Transforming students' literacy lives entails transforming our own practices as teacher educators.

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TAPPING INTO THE COMMON CORE STANDARDS

J. ESTILL ALEXANDER FORUM FOR ALER LEADERS IN LITERACY

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Abstract

Robert J. Rickelman has been an active member of ALER since attending his first conference in 1980 with John Readence, his major professor. He has served as President, President-Elect, an elected member of the Board of Directors, Co-Editor of Reading Research and Instruction and Reading News, Chair of the Teacher Education Division, and Co-Chair of the Public Information Committee. He is currently a Professor and Department Chair in the Reading and Elementary Education Department at the University of North Carolina-Charlotte, and has taught in middle and secondary schools in Ohio and Pennsylvania. He received his B.A. and M.Ed. from Ohio University and the Ph.D. in Reading Education from the University of Georgia.



In the spring of 2012, I taught an undergraduate content reading course, and we were getting ready to talk about the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) (Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). I asked the students, about half of whom would be student teaching the following semester, what they already knew about the CCSS,

and they gave me a blank look. I then asked the group which standards they were going to be accountable for using in their teaching, and they said that they would use the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, which had been utilized prior to the 2012-2013 school year.

North Carolina has been an early implementer of the CCSS. They received a Race to the Top award of \$400 million in 2010 to help implement the new standards, and several area school districts have been piloting them since 2011. The previous semester, I had taught a course in our graduate master's program in reading to an off-campus cohort in a neighboring county who was very involved in one of these pilot programs. The teachers in this group told me that they were "cored to death" in staff development surrounding the upcoming state implementation of the standards. Basically they told me that almost every school staff meeting and every professional development opportunity was focused on the Common Core. That disconnect between what I heard happening out in the schools and what our undergraduates were telling me led me on a quest to get a better understanding of what resources our state had available for teachers involved in the CCSS implementation, but more importantly, to see if they had any guidance for teacher educators to help us better prepare our teacher candidates for this major shift.

When I first moved to North Carolina over 22 years ago, there was very little interaction between the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) and the colleges and universities that prepare teachers in our state. Many times, faculty would find out about a new state initiative from our graduate students, who learned about them in their teaching jobs. So our students would have to teach us about what they were learning regarding recent state policies and initiatives. But several years ago there was a marked shift, and NCDPI began to get teacher educators much more involved. They actively sought our feedback as policies and initiatives were being developed. And they also began to host professional development workshops aimed specifically at teacher educators. These were often the same workshops that were designed for public school teachers and administrators, but revised to meet the specific needs of college faculty. I attended several of these over the past few years, and was pleasantly surprised about how much I learned from the staff development team. One presentation in particular, offered by Rachel Porter from The Centers for Quality Teaching and Learning, was focused specifically on the CCSS, and I was able to use a lot of the information that I learned not only in my teaching, but to help me frame my presentation to the Association of Literacy Educators and Researchers (ALER). I will refer back to her workshop later in this presentation.

Some Guiding Questions

I developed some questions to help me frame my remarks:

1. What should our pre-service and in-service teachers be learning/doing about the Common Core State Standards in our teacher preparation programs? What is the optimal level of breadth and depth of information to share with them, knowing that they will be receiving intensive training through staff development when they get their first teaching position?
2. How can we best prepare new teacher candidates for entering public schools in our states?
3. What resources are already available to help teachers, and more importantly teacher educators, at the national and state levels (especially in my home state of North Carolina) to prepare our candidates for planning lessons and assessments related to the CCSS?

The Common Core Standards

There is a lot of information about the Common Core State Standards available today, as 45 states are in the process of moving toward full implementation, with online assessments of the CCSS beginning in the 2014-2015 academic year. While standards have been developed at this time for English/Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics, there are also standards for Social Studies, Science, and Technology embedded in the ELA standards. Professional organizations for science (National Science Teachers Association) and social studies (National Council for the Social Studies) educators are also working on developing their own sets of standards that could become part of the Common Core at some point. For example, The Council of Chief State School Officers recently released a document entitled *Vision for the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Inquiry in Social Studies State Standards Guidance for states to use in enhancing their standards for rigor in civics, economics, geography, and history in K-12 schools* (2012) that outlines a plan for providing guidance to states on developing skills necessary in social studies for students moving toward college and career readiness. In this document, specific skills related to mastering social studies are outlined, but the content of study will be left up to individual states to decide. Science standards face similar issues related to the content of what should be taught (or not taught) in the K-12 classrooms. In the past, it has been difficult to reach a consensus about standards in these subjects, since there are a lot of debates, especially among conservative and liberal citizens, about what content

should be taught. So these professional organizations have focused more on the skills, rather than the content, at this time, with the goal of eventually having these standards approved as Common Core standards.

EngageNY, a New York State Education Department website, is devoted to providing resources for teachers and families to use as the CCSS are being implemented. They outline six shifts that will take place as that state is moving from previous content standards to the CCSS. These shifts have been adopted by many other states, including Oregon and North Carolina, and summarize some of the most important changes that will be necessary as states implement the new standards. I found these shifts helpful in framing for our future and practicing teachers how the CCSS implementation will change at a conceptual level the kinds of skills that they will be accountable for teaching in their classrooms. These shifts are outlined in Table 1. EngageNY has also published a companion paper for students and parents, to help them understand the six shifts and this resource, too, has been helpful as an introduction to the CCSS, especially for my undergraduate classes.

TABLE 1 The EngageNY Six Shifts in English/Language Arts

Shift 1	Balancing Informational & Literary Text	Students read a true balance of informational and literary texts.
Shift 2	Knowledge in the Disciplines	Students build knowledge about the world (domains/ content areas) through TEXT rather than the teacher or activities
Shift 3	Staircase of Complexity	Students read the central, grade appropriate text around which instruction is centered. Teachers are patient, create more time and space and support in the curriculum for close reading.
Shift 4	Text-based Answers	Students engage in rich and rigorous evidence based conversations about text.
Shift 5	Writing from Sources	Writing emphasizes use of evidence from sources to inform or make an argument.
Shift 6	Academic Vocabulary	Students constantly build the transferable vocabulary they need to access grade level complex texts. This can be done effectively by spiraling like content in increasingly complex texts.

Retrieved from <http://engageny.org/sites/default/files/resource/attachments/common-core-shifts.pdf>.

What Is North Carolina Doing?

As I discussed earlier, the NCDPI has provided a lot of resources for the public schools to use in implementing the CCSS and many districts have been using these resources extensively during professional development training. I have been able to easily utilize many of these resources in my classroom teaching, either as points for discussion or by pointing these out to my students as options for future reference. The training provided by North Carolina for their teachers uses the Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy (Krathwohl, 2002) to help consider the impact of critical thinking in meeting the CCSS. You can see how the revised Bloom’s compares to the original Bloom’s Taxonomy in Figure 1.

A revised verb chart organized around the categories presented in the Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy (Krathwohl, 2002) has also been helpful for my students, by showing them how the different levels are actualized in the classroom. My students have been encouraged to refer back to this chart as they plan lessons, which are part of a requirement related to a clinical experience prior to student teaching.

The NCDPI website has many additional resources, including unpacking documents, crosswalk documents between the old standards and the CCSS, and extended standards to use for students with intellectual disabilities. In addition, samples of graphic organizers that can be used in classrooms implementing the CCSS are provided on the website. All of these have been helpful to my students

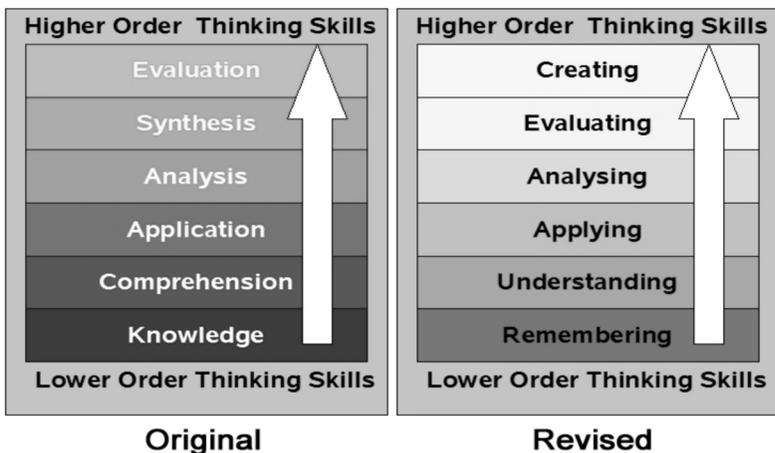


Figure 1

Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy Compared to Original

Retrieved from http://ww2.odu.edu/educ/roverbau/Bloom/blooms_taxonomy.htm

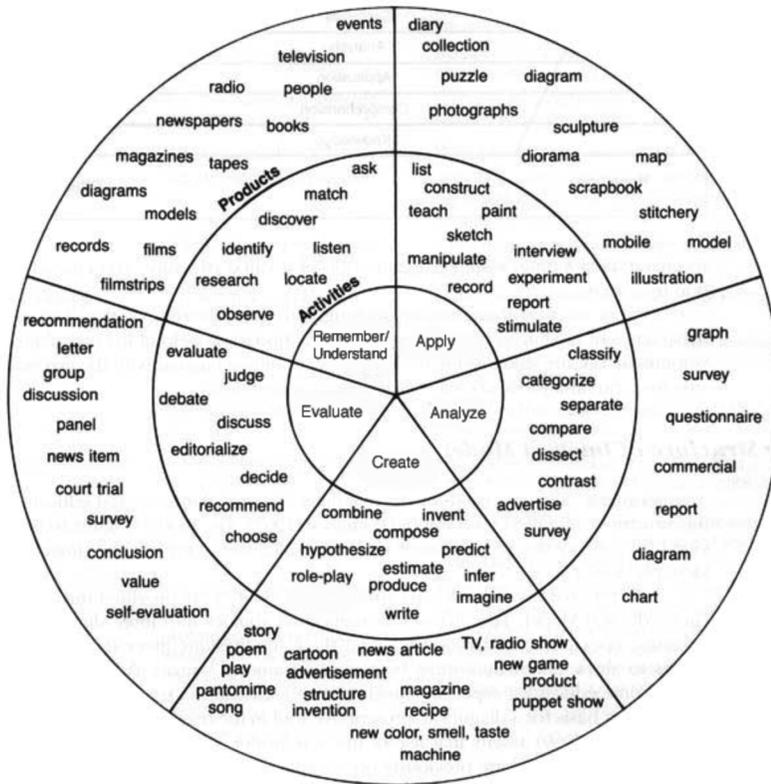


Figure 2

Verb Chart for Revised Bloom's Taxonomy

Retrieved from http://zaidlearn.files.wordpress.com/2009/07/revised_bloom_taxonomy_circle.gif

in terms of understanding how the CCSS will play out in their classroom practice. In addition, North Carolina has adopted what they refer to as *Essential Standards* in subject areas other than LEA and mathematics, which include unpacking, crosswalk and extended standards.

The workshop by Rachel Porter that I mentioned at the beginning of my presentation provided my teacher education colleagues at UNC Charlotte with a lot of resources that we could use in our classes, including some specifically focused on teacher trainers. There are too many to discuss here in detail, but she has provided a link to her website, which provides an abundance of resources that I frequently use in my classroom. These include instructional videos from The Teaching Channel, many of the NCDPI links that I have already discussed, and some resources targeted directly for higher education.

One resource that is very popular, especially among practicing teachers, and that I have found very helpful to share with students, consists of sample assessment items being developed for the Essential Standards in North Carolina and also for the CCSS (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, with whom North Carolina aligned for their formal assessments in ELA and mathematics beginning in the 2014-2015 school year).

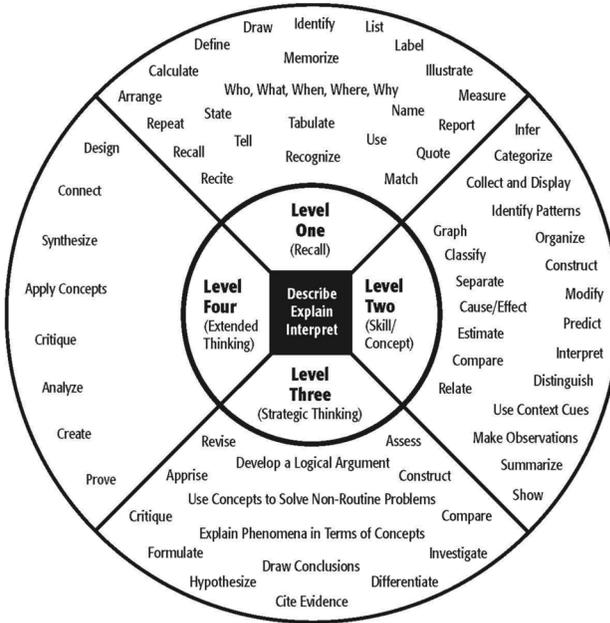
Some Other Resources That I Have Found Helpful

I have been working over the past 10 years on alternate assessments for students with intellectual disabilities. This work has resulted in consultations with almost a dozen states on how they allow students, some of whom cannot read, speak or hear, access to state standards in ELA. Much of this work is funded by the federal government, and I have teamed up with some amazing colleagues in the fields of special education, assessment and mathematics education during much of this work. More recently, we have focused on providing ways for these students with the most severe intellectual disabilities to access the CCSS, which is required by federal law (Browder, Wakeman, & Flowers, in press).

One of the tools that we have used to analyze the depth of understanding necessary to be able to master standards, including the Common Core, is Webb's Depth of Knowledge Matrix (Webb, 1997). Depth of Knowledge (DOK) becomes an important metric in implementing the Common Core State Standards, since a critical question that teachers must attend to is how much content breadth to teach in addition to how much depth. In the past, especially among social studies teachers, the focus has been on "a mile wide and an inch deep." In other words, in order to meet the previous state standards, teachers have had to cover a lot of material with very little time left to get deeply into any topic. With a renewed emphasis on critical thinking, the CCSS is expecting teachers to provide more depth of content (and less breadth), and be able to critically analyze and synthesize information across multiple sources. Webb's DOK chart is a useful tool for helping teach and assess progress toward this goal.

As seen in Figure 3, there are four levels of Webb's DOK (Webb, 1997). The lowest level is Level 1 – recall. Recall is basically taking information from text and mentally manipulating the information. No new information from the reader is necessary. In looking at the tasks related to Level 1 DOK, students might be asked to define a vocabulary term, list characters from a story, or identify the setting of a novel. The next higher DOK level, Level 2, which involves the application of a previously learned skill, might include making inferences, using the context to come up with a possible definition of a new word, or summarizing a story in their own words. Level 3 DOK tasks relate to

Depth of Knowledge (DOK) Levels



Level One Activities	Level Two Activities	Level Three Activities	Level Four Activities
Recall elements and details of story structure, such as sequence of events, character, plot and setting. Conduct basic mathematical calculations. Label locations on a map. Represent in words or diagrams a scientific concept or relationship. Perform routine procedures like measuring length or using punctuation marks correctly. Describe the features of a place or people.	Identify and summarize the major events in a narrative. Use context cues to identify the meaning of unfamiliar words. Solve routine multiple-step problems. Describe the cause/effect of a particular event. Identify patterns in events or behavior. Formulate a routine problem given data and conditions. Organize, represent and interpret data.	Support ideas with details and examples. Use voice appropriate to the purpose and audience. Identify research questions and design investigations for a scientific problem. Develop a scientific model for a complex situation. Determine the author's purpose and describe how it affects the interpretation of a reading selection. Apply a concept in other contexts.	Conduct a project that requires specifying a problem, designing and conducting an experiment, analyzing its data, and reporting results/solutions. Apply mathematical model to illuminate a problem or situation. Analyze and synthesize information from multiple sources. Describe and illustrate how common themes are found across texts from different cultures. Design a mathematical model to inform and solve a practical or abstract situation.

Webb, Norman L. and others. "Web Alignment Tool" 24 July 2005. Wisconsin Center of Educational Research, University of Wisconsin-Madison. 2 Feb. 2006. <<http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/WAF/index.asp>>

Figure 3
Webb's Depth of Knowledge Chart

making generalizations of previously learned concepts in new situations. So a student might be asked to develop an argument based on the needs of a particular audience or to compare/contrast how two different authors write about the same event. Finally, in Level 4 of the DOK chart, students must use what Webb calls "extended thinking," where they might be asked to analyze a theme

through several works of an author or to design, implement, and report on an original research project.

Webb's work is useful in thinking about the CCSS, since the DOK that must be used when planning, teaching, and assessing a skill is important. For instance, in a Grade 8 standard for learning from information texts, students are expected to be able to "Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation." This task would align to Webb's DOK Level 4, so asking students to compare two of the works, which requires a lower DOK level, would not allow the student to enough depth to be able to show mastery of the skill. As school systems wrestle with crosswalks from older standards to the CCSS, the DOK paradigm can be used to assess lessons to insure that there is the correct level of depth of knowledge for students.

Karin Hess (2008), at the Center for Assessment, has combined the Extended Bloom's Taxonomy (Kathwohl, 2002) and Webb's (1997) DOK work into a Cognitive Rigor Matrix which I have found extremely helpful in discussions about "how deep" with my students. Figure 4 shows how these two constructs align in ELA, and exemplars of the types of common skills that represent each level. In our work on alternate assessments, we frequently use Hess' Cognitive Rigor Matrix to make judgments about tasks that students with intellectual disabilities are using for learning, to see if they are being asked to use the same DOK as the general education students, or if they are using a lower DOK. The same practice can be applied to students who do not have identified disabilities.

What I Learned

So, what did I learn related to the questions I posed at the beginning of this paper? I will frame my remarks around the original questions. The first question asked what our preservice and inservice teachers needed to know about the CCSS from our teacher preparation classes. How much do they need to know? In a sense, what is the appropriate DOK for them to insure that they are well-prepared and effective teachers? It would be easy to get caught up in the breadth of the CCSS and not have time to get into the depth of the standards. First, I think that our candidates need to be familiar with the general framework of the CCSS. In my content reading class, I talk about these more in general, since I have many different majors in the class. I make sure that my social studies and science majors understand that there are CCSS for them embedded in the LEA document. In addition, Appendices 2 and 3 of the LEA CCSS discuss levels of text complexity and show examples of the level of work that K-12 students are expected to produce. The appendices are often ignored, but I have found that

Ess' Cognitive Rigor Matrix & Curricular Examples: Applying Webb's Depth-of-Knowledge Levels to Bloom's Cognitive Process Dimensions - ELA

Revised Bloom's Taxonomy	Webb's DOK Level 1 Recall & Reproduction	Webb's DOK Level 2 Skills & Concepts	Webb's DOK Level 3 Strategic Thinking/Reasoning	Webb's DOK Level 4 Extended Thinking
Remember Retrieve knowledge from long-term memory, recognize, recall, locate, identify	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify, recognize, or locate basic facts, details, events, or ideas explicit in texts Read words orally in connected text with fluency & accuracy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specify, explain, show relationships; explain why, cause-effect Give non-examples/examples Make basic inferences, concepts, ideas Make predictions from data or texts Describe how, where, when, or how generalizations of texts Locate information to support explicit-implicit central ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain, generalize, or connect ideas using supporting evidence (quote, example, text reference) Identify/ make inferences about explicit or implicit themes Describe how, where, choice, point of interpretation of a text Write multi-paragraph, composition for specific purpose, focus, voice, tone, & audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how concepts or ideas specifically relate to other content domains or concepts Develop generalizations of the results obtained or strategies used and apply them to new problem situations
Understand Construct meaning, clarify, paraphrase, represent, translate, illustrate, give examples, classify, categorize, summarize, generalize, infer a logical conclusion, predict, compare/contrast, match like ideas, explain, construct models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use language structure (prefix/suffix) or word relationships (synonym/antonym) to determine meaning of words Apply rules or resources to edit spelling, grammar, punctuation, conventions, word use Apply basic formats for documenting sources Identify whether specific information is contained in graphic representations (e.g., maps, globes, flowchart, diagram) or text features (e.g., headings, subheadings, captions) Decide which text structure is appropriate to audience and purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use context to identify the meaning of words/phrases Obtain and interpret information using text features Develop a text that may be limited to one paragraph Apply simple organizational structures (paragraph, sentence types) in writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply a concept in a new context Revise final draft for meaning or progression of ideas Apply internal consistency of text organization and structure to composing a full composition Apply word choice, point of view, style to impact readers' /viewers' interpretation of a text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Illustrate how multiple themes (historical, geographic, social) may be interrelated Select or devise an approach among many alternatives to research a novel problem
Analyze Break into constituent parts, determine how parts relate, differentiate between relevant-irrelevant, distinguish, focus, select, organize, outline, find coherence, deconstruct (e.g., for bias or point of view)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information is contained in graphic representations (e.g., maps, globes, flowchart, diagram) or text features (e.g., headings, subheadings, captions) Decide which text structure is appropriate to audience and purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Categorize/compare literary elements, terms, fact/details, events Identify use of literary devices (metaphor, simile, personification, etc.) Internal text structure (signal words, transitions, semantic cues) of different texts Distinguish relevant-irrelevant information; fact/opinion Identify characteristic text features; distinguish between texts, genres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze information within data sets or texts Analyze interrelationships among literary devices Analyze or interpret author's craft (literary devices, viewpoint, or potential bias) to create or critique a text Use reasoning, planning, and evidence to support inferences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze multiple sources of evidence, or multiple works by the same author, or across multiple genres Analyze complex/abstract themes, perspectives, concepts Gather, analyze, and organize multiple information sources Analyze discourse styles
Evaluate Make judgments based on criteria, check, detect inconsistencies or fallacies, judge, critique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brainstorm ideas, concepts, problems, or perspectives related to a topic or concept 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generate conjectures or hypotheses based on observations or prior knowledge and experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cite evidence and develop a logical argument for conjectures Describe, compare, and contrast solution methods Verify reasonableness of results Justify or critique conclusions drawn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate relevancy, accuracy, & completeness of information from multiple sources Apply understanding in a novel way, provide argument or justification for the application
Create Reorganize elements into new patterns/structures, generate, hypothesize, design, plan, produce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brainstorm ideas, concepts, problems, or perspectives related to a topic or concept 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generate conjectures or hypotheses based on observations or prior knowledge and experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Synthesize information within one source or text Develop a complex model for a given situation Develop an alternative solution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Synthesize information across multiple sources or texts Articulate a new voice, alternate theme, new knowledge or perspective

Figure 4

Karin Hess' Cognitive Rigor Matrix

they are critical to implementing the Common Core in the classroom. Hess and Hervey (2011) have done some wonderful work discussing the general notion of text complexity that current teachers in our master's programs find particularly helpful.

My second question asked about how we can best prepare teacher candidates for entering public schools. Besides the level of general preparation mentioned above, including a fairly in-depth discussion of text complexity, we can share with our students' strategies that bridge the gap between literacy and content subjects. Several students from my spring course mentioned earlier reported back to me that they were interviewed by principals before beginning their student teaching assignment, and each was asked how they could integrate literacy strategies (including writing) into their classroom. This included teachers of mathematics, social studies, and even art education teachers. We must help our candidates understand the importance of literacy in the schools today, especially with the implementation of the CCSS, which places a high premium on learning critical literacies to become college and career ready. I cannot recall any other time during my tenure as a literacy professional when the expectations for teachers and future teachers were so high. We need to take advantage of this by insuring that our candidates are well prepared and well versed in being able to discuss their expertise with others. My former students did mention that they felt comfortable discussing with teachers and administrators how reading and writing links to their subject areas during student teaching. We need to prepare future students for these discussions as well.

My third question related to exploring what resources are available to help teachers and teacher educators insure that our current and future teachers are fulfilling the enormous expectations brought to them with the implementation of the CCSS. Some states, including North Carolina, are ahead of the curve, since they were awarded Race-to-the-Top funding that included funding to pilot the implementation and provide these exact resources for school districts. In talking to ALER colleagues from other states, there seems to be a multitude of similar training material and teacher resources in many states. I only explored what my home state is providing on their website, and was surprised and pleased at the amount of helpful information and subsequent training that they are providing. I am pleased that, at least in North Carolina, teacher educators are being included in the reform, and workshops for implementing the CCSS are provided specifically for them with the intention of helping prepare our undergraduate teacher candidates for success in the K-12 schools. At times, the NCDPI invites preservice teachers to professional development meetings, and we can work to insure that our students understand the importance of working with education

professionals in their states and local communities even before they have been hired for a job.

This is an exciting time to be a teacher. Some veteran teachers (and teacher educators) are skeptical of the CCSS, and assume that this is the “latest craze” that will, in 3–4 years, be replaced by another. But in committing funding to the tune of \$4.35 billion, and with a lot of bipartisan support at the federal level (and at the state level in many cases), I would be surprised to see this initiative disappear any time soon. Current teachers are being asked to make huge paradigm shifts in thinking about their teaching, and our future teachers will be expected to leave our institutions being ready to begin on Day One, with some ongoing staff development to hone those skills. We owe it to the profession to make every effort to contribute to this worthwhile goal.

WEBSITE LIST (CURRENT AS OF MARCH 11, 2013)

- Centers for Quality Teaching and Learning – <http://www.qtlcenters.org>
 Common Core State Standards – <http://www.corestandards.org/>
 EngageNY Six Shifts – <http://engageny.org/sites/default/files/resource/attachments/common-core-shifts.pdf>
 EngageNY Shifts for students and parents – <http://engageny.org/resource/shifts-for-students-and-parents>
 North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Essential Standards – <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/acre/standards/new-standards/>
 North Carolina Essential Standards Sample Test – <https://data.ncsu.edu/nctest/NCTestSim.html>
 North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Common Core Resources – <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/acre/standards/>
 North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Standard Course of Study – <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/curriculum/languagearts/>
 Rachel Porter’s Website for High Education Faculty – <http://bit.ly/KDwEBt>
 Smarter Balanced Sample Test Items – <http://sampleitems.smarterbalanced.org/itemview/sbac/ELA.htm>

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RESEARCH AWARDS

TRANSFORMING LITERATE PRACTICE FOR ADOLESCENTS: INTERSECTING DISCIPLINARY LITERACY AND NEW LITERACIES

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION AWARD

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Abstract

This study investigated the ways that students processed multiple multimodal sources for historical inquiry using think-aloud protocols. Two students were selected as cases to exemplify the ways that proficient and less proficient readers engaged in the task using multiple multimodal sources embedded in an online environment. Findings suggest that less proficient readers exhibited similar reading processes as well as disciplinary thinking skills as they worked across multiple multimodal texts.

Recommendations for improving the lack of literacy achievement for adolescents highlighted in multiple reports (American College Testing, 2006; Grigg, Donahue, & Dion, 2007) suggest re-conceptualizing literacy instruction. It is argued that literacy instruction should focus on the literacies that are instantiated in the disciplines instead of applying generic literacy strategies across all content areas (Conley, 2008; Lee & Spratley, 2010; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). A disciplinary literacy approach focuses on the ways in which knowledge is constructed, communicated, disseminated, and critiqued in a specific discipline (Shanahan, 2009).

The purpose of this study, which focused on the discipline of history, was to understand the meaning making processes exhibited by high school students as they read multiple multimodal texts in a web-based environment. The research question was: How do students use information in multiple multimodal sources to provide evidence for a position about a contested historical event?

To better understand how disciplinary learning transpires in a high school classroom, the uses of a range of texts (audio, image, video) that are prevalent within a discipline like history were examined. Since most research on multiple texts has focused on printed texts (e.g. Stahl, Hynd, Britton, McNish, & Bosquet, 1996, Wineburg, 1991), this study is an extension of multiple text research with the types of texts used in classroom specific contexts.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Reading comprehension is theorized to be the interrelationship of the reader, the text, and the activity that is situated in the context in which reading occurs (RAND, 2002). Reading comprehension has a long line of research, but the role text plays in comprehension in a specific discipline has not been deeply studied (Moje, Stockdill, Kim & Kim, 2011). Because text can be broadly conceptualized to include any representations that create meaning (Bloome & Egan-Robertson, 1993), it is important to expand research on the role of non-traditional texts in disciplinary contexts.

In his seminal study of historians' reading processes, Wineburg (1991) compared the reading processes of high school students and expert historians. Based on those comparisons, Wineburg proposed that historians utilize three heuristics, *contextualization*, *corroboration*, and *sourcing*, when reading historical sources. Contextualization refers to the placement of events and people in time and space. Corroboration is defined as checking the details of texts against each other before accepting them as plausible (Wineburg, 1991). Sourcing includes checking the author of the document and assessing the validity and perspective of the author. These heuristics represent the types of discipline-specific thinking that are recruited to construct historical interpretations.

Disciplinary literacy, then, can be characterized as an approach to build the requisite disciplinary knowledge required by a given domain, like history. Therefore, disciplinary literacy encompasses the cognitive literacy processes used to make meaning, the cultural tools, including language and texts that mediate thinking, and the epistemic beliefs about knowledge and knowledge production that are instantiated in the discipline (Moje, 2008, Shanahan & Shanahan 2008).

A multitude of research has focused on single text comprehension (e.g., Anderson & Pearson, 1984; Kintsch, 1994), however, readers must make meaning across multiple texts in a discipline that vary in mode, genre, and structure. Multiple text comprehension requires reading multiple texts simultaneously and interdependently within a given task or activity (Boyd & Ikepeze, 2007). Perfetti, Rouet, & Britt (1999) posit that proficient readers marshal a *situation model* that represents meaning across individual texts. Additionally, readers create an *intertext model* that positions the various texts in relation to one another. Together these models contribute to an integrated *documents model* that creates a mental representation of the entire set of texts being read (Perfetti, et al., 1999). However, studies of multiple text comprehension situated in classrooms demonstrate that students rarely create cohesive intertext or documents models (Hynd-Shanahan, Holschuh, & Hubbard, 2004; Stahl, et al., 1996; VanSledright & Kelly, 1998). In these classroom studies, students lacked the cognitive and social processes to engage in disciplinary thinking like experts (Leinhardt & Young, 1996; Wineburg, 1991, 1998). Even the most capable students struggled to construct meaning across multiple texts (Hartman, 1995; Stahl, et al., 1996; Wineburg, 1991).

While students may struggle to synthesize across multiple texts, the Internet has afforded access to an exponential number of sources including ones that are multimodal (Coiro, Knobel, Lankshear, Leu, 2008). History in particular makes use of these multimodal sources in order to construct historical meaning (Lee, 2002). Students' successful comprehension of multimodal historical sources is essential to build strong disciplinary knowledge.

CONTEXT AND METHODS

This study was conducted at the end of a school year in a large and diverse metropolitan high school. Eight students, with a range of reading ability as measured by the ACT reading test, were selected from two intact American history classes taught by the same teacher. Think-aloud protocols (Ericsson & Simon, 1980; Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995) and semi-structured student interviews were employed to reveal the conscious processes of reading multiple multimodal sources. All think-aloud and interview data were video/audio-recorded and transcribed.

Pressley and Cho (2009) argue that verbal protocols are well suited for research on reading multiple texts on the Internet. Because the students in this study possessed a range of reading ability and low prior knowledge of the topic, concurrent and retrospective protocols were deployed to capture the greatest amount of cognitive processing that may have occurred during the task.

The eight think-aloud interview sessions occurred over a three-week period and lasted approximately two hours each. Since the sources were multimodal, like political cartoons, videos, or photographs, verbal prompts were used if the student was not thinking aloud. A sample prompt was, "Please tell me what you are thinking now." Following the think-aloud protocol, an immediate follow up semi-structured interview occurred with the student to provide an opportunity for reflection on the entire set of texts.

A bounded Internet-based task was designed to investigate the following central historical question. "*Was President Johnson justified in asking Congress for a resolution for war after the Gulf of Tonkin incident?*" A website was created that included eight multimodal sources to formulate a response to the question. Sources included an introduction text and video, two audio files, two videos, and two images that provided information about US involvement in the Gulf of Tonkin Incident in 1964. Students could navigate the site in any manner they chose after reading the introduction text and watching the three-minute introduction video.

After reading each source, students provided usefulness and trustworthiness ratings on a five-point Likert scale along with an open-ended response to explain their ratings. At the end of the task, students were asked to rate all of the documents cumulatively for usefulness and trustworthiness. Finally, students participated in a semi-structured interview about their experience with the task. Source ratings, opinion changes, and semi-structured interviews were utilized to triangulate the think-aloud data.

DATA ANALYSIS

Previous research that utilized think-aloud protocols guided the coding structure (e.g., Hartman, 1995; Pressley & Cho, 2009; Wineburg, 1991; Wolfe & Goldman, 2005). The unit of analysis, in this study, was most consistent with Wolfe and Goldman's (2005) comments and events. A comment was defined the entire burst of speech that followed student reading. An event was defined as a unit of speech that represented a distinct type of reading process. More than 200 pages of transcripts were parsed into comments and events. Once parsed, the event units (1,006) were coded by utilizing constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). As a result of this process, a demonstration of several layers of historical thinking emerged. Consequently, think-aloud interviews were coded at three levels. The first level of coding addressed types of historical thinking (Reisman, 2010; Wineburg, 1991). The coding scheme entailed a range of historical thinking from value-based statements and generic sense making statements to historical analysis that drew on student use of Wineburg's (1991) heuristics of

sourcing, contextualization, and corroboration. If a student employed one or more of the historical thinking heuristics and made a direct follow-up statement or evaluation, the code of historical analysis was applied.

The second level of coding was nested within each of the 6 historical thinking codes and mapped to provide insight into the general literacy processes that students exhibited in order to indicate the specific literacy processes that occurred within the level of historical thinking (Afflerbach & Cho, 2009; Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995). Codes included agreeing or disagreeing with the author, historical actors, or situations, asking clarifying questions, paraphrasing, evaluation, elaboration, making predictions, and summarizing.

Finally, think-aloud comments were mapped for their textual location: local, intratextual, intertextual, and global. The site and reference of the comment determined the textual location. This coding system provided a layered picture of the reading processes students exhibited as they read different types of multimodal texts and provided clues to the ways students think historically by using sets of literacy practices.

FINDINGS

Two students with different reading proficiencies, who engaged with the task in a similar manner, were selected from the group of eight participants to highlight the possibilities that the use of multiple multimodal sources for historical inquiry can have on student learning. These two representative cases demonstrate how they exhibited historical thinking as they moved through the task, how their understandings of the topic were mediated by multimodal texts, what sources students utilized to create their interpretations, and their level of interest in the topic and task as readers (RAND, 2002).

Michele (pseudonym) was the most proficient reader in the study. She scored a 31 on the ACT Reading test and consistently earned A's in her coursework. She was a student who excelled in academic tasks and reported high interest in using the Internet and studying history, particularly the Vietnam War.

Jovany (pseudonym) was a less proficient reader. He scored an 18 on the ACT Reading test and was a conscientious student earning B's and C's. He reported he was comfortable using the Internet and was also interested in history but not in the Vietnam War.

Role of the Task

The task was to read across multiple primary and secondary sources in order to investigate a historical question. The task was constrained to a single website in

TABLE 1 Comparison of Michele and Jovany's Think Aloud Events

		Eight Participants (% of total)	Michele (% of total)	Jovany (% of total)
Number of Historical Thinking Comments	Value Based	50 (5%)	15 (9%)	6 (3.8%)
	Sense Making	627 (62%)	103 (62.4%)	105 (65.6%)
	Sourcing	194 (19.2%)	28 (16.9%)	19 (11.9%)
	Contextualization	34 (3.4%)	1 (0.6%)	10 (6.3%)
	Corroboration	65 (6.5%)	8 (4.8%)	14 (8.8%)
	Historical Analysis	36 (3.6%)	12 (7.2%)	6 (3.8%)
	Total	1006	167	160

order to identify the types of historical thinking that students exhibited while reading text types that might commonly be found on the Internet. The examples and findings from this study reflect the nature of this type of task rather than one using an open Internet environment.

Michele

Reading behaviors nested within the types of historical thinking revealed how a more proficient reader like Michele reasoned through the task. Michele relied on general sense making strategies when she read across all of the sources. Similar to all eight think-aloud students, 62% of her think-aloud events (103) were made at the sense making level. These statements were mainly evaluative and elaborative. For example, of the 103 think-aloud events at the sense making level, Michele made 71 statements that indicated complex reading behaviors like evaluation, elaboration, questioning the veracity of the text, and making an inference instead of quoting, summarizing, or paraphrasing. As expected, Michele read multi-modal texts proficiently.

Michele utilized the historical thinking heuristic of sourcing 16.9% of the time and corroboration 4.8% of the time but made only one contextualization (0.6%). Despite limited use of historical thinking heuristics, Michele often followed their use with a historical analysis statement.

After the introduction, Michele watched the first video, the *Fog of War*, and continued to read each text in the listed order as she worked through the task.

Once she read the source information, she evaluated the source by stating, “Ok first of all, um if it’s a documentary, I feel that it’s going to be pretty accurate and that they have like real interviews with the people who were actually witness to this event”. She approached the video by sourcing for the reliability of the source based on its content. Her evaluation was based on the authenticity of the source because people were “there.” Consistently, Michele approached the task by using her disciplinary knowledge of history as such that source reliability is important to reading the source.

Michele made a majority of corroborations with video, but made at least one corroborating comment for each text type. She corroborated the introduction text with her own prior knowledge but every other corroboration was made with a source that was a part of the overall text set. She later used the information from the introduction and *The Fog of War* to corroborate what the *Midnight Address* video presented. Within the first thirty seconds of the *Midnight Address* video, Michele paused and made the following comment.

Michele: He doesn't really go into depth about how what happened like on the days, he doesn't really tell any of the American people what really went down and like how they got or they found one torpedo or that um, the sonar might not have been read correctly.

She corroborated Johnson’s claims with the reports from the *Fog of War* to make the assertion that Johnson was hiding important details from the American people. Later, Michele paused again to make an updated claim about Johnson’s justification for the Tonkin Gulf Resolution.

Michele: From the other videos I know that like they, he didn't even know for sure if the attacks had been made do it wasn't just something that was like wrong with their sonar or something so it doesn't seem like he is actually telling the truth really. He kinda just seems like he's just relaying like information, kinda like he's just saying what somebody else has already told him.

For the first three sources, Michele corroborated against each of the texts she had previously read. After the *Midnight Address*, she followed up her corroboration with historical analysis by recognizing that Johnson was dependent on information that was provided to him by other historical actors, like the Secretary of Defense. This represented a sophisticated historical analysis that acknowledged the complexity of the event based on the reports from several sources.

Michele consistently used her corroborations to ultimately create her interpretation of the event that Johnson was not justified even though he did not act alone. She asserted that Johnson's decision led to his downfall and mistakenly escalated the Vietnam War. Michele demonstrated a sophisticated reading of the sources during the task that was exemplified in her use of historical thinking heuristics and historical analysis. She demonstrated a higher degree of reading proficiency by analyzing the sources beyond the last section she read by making intratextual and intertextual connections. Michele read across these multimodal texts as one might expect a proficient reader to do but she also engaged in fairly complex historical thinking despite the lack of scaffolds or instructions to do so.

Jovany

Like Michele, Jovany predominately used general sense making strategies when reading across the multimodal sources. Slightly higher than the group statistics, 65.6% of his think aloud comments were made at the sense making level. Like Michele, most of his sense-making comments were evaluations, elaborations, or questioning the veracity of the event, and making inferences. Fifty-three percent of his comments made at the sense making level indicated complex reading behavior. Jovany also fixed up his comprehension by rewinding to review a source on nine separate occasions. While reading multimodal sources he was metacognitive about his comprehension.

Jovany utilized all three historical thinking heuristics. He made 14 corroborations, 10 contextualizations, and 19 sourcing comments. He only made six historical analysis comments. His amount of heuristic use outpaced Michele but she was more efficient in developing historical analysis when using the historical thinking heuristics.

The first source Jovany chose after the introduction was an image of the *Senate Voting Record*. He read the source information and stated, "1964. So this was August 7th. Couple days after right"? He contextualized that the Congressional vote came a few days after the reported attacked he read about and viewed in the introduction. Following the Senate voting image, Jovany decided to view the second image, *Vietscar*, a political cartoon.

Jovany's analysis of *Vietscar*, caused him to change his position. His think aloud comments highlight his ambivalence towards Johnson's justification.

Jovany: It helps me decide that like maybe he regretted what he did. Cause most people that have scars were either hurt because they weren't

doing something I mean you could have gotten a scar from anything but I usually associate a scar with regret. I don't know why I just do. So to me that says like he regrets having that scar.

Jovany demonstrated the ability to contextualize and interpret the cartoon. He noted the year in which it was published and was able to derive its meaning. Six out the 8 students were unable to interpret the cartoon. After reading the introduction and viewing the two images, Jovany had utilized historical thinking heuristics but had not engaged in historical analysis outside of evaluating the content of the *Senate Voting Record*.

As the task progressed, Jovany used the introduction video and the *Fog of War* to make the assertion that Johnson did not tell the whole story to the American public. By the time he read the fourth source, he began to exhibit more sophisticated reading behaviors like that of Michele. He finished by listening to the two audio recordings. The audio recordings prompted Jovany to make four corroborations, one with *Vietscar*, one with his own prior knowledge, and two with the *Fog of War* video. His comments while listening to the phone call between Johnson and McGeorge Bundy highlighted Jovany's use of multiple heuristics to create his own historical analysis.

Jovany: Um, the introduction is saying that um, this conversation was I believe before the Gulf of Tonkin Incident. Ok. (rewinds tape). Ok that brings me back to the one diagram of the cartoon, where he has a scar on his belly and that kinda tells me like um, he did, he doesn't know what he's doing. He did regret what happened. That's what that scar was.

Jovany contextualized the phone call by stating that he believed it took place before the Gulf of Tonkin Incident. After fixing up his comprehension by rewinding to listen again, Jovany made a corroboration back to *Vietscar*, and asserted that the Tonkin Gulf Resolution was a mistake that Johnson would later regret. His comments reflected his ability to create global and historical reasoning about the topic.

Like Michele, by the end of the task, Jovany had constructed a complex analysis and utilized historical thinking heuristics to make sense of the event. While Michele was more consistent in her exhibition of complex reading behaviors, Jovany exhibited progressively complex reading behaviors and continually updated his mental representations to create an intertext model (Perfetti, Rouet, & Britt, 1999) by the end of task.

ROLE OF TEXT

Each of the texts contained different affordances based on type (audio, image, video) as well as a combination of elements such as historical source type (cartoon, documentary, phone call). Think-aloud comments and text ratings revealed the role the texts played in Michele and Jovany's argument about Johnson's culpability in Gulf of Tonkin Incident.

Michele

The multimodal nature of the sources impacted how Michele read across all of the texts in order to address the inquiry question for the task. Her comments about the usefulness and trustworthiness of the sources immediately after reading a source revealed how the source impacted her thinking. After viewing the *Fog of War*, Michele commented on the trustworthiness of the source.

Michele: I really think that it's pretty trustworthy because it even won an Academy Award and I mean like it's documentary and it had real people who were there like witnesses, and it also had like the video reel where they were talking.

She evaluated the trustworthiness of the video based on the reliability of the source because it was an Academy Award winning documentary, but she also cited the presence of the videotapes from the deck of the *Maddox* and the audio recordings between the General and the Secretary of Defense that were embedded.

After Michele viewed the *Midnight Address* she commented on the lack of trustworthiness of Johnson himself because of the way he sounded.

Michele: When I was watching it, it kinda seems like Johnson was really nervous sounding and didn't really seem like he was convicted in what he was saying. It kinda just seemed like he was just saying it to appease the Americans and tell them why we had to go to war but it didn't really seem like he believed in the reasons why we had to go to war which makes me think that like maybe he just wanted to go to war for a different reason.

The presence of the audio afforded Michele the opportunity to judge the veracity of Johnson's appeal to the American people based on her analysis of the way he presented himself on television. The audio/visual feature seemed to assist Michele

in her analysis in a way that she might not be able to do with a transcribed printed version of the same speech.

Jovany

The multimodal nature of the sources also impacted how Jovany made sense of the task. His usefulness and trustworthiness ratings of the *Fog of War* revealed how the modality impacted his rating of the source.

Jovany: I thought it was trustworthy cause once again its hardcore information. It's the actual, it's one of the actual people saying coming out saying that yes this is our conversation nobody knows about it. Here's a video about it and some audio.

Jovany addressed the importance of the content but also indicated that the presence of video and audio also contributed to the credibility of the source. Later, Jovany compared the trustworthiness of a video as compared with an audio recording and judged the presence of video and audio to be more trustworthy than just audio. He stated, "It's kinda iffy. Um, it's just voices. In the other one there was an actual video of it but for this it's just voices".

At the end of the task Jovany also cited modality as a reason for his final usefulness ratings. He chose the introduction text and the *Midnight Address* among the most useful sources for him to answer the inquiry question. Jovany also exhibited a preference for primary source features of the texts. He based his use of sources to develop his answer to the inquiry question based on the mode of the source but also how the source influenced his thinking.

Jovany: Cause, the video, most of the videos were actual document, documentations of the real people talking.

The authenticity of the sources as presented in video form was judged to be credible by Jovany and therefore impacted how he constructed his interpretations.

ROLE OF THE READER

The follow-up semi-structured interviews provided insights into how Michele and Jovany used their prior knowledge and their interest to engage with the task and the texts.

Michele

Michele possessed a fair amount of domain knowledge based on her history grades but lacked prior knowledge on the topic of the Vietnam War. Michele indicated her interest in the topic based on the controversial nature of the event. Her interest appeared to be influenced by the nature of the event and how it has been reevaluated in historical terms.

Michele: I was really interested in it because like it kinda seemed like, I just thought it was like really interesting how maybe one of our Presidents might have made a mistake and how like how not many people really thought that when he was making the decision.

Michele indicated that her interest in the task was a four out of five. She based her interest on the ability to interact with multimodal sources instead of written documents and the opportunity to create her own historical interpretation.

Michele: It was interesting and more fun like that we got to listen to like the phone conversations or like everything else that we got to listen to and we got to see the videos and stuff and then we got to make our decision.

Michele was a high achieving student, a highly proficient reader, and was able to create a sophisticated interpretation of Johnson's justification based on her reading of the multimodal sources presented in the task.

Jovany

Jovany was not as interested in the Vietnam War as a topic in American History and also possessed low topic knowledge. At the end of the task he stated that he did not have much interest in the Gulf of Tonkin incident but preferred World War II.

Jovany: Uh it's, it's not really my thing to like understand what happened during, I, I really wasn't interested in it cause it's, it's one of those. . .It wasn't really popular, I mean it just happened. It was an event.

Despite Jovany's lack of interest in the topic, he had a high interest in the task and stated, "I love, I love using computers." He indicated that he often used the Internet for school tasks. When asked to compare this task with reading the same

sources in printed text form he responded by stating that he may have given up on the task if it was text only.

Jovany: I, I don't want to say I would have given up on it but, it's I, I probably, I'd be interested in it to a certain point. After reading so much text, it's just, it's just text. It's not exciting, it's boring. No emotion, there's no feeling.

Jovany also indicated, "I think it is easier using Internet resources to write an essay." As a less proficient reader, Jovany appeared to favor multimodal sources because they gave texture to the topic being studied. Despite his lack of interest in the topic and his more limited reading skills as measured by the ACT, Jovany mirrored several of the same historical thinking practices and reading behaviors that Michele exhibited.

DISCUSSION

Michele and Jovany represent contrasts in reading ability, school performance, and interest in the topic, yet both exhibited similar reading processes and comparable levels of complex historical reasoning without an intervention. While these cases are not generalizable, they are illustrative of the overall study and provide an empirical investigation of student processing of multiple multimodal texts in a high school history context. Findings suggest that task, text, and reader factors (RAND, 2002) are impacted by the use of multimodal sources for disciplinary inquiry.

These students used multiple multimodal primary and secondary sources by deploying some historical thinking strategies. They could read and synthesize multiple texts and make sense of a historical event despite limited background knowledge. Even though Michele and Jovany exhibited complex reading strategies like evaluating and making inferences, they were not necessarily reading with a disciplinary lens that critiqued the production of the texts they read. For example, much of their evaluation was based on content contained within the source and not based on who produced the source, which is a critical component of historical thinking (Wineburg, 1991). While the discipline should be foregrounded (Moje, 2008) when designing student inquiry tasks; simply adding multimodal texts will not generate discipline specific reading. Scaffolding is necessary to move students from more general sense making to discipline-specific reading.

Second, these two cases suggest that multimodal texts cannot be treated as universal. Analysis of multimodal texts should include considerations of the

amount of textual, visual, and auditory information that needs to be processed. The example of the political cartoon, *Vietscar*, highlights the high level of inferences required for a source that provided little textual information versus the video clip, *The Fog of War*, that provided image, text, and audio. While multimodal features may aid student comprehension of primary sources, it does not ensure comprehension. More research is needed to understand the differences in comprehending not only different text types but also different historical source types like cartoons or photographs.

Finally, initial differences between the two readers diminished as they progressed through the task. The case of Jovany exemplifies, that given traditional printed texts, he would have stopped reading. He needed multiple texts to build a complex *intertext* model (Perfetti, Rouet, & Britt, 1999) of the Gulf of Tonkin Incident. Had he been provided with one or two texts, he would not have been able to generate the mental representation of the event that he was able to construct much like Michele, a strong reader, over the course of several sources. Coiro et al., (2008) argue that a lack of prior knowledge can be ameliorated quickly when students are online, because multimodal sources like video, audio, and images can be used to increase background knowledge more quickly than written text. Teachers may consider adding multimodal sources into their texts sets to make written disciplinary texts more accessible to less proficient readers. This does not suggest that teachers should eschew written text for multimodal sources. Rather, these multimodal texts can be leveraged because of high student interest, so that students will be more likely to engage in rigorous examination of historical phenomena and perhaps be used as scaffolds for more dense and complex written primary and secondary sources.

While the central focus of this study was on how students read multiple multimodal texts for a school and discipline specific task, the ability to navigate a multitude of texts will impact their lives both in and out of school. These two cases highlight some of the potentials and challenges for instruction using multiple multimodal sources. We need to further conceptualize how to provide instruction with multimodal texts and continue to increase the complexity of texts for all students in all disciplines.

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ALER AWARDS TO
MEMBERSHIP

ALBERT J. MAZURKIEWICZ SPECIAL SERVICES AWARD

Mary Beth Sampson
Texas A&M University-Commerce

Abstract

Dr. Mary Beth Sampson, a professor at Texas A&M-Commerce, received the Albert J. Mazurkiewicz Special Services Award for 2012. Dr. Sampson has more than a 20-year history with the College Reading Association/Association of Literacy Researchers and Educators. Most recently she has concluded her three-year term as Board Director. Prior to that, she served as lead and co-editor for the Yearbook for two terms, from 2001-2009. Additionally, Mary Beth has served on the Review Board for Reading Research and Instruction, now known as Literacy Research Instruction, for 12 years and on the CRA Yearbook Review Board from 2000-2002. She also served as a section and co-editor for the 50th Anniversary Monograph and co-author of an oral history segment in that two-volume set. In addition, Dr. Sampson served as the Chair-Elect and then Chair of the Teacher Education Division from 2003-2005 and on the Program Committee since 1997. Via that role, she led the largest division and brought many new members as doctoral students to the organization. Dr. Mary Beth Sampson continues her involvement, now serving as the Chair of the Resolutions and Rules Committee. Her outstanding service to ALER is in keeping with the criteria for this award.



When preparing an address, a lesson, or writing an article, I often search for quotes that either motivate me or might be appropriate to incorporate into the product. So I utilized this familiar mode of preparation when trying to prepare a response to receiving the Albert J. Mazurkiewicz ALER Special Services Award. However, after lengthy searching I was somewhat disheartened at my lack

of success in finding a quote that even came close to capturing the value of receiving this award from this organization composed of valued colleagues.

I searched the education quotes and found many powerful statements such as, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world” (Nelson Mandela); “Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself” (John Dewey); “The only person who is educated is the one who has learned how to learn and change” (Carl Rogers) and “Education is simply the soul of a society as it passes from one generation to another” (Gilbert K. Chesterton). While all of the quotes reminded me how fortunate I was to have education as my profession, none of the quotes seemed appropriate for conveying the feelings I had when I received the notification I had been selected for this award. So the search continued.

I searched the work and profession quotes. Several were appropriate to being in a field I love such as, “Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life” (Confucius); “Find a job you like and you add five days to every week” (H. Jackson Brown, Jr.); “Laziness may appear attractive, but work gives satisfaction” (Anne Frank); and “Nothing is work unless you’d rather be doing something else” (George Halas). While the quotes reinforced my thankfulness for being in the field of literacy, none seemed to convey how I really felt about this honor.

So the search continued as I explored various categories of quotes from age (in response to my children’s reminder that age often seems to be a criterion for a service award) to inspirational to wisdom. Regarding age, I found “Age is an issue of mind over matter. If you don’t mind, it doesn’t matter” (Mark Twain). Now while I definitely liked Twain’s view and sent the statement to my children, the quote still didn’t seem to be what I was looking for. The inspirational search was reassuring with statements such as “Don’t judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds that you plant” (Robert Louis Stevenson) since as educators we often don’t ever really know the impact of our actions on our students; we just know our hopes and dreams for the learners who are entrusted to us. However the sentiment still didn’t seem to be what I was looking for. The wisdom search yielded a statement that made me feel very wise, “The only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing” (Socrates). However even though I could embrace each quote, I still hadn’t found one that seemed exactly appropriate for this award.

The searching continued, and then a list of quotes from the people accepting awards in the movie industry surfaced and I spotted a quote that seemed to capture the essence of why this award meant so much to me. Upon receiving the

American Film Institute's Lifetime Achievement Award in 1979, Alfred Hitchcock stated, "This award is meaningful because it comes from my fellow dealers in celluloid." All I had to do was revise just a little, and I had the absolute truth, "This award is meaningful because it comes from my fellow dealers in literacy."

And as I rewrote the quote, I realized why I had struggled so with trying to formulate a response. I always felt that it was a privilege and just plain fun to learn, work, and grow with such a remarkable and supportive group of professional researchers and educators. Therefore, receiving an award for involvement with an organization and people I enjoyed so much seemed somehow uncomfortable. ALER is comprised of individuals who are "dealers in literacy" in ways that positively impact the lives of learners of all ages. I am one of those learners for it is through this organization I have had multiple opportunities for research, presentations, publication, editorship, leadership, collaboration, and most importantly relationships both professional and personal. Professional relationships have developed that have resulted in research, presentations, and publications that I could never have accomplished alone and lifelong friendships have developed.

So I really feel that this award is a result of receiving service from ALER for many years rather than providing service to the organization. However since my "fellow dealers in literacy" have selected me for this award, I accept with gratitude and am both humbled and honored. The leaders and each and every one of the members of ALER have my sincerest and deepest thanks.

Note: The Albert J. Mazurkiewicz Special Services Award is awarded to members for special service and/or significant contributions to ALER

LAUREATE AWARD

Judy Richardson

Abstract

Dr. Judy Richardson received the Laureate Award for 2012. Currently, she is Faculty Emerita at Virginia Commonwealth University. Dr. Richardson has been a member of CRA/ALER since 1979. During that time, she has received both the A.B. Herr Award and the ALER Special Services Award. She has also been a CRA President, Board member, Division Chair and conference chair. She has served on innumerable committees and presented at just about every CRA/ALER CONFERENCE in the last thirty years. In addition, she has numerous articles and chapters published in various CRA/ALER publications as well as in the Journal of Reading/Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, the leading professional journal devoted to research and instruction with older students. The fact that her 2012 first-authored book, Reading to Learn in the Content Areas, is now in its eighth edition, is further evidence of her influence in the field. Dr. Richardson's work in Macedonia is another example of her commitment to worldwide literacy, as well as her collaboration with other colleagues and agencies. The fact that she was twice awarded Fulbright grants for this work is testament to its importance. In combination, these many and varied accomplishments easily align with the criteria for the Laureate Award: influence on others, longevity in the organization, service to ALER, and a commitment to collaboration.



Receiving the Laureate Award is a great honor for me. I have attended the RCRA/ALER conference every year from 1979 with the exception of 2008 when I was on a Fulbright in Macedonia. And I have enjoyed and learned so much at each and every conference. My personal and professional life has been enriched beyond measure because of my association with CRA/ALER.

As Thurber remarked in 1955, “with sixty (plus a few more years, in my case!) staring me in the face, I have developed inflammation of the sentence structure and a definite hardening of the paragraphs.” Next year, if I have not yet inflamed my sentences and hardened my paragraphs, I will share with you some reflections on literacy, literature and learning and we will consider how learning to read and write has—and has not—changed in the past 70 years.

Once again, thank you for this great honor, as this truly is a great organization.

Note: The ALER Laureate Award is awarded for mentoring/teaching, longevity in ALER, collaborative scholarship, and participation in ALER leadership and events.

TRANSFORMING
K-12 TEACHERS'
LITERACY
PRACTICES

EXPANDING THE LEARNING ZONE: DECISIONS THAT TRANSFORM THE PRACTICES OF TWO ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS TEACHERS

Juan J. Araujo

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Abstract

This article presents two case studies that document the decisions of two secondary English language arts teachers in ninth and eleventh grade classrooms who are working with English learners. These teachers were interviewed and observed in their classrooms during the spring semester to investigate their decision-making during literacy instruction. Findings suggest that when decisions focused on building relationships, inquiry instruction, and students' interests and mediated the resources around them, students deeply connected to the learning. One teacher saw students as instructional partners and overtly focused decisions on improved engagement and participation. The other teacher overtly and deliberately focused on empathy, caring and meaningful connections to help students make sense of their academic worlds.

English language arts teachers, at all levels, face a critical challenge of collectively attending to the literacy needs of 11.2 million (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2011) English Language Learners—especially in an era of federal standardized testing mandates. But as they plan, deliver and assess instruction, monolingual high school teachers, in particular, are realizing that “one-size-fits-most” instruction was never suitable to meet the literacy needs of multiple language learners. “These teachers need to think about the influence and use of their students’ cultural and linguistic resources, the specific resources

at the contexts in which they teach, the resources provided at their professional setting, and the effects of their particular pedagogical approaches” (Ball, 2006, p. 295). These teachers are realizing that the challenge is exacerbated by some of the curriculum at their disposal. Curriculum, which was never effective to meet the needs of 20th century students—especially English Learners—as they prepare for college, career and life. However, teachers must work with the curriculum they have to engage students in rich and multifaceted literacy learning.

Due to changing student language proficiency demographics, technology changes, and cultural shifts, teachers are finding that determining appropriate instructional strategies, given the mandated curriculum, is a complex undertaking. Although there are research studies that relate to supporting adolescent writing instruction (Panofsky, Pacheco, Smith, Santos, Fogelman, Harrington, & Kenney, 2005; Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007), little is known specifically about the decisions teachers make to support English Learners as they write in school. Information is still needed about how teachers decide which instructional strategies are the most appropriate to meet the range of student linguistic, thinking and academic needs.

The purpose of this paper is to help address this quandary. To further understand more about decision-making the following two questions guided this research:

1. What is the nature of teacher decision-making during writing instruction in two ELA classrooms?
2. What, if any, resources do these teachers put in use or action to mediate learning?

Theoretical Underpinnings

It has been widely accepted that concepts are learned long before formal schooling starts, but how they are learned has been a debate for many years. Some believed that learning happens due to stimuli, either passive or negative reinforcement (Skinner, 1957). Other believed that the mind stored input and provided an output when necessary (Rumelhart, 1994). Today, it is widely believed that learning is an active and constructive process in the social context (Vygotsky, 1978). Learning with this perspective happens through apprenticeship (Rogoff, 1990); the expert leads the novice until the novice can do the task without help or assistance. In this perspective, learning a language is shaped not only by the student’s prior learning experiences, but also by tapping into social capital (Bourdieu, 1972; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992), linguistic knowledge and culture, educational experiences, and individual learning patterns (Gardner,

1987). Socioculturalists believe learning happens socially, between and among people through the use of tools (Vygotsky, 1978). As humans transact with these tools and signs, they make sense of their local and global cultures that is how they see the world. Because culture is a process (Spindler, 1997) the tools and signs people use are in constant flux both individually and collectively. This paper is grounded in the sociocultural perspective because of its focus on the student's culture and its use as a mediation tool for learning.

What Informs Teachers' Decision-Making?

Teachers make effective decisions about their students' needs (Darling Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Gambrell, Malloy, & Mazzoni 2011). Many years ago Kinder (1978) theorized that good decisions are made by teachers who have extensive background knowledge about supporting their students and without this knowledge decision-making becomes a daunting undertaking. Teachers require content and pedagogical knowledge, as well as knowledge about their students, curricular mandates, local and national policies in order to make the best decision possible.

Teachers' instructional decisions are informed by many factors. These factors can be student or teacher related. Organizational, instructional, professional, local or national concerns and priorities contribute to the decision-making process for all teachers (Kinder, 1978). In addition, professional development informs how teachers make decisions. In particular, these two teachers took part in *Culturally Mediated Writing Instruction* (CMWI). Its purpose was to help teachers address the needs of mainstream students and English Learners and to help teachers exceed standards put forth by NCLB Act, 2001 (2002). During the institute, teachers were introduced to inquiry-based instruction, language acquisition theories, cultural practices, and writing strategies to help support students as they wrote. CMWI's theoretical underpinnings were based on a socio-literate approach, which supports students to "constantly be involved in research and into strategies that employ in completing literacy tasks in specific situations" (Johns, 1997, p. 15). Table 1 displays CMWI's principles and practices, which were explored in earlier publications (Patterson, Wickstrom, Roberts, Araujo, & Hoki, 2010; Wickstrom, Araujo, & Patterson, 2011).

Decision-Making Research Gap

While in the past there has been research on teacher decision-making in mainstream classrooms (Anderson, 2003; Clark & Peterson, 1986; Connelly & Clandinin, 1986) there has been very little research conducted in ESL classrooms

TABLE 1 Culturally Mediated Writing Instruction**CMWI Participant Beliefs**

Principles

- We learn best with opportunities for social interaction.
- We need opportunities to make strategic choices about what, when, or where we learn and how we read and write.
- We respond positively to purposeful, challenging tasks.
- We learn best when we can make connections to our lives.
- Our sense of identity influences our academic learning.
- We learn more easily and powerfully within a community of practice.
- We learn best (as individuals and as communities) through inquiry.
- We need to participate in dialogue and critique about significant issues (including our own learning strategies).

Practices

- Inquire, write, and publish together.
- Build on experiences outside and inside school.
- Activate prior knowledge and provide common experiences.
- Frame significant issues as springboards for inquiry.
- Demonstrate strategies and resources for inquiry, reading, and writing.
- Provide time for individual and shared investigation.
- Respond and revise; provide feedback for revision and editing.
- Publish and present findings in a variety of ways/media/genre to a range of real audiences.
- Invite further inquiry and opportunities to apply what we have learned.
- Assess learners' strengths & targets for growth; use assessment data to inform instruction.
- Use state and district curricular frameworks and standards to guide instructional decisions.

(Cumming, 1989; Woods, 1989). The gap on teacher decision-making research coincides with NCLB Act, 2001 (2002) because of its focus on standardized, objective-based assessments. In this perspective, teachers are judged by local, state, and federal authorities based on student academic yearly performance as measured by their state's chosen measurement tool. Because of this action, teachers find themselves teaching to the needs of the measurement tool, not teaching to their students' short and long-term academic, career and life needs.

After the passing of NCLB Act, 2001 (2002) school districts across the United States adapted to the mandate “every child will be reading and writing at grade level by 2013” by implementing structured curriculum across grades and content areas to ensure that students met and exceeded the standards set at the state and national level. In Texas, many school districts centralized instructional decisions about lessons, pacing, sequence and rigor to the point that teachers were provided and expected to adhere to daily lesson plans about what to cover with students. Teachers reverted to being thought of as technicians delivering banking education (Freire, 1970) to meet the objectives set by the states; the districts took on the essentialism philosophy that there are basic skills people need to function in society. These skills were delivered in a high-structured learning environment that measured their performance through frequent content-based assessments created by central administrators. Teacher decision-making capacities were reduced to classroom management, attendance, and seating arrangements. Today, however, some teachers are realizing that effective instruction for their students goes beyond the structured curriculum at their disposal (Patterson et al, 2010, Wickstrom et al, 2011).

During the last few years, several studies have looked at decision-making under the teaching adaption umbrella (Duffy, Miller, Parsons, Davis, & Williams, 2008; Parsons, Davis, Scales, Williams, & Kear, 2010). Parsons (2012) studied adapting practices of two third grade teachers in a Title 1 school. He found that teachers adapt in various ways and for different reasons. His review of the literature pointed to “a lack of empirical base in the field of adaptive teaching” (Parsons, p. 150). One major difference between Parsons study and this study is the student participants are adolescents in 9th and 11th grades. Another difference is that these case studies focus on how teachers use the resources at their disposal to mediate learning. Clearly there is a need to study teachers and their decision-making capabilities. Information about how teachers decide in English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom is still needed.

METHODS

Case studies (Creswell, 2008; Yin, 1994) are appropriate for the purposes of studying teacher’s decision-making because they require “an intensive, holistic approach of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit” (Merriam, 1988, p. 16). This descriptive non-experimental design (Creswell, 2008; Merriam, 1988) provides teachers and researchers a way to further understand the complex issue of teacher decision-making in order to extend and strengthen what is already known. These case studies are “(1) *particularistic* because they focus on the

decisions of two separate persons, (2) they are *descriptive* because they focus on rich description of events, (3) they are *heuristics* because the cases focus on understanding more about teacher decisions and they are (4) *inductive* because the data collected drives the understandings that emerge” (Barone, 2004, p. 8).

Setting

The study took place in two adolescent classrooms, at two different high schools in the southwest. These particular classrooms were chosen because of the researcher’s insider knowledge with the site and with the teacher participants. Carmen’s (pseudonyms) high school is located in a midsize city in north Texas. It serves about 2,200 students in grades 9 through 12, many of whom are typically middle- and upper-class students from Anglo, Hispanic, African American, Asian American, and Native American backgrounds. In this classroom, the students are either native English or long-term English Learners. That is to say that they have been in the United States more than 5 years and are almost fluent.

Janet’s (pseudonyms) high school is located in a suburban city in north Texas. It serves about 1,500 students in grades 9 through 12 many of whom are typically middle- and upper-class students from Anglo backgrounds. Janet reports that there appears to be an emerging growth pattern of Asian American and Hispanic students. In this classroom, English Learners range from beginning to intermediate English proficiency. They are typically enrolled in sheltered English as a Second Language classroom for the language arts portion of the curriculum and then participate in the regular classes for the other content courses.

Participants

The participants in this study were two high school ELA teachers. They were selected using a purposive sampling technique (Patton, 1990). The teachers for this study met the following criteria: 1) participation in the local Writing Project summer institute, 2) membership and knowledge of CMWI principles and practices, 3) teach English language arts to native and English language learners, and 4) be a member of the local NWP site. Taken together it was likely that these two English language art teachers would be making decisions based on student resources and information obtained from the CMWI professional development.

Carmen (pseudonym) was a Caucasian secondary ELA teacher whose focus was literature. She had taught at the middle and secondary grades for seven years. She has a Master of Education degree with a focus in reading. Her professional development activities focused on technology instructional practices. She used a

writing workshop approach. In class, students spend most of the time inquiring, reading, and writing about the topic of the day. Carmen was attentive to student needs, frequently engaging with students individually and collectively. Using a mix of formative assessments, Carmen motivated students to become self-reliant and take initiative for their own learning. She mediated learning using small and whole group conversations, interactive writing activities with a focus on using technology, and on-the-spot conversations to help students sort out their questions about what to do next.

Janet (pseudonym) was a Caucasian secondary ELA teacher, with a passion for working with beginning to intermediate English Learners. She had taught English Learners for eleven years and was pursuing a Master of Education with a focus on providing reading instruction to English Learners. Her professional developmental activity focused on learning more about effective practices with linguistically and culturally diverse students. She focused on guiding student learning using a writing workshop approach based on engaging students with inquiry (Wilhelm, 2007). As she delivered instruction, she was attentive to using the student's background knowledge as an aide for learning new materials. During the observation period Janet was torn between delivering the state mandated curriculum and the realities of the students' language and literacy proficiency in the classroom. Using reflective journaling, informal observations, long-term writing inquiries, and small discussion groups Janet mediated challenging academic tasks.

Janet's class met daily whereas Carmen's class met on a block schedule—sometimes meeting one, twice, or three times a week. The observations took place during ELA instruction. During the observation, the researcher documented the environment, conversations between students and/or between teacher and students. A digital recorder was used to revisit the conversations and identify to fill in the gaps between what was initiated captured through note-taking. Both teachers provided the researcher access to handouts, lesson plans, links to websites, and student work. After each lesson, the teacher and researcher spoke to discuss the observations. Topics ranged from students, lesson planning, delivery, assessment and decision-making. The conversations began with, "How did you think that went?" After this, the conversations led to questions about decisions, "Why did you decide to do that?" "What are you planning to do next, and why?" In Janet's class the conversations centered on student's individual needs. In Carmen's class the conversations centered on the curriculum in February and March then shifted to student's needs in April. A reason for this shift was a change in focus from preparation of standardized tests to improving student engagement and academic readiness for college and life.

Data Collection

This study used four types of documentation to address the research questions (1) pre-entry interviews, (2) teacher surveys, (3) periodic classroom observations, and (4) semi-structured teacher conversations before and after the observations. The researcher observed the teachers during the spring 2010 semester across a period of four months. The role of the researcher was a participant observer. During the observation the focus was to document the interactions between teachers and students to better understand the process of decision-making during literacy instruction.

The teachers went through a pre-entry interview and filled out a questionnaire about their principles and practices with the purpose of the researcher becoming familiar their philosophies, the classroom environment, classroom settings, teacher-preferred times, and to schedule the periodic observations. Informal conversations took place during a total of 22 observations for the two teachers. The observations ranged between 45 minutes to 1 hour and 15 minutes. These observations depended on the district, administration, teacher availability, and the researcher's teaching schedule.

Data Analysis

A constant comparative methodology was used (Glaser, 1992). Data collected were organized by participant, day of observation, interview, student assignment, or teacher directed assignment. Analysis during the collection phase consisted of transcribing, note-taking, and to begin to notice patterns of teacher's decision making and the enactment of their instructional practices. This process involved arranging the data, searching for patterns and recording them to each teacher participant in the study. The emerging codes provided guidance as the next phase took place.

After the data collection, the audiotapes and notes were transcribed using Microsoft Word and Atlas TI. Then, the researcher read through the observation and interviews multiple times to get an understanding of the data. For this analysis the researcher focuses on two: 1) resources in use and 2) decision-making. To achieve triangulation (Merriam, 1988) the researcher convened a team of six literacy experts (3 full-time university faculty and 2 doctoral students) who were familiar both with the teachers and with the professional development course to collectively analyze the data. The codes and themes were discussed, modifications were suggested, and a consensus about codes and themes was reached.

FINDINGS

The following narrative provides a case study for Carmen and Janet. Each case documents the nature of instructional decision-making, the practices the two

teachers used, and how these teachers put the resources in use to mediate learning. The narrative focuses on two instructional units for each teacher. For Carmen the units are *The Catcher in the Rye* and *The Hunger Games*. For Janet the units are *The House on Mango Street* and *The Odyssey*.

1. What is the nature of teacher decision-making during writing instruction in two ELA classrooms?

Carmen in the Mainstream Classroom

Deciding to learn from a culture of boredom. During *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger, 1951) unit, Carmen's decisions initially focused on delivering the academic content to get the students ready for the state assessment, improving linguistic knowledge and synthesizing the themes for the book. She decided to read the book because she had heard positive comments from other faculty, it was available for checkout, and "one student had suggested we read it."

Juan: Who decided on reading The Catcher in the Rye?

Carmen: The curriculum. We have ten novels to read from. It depends on what's in the bookroom since we share the books. My class is supposed to be American Literature and I have to follow a historical timeline.

The Catcher in the Rye (Salinger, 1951) was taught through traditional methods (i.e., lecture, question and answer, feedback). As she looked around the room Carmen said she noticed that many students seemed "bored and not happy." During the next lesson she decided to have students read in pairs and aloud to the rest of the class, but still many students were not engaged with the story, during the observation students talked about what they did during the weekend or about what plans they had for after school.

During the next interview, Carmen said, "I know the students hate the book and have not read it, instead the students will read the Spark Notes as they prepare for the chapter quizzes and final exam." So, Carmen asked 10 teachers to audio tape reasons why they had enjoyed reading the book. During the next lesson she played the audio for the students, they spoke about their feelings for the book. They opened up about their unwillingness to read. They said that they did not connect to Holden or his issues. She said, "The funny thing was that having this conversation made me realize that I did not like the book either when I read it, I learned to appreciate it when I read it again in college." From that point forward she said that she noticed students seemed more connected to the story and the characters.

Juan: Why do you think the students did not connect to the book?

Carmen: Huh, I don't know, I read in this article that our kids share everything with everyone, they put everything on Facebook. If they have a problem they say, "Guys I don't know what to do," and this book is so different than that. I think Holden is so different than that. I think all generations before [Facebook] understand that because we have not been able to do that.

To mediate, she decided to ask students to create a "Catcher in the Rye Soundtrack" which they presented to the rest of the class. Its purpose was for students to create a music soundtrack for the book. The activity asked students to search for ten songs that went along with the themes and characters. The students were asked to submit a reflection where they discussed the reasons for their song choices and how the songs fit the particular scenes. During the observations, the students were eager to share their soundtrack; each listened to each other's choices and made connections to themselves, the characters and its themes. Below is one student's explanation of two song choices.

1. For the first song, I choose Mr. Lonely by Akon. This song is when he is in the hotel room and feels depressed and lonely because he has no place to go, nothing to do and got kicked out of Pencey. My motivation for this song is he is feeling depressed so the song explains that he is lonely. That is how he feels so it is a good part of the book.
2. *Nothing on you B.O.B. [babe]* [is another song that] goes into the part of the book when Holden is thinking about Janet when he is going into his hotel room. He can't get her out of his brain. The song is about there isn't anyone who can't compare to the girl. That's how Holden feels, he loves everything about her. The song really relates to this.

Because Carmen saw a difference in student participation when she gave students some personal latitude with the soundtrack, she decided to continue this practice and allow her students to select the next book. To do this, she asked them to go home, think of a book that they felt the class needed to read and then to "pitch the book" to the class next time they met. Students were given 3 minutes to sell their book to the class. At the end of class, the choice was overwhelmingly in favor of *The Hunger Games* (2008) because the students said they connected to the young characters, setting in a television game show, and its themes of war, poverty, friendship, and government.

Deciding to take advantage of a culture of advocacy. During *The Hunger Games* (2008) unit, Carmen's decisions focused on the students building personal and authentic connections with the text. She decided to read this book to engage students with a book that was meaningful to them. Carmen said she decided to see her students as partners in the learning process because she wanted students to see that reading a book could be enjoyable.

Carmen: They've talked me into reading The Hunger Games book, even though I know it's beneath them, reading wise that is. I decided they hated The Crucible, they hate, I mean, they thought A Lesson before Dying was mediocre, they hated The Catcher in the Rye, so I decided let's read a book that they selected and that they enjoy . . . I want them to see that you can actually get into a book.

She engaged students in authentic tasks like asking them to research about current events, write Dear Abby Letters as if they were characters in the book submitting them to the personals in newspapers, and record group documentaries that engaged outsiders to discuss topics that they connected to the book. She decided to step aside more often because she said, "students learn best when this happens." To assess learning, Carmen assigned tasks throughout the reading that were meaningful and engaging for students. The assignments were to create a video about a topic in connection to the book, research a topic on their own and present it to the class. Carmen asked students to choose a research topic from a list they had collectively developed and at the end of the class present their findings to the rest of the class. The decision to go along with what the students wanted improved both the classroom atmosphere and the relationship between the students and the teacher. From the students' perspective this action revealed that Carmen possessed similar interests and personality as they did. One student said, "Miss, I wish you would have shown us this side earlier."

Janet in the English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) class

Deciding to navigate within the culture of newcomers. During *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1984) unit Janet's decisions focused on encouraging students to use their background and culture as resources when they read the text. She decided to read the book because of her prior success with previous students.

Juan: Why did you decide to read the book?

Janet: Because, first of all, it's my all-time favorite book. It's also in the district curriculum. It's so thick and rich of ideas. And I've had at least five students that have said, "When we read House, it changed my life."

To facilitate learning, Janet decided to stop often during reading (three or four times each chapter) and ask students to think about the characters and plot. She frequently clarified unfamiliar vocabulary.

Janet: Do you think she's serious or do you think she is joking?

Carla: What did you say before—sarcastic?

Janet: Well, if I said, "you didn't do your homework; that makes me very happy." That's being sarcastic.

At times when the action was difficult to describe with words, she would act out and use humor to provide a visual or a concrete example for the action in the story—Total Physical Response (Asher, 1995). She reported during one conversation that this helped students build [reading] comprehension.

Janet: [Reading from House] We slowed the double circles down to a certain speed so that Rachel who had just jumped in could practice shaking it . . . and then is Rachel who starts it. Skip, Skip, snake it in your lips. Wiggle around and break your lip.

After reading the passage, Janet stood up out of the chair and pretended to jump rope and shook her hips like the book describes. Students burst into laughter as she shook her hips. To assess what the students were learning she asked them to answer through writing two essential questions she had posed from the very beginning: 1) Tell me something you have in common with the book, 2) How do people keep their own power? She decided to use essential questions because she said, "this will be the best way to elicit a good response from her students." Throughout the reading she continually asked students to speak about their commonalities with Esperanza, the lead character, to make personal connections.

Deciding to test the culture boundaries. For *The Odyssey* (Homer, trans. 1996) unit the decisions Janet made focused on meeting the curriculum and to gauge the status of the students' academic language proficiency in order to determine their readiness for the mainstream curriculum. Janet delivered the content using

a more traditional method (question, answer, assessments) and stepped back to provide less academic support.

Juan: Who chose The Odyssey?

Janet: The curriculum.

Janet acknowledged that only the academic content guided her decisions because she believed that regular English language arts teachers would not provide the level of support she provided to her students. She said she took this course of action because she wanted to make informed decisions about the student's academic placement for next year. As the readings progressed she said, "Only one student is successfully navigating the academic content. The other students are having trouble because of the lack of [clear] connections and because the vocabulary needed to read and understand the text was too academic." To help them make significant connection she decided to use the web [i.e., www.mythweb.com] and decided to show them bits of *The Odyssey* movie (2008). One of the biggest aids for students was when Janet decided to charge groups to lead the conversation for one chapter. Janet said that this decision allowed students to focus on chunks of the text which improved the dialogue and heightened comprehension.

2. What, if any, resources do these teachers put in use to mediate learning?

This section describes how Carmen and Janet transformed their teaching practices by using the resources around them. Multiple resources including personal and professional knowledge, familiarity about students' sociocultural resources, familiarity with the text, and the contextual resources guided the instructional decisions the teacher participants made. For this study, the data pointed to four types of resource the teachers put in use: 1) textual, 2) contextual, 3) reader/writer, and 4) teacher. The textual resources included the textbook, articles, worksheets, and novels. The contextual resources included the classroom, school, home, and other classrooms they visited during the day. The reader/writer resources included the student's sociocultural knowledge, linguistic knowledge of English and native language skills students accessed during instruction, thinking strategies to support learning, and previous academic knowledge of the text or topic. The teacher resources included familiarity with the text, knowledge of the student, understanding of the context, prior personal experiences and professional experience. Table 2 displays the four instructional units, the resources in use, and the activity the teachers implemented to mediate the language and literacy

domains (sociocultural knowledge, linguistic knowledge, thinking strategy, and academic knowledge). When these teachers used these resources, these resources turned into affordances for students. Together these affordances created a zone of learning for students which expanded or contracted depending on the use of the resources.

TABLE 2 Language and Literacy Needs

Primary Text/ Language Support	Mediated (√)	Resources Used	Activity/Student Projects
<i>The Catcher in the Rye</i>			
Sociocultural Knowledge	√	Reader Contextual Textual	Flexible Seating “Catcher Music Soundtrack” Audio Recording
Linguistic Knowledge			
Thinking Strategies			
Academic Knowledge	√	Reader Textual	“Catcher Music Soundtrack” Audio Recording
<i>The Hunger Games</i>			
Sociocultural Knowledge	√	Reader Contextual Textual Teacher	Individual Inquiry Research Project
Linguistic Knowledge	√	Reader Contextual Textual Teacher	Individual and Group Research Project Write Up and Presentation
Thinking Strategies	√	Reader Contextual Textual Teacher	Essential Question
Academic Knowledge	√	Textual Contextual Textual Teacher	Individual and Group Research Project
<i>The House on Mango Street</i>			
Sociocultural Knowledge	√	Reader Contextual Textual Teacher	Author’s Chair

Linguistic Knowledge	√	Teacher	Teacher Read Aloud
Thinking Strategies	√	Reader Contextual Textual Teacher	Time for Dialogue About Connections
Academic Knowledge	√		Read Aloud Writing Workshop Author's Chair Conferencing
<i>The Odyssey</i>			
Sociocultural Knowledge	√	Teacher Contextual	The Odyssey Movie
Linguistic Knowledge	√	Teacher	Internet Research Activity About Greek Gods
Thinking Strategies	√	Teacher Contextual Reader	Chapter Leaders— Students Lead Discussion to Discuss Key Findings
Academic Knowledge	√	Teacher	Dialogue Chapter Leaders Who Is a Hero? Project

Figure 1 displays a product that was constructed during the data analysis to make sense of the resources the teachers were navigating within to mediate what is already known with new information for students. This decision-making heuristic provided some clarity about the decisions these two teachers were making. During the analysis this heuristic made a difference because it provided a way to contextualize the decisions. These four resources transact (Rosenblatt, 1978) with one another to create a zone of learning for the students.

During *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger, 1951) Carmen initially focused on the textual resources (e.g., book) and her personal knowledge of the book. As she saw students become disengaged, she searched for contextual (i.e., teacher audio tapes, and technology), student (i.e., music recording), and additional teacher resources to help connect students.

For *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008), Carmen initially focused on the students resources (i.e., knowledge of the book) because the students were familiar with the text, not her. The students possessed all the textual resources. When Carmen improved her textual resources she more effectively used the contextual

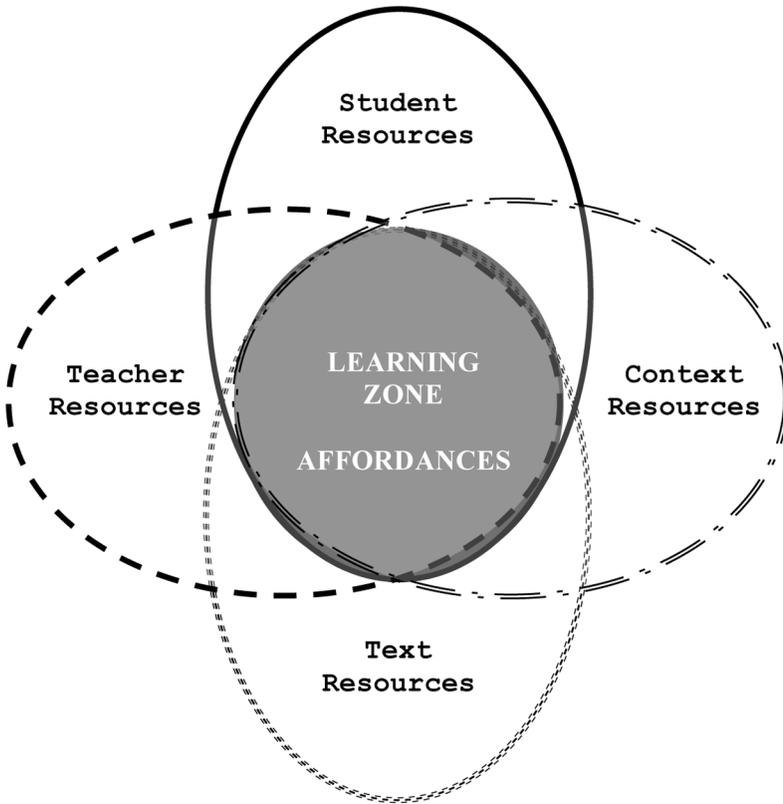


Figure 1

The Decision-Making Conceptual Mediation Heuristic.

resources and planned ways to incorporate the class, school, and technology to mediate learning.

During *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1984) Janet utilized the student, personal, contextual and textual resources to mediate learning. Because the book was about an immigrant, students were able to relate to Esperanza's experience. Because Janet had taught this book previously, she was able to tap into her experience. She was able to deliver practices which other students connected with. Because the language used in the text was familiar, and the reading was delivered during class, students were able to tap into the many contextual and textual resources.

For *The Odyssey* (Homer, Trans. 1996) use of student and textual resources became challenging for Janet. During this unit, she had to rely on her personal and professional resources and the use of the contextual resources around her.

Through personal and contextual resources, she managed to find technology resources, the idea about chapter leaders, and the movie she played for the class after they read the chapter. But because students possessed few resources and the text was too difficult, Janet reported that only a handful of students accomplished any meaningful work.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of these case studies was to develop a better understanding of the decision-making practices of two high school teachers during English language arts instruction and to understand when and how teachers put the resources at their disposal in use. The researcher observed, interviewed, and analyzed multiple data to answer the following two questions.

1. What is the nature of teacher decision-making during writing instruction in two ELA classrooms?
2. What, if any at all, resources do these teachers put in use or action to mediate learning?

The decisions Carmen and Janet made that attended to the shifts in culture of the classroom (needs and resources) made a difference for students. In Carmen's case the class culture initially was "I passed the state assessment, I do not have to do anything else!" and was then exacerbated by the lack of cultural connection with *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger, 1951). Nevertheless, it was only April and Carmen had to keep them engaged. It was no longer enough to get them in class. *The Hunger Games* (Collins, 2008) was the vehicle that created a springboard for inquiry for the students. In Janet's case the class culture was "We support each other—we are in this together." However, when the academic texts went beyond their abilities with *The Odyssey* (Homer, trans. 1996), the culture shifted to, "Miss, can you give me the answer?" Instead of simply giving students the answers, Janet searched for other appropriate resources that mediated the needs of the students. These conversations and outcomes were made possible because these teachers kept an ongoing dialogue with the students.

The decisions Carmen and Janet made that focused solely on delivering and assessing the structured explicit curriculum (Oliva, 2005) made little difference for student learning. In Carmen's class this was evident during *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger, 1951) when the students were just reading and discussing the book—they were bored, not happy, and not learning. In Janet's classroom, learning stalled when she shifted her focus to *The Odyssey* (Homer, 1996) to see

if students were ready for the traditional mainstream structured curriculum. In both of these instances, the teachers were attempting to use traditional teaching methods which included reading the book at home, questions/answer turns during class time, and taking traditional pencil/paper quizzes to gauge learning. A possible reason for this is that both *The Catcher in the Rye's* (Salinger, 1951) and *The Odyssey's* (Homer, Trans. 1996) characters and themes did not explicitly appeal to the students' interests and concerns. However, once both Carmen and Janet realized the mismatch they took immediate action and made explicit connections for students through conversations and projects.

As these teachers came to recognize the many resources around them, they were able to create a more integrated curricular experience (Brown, 2006). During the music soundtrack and inquiry project, Carmen's students were able to put into action personal skills, academic knowledge about the subject area and technology expertise to explore their questions about the topic at hand. Students explored topics including science, warfare, poverty, health-care, politics, and accounting. Janet's students more effectively used the resources at their disposal during *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros, 1984) because they were able to more explicitly connect to the themes of family, immigration and adolescence, because the book's academic language was more accessible to beginning English learners and because Esperanza and her family experiences mirrored their own current happenings.

The nature of decision-making was successful when the teachers grew in expertise and were informed by the resources at their disposal and therefore were able to more quickly set the conditions for self-paced, individualized learning to take place. In Carmen's case, the change that made a difference was her willingness to go with what students wanted to learn about and to more explicitly use the entire school. In Janet's case, the change that made a difference was her willingness to go beyond the structured curriculum and then pull back when necessary.

The nature of decision-making in these classrooms was at the core of student success. When these teachers decided to incorporate student suggestions, encouraged problem posing/solving with students, and thought deeply about their needs, the students thrived. When the decisions focused on delivering the explicit curriculum that narrowed to learning the basics the students seemed lost and unable to work on their own. Both of these teachers used student observation and took immediate action when appropriate to make learning the goal in their classrooms. While it took an unsuccessful experience with *The Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger, 1951) for Carmen to get to know her students, building extensive background knowledge about them made the most difference in the

long term as she made decisions. Janet, on the other hand, knew her students, so when she noticed that they were struggling to “get it” she was prepared to take action.

Until recently (Duffy et al., 2008; Parsons et al., 2011) the nature of decision-making in the field of language and literacy instruction has been limited, particularly in second language education. As culturally and linguistically diverse students make up more of the student population in Texas and around the United States, it is necessary to understand more about how teachers can use their personal, professional, and contextual resources to mediate learning for their students. To consistently work within and expand the student’s learning zone, Janet’s and Carmen’s decisions show us that knowing about and taking action upon the resources at a teacher’s disposal is vital to improve student success and engagement—this is apt, considering the rapid demographic shifts and technological advances in the student’s social environment. Still, more information is needed about how monolingual teachers support English Learners and how they decide between the resources at their disposal to set the conditions for learning to happen.

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THE THREE C'S OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: THE COACH, THE CONTENT, AND THE CONTEXT

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Abstract

As school districts continue to determine the most effective means to train and retain quality teachers, many are continuing to enlist the assistance of literacy coaches to serve as on-site professional development agents. This study examined how elementary literacy coaches perceived their ability to influence teachers' instructional practices. Through the analysis of survey and interview data, the coaches' perceived positive influences are explained as related to the content and context of professional development. Results indicate the importance of developing literacy content knowledge, using assessment to plan instruction, modeling effective instructional techniques, and collaborating within a collegial, reflective environment.

In response to demands for increased teacher preparation and instructional performance, school districts work to determine the most effective means to provide professional development in their schools. Many districts are choosing to enlist the assistance of literacy coaches to provide ongoing professional development for teachers. School based coaching is being proclaimed as a promising strategy to improve instruction (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009; Poglinco & Bach, 2004) as part of a culture of literacy collaboration (Bean, 2012). In one study investigating district-level administrators' decision-making processes pertaining to literacy coaches, three major factors influenced their decisions to hire coaches: reform contexts, student performance data, and existing roles and programs (Mangin, 2009a;

2009b). According to the research, national and state reform contexts provided the impetus in leading district administrators to consider using literacy coaches as one way to raise student achievement. In response to low student performance data, officials opted to employ literacy coaches to assist teachers in the interpretation of student assessment data and in the instructional design for the purpose of improving student achievement. Recent studies have explored the relationships among coaching, teacher instruction, and student achievement (Elish-Piper & L'Allier, 2010; Elish-Piper & L'Allier, 2011; Walpole, McKenna, Uribe-Zarain, & Lamitina, 2010). These studies suggested positive effects of coaching factors (such as the amount of time spent with teachers and teacher collaboration); however, the specific aspects of coaching predicting student gains have not been clearly defined. Considering the adoption of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in forty-six states and the District of Columbia, combined with the call for increased teacher performance development and teacher evaluation (Marzano, 2012), professional development in schools is of utmost importance. Faculty and staff must learn the content of the CCSS as well as instructional changes inherent in the CCSS implementation. This study investigated how literacy coaches perceived their influences on teachers' instructional changes in their professional development roles.

Coaching as Professional Development

The need for literacy coaches working within a professional development model arose from the No Child Left Behind legislation (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). One stipulation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) stated that each classroom in America must be instructed by a "highly qualified" teacher. A highly qualified teacher was loosely defined as one holding a bachelor's degree or higher, possessing the content knowledge necessary to teach the core academic subjects, and holding a valid state teaching license. Schools responded to this need to ensure that teachers were considered "highly qualified" by positioning a professional development agent, a literacy coach, in elementary schools to provide ongoing professional development training. The coaches were to provide in-depth collaborative professional development and classroom support in reading components for K-3 teachers and special education teachers (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

Literacy coaches assume a variety of roles within a school setting and the roles relate mainly to teacher-oriented tasks and management-oriented tasks (Dussen, Coskie, Robinson, & Autio, 2007; Massey, 2011; Walpole & McKenna, 2013). Teacher-oriented tasks include such roles as modeling, observing and

providing feedback, helping teachers to use data to pinpoint areas for instructional improvement, and meeting with teachers individually and in grade level teams. Management tasks include roles such as coordinating the school literacy program, providing materials and resources for teachers, completing paperwork, and supporting administrators in literacy endeavors. Walpole and Blamey (2008) defined coaches in terms of mentors and directors as perceived by building principals. In their study, coaches assumed a mentor role by supporting teachers and modeling instruction. In the director role, coaches were responsible for staff development and for serving as a liaison among school district personnel. Additionally, principals viewed coaches as change agents for school reform. A coach's role in professional development draws from performing a combination of these roles working within a school and district context.

Professional development is seen as a vehicle for change within a school setting. In defining coaching as a professional development tool there is an assumption that a relationship exists between the coach and the teacher receiving the benefit of professional development. Framing this model within socio-cultural theory, teacher learning is situated within everyday social contexts. The teacher, as the learner, is actively engaged with the more knowledgeable coach; subsequently, as learning takes place, the teacher gradually becomes self-regulated and independent (Rogoff, 1997). This collaborative process bridges present learner understandings to new understandings and hence strengthens instructional practices. From the situated learning perspective, professional development programs should be embedded within the school context, involve collaboration among teachers and coaches, and be ongoing in order to sustain the teacher learning and to evidence changed instructional practices (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2001; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001; Stephens, DeFord, Donnelly, Hamel, Keith, & Leigh, 2011; Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007). "Professional development programs are systematic efforts to bring about change in the classroom practices of teachers, in their attitudes and beliefs, and in the learning outcomes of students" (Guskey, 2002, p. 381).

A professional consensus is emerging regarding qualities defining high quality professional development. Research conducted by Garet and colleagues (2001) suggests that sustained and intensive professional development focusing on academic content integrated into the daily life of a school is more likely to produce enhanced knowledge and skills. A focus on content knowledge had a strong, positive relationship with changes in teacher knowledge. The content knowledge of professional development refers to subject area content, knowledge of teaching strategies, and knowledge about how students learn (Garet et al., 2001). The relationship between content focus and a positive impact on instructional

practice has been explored in previous studies (Cohen & Hill, 2000; Ingvarson, Meiers, & Beavis, 2005). “A strong knowledge base and a clear theoretical rationale grounded in research are necessary conditions for effective programs” (Ingvarson et al., 2005, p. 16).

In addition to content, the context of professional development is also influential in program improvement and teacher effectiveness. The context refers to situating the learning experiences within a collaborative and collegial learning environment. Teachers learn through examination of their own practices (Putnam & Borko, 2000) with opportunities for active learning and application of learned skills (Fisher, Frey, & Nelson, 2012; Fishman, Marx, Best, & Tal, 2003; Snow-Renner & Lauer, 2005). By situating professional development within an embedded school setting, Hayes and Robnolt (2007) provided on-site, ongoing support to teachers in efforts to analyze assessment data and provide research-based literacy instruction. They provided ongoing support to the teachers and implemented professional development opportunities specifically targeting instructional weaknesses. Student pass rates on state standardized assessments increased and teachers perceived a significant change in their literacy knowledge and application.

Literacy coaching is considered a job-embedded approach to professional development (Knight, 2009). Job-embedded professional development indicates collaboration among coaches and teachers relating to planning, understanding content, reflecting and implementing new practices (Knight, 2009). In order to truly effect change, the principles of professional development need to be incorporated into a process of professional development (Mraz, Vacca, & Vintinner, 2008). When relating this concept to literacy coaching, the process involves a continuous cycle of motivation and interest in learning, gaining knowledge and experience with the specific content of professional development, reflecting upon and evaluating the information, and incorporating the new information into instructional practice. When proposing a conceptual framework for a professional development model, Desimone (2009) outlined a model which included core features of content focus, active learning, coherence, duration, and collective participation. According to Desimone’s model, the core features influence teacher knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs, which in turn promote teacher instructional change. The instructional change therefore influences student learning. Viewing literacy coaching as a job-embedded form of professional development and following Desimone’s model, studying the literacy coach, the professional development content, and the collaborative context is critical in understanding the role of a literacy coach as a professional development agent in elementary schools.

In order to explore the relationships among coaches, content, and context, the following research questions guided the current study: (1) To what extent do coaches perceive changes in teachers' instructional practices as a result of coaching? and (2) To which aspects of coaching do coaches attribute teacher instructional changes? While a larger study using the same data set more broadly investigated the coaching role and coaches' perceived impact on teachers (Massey, 2011), the current study looked more closely at the professional development aspect of the literacy coach role and the perceived influence on teacher instructional change.

METHODS

A mixed methods design was utilized to answer the research questions through a two-phase process. In the first phase, archival data from literacy coach surveys were examined qualitatively and quantitatively. In the second phase, four coaches participated in follow-up telephone interviews with the researcher.

Participants and Data Collection

Literacy coaches serving in Reading First (RF) grant-funded schools in one southeastern state reported on their duties and perceptions of the important components of their job descriptions influencing teacher change and student achievement outcomes. Surveys were sent electronically to all RF coaches in the state at the beginning and the end of the 2008-2009 academic year. The surveys contained forced choice items using a Likert-type scale and open-ended items probing professional experiences and training, coaching roles and responsibilities, conferencing styles, and reflections on the coaching tasks deemed most critical to successful coaching. Seventy-eight coaches responded to the fall survey (81% response rate) and 75 coaches (78% response rate) responded to the spring survey. All coaches were female and were serving in elementary schools initially identified as "at risk" for academic failure according to NCLB guidelines based on free and reduced lunch ratios and third grade standardized test scores (Huang & Moon, 2009; RMC Research Corporation, 2009).

Schools were located in small towns or rural areas (70%), middle-sized towns with a population of fewer than 250,000 (20%), and in suburban areas (10%) (RMS Research Corporation, 2009). Based on coach profiles identified through the surveys, 10 coaches were randomly selected to participate in phase two of the research, an in-depth structured telephone interview. The 10 coaches were identified as teacher-oriented coaches, those spending the majority of their

time working directly with teachers through modeling, instructional planning, classroom observations, and feedback sessions. Of the 10 coaches chosen to participate, four coaches (40% response rate) agreed to participate in the interview process.

The four coaches represented a cross section of geographic locations in the state. One coach served in a suburban setting and the remaining three served schools in rural and/or small town settings. When interviewed, all four interviewees continued to serve as elementary literacy coaches. Three coaches reported eight years of coaching experience and one coach reported a total of four years of coaching experience. The interview questions were designed to more specifically describe the relationships coaches established with teachers, the manner in which they conversed with teachers, specific changes they noticed in teachers and students, and insights into how coaches made their decisions.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the Likert-type sections of the surveys using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 18.0. Based on the 92 survey items measured on a Likert-type scale, the Cronbach's Alpha was .955, indicating a high level of internal consistency.

A descriptive content analysis was performed to note patterns and commonalities of the archival open-ended responses and interview responses. Data were recorded and coded according to themes, patterns, and trends relating to the research questions using NVivo 8.0, a qualitative data analysis software. A word frequency query was conducted to determine an initial coding structure and then a codebook was established based on the words and phrases most commonly stated by coaches in their open-ended survey responses. The codebook contained definitions of the codes and text samples exemplifying the codes. Content was coded according to the coding structure. Inter-rater reliability procedures were followed using two coders double coding approximately 30% of the data. Using a percent agreement, or crude agreement (Neuendorf, 2002), inter-rater reliability was established at 88%. Disagreements were clarified, amended, and recoded as needed.

RESULTS

Changes in Teacher Practices

As part of the survey, coaches were asked to evaluate statements according to the extent they felt each contributed to teachers' instructional practices. The

statements included items such as increased knowledge of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, using assessment to plan instruction, modeling of instruction, access to materials, observational feedback, book study groups, reflections, and collaboration. Table 1 presents the complete list of statements and results. Coaches were also asked to follow up their survey responses with an open-ended response elaborating on the tasks they felt most contributed to teachers' literacy knowledge and instructional practices. When examining the means for each statement, the statement with the highest mean on a five-point scale was "using assessment to plan instruction" ($M = 4.52$, $SD = .79$) followed by "collaboration of teachers with other teachers" ($M = 4.44$, $SD = .75$). Tasks receiving slightly lower rating averages were "increased access to instructional materials such as books, technology, and experts" ($M = 4.39$, $SD = .80$), "increased knowledge of comprehension" ($M = 4.39$, $SD = .73$), "increased knowledge of phonics" ($M = 4.37$, $SD = .72$), "increased knowledge of fluency" ($M = 4.31$, $SD = .79$), and "increased knowledge of phonemic awareness" ($M = 4.3$, $SD = .76$). These mean scores fell between the Likert-type categories "much contribution to change in teacher instructional practices" and "greatly contributed to change in teacher instructional practices."

The integral components of teacher change according to the survey were mirrored in coaches' open-ended survey responses and interview responses. There was no direct survey statement mentioning professional development; however, when analyzing the open-ended responses, the most common response attributed change to the professional development teachers received. Below are open-ended survey responses reflecting the importance of professional development and its contribution to teachers' literacy knowledge and change in instructional practice:

- The professional development my teachers and myself have been given over the past six years is invaluable. There is a different mindset and a different way of looking at instruction now.
- The professional development opportunities extended our knowledge base about instruction and instructional resources.
- Teachers would return from conferences and workshops with ideas, new energy, and I could see the practices they learned put into place in their instructional times.
- Without a doubt...the professional development they have received over the past 6 years [contributed to teacher change].
- The professional development and hands on learning and implementation that was provided [contributed to teacher change].

When analyzing open-ended statements related to the targeted survey statements and the coaches' perceptions of how teacher instructional practices changed, the following comments were noted on the surveys and interviews related to using assessment to plan instruction:

- The teachers are using data to drive instruction.
- They talk about data and are aware of student needs. We highlight the groups – benchmark, strategic, and intensive – and use it to form small groups for instruction.
- The professional development has greatly contributed to the teacher's literacy knowledge and instructional practices including the new assessments we have implemented.
- Having a student driven classroom, changing seating, instruction methods, and techniques depending on the needs of the students.
- Side by side monitoring of students, data, and future instructional needs.
- Knowledge of what to do with assessment.

Coaches also noted the importance of teacher collaboration as a contribution to teacher change:

- Offering time in house for teachers to collaboratively plan and have conversations about instruction and what works best for student success [was important].
- Meeting as a grade level and discussing what works in one class, then having the teachers observe each other and then discuss again [was important].
- Once they got used to the basal, teachers shared ideas of how they supplemented.
- Teachers have influenced each other. For example, when we first started literacy workshops, a particular teacher set up her stations and her students were very successful. Other teachers noticed and began to make/improve their workstations.

Although the survey statements indicated the contribution of increased knowledge of various components of literacy as contributing to changes in teacher instructional practices, there were no comments from the surveys or interviews

indicating this importance. In addition, nothing was mentioned about the importance of specific content area knowledge such as comprehension, phonics, or fluency.

The first research question pertained to the perceived changes coaches observed in their colleague teachers. In summary, through the professional

TABLE 1 Attributes Contributing to Change in Teacher Instructional Practice

Statement	None	Little	Some	Much	Great	Mean	SD
Increased knowledge of phonemic awareness	0%	0%	18.3%	33.8%	47.9%	4.30	0.76
Increased knowledge of phonics	0%	0%	14.1%	35.2%	50.7%	4.37	0.72
Increased knowledge of fluency	0%	1.4%	15.5%	33.8%	49.3%	4.31	0.79
Increased knowledge of vocabulary	0%	0%	26.8%	23.9%	49.3%	4.23	0.85
Increased knowledge of comprehension	0%	0%	14.1%	32.4%	53.5%	4.39	0.73
Using assessment to plan instruction	0%	1.4%	14.1%	15.5%	69.0%	4.52	0.79
Modeling of instruction by exemplary teachers	0%	4.2%	18.3%	33.8%	43.7%	4.15	0.87
Modeling of instruction by literacy coach	0%	1.4%	21.5%	35.2%	42.3%	4.18	0.83
Increased access to Instructional materials	0%	1.4%	15.5%	25.4%	57.7%	4.39	0.80
Observational feedback from the literacy coach	0%	1.4%	16.9%	38.0%	43.7%	4.24	0.78
Book study group	2.8%	11.3%	22.5%	31.0%	32.4%	3.79	1.11
Teachers' reflections on their own instructional practice	0%	1.4%	15.5%	45.1%	38.0%	4.20	0.75
Collaboration of teachers with other teachers	0%	1.4%	11.3%	29.6%	57.7%	4.44	0.75
Consistency of district and state policies with the types of professional development opportunities teachers received in your school	0%	5.6%	15.5%	26.8%	52.1%	4.25	0.92

development opportunities presented to the teachers, coaches reported changes in how teachers applied their knowledge from workshops and professional development opportunities in the classroom, the teachers' increased ability to use assessment data to plan instruction, and the teachers' collaboration with other teachers to share instructional ideas.

Coaching tasks contributing to teacher instructional changes. The Likert-type items on the survey and related interview questions were analyzed to determine the specific coaching tasks the participating coaches felt contributed to teachers' literacy knowledge and instructional practices. In addition, as an open-ended survey question, coaches were asked to list the coaching tasks they felt most contributed to teachers' literacy knowledge and instructional practice. When combining these open-ended survey responses with similar interview questions aimed at confirming data, the second research question was addressed. As reported above, coaches noted the importance of the professional development the teachers received either from direct coaching or from opportunities arranged and/or promoted by the coach. Coaches reported that they were responsible for arranging and/or presenting a variety of professional development opportunities for their schools including workshops related to book studies, small group instruction, differentiated instruction, literacy work stations, assessments, and best practices for teaching the reading components.

Beyond the formal professional development opportunities, coaches mentioned coach modeling as a benefit to teachers. Coaches modeled instructional strategies both inside and outside the classroom. The following quotes reflect coaches' comments on the surveys and interviews related to modeling:

- Seeing is believing. Co-teaching also works because each person can put his or her best foot forward and feel successful.
- I modeled lessons with students and also did "mini-modeling" with no students for the teachers.
- I modeled lessons in the classroom and did not avoid discipline and management issues.
- My modeling/feedback/teaching of whatever the teacher was weak in [was important].

Coaches indicated that observation and feedback were beneficial coaching tasks contributing to teacher change. They also noted the importance of building and developing a trusting relationship between the coach and the teacher as part of the observation and feedback cycle. The following quotes focus on the

observation and feedback cycle as well as building a relationship through the work with teachers:

- I think having a coach visit classrooms helped teachers hold themselves accountable for time and good instructional practices.
- The conferences I had with teachers after observations [were important].
- Coaching and co-teaching with feedback [were important].
- I tried to engage the teachers in conversation after the observation thinking about what they noticed about the lesson. We talked about my notes and other things to try.
- [It was important to] develop a trusting relationship with each teacher, making it clear that I am not a supervisor, keeping the dialogue open for questions, etc. This has resulted in better attention and better implementation of strategies, suggestions, etc.
- Meeting with each teacher independently – confidentially [was important].
- Planning with teachers and then modeling, discussion and planning again with teacher and side by side coaching [were important].

Coaches also noted the importance of grade level meetings and collaboration as benefits to teachers. For example, one coach noted the importance of “meeting as a grade level and then offering time in house for teachers to collaboratively plan and have conversations about instruction and what works best for student success” as a benefit to classroom teachers.

In summarizing the results of the second research question, the coaching tasks perceived as contributing to a change in teacher practice were arranging professional development opportunities, instructional modeling, observation and feedback, and providing collaborative opportunities among teachers through grade level meetings.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study provide further evidence of the importance of the *coach*, the *content*, and the *context* of professional development in elementary literacy reform efforts. In a summary of successful schools, Lipson and colleagues (2004) noted the importance of teacher knowledge while Garet and colleagues (2001)

emphasized the importance of both content and context for effective professional development. Successful schools have teachers who have expertise in the content in which they teach. In the current study, coaches attributed changes in teacher instructional practices to an increase in literacy content knowledge. According to the coaches, teachers gained content knowledge in the literacy components of comprehension, phonics, fluency, and phonological awareness. An additional aspect of content knowledge was the positive change coaches noted regarding using classroom assessment data to plan instruction. More fully understanding the assessment data and understanding how to differentiate instruction based on the data were factors in the coaches' perceived notions of teacher instructional improvement. Content knowledge also encompasses knowledge about effective teaching strategies. The benefits of coaches modeling effective strategies for teachers were noted in the current research and in current literature (Casey, 2011).

Equally important are the *context* of professional development and the *context* of teacher learning in the schools. The *context* of professional development refers to situating teacher learning within a collaborative and collegial learning environment and providing teachers with opportunities to examine their own practices (Putnam & Borko, 2000) and apply their content knowledge (Fishman et al., 2003; Snow-Renner & Lauer, 2005). In the current study, coaches recognized the importance of collaboration as a benefit to teachers and as an attribute contributing to instructional practice expertise. Coaches worked with teachers in the midst of grade level planning and sharing meetings as well as part of a one-to-one coach and teacher planning, observation, feedback, and reflection cycle. Collaboration among teachers and coaches has been found to be a contributing factor to teacher change when coaches create opportunities for professional conversation and reflection within a job-embedded professional development framework (Kennedy & Shiel, 2010; L'Allier, Elish-Piper, & Bean, 2010; Silva & Contreras, 2011; Vanderburg & Stephens, 2009). Elish-Piper and L'Allier (2011) identified four specific literacy coaching activities that predicted student reading gains in primary grades: conferencing, administering assessments, modeling lessons, and observing teachers. These coaching activities were perceived as contributing to teacher instructional change in the current study and are also related to the paramount goal of improving student achievement. The importance of creating a reflective context for professional development was echoed in an interview with a leading researcher in effective professional development in urban schools, Marilyn Cochran-Smith (Wilson, 2008). When asked how continued professional development can increase teachers' abilities to raise the academic achievement of students in urban districts, Cochran-Smith responded,

From my perspective, one of the most powerful ways for professional development to improve teacher practice is for teachers to work together in inquiry communities. In these inquiry communities, teachers bring the data from their everyday work and collaborate with colleagues to raise questions, look at their own assumptions, and look at student work... inquiry communities center on examining students' work and students' learning, which is a critical way for people to work on increasing learning and life changes for students. (Wilson, 2008, p. 247)

LIMITATIONS

Several key limitations must be noted that influence the generalizability of the results. The study examined data collected in one state with participants serving elementary schools designated as at-risk. No coaches served in urban schools; therefore, the results may not be generalizable to urban settings. The coaches worked mainly with kindergarten through third grade teachers. Coaching roles and responsibilities differ in upper elementary, middle school and high school settings; consequently, results may not relate to coaches working with teachers beyond the primary grades. In addition, the coach training and expectations of the role may have varied across states and the results may not be generalized to similar at-risk schools in other states.

In research analyzing survey data, reliability can be threatened because of the interpretive nature of the survey questions (Desimone & Le Floch, 2004). While measures were taken to allow respondents an opportunity to clarify their responses, it is difficult to know with certainty that the respondents' interpretations were standard and consistent across the Likert-type scale.

A final limitation is the low number of teacher-oriented coaches who agreed to participate in the in-depth interviews. Twenty coaches were identified as teacher-oriented coaches and ten were contacted for participation in follow up interviews. Unfortunately, interviews were scheduled after the Reading First grant funding ended, and a number of coaches who participated in the surveys were no longer serving as reading coaches and/or were difficult to locate. Additional interviews would have provided a stronger coaching voice to corroborate and extend the survey responses.

IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has implications for coaches establishing their roles and responsibilities within the school context and determining how best to structure their

interactions with teachers. Using the findings relating to the content and context of professional development coupled with results from previous research will assist coaches in establishing relationships with teachers and in designing their schedules to allow for professional development and ongoing coaching. Further research, however, is needed to empirically determine how the coaches' perceived influence on teachers actually changes teacher practice.

A second implication relates to universities preparing reading specialists. As part of the International Reading Association Standards 2010, reading specialist candidates must gain experience working with and coaching teachers in school settings (International Reading Association, 2010). As universities plan courses to prepare candidates in literacy coaching, opportunities to increase teacher knowledge by using a coaching cycle of observation and feedback, collaboration, and reflective teaching must be integrated into coursework. Further research delving into effective coaching tasks will help define best methods for preparing literacy coaches as professional development agents.

The study has implications for school administrators and for literacy coaches. As schools prepare for the implementation of the Common Core State Standards, professional development will be a critical component. There are numerous instructional shifts related to changes in standards (Jaeger, 2012; Massey, 2012) and teachers will need to understand these shifts and alter their instructional practices accordingly. In schools utilizing literacy coaches, the coaches will most likely be partly responsible for providing and/or arranging for professional development when implementing the CCSS for English Language Arts. Best practices for instilling content and pedagogy through professional development will be a major focus in CCSS implementation. Continued research on the effectiveness of coaches and their relationship to student achievement will provide schools with an effective coaching model to support learning standards reform.

As school districts continue to provide quality instruction and dialogue in decision-making regarding the most effective ways to maintain effective instruction, the *coach* as a professional development agent, the *content* of professional development opportunities, and the *context* of professional development organization and delivery must be at the heart of the conversation.

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HOW DO TEACHERS CHANGE THEIR PRACTICE? CASE STUDIES OF TWO TEACHERS IN A LITERACY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

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Abstract

A majority of professional development efforts are predicated on the notion that teachers are willing and able to change, but research demonstrates that these efforts are often slow and met with resistance as a result of previous low-quality professional development initiatives. The case studies reported here explore two teachers' experiences in implementing guided reading as a result of a longitudinal, university-led professional development initiative. It was found there were differences in teachers' level of implementation of guided reading and differences in their ability to plan quality literacy activities.

The teacher is the most important in-school factor influencing student achievement (Bean & Morewood, 2011; Bransford, Darling-Hammond, & LePage, 2005); therefore professional development (PD) initiatives must concentrate on improving the quality of classroom instruction. Consequently, federal mandates (specifically the No Child Left behind Act, 2001 which was passed in 2002) require states to provide "high-quality" PD. Even though the research

community has generally reached consensus about what constitutes high-quality PD (Desimone, 2009; Dillon, O'Brien, Sato, & Kelly, 2011; Taylor, Raphael, & Au, 2011), classroom teachers are often provided with low-quality PD (Baumsmith & Barry, 2011).

Organizations such as Learning Forward (formally the National Staff Development Council), the National Council for Teachers of English, and the International Reading Association have called for education researchers, administrators, and policymakers to provide targeted and continued PD for teachers (Joyce & Showers, 2002; Learning Forward, 2012; NCTE, 2006; Penuel, Fishman, Yamaguchi, & Gallagher, 2007). For example, Learning Forward (2012) has developed standards for implementation of PD that emphasize ongoing implementation and support, constructive feedback, and formative assessments of initiatives. Although PD is accepted as an important factor in enhancing teacher effectiveness and student learning, previous research demonstrates that instructional reform is slow and is frequently met with resistance (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Duffy, 2004; Remillard, 2005).

The current study explores two urban elementary school teachers' instruction while participating in a longitudinal literacy PD initiative led by university-based literacy researchers and their perceptions of the PD by examining the following research questions:

1. How does these teachers' literacy instruction change over time?
2. How do these teachers perceive the PD initiative as influencing their practice?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Perspective

A situative perspective (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989) informed this research. This perspective assumes that learning is situated in activity and is socially constructed in a specific context (Vygotsky, 1978). Learning should take place in the context in which it will be used (Putnam & Borko, 2000). For example, Brown and colleagues argued that knowledge is "inextricably a product of the activity and situations in which they are produced" (p. 33). This study was situated in the context of this school and conducted within teachers' classrooms.

In addition, perspectives of balanced literacy framed this study (Pressley, 2006). Effective literacy instruction balances basic skills instruction (phonics, decoding, literal recall, and fluency) with high-level reading skills that enhance

students' strategic, adaptive, creative, and reflective abilities (Pearson, Cervetti, & Tilson, 2008). Similarly, word-level instruction is balanced with opportunities to comprehend and create authentic text (Pressley, 2006). Therefore, the perspective of effective literacy instruction taken in this PD initiative includes word study, guided reading, independent reading, shared reading, read alouds, and writing (Cunningham & Allington, 2010).

Professional Development

Research suggests that high-quality PD initiatives provide support for teachers where specialists and partners model best practices and coach teachers (Bean & Morewood, 2011). In addition, prior research demonstrates strong evidence linking the following five components to successful PD efforts: (a) focus on content; (b) active learning opportunities for teachers that include opportunities for observations; (c) coherence between teacher knowledge, beliefs, and curricular guidelines/policies; (d) a duration of at least 20 hours of contact time; and (e) collective participation of peers in the same grade or school (Desimone, 2009; Dillon et al., 2011; Penuel et al., 2007; Taylor et al., 2011). The longitudinal PD initiative presented here incorporates these components through a school-university partnership that facilitates continuous support from school literacy coaches and university literacy teacher educators to facilitate urban elementary school teachers' high-level literacy instruction.

While there is agreement on the components of high-quality PD models, there is still a need for research that examines the process by which teachers change through PD initiatives (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000; Guskey, 2002; Scott, Cortina, & Carlisle, 2012). Examinations of the process require research focused on classroom practice and student learning (Dillon et al., 2011). This study is grounded in Guskey's teacher change model. This model positions changes in teachers' attitudes as dependent upon positive outcomes in student learning. When teachers learn of new practices through PD, they may implement those new practices immediately, but unless they see positive changes in student learning, they will not alter their beliefs about teaching and learning. As a result, Guskey asserts that change and instructional improvement is a continuous process that only begins with PD. The current study focuses on this initial phase of Guskey's model by exploring how PD leads to changes in elementary school teachers' literacy practices.

Previous research demonstrates the value of capturing teachers' perceptions of PD models, particularly literacy coaching, as a means to assess the efficacy of an initiative (Scott et al., 2012). Capturing teachers' perceptions also allows

PD developers and facilitators to identify classroom teachers' needs for future PD opportunities (Fishman, Marx, Best, & Tal, 2003; Hayes & Robnolt, 2006; Kennedy & Shiel, 2010). The current study presents an analysis of two classroom teachers' experiences during the first two years of an ongoing school-university partnership.

METHODS

This study used case study methods (Yin, 2009) to explore two teachers' experiences in a literacy PD initiative. Case study methods are appropriate for studying complex phenomena, especially when the phenomena are closely connected to the context (Yin, 2009). In this study, the phenomena under study are teachers' change in instruction and teachers' perceptions of PD.

Setting

This research took place in a high-needs urban charter school. The school population included 99% African American students. It is a high poverty, Title I school, with 86% of students eligible for free or reduced lunch prices. At the time of the study, 60% of the school's teachers lacked formal teacher preparation; most held emergency certification credentials. Most alarming, only 29% of students scored proficient or higher on the school's standardized reading assessment. School leaders reached out to university faculty in an effort to improve literacy instruction through guided reading. At the time, the school used a scripted basal program that did not differentiate for varied student levels. The school's lead administrator recognized that instructional changes were necessary to improve student outcomes.

In the first year of the partnership, two university faculty members provided four school-wide PD sessions focusing on guided reading, informal literacy assessments to guide instruction, and literacy centers, as well as modeling lessons for teachers. In the second year, the expanded university research team focused on the literacy coaches and school leaders, holding monthly book club meetings that emphasized effective literacy instruction and coaching practices. The researchers collected data to measure and evaluate the progress of our PD initiative, with ongoing analysis to determine next steps. Thus, PD sessions were tailored to stakeholder-identified needs (Fishman et al., 2003; Hayes & Robnolt, 2006; Kennedy & Shiel, 2010).

To address the first research question of how teachers' literacy instruction changed as a result of PD, the university team conducted observations of the teachers' literacy instruction. Teachers were observed once during Year 1 and four times during Year 2. A member of the research team observed each teacher's

literacy block, usually 90-120 minutes. Observers were as unobtrusive as possible and took detailed field notes, which were later independently coded by two researchers. To address the second research question of teachers' perceptions of PD influencing their literacy practices, a researcher interviewed each teacher after three of the observations (the Year 1 observation and one observation each in the fall and spring of Year 2). Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed, then coded by two separate researchers. All data were qualitatively analyzed through open and axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Participants

The first teacher, Ms. Henry (all names are pseudonyms), is an African American woman in her mid-30s. She had an education degree and traditional teaching certification. She had nine years of classroom experience and previously taught in public schools in other states. Ms. Henry is experienced in guided reading and balanced literacy instruction prior to the university partnership. The second teacher, Ms. Barber, is an African American woman in her mid-20s. She holds emergency certification. She was in her third year at the school; she worked as an instructional assistant for a year before she was given her own classroom, where she has taught for two years. She was not familiar with guided reading or balanced literacy.

FINDINGS

In this section, a summary of the findings for each research question is provided. Next, a case description of each teacher's literacy instruction is presented.

Research Question 1: How do these teachers' literacy instruction change over time?

Our findings were mixed. The first grade teacher, Ms. Henry, did not significantly change her literacy instruction as a result of PD. Although she did not implement guided reading during each observation, her instruction was driven by solid pedagogical understanding within the confines of the school's curriculum and organizational issues. She was not resistant to changing her practices to meet instructional reform. Instead, she was already well versed in balanced literacy practices and guided reading.

The second grade teacher, Ms. Barber, was not an experienced teacher and previously relied upon the basal reader to guide her literacy instruction. She was unfamiliar with guided reading and balanced literacy instruction prior to our PD initiative. Ms. Barber was willing to try what she learned in the PD sessions.

Research team members observed her efforts to implement guided reading over Year 2, with a good degree of success. She was eager to learn and utilized resources available to her, including planning and sharing ideas with colleagues above and below her grade level. Ms. Barber still had a lot of room to grow, as evidenced by her continued use of basal resources instead of authentic texts and her reliance on low-level skill worksheets during literacy centers. The researchers did not see a great deal of content or task differentiation early in our observations but noticed improvement as Ms. Barber learned to use informal reading inventories (IRIs) to inform her groups and tailor instructional choices to better meet her students' needs. By the end of Year 2, she was making a genuine effort to adapt her instruction to better meet her students' needs and was making plans to study additional resources over the summer.

Research Question 2: How do these teachers perceive the PD initiative as influencing their practice?

Analysis revealed five themes in these teachers' perceptions (see Table 1). Findings positively reflected researchers' efforts to work with coaches to improve their understanding of comprehensive, data-supported literacy instruction and coaching roles within the school. Both Ms. Henry and Ms. Barber described increased collaboration among teachers and between faculty members and school leaders, suggesting change in school culture and in teachers' knowledge and efficacy. In particular, they noted strong support from the reading coaches, including instructional models, classroom reinforcement, and assessment aid. Both teachers noted the frequency of the coaches' presence in their classrooms and their perceived freedom to call for coaching help as needed.

Interview responses also indicated a greater ability to plan and implement differentiated instruction. When the school and university began the PD initiative, most of the school's teachers relied upon whole-group basal instruction and standardized assessments. They were unfamiliar with IRIs and ongoing classroom assessments such as running records to monitor student progress and needs. Many of the school's teachers did not have a strong understanding of high-level literacy skills or how to teach them to their students.

Case Descriptions

Ms. Henry. Ms. Henry's first grade classroom was busy and cheerful. In the front of the room there was a carpeted student seating area under a whiteboard, an authentic word wall, calendar displays, an easel, and books. Student desks were arranged into tables in the center of the room. Around the perimeter were

TABLE 1 Themes That Emerged Regarding Teachers' Perceptions of the Literacy PD

Theme	Quotes
More collaboration among faculty and between faculty and administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have a . . . mentee actually and she's been one of <i>those</i> ones, a lot of time, and I've been working with her . . . not seeing . . . the rich literacy instruction (Henry) • The specialists, well [reading coach] comes in on a regular basis (Henry) • She goes over the small group lesson plans as well and we are both working on the adoption of the new reading curriculum this year (Henry) • I have a lot of coaching (Barber) • . . . a lot of them come in and model lessons and the good thing is that when they come in, it isn't just they come in and I'm watching them, like they might come in and help me and I'm their assistant (Barber)
Ability to differentiate instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is really cool to see kids who are moving along. I see okay, okay, they are doing this and I think this is great (Barber) • . . . opened my eyes a little more to what that child was missing, or you know still hasn't grasped as far as reading was concerned, so it kind of narrowed it down. Okay, he's doing this because of this (Barber) • I can really track a lot better, I can figure out what I need specifically for each child and I can make the assignments really specific (Barber)
More time for independent student reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You know they each have their own book, but I wanted to see how well they take charge (Henry) • They are supposed to read 5 books per week and if they have read them, and I know they have read them, they can switch them out, but some of the kids are like, "I read all the books in my level already." (Henry) • They know where the action stuff is, they know where the fiction stuff is, they know where they are at, and they get to pick what they want to read (Henry)
Ability to administer informal reading assessments and understand results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm still learning the whole [IRI] process (Henry) • When I got my [IRI] stuff, I was like, I don't really know what I'm supposed to do with this or how I'm going to deal with this when I have so many kids in the middle and they were like, you know the kids better than we do, so group them and then test them, see what you think and work with them every day (Barber)

(continued)

TABLE 1 (continued)

Theme	Quotes
Implementation of Guided Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Guided Reading materials that we have are really good; they work fairly well. (Henry) • Normally I have 2 groups at a time...I normally put [IA] in the plan because that helps, but that time, I was like, no, I need her and then they pulled her. So then I pulled two groups at a time, the two lowest groups at the time together and the two highest groups at a time together (Henry) • I mean it has taken time, this is my 3rd year in the classroom, my 2nd year teaching, it has taken time to figure it out. How it should look, how it should flow, how they should transition, how to set my room up. So it has definitely come together and it has really changed since this time last year and it has changed 100% from the beginning of the school year (Barber)

cubbies and several student centers, including a reading center with a comfortable sofa, and anchor charts covering the walls.

Ms. Henry understood comprehensive literacy components of word recognition and fluency, phonological and phonemic awareness, comprehension, vocabulary, and writing. In each observation, instruction began with morning work, including calendar and a morning message. Most messages focused on writing mechanics and grammar, with students correcting and discussing the teacher's intentional mistakes. Students then participated in read-alouds or dispersed into differentiated groups for guided reading and center activities. Some examples of student centers included buddy reading, "reading the room" sight word recognition and word-level work on literacy-based computer programs.

During guided reading, researchers noticed that Ms. Henry had students read different texts in order to promote self-sufficiency. When asked about the strategy, she explained that she had noticed some students reading, while some depended on others. To ensure that each child practiced decoding skills and read the text, she mixed up familiar, instructional-level books. She took running records and anecdotal notes during each child's reading and was able to pinpoint individual needs and strengths. She explained:

I just wanted to see what they could do strictly on their own, but in the comfort of reading in a group. You know they each [have] their own book, but I wanted to see how well they take charge of their own reading.

When asked how her choice influenced students' literacy learning, Ms. Henry noted, "I think it made them responsible for their own reading and it made them pay attention to what they had in front of them. Not so much what they hear." She successfully used the technique with other guided reading groups to ensure that each student relied upon the text rather than other students.

Researchers did not observe guided reading during each observation in Ms. Henry's room. There were days where her instructional assistant (IA) was needed in other areas of the school, thus making management more difficult. When interviewed on a day when her IA was pulled away from the literacy block, Ms. Henry expressed a need to rearrange her schedule to improve management:

I normally put [IA] in the plan because that helps, but that time, I was like, no I need her and then they pulled her...usually when there are two adults in here, I am over here and she kind of gets in the middle (of the room) so they have that person that is close enough to them when they are not behaving well...So I guess I'm going to have to go back to including her in the small group but making it flexible enough so that they if they do pull her out, which they did this morning, I'm able to move forward.

When asked how often her IA was pulled away during literacy instruction, Ms. Henry responded, "At least twice per week," making guided reading difficult to manage. We observed days where Ms. Henry kept the class in a whole group and conducted several tasks in succession, including read-alouds, authentic writing, and phonics and spelling through word making activities.

Over the course of observations, researchers noted a great deal of verbal instruction and interaction with students. Ms. Henry asked an average of 4.6 literal questions and two inferential questions during each observation, with many questions focused on direct recall of phonics or spelling and mechanics (e.g., "If I were looking for the word *sleep*, what would I look for?" and "What goes at the beginning of a sentence?") or story elements (e.g., "Who was the main character?"). Ms. Henry explained, discussed, and reviewed concepts with students an average of five times per observation. She provided an average of five instances of positive feedback per observation, blending specific feedback such as praising students' finger pointing during guided reading and general praise (e.g., "Awesome job!")

When interviewed about her instruction, Ms. Henry described how ongoing informal assessment informed her decisions. She noted her use of questions to check understanding, and described students' overall progress. She described how the school's reading coaches helped facilitate classroom instruction: "When

[reading coach] comes in, it is usually like today, she jumps in even though she is kind of observing, she'll come in and give me feedback, but she is a huge help." When asked what additional coaching supports would be helpful, Ms. Henry asked for more strategy modeling.

Ms. Barber. Ms. Barber's second grade classroom was similar in size and layout to Ms. Henry's. She had a small rug near a reading area with low bookcases where she gathered students for group discussions. She rearranged the student desks frequently between rows and groups and sometimes isolated a desk or two, perhaps to aid management. Her room was rather noisy, and students were prone to arguments.

Although Ms. Barber did not have formal teacher preparation, she became a teacher after working at the school as an instructional assistant for one year. She was young and enthusiastic, and had a good rapport with the students. She was not experienced in balanced literacy or guided reading and relied upon the school's scripted basal series. She attended the school-wide PD sessions and asked for additional support. The first author modeled in her classroom a whole-class interactive read aloud and comprehension mini-lesson, and then rotated students through guided reading groups and comprehension activities. When interviewed about her instructional choices and influences, Ms. Barber noted additional modeling and support from the reading coaches as helpful. Subsequent observations afforded opportunities to see her progress.

Guided reading occurred in four of five observations, demonstrating Ms. Barber's willingness to learn and try out new practices. However, researchers observed few group rotations: Ms. Barber typically worked with one or two groups during each block. As she worked with her group(s), the other students completed worksheets or literacy computer games.

Researchers observed just two instances of independent reading among students, and no teacher read-alouds. One instance of CD-assisted reading was observed as part of a whole-group, scripted basal lesson. The basal textbooks were used during each observation, but no use of trade books or authentic texts was observed. However, such books were present in the room. When asked about her instructional choices, Ms. Barber responded that she taught skills that followed a prescribed sequence. She further stated that her instructional format was similar to a third grade colleague's, thus preparing her second graders for future expectations.

During the course of observations, researchers saw increased feedback to students. No positive feedback was noted in the first three observations, but researchers saw an average of two instances of positive feedback during the last

two observations. She balanced specific student feedback such as, “I like that you answered in a complete sentence and gave a good answer,” with general feedback such as, “Good,” to confirm students’ correct responses to her questions. Unfortunately, specific negative feedback was noted throughout, with four instances captured in the last observation.

Disruptions were common, with an average of 4.2 per observation. Ms. Barber had a difficult class, disruptive students from other classes were frequently sent to work in her room, and she was ill prepared to manage effectively. During spring of Year 2, she took advantage of available PD to routinize her management and student expectations, noting, “About a month ago we had a PD...like I’m big on my expectations, this is how it has to be. My CHAMPS board is like my heaven...here’s what is on the board and here’s what we are doing.” The PD she referenced taught teachers the acronym CHAMPS, which stands for Communication, Help, Activity, Material, and Participation. She noted that management became easier when students understood her expectations, saying

Yeah, they know, yeah definitely, if they start and they are on task and they are following my expectations, we can have more fun with it. The weird thing, they have more fun when they are on task. They know: If I do this correctly, it’s going to make her do this. So they will actually try harder a little bit because they want to make me dance.

When asked what additional supports she needed to meet students’ literacy needs, Ms. Barber noted that she received a great deal of coaching support, and that time to process her own understanding would be useful:

I just need more time, I think we have a lot of coaching that goes on. I think it is every teacher’s gripe is that I don’t have enough time to do what I need to do, but I have a lot of coaching, I speak to [reading coach] all of the time, we talk, we email, and Allison is here. We have a lot of collaboration, but, um, I think that kind of time to process what is going on with that . . . So maybe more resources and time to process all this amazing information I’m getting from people. I just need more time to chew it up and digest it.

She further described the support she received from the reading coaches and the freedom she felt to ask questions via email and text message. For example, when

administering an informal reading inventory for the first time, she was uncertain of the procedures and texted for help.

I texted [reading coach]: “I don’t understand what I’m doing,” and so she came in and tested a kid, to show me, and then watched me to make sure I was doing it right. And after, [we did] a few kids together. And then a first grade teacher, Ms. Henry, showed me how to do running records, so we have a lot of conversation and dialogue and a lot of meetings. We talk a lot.

Important to PD efforts with the reading coaches, Ms. Barber described their support. She appreciated the coaches’ guidance and modeling when needed, and supporting at other times: “When they come in, I’m teaching and they are supporting, so it is helpful. It is very helpful.”

DISCUSSION

Two teachers were observed and interviewed over the course of two years to determine the effects of targeted, continuous PD on school-wide literacy instruction. In the first year university researchers focused on providing teachers with a foundation for guided reading and balanced literacy, covering instructional planning and implementation, student grouping, literacy centers, and informal assessment. In the second year, university researchers focused on providing school literacy leaders, including reading coaches, with additional understanding of a comprehensive, balanced literacy model; informal reading inventories; and effective coaching. This shift was in direct response to observed needs and student achievement data. This paper presents descriptive case studies of two teachers’ responses to the ongoing PD efforts.

From the beginning, Ms. Henry was well regarded as one of the strongest teachers in the school, and she participated as a leader in the second whole-school PD session in Year 1. She supported other teachers as they attempted guided reading and began using informal reading assessments. Her willingness to share her knowledge reflects the documented need for partners to model and communicate best practices (Bean & Morewood, 2011; Taylor et al. 2011). Importantly, she recognized the need to deepen her own understanding of high-level literacy instruction (Pearson et al., 2008) as evidenced by her requests for coaching and strategy modeling. Her progress was limited by existing school structures, such as staffing needs.

As the PD initiative progressed, both teachers described positive changes in the school's culture. Ms. Henry described increased administrative encouragement and use of informal assessment and leveled texts rather than standardized tests and basal materials. Ms. Barber enthusiastically described her data-informed groups and the use of assessment to monitor progress and instructional needs. Towards the end of Year 2, she was excited to see who had progressed beyond her expectations and noted that all of her students had made progress. Ms. Barber further explained how she analyzed data to inform her instruction. Taken together, her enthusiasm for student progress as a result of PD-influenced data collection and analysis indicates her improved perceptions of her own teaching knowledge and self-efficacy (Borko, 2004). These findings demonstrate the school-wide structural supports that must be in place to afford teachers the opportunity to change classroom practice (Fullan & Miles, 1992).

The findings in this study demonstrate that teachers need targeted, sustained PD opportunities to support successful instruction in the classroom (Penuel et al., 2007). This report describes the process by which one PD initiative supported effective literacy instruction. Previous research suggests that PD initiatives are predicated on teachers' willingness and ability to change (Borko, 2004; Fullan & Miles, 1992). Participants in this study showed willingness but were unable to make substantial changes in their classroom practice. Ms. Henry was limited by school structure (e.g., needing support from her IA to implement guided reading) while Ms. Barber was limited by her lack of foundational knowledge. Further, these findings demonstrate that even two years of sustained PD may not be enough to shift school culture and equip teachers to progress from low-level literacy instruction to high-level literacy instruction.

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WHAT ARE WE ASKING KIDS TO DO? AN INVESTIGATION OF THE LITERACY TASKS TEACHERS ASSIGN STUDENTS

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Abstract

From a social constructivist perspective, the classroom activities students complete are vital considerations for teachers and researchers. Academic tasks determine what students will do during literacy instruction, and what students do determines the knowledge that they obtain. This paper presents data from four studies in different contexts that documented the literacy tasks elementary students were asked to complete. The researchers rated the openness of the observed tasks: the degree to which the tasks were authentic, collaborative, challenging, student directed, and sustained. Overall, a large majority of tasks were closed. However, the researchers found differences among contexts. The results pointed to the role of school administrators in influencing teachers' instruction.

Roser (2001) offered us a challenge to consider which activities are cute and which ones count. To decide which ones count, we need to consider why we ask readers to complete these activities, what their instructional purpose is, and what they actually do for our readers.

Serafini, 2011, p. 240

Researchers posit that the academic tasks students complete are the fundamental unit of classroom instruction (Blumenfeld, Mergendoller, & Swarthout, 1987; Doyle, 1983; Perry, Turner, & Meyer, 2006). The academic tasks teachers assign determine the experiences in which students engage. That is, students learn new information through the experiences, i.e. the tasks, teachers develop for them (Doyle, 1983). However, researchers have argued that the tasks teachers implement are largely low level (Blumenfeld et al., 1987; Brophy, 2010; Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004; Parsons, Richey, Malloy, & Miller, 2013). For example, Allington (2001) lamented, “In the typical classroom the assigned tasks overwhelmingly emphasize copying, remembering, and reciting with few tasks assigned that engage students in thinking” (p. 94). It is important, then, to investigate the tasks students complete during literacy instruction. Accordingly, the research reported here was guided by the following research question:

- What types of tasks do students complete during literacy instruction?

Theoretical Framework

A social constructivist perspective informs this research. Important to this perspective is the idea that students actively construct knowledge through interactions with others in a specific context (Vygotsky, 1978). The work of Piaget (1954) and Dewey (1938) is foundational to social constructivist theories, and central to their work is an emphasis on *experience*. They argued that students create knowledge and understanding through “educative experiences” where they experience “equilibrium” or “disequilibrium.” Similarly, Vygotsky’s *zone of proximal development* is fundamental to social constructivism. This zone parallels the ideal difficulty level of an instructional task: where a learner can be successful with support (Tracey & Morrow, 2012).

Background

Doyle’s (1983) seminal review of research on academic work presented the task as the fundamental unit of analysis in the classroom. He demonstrated that students acquire the knowledge that is necessary to complete the task. Blumenfeld and colleagues (1987) built on Doyle’s conception of tasks. They agreed that tasks determine what students will learn—the content—but Blumenfeld et al. also emphasized the form of the task: “the procedures, social organization and products they require” (p. 136). Therefore, they added a social dimension to Doyle’s view of tasks and discussed the influence of tasks on motivation, not

just cognition. They proposed that the form of the task influences students' motivation to complete the activity because it affects the expectancy and value they place on the task. Blumenfeld and colleagues suggest that tasks can be characterized according to the combined complexity of these elements. Furthermore, they expressed concern about the preponderance of simple tasks in schools: "we may be creating workers desirous of doing the least possible in an individualist fashion" (p. 144).

This theoretical work laid the foundation for the empirical study of tasks. Turner (1995) and Perry (1998) studied the tasks that promoted self-regulated literacy behaviors in primary students. They found that tasks were the key determinant of classroom culture. Turner distinguished between "open" and "closed" tasks. Open tasks were student directed opportunities that allowed students to frame the problem and design the solution, whereas closed tasks were teacher directed opportunities that required students to work toward one solution or right answer. Open tasks encouraged students to be self-regulating: "The task itself was instrumental in facilitating motivation" (Turner, 1995, pp. 430-431). Similarly, Miller and Meece (1999) discovered in their study with third-grade students that "high-challenge" tasks were associated with increased motivation. Also, researchers have found that more rigorous writing tasks were associated with increases in academic language (Crosson, Matsumura, Correnti, & Arlotta-Guerrero, 2012), writing ability (Matsumura, Patthey-Chavez, Valdes, & Garnier, 2002), and performance on standardized tests (Newmann, Bryk, & Nagaoka, 2001).

In summary, theory and research on academic tasks has demonstrated that they are important determinants of the classroom environment. Thus, tasks play a significant role in facilitating students' learning and motivation. Research has also illuminated certain task components that are repeatedly associated with enhanced learning and motivation: authenticity, challenge, collaboration, student choice, and sustained learning (Gambrell, Hughes, Calvert, Malloy, & Igo, 2011; Parsons, 2008; Parsons, Malloy, Parsons, & Burrowbridge, 2012; Pressley, 2006). However, researchers also described the paucity of authentic, challenging tasks in classrooms (Fredricks et al., 2004; Parsons et al., 2013; Parsons & Ward, 2011). For example, Brophy (2010) concluded, "Students spend too much time reading, reciting, filling out worksheets, and taking memory tests, and not enough time engaging in sustained discourse about powerful ideas or applying these ideas in authentic activities" (p. 28). A limitation of the studies that make up this body of work is they are limited to one or only a few classrooms. To address this gap in the literature, we studied the types of literacy tasks occurring in 11 classrooms, including all elementary grade levels, in different contexts.

METHODS

The research reported here is drawn from four separate studies. While they are separate studies, the researchers used the same procedures for data collection and analysis. Therefore, compiling the data provided a more robust illustration of the project as a whole. The researchers used observations of literacy instruction to document the academic tasks students completed. During observations, the researchers documented the tasks students were assigned. For the purposes of this research, a task was operationally defined as a classroom activity that resulted in a student product. This definition came from the research literature, which highlights the importance of writing (Crosson et al., 2012; Lutz, Guthrie, & Davis, 2006; Miller & Meece, 1999; Perry, 1998).

Study 1 occurred in a Title I elementary school in the Southeast. The researcher (second author) observed six teachers (one at each grade K-5) six to eight times during the school year, for a total of 44 observations. Table 1 displays the participants in all studies in this research report. This school was selected because it was a Title I school and the principal wanted to establish a partnership with the university. Thus, Study 1 began at the start of that partnership and the researcher supervised student teachers at the school. The principal suggested participants based on his knowledge of (a) the rubric we used to rate tasks in this study (Appendix), which is described below, and (b) teachers' typical instruction. At the beginning of the study, the researcher provided individualized professional development on open tasks to each of the six participants and all of the teachers were well versed in how to make their tasks more open.

Study 2 occurred in four third-grade classrooms in a Title I school in the Southeast. Each teacher was observed nine times across three weeks for a total of 36 observations. This school was purposefully selected to participate in this study as a high-performing Title I school. This school was low performing a decade earlier. Upon partnering with the local university, the school experienced dramatic increases in student achievement for several years. However, the school's achievement had plateaued in recent years. Accordingly, the school initiated a focus on project-based literacy instruction (Parsons, Metzger, Askew, & Carswell, 2011). The researcher (first author) documented the literacy tasks occurring in such an initiative. The third-grade teachers volunteered to participate in the study. The teachers knew the purpose of the study was to document the tasks that occurred in literacy instruction, and they were provided a copy of the task rubric (Appendix).

Study 3 occurred in a sixth-grade classroom in a Title I elementary school in the Mid-Atlantic region. The researcher (first author) worked at the school as

a university supervisor. The administrators at the school nominated the participating teacher as an effective teacher. The researcher's subsequent work observing in her classroom corroborated the administrators' assessment. The teacher was intentionally integrating literacy into her social studies instruction, and the researcher supported her in designing instruction. The researcher observed the literacy instruction in this classroom once a week (with several interruptions due to conferences for the researcher and required testing in the classroom) from January to May for a total of 10 observations.

Study 4 occurred in the same classroom as Study 3, with the same teacher. This study lasted the duration of the following school year with weekly observations for a total of 26 observations¹. The teacher continued to explicitly integrate literacy and social studies, and the researcher continued to support her. Between Studies 3 and 4, one adjustment in data collection was made. The researchers felt the requirement for an activity to include writing to be considered a task was limiting. There were several instances when an activity occurred that did not include writing (e.g., a read aloud accompanied by a rich class discussion); however, due to the operational definition, this activity was not documented as a task. Accordingly, for Study 4, we broadened the operational definition of a task to include "an activity that requires a student response."

TABLE 1 The Participants in Each of the Studies

Study	Ethnicity	Gender	Grade Level	Years of Experience	# of Observations
1	White	Female	K	10	6
	Black	Female	1	4	7
	Black	Female	2	4	8
	White	Female	3	26	8
	Black	Female	4	8	7
	White	Female	5	0	8
2	Black	Female	3	16	9
	White	Female	3	8	9
	White	Female	3	4	9
	Black	Female	3	3	9
3 & 4	White	Female	6	6	10 & 26
Total					116

Each of the studies used the same data analysis procedures. Data were analyzed using a rubric to rate the “openness” of the task (Parsons, 2008; Parsons et al., 2012). The rubric rates the following task components: authenticity, collaboration, challenge, choice, and sustained learning (see Appendix). These components were derived from the research literature on high-quality tasks described in the Background section of this paper. Each of the five components was rated 1-3 for totals ranging from 5-15. From the total of these ratings, tasks were classified as closed (rating totals 5-8), moderately open (rating totals 9-11), or open (rating totals 12-15). It is important to note that this study does not privilege a type of task. A variety of closed and open tasks should make up a balanced literacy curriculum (Pressley, 2006), and a preponderance of one type of literacy task throughout the school year limits students’ opportunities to engage in comprehensive literacy experiences. Therefore, this study sought to document the types of literacy tasks teachers implement.

Reliability of the task rubric was established. Three researchers involved in research on academic tasks (including the two authors of this article) independently rated 30 tasks from across the studies and then used Spearman’s Rho to determine inter-rater reliability. The results indicated an inter-rater reliability of .832, establishing high reliability in using the task rubric to rate the openness of the tasks.

FINDINGS

In this section, we first provide classroom examples of closed, moderately open, and open tasks to illustrate the ratings. Next, we describe the results of each study separately. Finally, we present the cumulative totals.

Examples of Closed Tasks

Closed tasks received low ratings for authenticity, collaboration, challenge, choice, and sustained learning. An illustrative example of a closed task occurred during a small-group reading lesson in a sixth-grade classroom. Students read the same story and created a plot diagram as they read. This activity was inauthentic, students had few opportunities to collaborate or make choices, and the task was limited to the one small group lesson. In a third-grade classroom, students sorted their word study words and wrote them in their word study journals. This task was a school-based activity, completed alone, in one setting, with few opportunities to make choices. Additionally, test preparation activities where students read a passage and answered questions that followed were rated as closed tasks. These

activities were inauthentic; included no collaboration, challenge, or choices; and they were completed in one sitting. In our observations, we often observed students copying information off the whiteboard or overhead, and we frequently observed students completing worksheets. These types of activities received ratings that designated them as closed tasks.

Examples of Moderately Open Tasks

In a sixth-grade classroom, a lesson focused on hyperbole. The teacher placed pictures of a recent snowstorm on the whiteboard. The teacher explained their task by stating, “We’re going to try to describe these pictures using hyperbole. How can we get their point across in exaggeration?” This task was rated as moderately open because it included some aspects of real-world literate behaviors and it included collaboration. Another example of a moderately open task occurred in a third-grade classroom where students worked in groups to create their own communities. One of the activities within the project was for students to create a graphic organizer that delineated who would complete which aspects of the presentation. This task was authentic, collaborative, and gave students choices. Accordingly, it was rated as moderately open. Another moderately open task we observed occurred after the class read a story about murals. Students created their own murals depicting something about which they were passionate (Parsons, 2010). Students worked alone, but had the opportunity to make choices as they worked over several days to create and present their murals.

Examples of Open Tasks

Open tasks received high ratings for authenticity, collaboration, challenge, choice, and sustained learning. An example of an open task occurred after the class read a story from the basal reader. The students were then assigned to write a letter to a character in the story. This included a real-world literacy action (writing a letter), students had several choices, and this task included a high degree of challenge. Another illustrative example of an open task was from a classroom using a “book club” format. Students read a chapter book and discussed their reactions to this book. This task received high ratings for authenticity, collaboration, and sustained learning. In another class, students wrote “a chapter” about an animal of their choice. Therefore, they had to read several nonfiction texts to conduct research and then synthesize this information in their writing. Students collaborated with peers as they peer edited their chapter. This task lasted over several weeks.

Study 1

Study 1 occurred in an urban school district in a Southeastern state. Six teachers, one at each grade level K-5, participated in this study. In 44 observations, the researcher observed 159 literacy tasks. The observed tasks were almost universally rated as closed (see Table 2).

Study 2

Study 2 took place at a different school in the same district as Study 1. Study 2 focused on four teachers who made up the third-grade team at the school. This school's emphasis, at the time of the study, was to implement project-based literacy instruction. In 36 observations, 68 literacy tasks were documented. The researcher documented variability in the openness of the observed tasks in this school (see Table 2).

Study 3

Study 3 was conducted in a Mid-Atlantic state. The researcher observed one sixth-grade teacher's literacy instruction each week January through May. In 10 observations, the researcher observed 39 tasks, with a balance in open, moderately open, and closed tasks (see Table 2).

Study 4

Study 4 was conducted with the same teacher as Study 3, and it occurred across the following school year. Between Studies 3 and 4, the researchers changed the operational definition used to identify tasks. In 26 observations, the researcher observed 66 tasks. While a majority of the observed tasks were closed, several moderately open and open tasks were observed as well (see Table 2).

TABLE 2 Task Ratings Found in Each Study

Task Rating	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Study 4	Total
Closed	147	39	16	41	243
Moderate Open	12	18	14	14	58
Open	0	11	9	11	31
Total	159	68	39	66	332

DISCUSSION

This research is significant because it documented the literacy tasks students were assigned in 11 different classrooms, including all elementary grade levels, in multiple states. Studying the literacy tasks students are assigned is important because tasks determine the literacy skills and knowledge they will acquire. As noted above, this study does not privilege a type of task. Open tasks are not better than closed tasks. Both types of literacy tasks are important in elementary classrooms (Pressley, 2006). Consider one of the closed tasks presented above. Sorting word study words, though rated as a closed task, is an important part of a comprehensive literacy block (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, & Johnston, 2011; Cunningham & Allington, 2010). Our concern, like others (Allington, 2001; Blumenfeld et al., 1987; Brophy, 2010; Fredricks et al., 2004; Parsons et al., 2013; Parsons & Ward, 2011), is the predominance of closed tasks in elementary literacy instruction. Students need opportunities to engage in real-world literate behaviors where they collaborate with others, make choices, and engage in sustained learning (Gambrell et al., 2011; Miller & Meece, 1999; Parsons, 2008; Pressley, 2006).

Indeed, the findings in these studies demonstrated a preponderance of closed tasks (73%). This finding raises concern about what students are experiencing in elementary school literacy instruction. Students' experiences determine not only what they will learn but also what they will come to think about reading and writing (Doyle, 1983; Johnston, 2012). That is, if all students experience in the name of literacy is copying, answering literal questions after reading, and memorizing spelling words, they will create a narrow view of what it means to be literate. On the other hand, if students also experience opportunities to discuss ideas about text, write for real audiences, and pose and solve problems, they are likely to create a richer and more nuanced perspective of what it means to be literate.

Some of the classrooms under study demonstrated more of a balance in closed and open tasks than others. For example, Study 1 documented closed tasks almost universally (92.5%) and zero open tasks. A more balanced approach was found in Study 3: 23% of the observed tasks were open, 36% were moderately open, and 41% were closed. In each of these four studies, the researcher intervened with teachers in some way to support teachers in developing and implementing open tasks. In Study 1, the researcher worked one-on-one with each of the teacher participants to ensure that they understood how to design more open tasks. In Study 2, the researcher intervened minimally by just providing the participants with the task rubric. In Studies 3 and 4, the researcher worked with the teacher on a weekly basis to design open tasks.

A few patterns were noticed in the number of tasks or percentage of open tasks when looking at the grade level or the class size. Patterns appeared to exist by school, though. That is, the supportiveness of the context varied in the degree to which they allowed the teachers to implement the types of open tasks being promoted. For example, the teachers in Study 1 worked in a restrictive context. Despite the principal's assurance at the beginning of the study that the participating teachers used a variety of tasks with different levels of openness, the researcher came to find that school policies prevented such a variety. The principal told teachers in this school that their literacy tasks had to look like the state mandated test so the students would be prepared to take the test ("If it doesn't look like the test, don't do it."). Hence, this edict severely restricted the types of tasks teachers implemented. Indeed, there was little variation in the openness of tasks observed in Study 1.

The other studies were conducted in contexts where teachers were given more autonomy in their instructional decision-making. In fact, the school in Study 2 had an explicit focus on implementing project-based literacy instruction. The context of Studies 3 and 4 essentially provided the teacher complete autonomy of her instruction; however, the emphasis on student achievement on high-stakes test scores influenced her instruction. The school system, for example, created PowerPoint presentations that covered the social studies content that was included in the state's high-stakes social studies test. This teacher felt compelled to use these PowerPoint presentations despite the fact they emphasized dates and facts.

Moreover, it is important to consider these findings from the perspective of a teacher educator. Recall that each of these schools at the time of the study was serving as a host for preservice teachers' fieldwork. Even if teacher educators promote the use of a variety of open and closed tasks, preservice teachers placed in these schools are seeing few open tasks and an overabundance of closed tasks. This consideration is important in light of the powerful role that fieldwork plays in teachers' development (McIntyre, Byrd, & Foxx, 1996).

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Future studies should be aware of potential restrictions that the context may afford, particularly the degree of administrative commitment to the proposed objectives of the study. In addition, future studies of literacy tasks should carefully consider the way tasks are defined and rated. Studies 1, 2, and 3 defined tasks as activities that resulted in a written product. The researchers found this definition limiting because many activities were worth documenting (e.g., student

discussion or independent reading), but we did not include them because they did not fit our definition—i.e., they did not result in a written product. Thus, Study 4 expanded the definition of task to “any activity that requires a student response.” Therefore, discussion and reading—not just writing—could be documented with this definition. Accordingly, the rubric was amended. We added “reading” to all levels of the “Challenge” component. For example, level 1 read: “The task requires letter- or word-level *reading or writing*.” All other components of the rubric were appropriate with the new operational definition.

An important next step for classroom-based researchers of literacy and teacher educators is to communicate across educational disciplines and with various audiences. The implications of this research demonstrate that policy and administrators influence teachers’ instruction and students’ learning. It seems important, then, for us to learn from and communicate with researchers in other fields such as educational policy and educational leadership. Similarly, it is important for researchers to communicate research findings with various educators in different roles: teachers, teacher educators, principals, administrators, professional developers, and policymakers. Without widespread change, we teacher educators are fighting an uphill battle.

CONCLUSION

Literacy tasks determine what students will experience (Doyle, 1983), and students’ academic experiences determine what they learn (Dewey, 1938; Piaget, 1954; Tracey & Morrow, 2012; Vygotsky, 1967). Therefore, literacy teachers and researchers should pay special attention to the literacy tasks they design, implement, and study in elementary school classrooms. Our study corroborates what previous researchers have suggested (Allington, 2001; Blumenfeld et al., 1987; Brophy, 2010; Fredricks et al., 2004; Parsons et al., 2013; Parsons & Ward, 2011): The tasks we assign students are overwhelmingly low-level (i.e., closed). We urge teacher educators, professional developers, teachers, and researchers to work to add more balance in the types of tasks, both open and closed, to give students rich literacy experiences. Likewise, we urge administrators and policymakers to give teachers the professional autonomy they deserve, permitting them to implement more comprehensive, and thus more effective, literacy instruction.

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APPENDIX

RUBRIC FOR RATING OPENNESS OF TASKS

(adapted from Parsons, 2008)

Describe the task and its product:

Authenticity (adapted from Duke, Purcell-Gates, Hall, & Tower, 2007)

- 1 – The task is limited to tasks that are completed primarily in school.
- 2 – The task mimics outside-of-school tasks, but has features of school-based activities.
- 3 – The task closely replicates tasks completed in day-to-day lives outside of school.

Collaboration

- 1 – Students work alone on the task.
- 2 – Students collaborate minimally in the task.
- 3 – Students collaborate throughout the task.

Challenge

- 1 – The task requires letter- or word-level writing.
- 2 – The task requires sentence-level writing.
- 3 – The task requires paragraph-level writing.

Student Directed

- 1 – The students have no input on the task.
- 2 – The students have input, but the choices have minimal influence on the task.
- 3 – Students have input into many substantial aspects of the task.

Sustained

- 1 – The task takes place within one sitting.
 - 2 – The task takes place within one or two day.
 - 3 – The task spans over three or more days.
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Note: Portions of these data have been presented elsewhere in a description of the relationship between tasks and the teachers' instructional adaptations (Parsons, 2012).

Portions of these data have been reported elsewhere in a description of student engagement in different types of tasks (Malloy, Parsons, & Parsons, in press).

THE IMPACT OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN WRITING INSTRUCTION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF WRITING STRATEGIES IN THE CLASSROOM

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Abstract

This study investigated the impact of the New Jersey Writing Project in Texas (NJWPT) three-week professional development on the classroom implementation of writing strategies. Quantitative data were collected two years after the initial professional development regarding the frequency of implementation of writing strategies in the classroom using a Self-Assessment Implementation Survey (Eads, 1989). The top four ranking strategies implemented on a daily basis during the three-week NJWPT professional development were in class writing, prewriting, journal writing, and teacher writing with students (Carroll, 1979). Teacher interviews were conducted with key informants four years after training. These data indicated that the NJWPT professional development had a positive impact on the teaching of writing and influenced the frequency and type of writing strategies the teachers implemented in their classroom.

Both researchers and theorists have concurred that writing is one of the keys to communication and achievement (Britton, 1970; Gere, 1985; Vygotsky, 1978). In 2006 Thomas Friedman asserted in his bestseller, *The World is Flat*, that in order to be a successful and functioning member of the global society students must have the knowledge and skills necessary for communicating through the written word. He noted this was true whether the message was handwritten and

mailed, typed on a computer screen and sent, or presented by other media to a room filled with an audience.

However, while the importance of writing was being emphasized by the public at large and the educational community, writing had become the neglected element of school reform with most elementary students spending fewer than three hours a week on writing assignments (National Commission on Writing, 2003). Results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress ([NAEP] 2002) writing assessment documented that 58% of fourth graders and 54% of eighth graders were writing at the basic level. Writing at this basic level was described as lacking attention to audience and elaboration that clarifies and enhances the central idea. In addition, writers testing at the basic level or below were not writing well enough to meet the demands faced in higher education and the work environment (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2003).

The above findings did not indicate an unexpected phenomenon. News of declines in student writing had been reported since NAEP scores were first released in the 1970s (NCES, 2003). Legislation such as *No Child Left Behind* (2001) emphasized the need for standards-based curricula and a rise in student achievement. Many schools responded by trying to find ways to both identify a successful writing curriculum and train teachers to implement it in a way that would be effective and raise scores (Colby & Stapleton, 2006).

The purpose of this study was to examine professional development in writing instruction and its impact on the implementation of the writing process in the classroom. The components studied were (a) the New Jersey Writing Project in Texas (NJWPT) three-week professional development; (b) the frequency of writing strategies implemented in the classroom by teachers two years after the completion of the NJWPT; and (c) the continued impact of the professional development four years after training.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Professional Development in Writing Instruction

Researchers in the late 1960s, throughout the 1970s, and into the 1980s, such as Emig (1969, 1977, 1983), Britton (1970), Graves (1978, 1982, 1996), and Carroll (1979) studied a student-driven process of writing that focused on students' abilities to communicate and compose written pages. Britton (1975) headed a project at the London Institute of Education Research which investigated writing instruction as a direct response to the perceived deficiency in literacy among university students. His work, coupled with Emig's (1977) findings in "Writing as a Mode of Learning" has often been viewed as central to the concept of writing as a process and pivotal to the creation of a new movement.

As writing instruction shifted to the process model, and research identified effective instructional practices that positively impacted students' writing output, professional development was identified as one way to increase the transformation of teaching behaviors. According to Emig (1983), teachers of writing must: write themselves in many modes and examine that writing; observe directly writers of many ages and backgrounds engaging in the process; and speculate systematically with other teachers about the observations. Emig proclaimed, "What is most powerful and persuasive developmentally is direct, active personal experience, since only personal experience can transform personal knowledge" (p. 141).

Piazza (1981) observed eleven teachers in a five session writing professional development that required participants to write, respond to and revise an essay with feedback from the consultant. She recommended that to improve teacher training in writing, future researchers needed to examine the content, design, and delivery of instruction for professional development in writing. While some history and theory are important, the most important component of a professional development program in writing was to provide teachers with many opportunities to practice writing and its instruction. In other words, until teachers viewed themselves as writers and wrote, they would neither understand the difficulties that students encountered when they were learning to write nor would they recognize the ways that they could help students become better writers. Therefore, if teachers were to improve writing instruction, then the professional development must have provided teachers with opportunities to write as well as teach writing.

METHODS

This research study was conducted in three phases: Phase 1 during Summer 2007, Phase 2 during Fall 2009, and Phase 3 during Summer 2011. Research questions from the study addressed are:

1. What was the frequency of writing strategies implemented in the classroom two years after attending the NJWPT three-week as measured by the Self-Assessment Writing Implementation Survey (Eads, 1989)?
2. How did the NJWPT three-week professional development impact teacher implementation of writing strategies in the classroom as measured by personal interviews with key informants four years after attending the professional development?

Setting and Context for the Study

The New Jersey Writing Project in Texas (NJWPT) three-week writing professional development evolved from The New Jersey Writing Project (NJWP),

which was a consortium of Rutgers University, the Educational Testing Service, and New Jersey school districts. Joyce Armstrong Carroll, the co-director of the NJWPT, in her 1979 study, described the professional development:

NJWP officially began as a summer institute conducted by Janet Emig, director, and Joyce Armstrong Carroll, co-director. The goal of NJWP was to improve student writing by improving the teaching of writing and was predicated on the following assumptions:

1. Teachers of writing should write.
2. Writing is a mode of learning.
3. Teachers teaching teachers accomplish efficient curricular change.
4. Theories about writing instruction and assessment of writing enhance classroom practices. (p. 4)

The three-week professional development consisted of approximately six hours of instruction each day, Monday through Friday, in various independent school districts in Texas. Each morning the teachers wrote on a topic of their choice for at least one hour. The teachers then formed groups to interact with each other and their writing using a specific response format. A debriefing time was given before lunch each day to discuss readings the teachers had done the night before and thoughts and comments on the writing and grouping experienced that morning. The afternoon hours were spent learning new approaches and strategies for reentering their writing, working through the writing process, and studying the theories and research behind the professional development.

The professional development focused on two types of writing based on Janet Emig's *Components of the Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders* (1969). One type was a reflexive writing to be published in an anthology at the end of the professional development, and the second was an extensive paper which was sent to a publication of choice on the last professional development day. A second text, *Acts of Teaching: How to Teach Writing* (1993), written by the co-directors of The New Jersey Writing Project in Texas Joyce Armstrong Carroll and Edward Wilson, was also used.

On the final day of the professional development, teachers gathered in a circle for one last reading of a piece that they had written during the three-week professional development. Implementation of writing process strategies in the classroom was discussed, and the teachers made plans to move into the next phase, which was writing with their students daily and teaching their students the principles and strategies they learned during the three-week writing professional development (Carroll, 1979).

Procedures Phase 1

Phase 1 began in March of 2007. At the NJWPT conference, the researcher spoke to 55 certified NJWPT trainers who would facilitate the three-week writing professional development in the coming summer in various independent school districts in Texas. The purpose of the research was described and each trainer received a script to read on the last professional development day during the 2007 summer professional development. The script asked for volunteers to complete demographic information and provide contact information for the researcher. Questions from the trainers were answered by the researcher and clarifications made.

The three-week writing professional developments started in Summer 2007. Eighty-seven teachers from seven school districts in Texas consented to follow-up data collection and with the researcher. Table 1 contains Phase 1

TABLE 1 Phase 1 Subject Demographics for 2007-2008 School Year

	<i>n</i>	percent
Gender		
Male	4	4.6
Female	83	95.4
Grade Level		
Primary (K-2)	22	25.59
Intermediate (3-5)	38	43.68
Middle Level (6-8)	18	20.69
Secondary (9-12)	9	10.34
Other	0	0.0
Experience		
0-2 years	12	13.79
3-5 years	28	32.18
6-10 years	21	24.14
11-20 years	18	20.69
21-30 years	6	6.89
31 + years	2	2.29
School District		
Urban	1	1.15
Suburban	65	74.71
Rural	21	24.14

subject demographic information including grade level taught and years of experience for the 2007-2008 school year.

Phase 2

In Fall 2009, the Self-Assessment for Writing Implementation Survey (Eads, 1989), which included instructional strategies and lessons taught during writing instruction, was sent by mail to the 87 teachers who volunteered to participate in Phase 1. Teachers who completed the survey were also asked to participate in an individual face-to-face question and answer session that would be conducted at a later date with the researcher. Sixty-two teachers (71%) returned the Implementation Survey. Thirty-two of the 62 teachers (52%) volunteered for a follow up

TABLE 2 Phase 2 Subject Demographics for 2009-2010 School Year

	<i>n</i>	percent
Gender		
Male	2	3.2
Female	60	96.8
Grade Level		
Primary (K-2)	14	22.58
Intermediate (3-5)	29	46.77
Middle Level (6-8)	12	19.35
Secondary (9-12)	7	11.29
Other	0	0.00
Experience		
0-2 years	9	14.5
3-5 years	24	38.7
6-10 years	10	16.1
11-20 years	15	24.2
21-30 years	4	6.5
31 + years	0	0
School District		
Urban	1	1.61
Suburban	46	74.19
Rural	15	24.19

interview. Table 2 contains Phase 2 subject demographic information including grade level taught and years of experience for the 2009-2010 school year.

Phase 3

In Summer 2011, teacher interviews were conducted with the six key informants identified by the researcher using a purposeful stratified random sampling technique (Patten, 2007). The researcher separated the 32 volunteers into the following three categories: teachers who scored at the mean on the implementation survey; teachers who scored above the mean; and teachers who scored below the mean. The researcher randomly selected from each category two teachers to interview. Table 3 contains Phase 3 demographic information for the six key informants.

TABLE 3 Demographics of Key Informants in Phase 3

Key Informant	Grade Level	<i>M</i> Implementation of Writing Activities	Implementation Level
Key Informant 1	3	2.80	Low
Key Informant 2	10	2.19	Low
Key Informant 3	7	3.11	Medium
Key Informant 4	1	3.11	Medium
Key Informant 5	2	4.88	High
Key Informant 6	4	4.21	High

DATA SOURCES

Quantitative Data Sources and Analysis

To examine the data in this study, permission was granted to use The Self-Assessment for Writing Implementation Survey (Eads, 1989) designed as a 20 question Likert-scale. The purpose of the survey was to measure the number and frequency of writing strategies implemented in the teacher's classroom as self-reported by the teacher. Teachers were to report the frequency of use of the instructional strategies. Items were rated on a 5-pt scale ranging from *Almost Always* (5) to *Almost Never* (1). The data were analyzed by finding the mean frequencies with which each practice was used.

Qualitative Data Source and Analysis

Face-to-face interviews were held during Phase 3 of the study. The purpose of the interview was to discuss the teaching of writing and the frequency and type

of implementation strategies the teacher had used since attending the three-week writing professional development. The following baseline questions concerning classroom implementation were used:

- What influence do you think the three-week writing professional development has had on your classroom practices?
- How has the 3 week writing professional development provided by your district affected your teaching?
- What strategies did you implement that were most successful/least successful?
- What were some of your reasons for success in implementation of the writing professional development?
- What were some of the barriers you experienced in implementation of the writing professional development?

The researcher used a constant comparative data analysis technique developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) to analyze the teacher interviews. To ensure interrater reliability, a second researcher examined the data. The two researchers met and discussed and compared the themes and categories that were found. The researcher conducted member checks by asking the six key informants to review the data analysis results for proper documentation to ensure dependability (Patten, 2007).

RESULTS

Quantitative

To answer question #1, “What was the frequency of writing strategies implemented in the classroom two years after attending the NJWPT three-week” the data from the Self-Assessment Writing Implementation Survey (Eads, 1989) was examined. The mean frequencies of each instructional practice are reported in Table 4, with the one used most often by teachers, *in class writing*, receiving the highest mean score of 4.887 and the strategy used least by teachers, *worksheets on grammar and mechanics*, receiving the lowest mean score of 2.194. The top four ranking strategies, *in class writing*, *prewriting*, *journal writing*, and *teacher writing with students*, are strategies that were implemented on a daily basis during the three-week New Jersey Writing Project in Texas professional development (Carroll, 1979).

Table 4 also displays the frequency of writing strategies implemented in the classroom as reported by the teachers on the Self-Assessment Writing

TABLE 4 Frequency of Activities Implemented as Reported on the Self-Assessment Writing Implementation Survey in Rank Order

Item	Daily		Once a Week or More		Two or Three Times a Month		Once a Month		Less Than Once a Month		Not Used		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%		
^a 1. In-Class Writing	55	88.7	7	11.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4.8871	0.31906
^a 2. Brainstorming/Pre-Writing	19	30.6	37	59.7	6	9.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4.2097	0.60428
^a 3. Journal Writing	24	38.7	32	51.6	0	0.0	2	3.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	4.1935	0.86534
^a 4. Teacher Writing with Students	19	30.6	36	58.1	7	11.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4.1935	0.62302
^b 5. Writing in the Content Areas	25	40.3	18	29.0	13	21.0	0	0.0	6	9.7	0	0.0	3.9032	1.22421
^a 6. Imitating Writing Models	31	50.0	12	19.4	0	0.0	19	30.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	3.8871	1.31952
^b 7. Spelling/Vocabulary Lessons	12	19.4	39	62.9	4	6.5	1	1.6	6	9.7	0	0.0	3.8065	1.08399
^b 8. Evaluation/Analytic Criteria	13	21.0	24	38.7	25	40.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	3.8065	0.76477
^a 9. Revising	19	30.6	24	38.7	6	9.7	13	21.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	3.7903	1.10345

(continued)

TABLE 4 (continued)

^c 10. Publications or Displays	13	21.0	6	9.7	37	59.7	6	9.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	3.4194	0.93297
^b 11. Sentence Combining	13	21.0	1	1.6	44	71.0	2	3.2	1	1.6	1	1.6	3.3226	1.00448
^a 12. Peer Revision	7	11.3	24	38.7	18	29.0	7	11.3	6	9.7	0	0.0	3.3065	1.12481
^b 13. Rewriting Passages	7	11.3	18	29.0	12	19.4	25	40.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	3.1129	1.07284
^b 14. Using Reference Materials	0	0.0	26	41.9	26	41.9	1	1.6	9	14.5	0	0.0	3.1129	1.00987
^a 15. Conferencing	7	11.3	25	40.3	16	25.8	0	0.0	8	12.9	6	9.7	3.0806	1.50734
^c 16. Out-of-Class Writing	7	11.3	24	38.7	7	11.3	8	12.9	6	9.7	10	16.1	2.8065	1.67761
^c 17. Editing/Grammar Worksheets	0	0.0	20	32.3	0	0.0	16	25.8	24	38.7	2	3.2	2.1935	1.34089

Note. $N = 62$

^a Strategies implemented daily during the 3 week NJWPT professional development

^b Strategies modeled two or more times during the 3 week NJWPT professional development

^c Strategies mentioned once or not at all during the 3 week NJWPT professional development

Implementation Survey. Of the volunteers who participated in Phase 1 and Phase 2, 62 teachers (100%) reported using in class writing once a week or more. Pre-writing and journal writing were reported being implemented once a week or more by 90% of the teachers. Conversely, 66% of the teachers used worksheets less than once a month or not at all, which was an activity that was not implemented during the three-week NJWPT professional development (Carroll, 1979).

Qualitative Component

Teacher Interviews. To answer question #2, “How did the NJWPT three-week professional development impact teacher implementation of writing strategies in the classroom,” the interview data was examined. During the interviews, the teachers reported the use of specific activities for the strategies from the Implementation Survey. For example, a description for prewriting by Key Informant 6 was, “We used a Quicklist; students made lists of topics they could write about.” Key Informant 1 confirmed the use of prewriting by saying, “I show a picture to the students, and they use the picture to trigger a memory or descriptive words to write.” All six teachers said their students kept a journal to write personal ideas in, story topics down, and try out writing lessons learned in class. Three themes emerged from the interviews: *collaboration*, *confidence*, and *constraints*.

Theme: Collaboration. Teachers discussed how collaboration with others influenced their implementation of writing strategies in their classroom under three different categories. The categories included *colleagues*, *administration*, and *trainers*.

Collaboration with colleagues. All six teachers mentioned colleagues who influenced their use of classroom writing strategies. The low implementers expressed negative collaborative experiences with colleagues such as, “No one on my grade level has been trained, so I get discouraged and don’t know who to ask. One colleague tries to help me, but her writing philosophy does not match what I learned in NJWPT,” while the medium and high implementers experienced positive interactions with colleagues where they felt their input in writing instruction was valued. The third grade teacher even admitted to being ridiculed, saying “The other teachers in my school have never been to the NJWPT professional development. They laugh and call it a cult,” which led her to an unwillingness to share her student writing. The two high implementers both stated that they collaborated with their colleagues especially on reading and writing connections. One said, “My team leader brought the picture books she used in her lessons leading me

to recognize that in my own classroom library were books that could become a mentor text to model writing to my own students.”

Collaboration with administrators. All six teachers commented on the addition or lack of administrative support from campus and district personnel. Low implementers were not able to find support from administration at either the campus or district level. Medium implementers began to see support at the campus level, with one stating “My principal has asked me to share why writing is important to me in my personal life. I am hoping she will ask me to share the impact it has had on my students.” The second grade teacher, a high implementer, said, “I have been asked at the district level to help create a writing professional development that extends the writing process strategies from NJWPT.” Both experienced support across the district where they were asked to share their expertise in writing instruction in follow-up professional developments.

Collaboration with trainers. Each teacher who attended the NJWPT professional development was taught by two certified trainers. Low implementers were not able to contact their trainers easily or receive timely feedback. The 10th grade teacher said, “My district doesn’t support NJWPT anymore so my principal won’t support bringing in trainers to our campus. I have to search out the trainers and can’t always find them in such a big district.” Medium implementers attended district level training with their trainers, while high implementers kept in close contact through email, social media, and face to face collaboration. The grade 4 teacher specifically stated, “My trainer is my online friend, and she has set up a group for us in social media.”

Theme: Confidence. All of the teachers mentioned their confidence level in teaching writing and implementing writing activities in their classroom. Two categories emerged as the interviews progressed: *confidence in lesson planning* and *confidence in modeling their own writing in front of their students*.

Confidence in lesson planning. High implementers felt more confident in planning lessons and were able to find and use multiple resources as they planned writing lessons for their classroom. They then shared their lessons with colleagues and administration in curriculum meetings. One key informant shared, “I had never actually planned a writing lesson but had always relied on my colleagues to give their lesson plans to me each week. I would try and follow their plans but always felt overwhelmed or confused. Now I bring lessons to the weekly planning meetings and feel confident in sharing my ideas and the strategies that have worked for my students.”

Medium and low implementers felt easily overwhelmed at times with planning writing instruction and needed help from colleagues and their trainers. The low implementers gave up more easily on teaching writing when they did not feel that confidence in planning writing lessons. The medium implementers struggled but attended more professional development on writing instruction and set goals for their planning and implementation. The 7th grade teacher said, "I struggled with daily implementation, but have set a goal for myself to continue to work on implementing the activities that I learned during the three week writing professional development and making them a part of my classroom at least twice a week."

Confidence in modeling writing. While the level of implementation varied, all but one key informant were more confident in modeling writing to their students in the classroom after attending the NJWPT three-week professional development four years earlier. The third grade teacher allowed her students to write and share their writing with each other, but still did not feel confident in her own writing, leading to low implementation of strategies. She even stated that due to her dislike of writing, she allowed the students to do more of the modeling with each other. Being shy or embarrassed also led to less implementation by the 1st and 10th grade teacher. They both agreed that because of the importance of writing, they tried to overcome their feelings of inadequacies. The highest implementers liked writing and viewed their interaction with students while modeling as positive.

Theme: Constraints. When discussing questions concerning implementation barriers in the classroom, the theme of constraints was repeated. Constraints fell into three main categories: *curriculum*, *time*, and *state testing*.

Curriculum constraints. The lowest implementing teacher did not want to spend any extra money on professional resources to support implementation, saying that "I don't have any professional books that help me supplement the district curriculum, and I just don't have the money to buy extra," and her district was not able to provide new writing materials. Scripted curriculum for the 10th grade teacher was a negative aspect of curriculum implementation. The 1st grade teacher even felt that that curriculum was forced upon her. The medium and high implementers were given guidelines and standards for teaching writing but had the freedom to choose which strategies would best produce success in their students. One high implementer said, "My district curriculum was actually modeled after the NJWPT professional development so many of the books and strategies shared are easy for me to implement." All six key informants

mentioned that the district and the state ultimately provide the curriculum framework, but the lowest implementers have less decision making ability in planning and implementing writing strategies learned in the three-week professional development.

Time constraints. All six teachers mentioned time constraints as a barrier to successful implementation of writing strategies in their classroom commenting that “There are just too many things to get done, and too many distractions that are out of my control.” They cited interruptions, distractions, and district imposed class times as problems. One example of a time constraint given was, “I struggled with time in my departmentalized classroom where I only had 55 minutes with each section of Language Arts students.”

Testing constraints. While the two key informants with the lowest implementation scores worried more about subject areas they were required to assess with statewide standardized tests, the medium implementers saw testing as a barrier that disrupted but could be overcome. The two key informants that had the highest implementation scores viewed writing instruction as a key component of learning in their classroom and did not let time spent on state testing become a negative factor. One teacher discussed integrating writing into other subject areas saying, “I have to give reading and math tests every six weeks, so I just make sure that I implement writing into those subjects almost daily. I think it helps them understand concepts better anyway.”

DISCUSSION

Implementation monitoring through interviews and surveys showed that the participants did implement new techniques learned during the three-week professional development both two and four years after the training. No teachers self-reported zero implementation of the writing strategies taught during the three-week professional development.

Two major contributions to the literature have been made by this study for those interested in improving student writing. These contributions included:

1. The components of an effective model for writing professional development described were: teachers writing daily; teachers sharing their writing with peers and receiving feedback and guidance for revision; teachers learning about writing process theory; and teachers engaging in the application of writing process strategies to implement in their classroom with their students.

2. A description of teacher implementation of writing instruction in the classroom indicated that the teachers attending an effective professional development in writing were consistently using writing strategies that were taught and practiced during the professional development.

CONCLUSION

When compared with other professional development in the literature, the NJWPT employs the following recommended components: theory of composing (Emig, 1969; Britton, 1970), teachers writing (Carroll, 1979; Graves, 1978), and continuity (Piazza, 1981). The NJWPT three-week professional development merged theory and practice in a valuable way according to the qualitative component of this study, and attending such a training is a potentially effective way for administrators and teachers to learn more about the writing process and to implement more writing strategies in the classroom.

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DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS: WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM PARENTS OF CHILDREN WHO STRUGGLE WITH READING?

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Abstract

Drawing upon phenomenological research methods and ecological systems theory, this study explores the perspectives of parents of struggling readers and investigates the processes by which collaborative family-school relationships can be developed or impeded. Twenty parent interviews across a large northeastern state revealed factors they believe facilitated or impeded family-school partnerships.

Family involvement, regardless of social or cultural background, can have a major impact on student achievement and literacy development (Edwards, 2009; Epstein, 1986, 1989; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Leslie & Allen, 1999; Snow, 1993). Research has demonstrated that effective schools have high levels of parental and community involvement (Epstein, 1991; Ingram, Wolfe, & Lieberman, 2007). Family involvement in schools is therefore central to effective education which is the core business of schools. However, developing family-school partnerships is not always an easy endeavor and developing effective family-school partnerships requires commitment and time, levels of trust and communication, and understanding on both sides of the fence.

Given the tremendous importance of family-school partnerships, especially for families whose children struggle in school, this study examines and describes

parents' perspectives of struggling readers. Adopting a phenomenological stance, the goal of this study was to find out parental perspectives and to present their stories and in doing so, shed light on some of the issues that may hinder or help parents as they seek ways to help their child become a better reader. The following research questions were explored:

1. What are the stories that parents share of their child's struggles with literacy development and their own journeys in assisting their child?
2. Are there commonalities across these individual journeys?
3. If so, what are the lessons parents reveal as we seek to build effective, meaningful partnerships?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Perspectives

Pianta and Walsh (1998) describe schooling as an organized system of interactions and transactions among persons (parents, teachers, students), settings (home, school), and institutions (community, schools, government). Each of these social contexts offers unique and important contributions to the student's learning and development (Bronfenbrenner, 1992; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Sameroff, 1995). Ecological systems theory suggests that in order to potentiate the contributions from each context, a collaborative family-school relationship is necessary. This relationship should offer support for the unique and shared contributions that each context may contribute to the child's development (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Christenson & Havy, 2004; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003).

Parental Involvement

Over the last three decades, a large body of cross-disciplinary research points to the benefits of parental involvement in their child(ren)'s education (Chavkin, 1993; Christenson, 1995; Deslandes, Royer, Potvin, & Leclerc, 1999; Epstein 1989, 1991; Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2001; Fan & Chen, 1999; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Leslie & Allen, 1999; Snow, 1993) and supports the assertion that parents' attitudes, behaviors, and activities relative to their children's education, influence academic success (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). For example, parental involvement has been associated with lower drop-out rate, higher retention rates, and higher rates of participation in advanced courses and on-time graduation rates (Barnard 2004; Marcon, 1999; Trusty, 1999). As well, parent

involvement influences student achievement, attendance, self-concept, motivation, and behavior (Henderson & Mapp).

Clarke, Sheridan, & Woods (2010) believe effective family-school relationships includes several core principles: *commitment, continuity, trust, sensitivity, equality, and communicating effectively, building trust, showing respect, sharing learning experiences, and resolving conflict*. They argue these elements are “fundamental [in order to build] positive relationships and set the stage for intentional, child-centered, effective action” (p. 76). However, little research has been done from the parents’ stance (Anderson & Stokes, 1984). Edwards (1999) argues “research is saturated mainly with researchers’ descriptions, interpretations, observations and assumptions . . . what is glaringly missing from these researchers’ in-depth accounts . . . are the parents’ own descriptions and interpretations” (p. 13). Indeed, the parental perspective and parents’ understandings of their own experiences with the school and of their child’s experience as a struggling reader has not been widely explored (McGrath, 2010). The present study seeks to address a significant gap related to parents’ own perspectives on their child’s literacy experiences.

METHODS

Data for this study consisted of phenomenological interviews with parents in order to understand the process they went through when they realized their child was having difficulty with reading. In this phenomenological approach adapted from Seidman (2006), “the goal is to have the participant reconstruct his or her experience within the topic under study” (p. 15).

Researchers’ Stance

Setting aside one’s subjectivities in phenomenological approaches is important as the researcher looks for patterns, themes, or categories. The phenomena must be examined from the participants’ perspective (Peshkin, 1988). This was challenging for several reasons. The stories parents shared were emotional – sometimes very painful, for both the story-teller (parent) and the listener (researcher). Nonetheless, the researcher maintained the stance of an active, but encouraging listener while conducting the interviews and analyzing data.

Although it is important to acknowledge potential subjectivities, it is possible and necessary to monitor them (Peshkin, 1988); thus, the researcher encouraged parents to share their stories, while monitoring her subjectivities through a research log and reflective notes. In this way, the parents’ stories are able to speak for themselves.

Data Collection

Interviews were conducted in a variety of settings chosen by the parents; most of interviews were conducted face-to-face, although a few were conducted via phone. The intention was to create an atmosphere in which parents would feel calm, relaxed, and comfortable since some stories were likely to involve intimate and emotional content.

During interviews, parents were asked to tell the story of how they became aware that their child was a “struggling reader” and to explain the process they went through on their own or with others as they addressed this issue. A general, semi-structured, interview guide was utilized, which allowed the researcher to request follow-up, clarification, and elaboration (Seidman, 2006). All interviews were recorded and transcribed. Interviews ranged in duration from one to two hours with several participants interviewing two to three times until they felt they had completed the telling of their story and their child’s story.

Participants

The twenty participants were chosen for their ability to provide insight into the phenomenon being studied (Glesne, 2010); each participant had been through or was going through the process of parental advocacy for their struggling reader. All participants were of European American background and came from a range of socio-economic classes, as determined by their occupations and geographic location, and represent eighteen school districts across several regions of a large northeastern state. With the exception of the two married couples and to the researcher’s knowledge, none of the participants knew each other, nor had they discussed their stories with one another (See Table 1).

Access to participants was gained through several venues. Four of the parents were accessed through their participation with a university literacy center over the course of several semesters. Four parents were recruited from a summer school remediation program that took place over several semesters. Twelve participants were referred by acquaintances or from casual conversations about the study with the author. Most parents interviewed were mothers (n=16), while one couple was interviewed together, and one couple was interviewed separately.

Data Analysis

Interview data was coded using a constant comparative method for data analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) with the use of *open*, *axial*, and *selective* coding procedures to code the raw data and to then group similar codes as recommended by Creswell (1998). Originally, this analysis

TABLE 1 Demographic Information about Parent Participants

Parent Pseudonym	Profession	SES and Location	Child(ren Pseudonym)
Andrea	High School Principal	Middle Class, Suburban	Kelsey
Carol	Stay at home mother	Affluent, Suburban	Elizabeth
David (married to Maureen)	Manager for Plant Start-Up	Middle Class, Rural	Sean & Amanda
Debra	Volunteer Parent Advocate	Low-income, Rural	Cassidy
Dena	Paralegal for attorney of educational law	Middle Class, Rural	Thomas
Donna	Stay at home mother	Working Class, Urban	Daniel
Doris	Works for non-profit human services agency	Middle Class, Suburban	Lea
Elizabeth	Personal Fitness Trainer	Affluent, Suburban	Nick
Jane	Accountant	Middle Class, Suburban	Matthew
Janice	Mortgage Broker	Affluent, Suburban	Jonathan
Jennifer	Bank Teller	Working Class, Suburban	Robert & Kim
Karen	Bank Manager	Middle Class, Suburban	Kami
Lisa	Stay at home mother	Middle Class, Rural	Melony
Lynda	Hairdresser	Working Class, Rural	Madison
Maureen (married to David)	Home Health Care Aid	Middle Class, Rural	Seth & Amanda
Mike & Jenn	Graduate student/ Nurse	Lower Middle Class, Suburban	Nathan & Tyler
Nadia	Trained Chef	Affluent, Rural	Rick
Wendy	Stay at home mother	Middle Class, Suburban	Donald
Veronica	Stay at home mother	Working Class, Suburban	Josh

led to the development of a grounded theory of advocacy around parent stories (McGrath, 2010) that included four major stages: (1) awareness of the child's reading problem, (2) understanding the problem, (3) acknowledging the need for advocacy, and (4) accessing appropriate reading services. These components led to either a successful or unsuccessful resolution of the child's reading difficulties.

FINDINGS

In this section, storylines and commensurate themes that emerged from the analysis of the data, relative to the framework for effective family school relationships, are presented.

Core Principles Underlying Effective Family-School Relationships

Beliefs, Commitment, and Continuity

Principles:	Strategies:
<i>Beliefs, commitment, continuity</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share and effectively communicate the same goals • Commit to establishing and maintaining a positive relationship • Acknowledge family's unique contributions

Underlying the core principles of *beliefs, commitment, and continuity* is the notion that families and school share the same goals for the child's academic and personal development and achievement. Both contexts are committed to establishing and maintaining a positive relationship and consistency across systems and settings (Clark, et al., 2010).

A common storyline conveyed by all 20 parents was that they cared deeply for their children and wanted the best for them. Carol's position clearly articulates the wish to work with the school and for the school to understand and acknowledge the unique contributions parents bring to their child's schooling: "I think that the parents who sit with these kids and work with these kids and . . . know their children best, and I think that the teachers and the administration should say you know what? This should then be a team approach."

Building upon this sentiment, Wendy conveyed a position which indicates that she recognized her unique contribution to the successful development of her child as she described how she first came to notice her son's difficulties: "I knew what to do for Donald based on my experiences with my third child. He repeated

first grade. He had an evaluation and they determined that he had a perceptual problem and when I asked if I had to take him for an eye exam they said, “No that would not show a problem with perception.” That was kindergarten. Turned out when he was in third grade, one day he said, “if I close one eye everything is blurry, if I close the other one, I can see really clear. So I took him for an eye exam and he is legally blind in his right eye. So, when things started to break down for Donald, I knew what to do.”

While both Wendy and Carol understood their unique responsibilities for and contributions to their child’s academic development and wanted to work in partnership with the school, other parents described barriers to effective partnerships. The common thread across these stories was ineffective communication. Elizabeth described persistent attempts to contact and work with her son’s teachers so that they could better address his needs. She shared how her son Nick was placed in a self-contained special education classroom where there was not specialized help for reading. She commented, “As a child diagnosed with dyslexia, he should have had a reading person [working with him] . . . And nobody was listening to me.” She described how she had copied literature describing dyslexia and highlighted those portions that described the areas where Nick struggled, as well as how she pleaded with teachers to “please read this so you understand where my son is.”

Jennifer described a similar sentiment as she described what she felt was a recurrent “struggle to get any of the teachers to give a call and leave a message” regarding her son’s schoolwork. She shared how her son’s teachers “wouldn’t communicate with me that the homework didn’t get done [from] the very first one. They would wait. I don’t understand that. And I was telling them, ‘Don’t wait.’ And they kept waiting, and this was in a class of eight kids!”

Elements of Effective Relationships

Trust, Sensitivity, Equality

Elements:	Strategies:
<i>Trust, sensitivity, equality</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engage in consultative decision making• Proactively address child’s academic and developmental needs• Deliver on promised services• Value familial contributions• Exercise transparency in communicating assessment results• Define educational jargon and acronyms

Trust. Trust is often viewed as one of the most critical elements in an interpersonal relationship (Ammeter et al., 2004; Nugent & Abolafia, 2006). The four parents who reported a successful resolution for their child's reading difficulties conveyed great trust in their respective schools as indicated in Debra's comments: "I love the school district, I'm very happy with it. Pretty much what I have fought for and kicked and screamed for in other districts, for my own kids and others, is handed over to you. Here, I am confident that Colin's needs are being met." From Debra's perspective, the school was trustworthy because it had been sensitive to her child's unique learning needs, had included her in the decision making regarding her son's IEP, and delivered on the services promised.

Sensitivity. Those parents who reported an unsuccessful resolution to their child's reading difficulties conveyed a very different picture. Anger and betrayal resonated through their stories and there was a poignant mistrust of the school. For example, Lisa conveyed a sense of shock when she was told suddenly that her child was struggling in first grade after having been told in kindergarten that everything was wonderful: "it felt like it was kind of like a slap in the face because here we're told one thing and now, within a month, we're being told something totally different? There's a huge jump here that we weren't expecting. If we had known, we probably would have worked with her more over the summer."

David expressed a similar sentiment regarding his frustration and his assessment of the school. He spoke as former School Board President, when the district embraced the "whole language" reading philosophy: "I think the results of the reading program should have had much closer (School) Board scrutiny. A lot of times, these things are never brought to the Board by the administration for any kind of open discussion. It's another failure of the system, but we are talking about my son . . . they failed dramatically with Sean . . . And why haven't they done anything to improve performance down there? I don't have the answers, but as a parent, it leaves me with a gaping credibility problem involving the effectiveness of the school and the reading methodology used with Sean."

Elizabeth described the breakdown of trust in this way: "I got tired of everybody still blaming Nick. Nick you're not focusing, Nick you're not coming in for extra help, Nick, you're not studying, Nick you're not turning in your homework. I kept telling them that it was dyslexia. They turned the other way. No one would listen. The psychologist left out a critical subtext, then lied about it."

Although speaking from hundreds of miles across the state, Wendy describes a similar breakdown in trust and how this eventually propelled her to pursue a degree in psychology: “The same psychologist was at the school and there was no way this man was going to test (Donald). He goofed up royally with the other one. At this point, I had the psychology background and I knew that the first thing you do when you’re speaking about psychology is you rule out the physical.” Wendy described a perceived imbalance of power as she shared the outcome of a Special Education meeting where she “was made to feel inadequate” because she failed to understand her son’s testing results.

Equality. Equality is the third element of effective relationships. Lake & Billingsley (2000) posit that the factors that escalate and deescalate conflict among families and schools are the imbalance of power and authority. Whereas Debra and the other parents who reported positive family-school partnerships perceived that their contributions were valued and respected and thus felt a balance of power and authority, the rest of the parents shared their perceptions of varying degrees of power imbalance between family and school. Carol and David, representing different school districts, illustrate this in a powerful and poignant way.

David’s comments were similar in this regard. After describing his persistent, but failed advocacy efforts for helping his child overcome reading difficulties, David expressed that he felt “bitter” and “estranged” from the school. He also wondered how other parents, with less social and economic capital would be able to advocate for their children:

I sat on the School Board for 15 years, which means I’m not afraid of the system and I understand it. Can you imagine, for example, someone with much less ability to articulate the problem, much less ability to use the system to intervene for their child feels? Or a new immigrant whose primary language is Spanish? I think those parents could feel even more estranged, more angry, more bitter than I feel.

In light of the fact that the majority of the parents (75%) in this sample were educated professionals, not living in poverty, and not from marginalized people groups, David’s comments are particularly poignant. Despite the great socio-cultural capital these parents held, they often had difficulty navigating school culture and perceived an imbalance of power.

Actions Involved in Effective Relationships between Families and Schools

Communicating Effectively, Building Trust, Showing Respect, Sharing Learning Experiences, Resolving Conflict

Actions:	Strategies:
<i>Effective communication, building trust, showing respect, sharing learning experiences, resolving conflict</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly communicate literacy abilities • Provide specific and strategic recommendations for the home • Encourage the family to recognize its critical role in child's learning • Avoid intimidation tactics • Proactively provide access to academic information

For the parents who reported positive relationships with their respective schools, there was a common theme: the teacher/school had clearly communicated their child's reading abilities, and problems were clearly outlined and specific solutions for what the school planned to do to remediate. In addition, specific activities the parents could do at home were presented to families. Parents perceived that they were not only sharing in their child's learning experiences, but were playing a critical part in their child's academic development. Effective communication led to trust and respect thereby bypassing conflict (Clark, et al., 2010).

Jane's narrative very powerfully describes this synergy: "I've been really pleased with the way Matthew's issues have been handled. About half way through first grade, Matthew's teacher sent home, every night, the book they had worked on and the sentence that he wrote. He had to reread the book to us, put together the sentence that he had written in school, and then he had to write another sentence. Some nights were hard because we were all tired, but I think this program, and the wonderful reading teacher, have made all the difference."

On the other hand, for the majority of the parents interviewed, ineffective communication led to a breakdown in trust and understanding; this breakdown ultimately led to very powerful and heart-breaking conflicts. Communication problems mentioned in the interviews included unclear reporting measures, use of educational jargon, and difficulty accessing information from the school.

Although Veronica had noticed some signs that Josh was struggling in first grade, she was surprised when the school made it clear that they intended to retain Josh because “Nobody ever told me what the problem was.” Veronica later learned of a university-based reading clinic where she was able to arrange for assessments and tutoring. Veronica contrasted her experience in this way: “(*The teacher*) told me that he has a problem with saying all the sounds of the words and that was even written in the report at the end.”

A similar story was shared by Maureen: “We had no idea that she wasn’t ready for third grade. She had passed 2nd grade. She went into third grade and very quickly she lost speed at third grade, but we weren’t notified.” Debra expressed concerns regarding the Committee on Special Education (CSE) meetings. She perceived that many parents were coming into the meeting seeing testing results for the first time. They didn’t have time to thoroughly digest the information or understand it due to the plethora of education jargon used to explain the child’s results. The jargon was both intimidating and disconcerting: “they (school personnel) are throwing around CSE, IEP, LEA, LRE . . . and a lot of parents don’t even ask what they mean.”

There was a clear pattern across parent narratives that parents did not feel they were granted access to or proactively provided with information regarding their child’s abilities in reading or with strategies to help their child address reading struggles. Many parents commented that teachers told them to “read with their child”—something that the parents were already doing. Parents described wanting to be given specific guidance and feedback. Jenn and Mike illustrate what is expressed across other parent interviews: “I didn’t realize that I would actually have to go in to get the information I needed.” Jenn commented that the best thing school could have done was “give us information as far as what exactly the reading problem was—specific things—what he needed to work on . . . not just telling us to read with him.”

In contrast, Mike described their experience with a summer reading program run as a partnership between a university-based reading clinic and his home school district. “They told us what the specific reading problems were and what they were doing in class to help with them. Then they gave us little activities to do at home with the kids. Specific things. And we got more specific ideas when we went to the parent meeting that they had. I learned more things we could do at home in that hour than I did in five years since our kids first started school.” Mike’s comments are a powerful testament to a parent’s desire to gain access to information that is strategically helpful in facilitating an individual child’s literacy development.

DISCUSSION

The perception that no single institution can single-handedly address all the conditions that children need to flourish is one of the most important cross-cutting social policy perspectives to emerge in recent years (Melaville, 1998). Indeed, the collaboration of home, school, and community provides the ideal synergy. The results of this study substantiate that collaborative relationships between parents and teachers are essential in establishing family-school partnerships (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001). Strong partnerships are particularly important where there are potentially adversarial or challenging situations. The establishment of positive, constructive relationships provides an opportunity for dialogue and problem-solving. On the other hand, “strained or adversarial relationships between parents and teachers create barriers and greatly limit the quality of services available to assist a child in meeting his or her learning needs” (Clark, et al., 2010, p. 62).

The four parents who reported a positive resolution for their child’s reading difficulties also described positive, effective family-school partnerships. Central to these partnerships were the parents’ perception that their contribution to their child’s literacy development was recognized and valued. As well, these parents described open communication with their child’s teachers and schools, clear reporting methods, and ample time with the teacher to discuss their child’s needs. Finally, these parents described specific tools, given to them by their respective schools, to help their child’s literacy development.

However, the majority of the stories suggest we have lots of work to do. As former Surgeon General Jocelyn Elders cautioned, “We all say we want to collaborate, but what we really mean is that we want to continue doing things as we have always done them while others change to fit what we are doing” (as cited in Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA). An optimal approach to potentiating the unique contributions that families and schools bring to the student’s learning and development will take patience, commitment, and understanding, but as some of these parents described, there are some very positive and effective examples we can look to as we continue to work toward more effective family-school partnerships. We do this in the pursuit of providing our nation’s children with the very best education possible.

LIMITATIONS

A limitation of this study involves the selection of the participants. Participants were originally chosen for their ability to provide insight into the advocacy process of their struggling reader. Thus, conclusions can be referenced to these

specific participants. Further exploration of how effective family-school partnerships might be developed across a broader population of parents is necessary. Second, although the parents interviewed represent many school districts across a large north eastern state, the majority of the participants were middle class or affluent English speaking Euro-Americans. A broader sample of participants from wider socio-economic levels is necessary to explore how socio-economic status, ethnicity, or language might impact home-school partnerships.

IMPLICATIONS FOR BUILDING STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

Looking at the positive and effective examples of family-school partnerships and listening to the parents involved in this study, there are some important implications for building more meaningful home-school partnerships:

1. Parents know their children, care deeply for them, and can provide incredible insight into their child's development. Educators can build trust when they build upon the strengths parents bring to the table. As Carol articulates, ". . . this should be a team approach."
2. Striving for effective communication should be a central goal for families and schools. The parents wanted *specific and strategic* ways they could develop their child's literacy abilities at home. Proactive communication would lessen the tension and conflict expressed by some of the parents represented in this study.
3. Trust is another important goal for families and schools. Building trust is multifaceted and begins when schools take the time to understand the needs of individual children, seek ways to proactively address those needs, and deliver on services promised
4. Including parents in the decision-making process is critical to building meaningful home-school partnerships and addressing the "whole" child.

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UNDERSTANDING EDUCATORS' CHANGING PERCEPTIONS OF JOB-EMBEDDED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOLLOWING THE ACTION RESEARCH PROCESS

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Abstract

This study was conducted to describe educators' perceptions of effective professional development (PD), as well as perceived changes to literacy instruction, while engaging in an action research project. Five educators (4 elementary teachers and a media specialist) from a rural Professional Development School participated in the study. Pre-and post-surveys were conducted and analyzed to determine changing perceptions of effective PD and literacy practices. Overall, the educators' responses indicated that their perceptions of effective PD did change over time. Specifically, descriptions of effective PD became more accurate and defined. In addition, the participants reported that they changed their literacy instruction because of their involvement in the job-embedded action research project. According to the self-report data, the participants became more explicit, deliberate, and intentional in their instruction because of their involvement in the action research project.

Providing effective professional development (PD) for teachers has been a focus in education for several decades and there are many PD frameworks that can be followed (American Education Research Association, 2005; Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon, & Birman, 2002; Guskey, 2000). Literacy researchers have explored characteristics of effective PD for teachers through a variety of lenses. Several studies have looked at effective PD by examining inservice and preservice teachers' perceptions (Anders, Hoffman, & Duffy, 2002; Morewood, Ankrum, & Bean, 2010). Others have studied professional development using a framework of characteristics associated with effective PD (Morewood & Bean, 2009).

Action research is a practical approach to PD, as it is both authentic and job-embedded (Mills, 2011). This approach provides educators with opportunities to critically and systematically examine their own instruction in order to better understand how their instruction influences student learning. Since effective PD is vital to improving pedagogy, this study focused on how the educators viewed job-embedded PD (i.e., through action research projects) and how it helped them transform their literacy pedagogy and instruction. The specific research questions that guided this work were:

1. What were educators' perceptions of job-embedded PD?
2. What pedagogical changes did educators discuss when asked about transfer of information from the PD to their instruction?
3. Over time, what types of knowledge did these educators talk about transferring from the PD to their practice?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on PD suggests that when participants are actively engaged they are more likely to describe these opportunities as effective (Desimone et al., 2002; Morewood, Ankrum, & Bean, 2010). In addition, when educators actively engage in PD activities they are more likely to apply their new knowledge of the content learned from the PD to their instruction. This application is what Bransford and Schwartz (1999) describe as being on the "trajectory towards expert" (p. 68). Transferring knowledge to practice is a vital link in making PD effective and successful because student learning is impacted by the degree to which teacher learning is deepened, changed, and applied.

The notion of moving towards "expert" can be investigated by looking at three different areas of knowledge: knowledge-for-practice, knowledge-in-practice, and

knowledge-of-practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). Knowledge-for-practice focuses on content knowledge of specific content areas and pedagogical knowledge. Knowledge-in-practice is described as application in order to engage in effective practice. Knowledge-of-practice involves educators disseminating their understandings to a broader audience in order to further inform the educational community. All three of these types of knowledge align with features, such as active learning (Desimone et al., 2002; Morewood, Ankrum, & Bean, 2010), which is vital if effective PD is to take place. Further, this framework of knowledge construction supports educators' involvement in the action research process.

Action research is "inquiry teachers undertake to understand and improve their own practices" (McCutcheon & Jung, 2001, p. 144). Further, it is a "systematic and intentional inquiry carried out by teachers" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, p. 7). Both of these definitions put teachers at the heart of the research, which helps them to learn through reflection and adjust their instruction to meet the needs of their students; this is responsive teaching. Effective PD guides teachers to be more responsive in their instruction by providing them with content and practice that allows them to be more engaged with students' through the learning process.

Since action research is systematic, there is a framework that teacher researchers adhere to, which allows them to critically reflect throughout the process (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2008; Hirschy, 2008). Action research begins with a question about instruction. Then, the teacher researcher(s) review the literature in the field to build background knowledge. Once background knowledge is broadened and deepened, instructional change is implemented. Next, data is systematically collected and analyzed. Finally, the teacher researcher(s) then make these findings available to others in the field.

METHODS

Context

The educators in this study work in a rural, P-5 school. Over 50% of the students received free and/or reduced lunch. The total student population was approximately 360 students, with 2-3 classrooms per grade level. The local university had engaged in Professional Development School (PDS) work with this elementary school for over 15 years and both of these partners embraced the mission of the school-university partnerships.

Per the terms of the PDS agreement, this school agreed to host preservice teachers for three consecutive years, engage in collaborative PD with the university, and partner in educational research. Part of this educational research

involved participating in an annual action research project. In addition to these common commitments among all PDS partners with the university, this school also hosted a university faculty member (the first author of this piece) as a Collaborative Faculty in Residence (CFIR) for two consecutive years (2009-2011). In this role, the university faculty member spent the equivalent of one day per week in the school. The time consisted of teaching, co-teaching, observing pre-service teachers, planning and providing PD, and engaging in grant writing endeavors. Over the two years, the CFIR worked closely with educators from the school to submit two internally funded grants in order to support PD opportunities. Both of the grants were funded, which allowed this action research to be successfully conducted during this time.

Participants

The selection of participants in this action research was purposeful and convenient. This sample was purposeful because the participants were specifically asked to be a part of this project because they were a part of the school's PDS committee. Further, this sample was convenient because these educators were already a part of the PDS partnership because they were faculty members.

The educators who participated in this action research were an experienced group of educators. They possessed a range of 8-25 years teaching experience, taught in a variety of grade levels, and worked in different roles within this school's setting. Over the two years of this project, this group consisted of four classroom teachers (2 kindergarten teachers, 1 first grade teacher, and 1 second grade teacher), an Academic Coach, a Title I Reading Specialist/Technology Integration Specialist, a Title I Reading Specialist, and a Media Specialist. In addition to the educators in this group, several pre-service teachers participated in this project in various ways. While many were involved in this research, the results presented here focus on the four classroom teachers and the media specialist. These participants were selected from the overall sample because consistent data over the two-year project was available for each of these participants.

Data Sources and Analysis

While this action research project produced many sources and artifacts for review, this study focused specifically on the analysis of three sources: the initial survey from Year 1 (January, Spring 2011), and the final surveys in Year 1 (May, Spring 2011) and Year 2 (April, Spring 2012). These surveys can be found in Appendix A-C. All of the surveys required open-ended responses. The surveys were all the same except for one additional item on both of the final surveys; an

item about fluency on the first one (Spring 2011) and an item about comprehension on the second one (Spring 2012).

In order to examine the first research question, two researchers engaged in qualitative procedures, which included an iterative review process to code the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This process consisted of each researcher reviewing and coding the data from these three sources independently using Desimone et al.'s (2002) findings on characteristics of effective professional development as the priori codes. These codes included the structural category (duration, reform type, and collective participation) and the core category (active learning, coherence, and content).

Duration is defined as the amount of time and the span of time educators participate in professional learning (Desimone et al., 2002). Professional development can be delivered in a variety of ways; therefore, reform type, according to Desimone et al. focuses on non-traditional forms that include, but are not limited to, coaching in the classroom and professional learning communities. The final topic within the structural category of effective professional development is collective participation. Collective participation suggests that educators grow professionally when they engage and work with others within their school and/or grade level (Desimone et al., 2002).

The characteristics within the core category of effective professional development were also used during this analysis: the three characteristics within this category (active learning, coherence, and content) are further explained here. Active learning is defined as educators being involved in the learning process during a professional development session versus being a passive recipient of knowledge (Desimone et al., 2002). Desimone et al. suggested that professional development that aligns with educators' personal and professional goals as well as school and district goals for student learning provides coherence for educators. Finally, according to Desimone et al., when teachers are interested and invested in the content (i.e., they view it as important), they perceive the professional development session to be effective.

During this analysis Desimone et al.'s (2002) research on the characteristics of effective professional development guided the researchers' coding; however, a new code emerged throughout the analysis. Throughout the data, the researchers recognized a reoccurring theme as the participants described and discussed how they implemented the information they learned during the professional development into their instruction; this code was defined as application. Upon recognition of this reoccurring theme, the researchers discussed the new code and reviewed the entire data set for any other representations of this theme in order to capture the true meaning behind the participants' responses. After discussing

any discrepancies in the coding, the researchers reached 100% agreement using this coding scheme.

In order to answer research question one, the coded data were analyzed in two ways. First, data were collapsed across the group to represent the information in a collective way. Then, the data were analyzed per individual to demonstrate any changes that occurred in each participant's responses over time.

Next, the researchers focused the analysis on information related to the second research question. In order to code the data for this information, the researchers used Hiebert and Stigler's (2000) work regarding changes in form and substance through an iterative process used in qualitative data analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Hiebert and Stigler define form in regards to the structure of the lesson. They further described form as changes that are easily implemented. Examples of form changes to instruction may include planning and pace of a lesson, as well as being aware of instructional practices (e.g., reflective practitioner). Substance changes can be viewed as those changes that directly influence student learning. Such changes to instruction are those that focus on content of the lessons and instructional practices; these are substantive changes (Hiebert & Stigler, 2000). For example, the researchers coded the use of instructional activities, the deepening of content knowledge, and the implementation of strategy instruction as a substance change. To further clarify, the coding scheme used for substance changes to instruction, the researchers defined the term strategy using Gregory and Cahill's (2010) definition, which includes schema, connections, visualization, questioning, and inferring.

Finally, the initial survey from Year 1 and the final survey from Year 2 were reviewed an additional time for information pertaining to research question 3. In order to gain more information about the educators' knowledge construction, the researchers used Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1999) work to define knowledge construction and to code the participants' responses accordingly. The codes that were used during this analysis were knowledge-for-practice (deepening understanding of content and pedagogy), knowledge-in-practice (applying concepts while engaging in classroom instruction), and knowledge-of-practice (disseminating information about effective instructional practices) (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999).

RESULTS

This study explored the manner in which educators described job-embedded PD while being engaged in an action research project. Specifically, the researchers sought to describe the characteristics of effective PD that the educators discussed,

explain how the participants described transfer of knowledge from PD to classroom instruction, and the types of knowledge the educators discussed when reflecting on their action research experiences. Below, the research questions are used as a framework to discuss the results of this research.

Research Question 1

In order to capture the educators' perceptions of job-embedded PD, participant responses were analyzed from the survey prompt, "In your own words describe the term *job-embedded PD*." This data was reviewed on the initial survey from Year 1 and the final survey in Year 2 in order to compare the participants' responses over time.

Overall, the participants' definitions of job-embedded PD aligned with the characteristics defined by Desimone et al. (2002) (Table 1). It is interesting to note that on the final survey, more participants included duration, collective participation and active learning in their definitions than they did on the initial survey, which took place before they engaged in the action research project. Another interesting finding from both the initial and final survey was the discussion of application. This code emerged from the data as the participants discussed the meaning of job-embedded PD.

In Table 2, the data are presented for each individual participant. These results demonstrate that most participants included more characteristics of effective PD in their definitions of job-embedded PD on the final survey.

The example below illustrates Participant 3's responses when defining job-embedded PD on the initial survey from 2010 and the final survey from 2012. In the initial survey, Participant 3's response was coded for reform type, duration, and collective participation. While Participant 3 had more characteristics coded

TABLE 1 Characteristics of Effective, Job-Embedded Professional Development

Characteristics of Effective PD	Initial Yr. 1	Final Yr. 2
Reform	4	4
Duration	1	2
Collective	1	4
Active	0	2
Coherence	1	1
Content	1	1
Application	3	4

TABLE 2 Individual Responses in Listing Effective Professional Development

	Initial Yr. 1	Final Yr. 2
Participant 1	4	5
Participant 2	1	3
Participant 3	3	2
Participant 4	2	4
Participant 5	1	4

in her initial survey, her response on the final survey in Year 2 indicated a change in her thinking about job-embedded PD. In the final survey, her definition of job-embedded PD focused on several characteristics and the transfer of the information from the PD session to her instruction.

Participant 3 Year 1: In education, job-embedded PD consists of ongoing learning opportunities that occur within daily activities. Educators engage in discussions with others and teach, collaborate, mentor and coach among peers.

Participant 3 Year 2: Job-embedded PD is incorporated within your teaching experience. You are learning as you go, applying new techniques and strategies and reflecting upon them. Within this PD, it is a hands-on approach. Application is immediate making it feel more relevant and beneficial.

Research Question 2

When considering what makes PD effective, educational researchers need to consider what types of changes educators make to their instruction based on their PD learning. In order to examine the perceived pedagogical changes by these educators, the data from Year 1 and Year 2 on the final surveys were analyzed using the form and substance codes. It is important to understand that there is no privilege between form and substance; both are needed for effective instruction.

In Year 1, all of the participants indicated that they made changes to the form of their instruction. However, only two participants responded that they made substantive changes to their instruction. During Year 2, four of the five participants' responses indicated they had made changes to the form of their instruction as well as to the substance of their instruction.

An example of how the educators discussed the changes to their instruction is presented in the quote from Participant 4: “Yes, yes, yes. I have not changed what I teach, just the process. I have added fluency activities within the content I always teach.” This quote demonstrates this educator’s awareness of the form and substance she used while teaching. This awareness guided this educator’s instruction so that she could be more responsive to her students’ learning needs.

Research Question 3

To better understand how educators’ perceived transferring knowledge from PD to their instruction, it was necessary to explicitly examine the types of knowledge the educators discussed when responding to the question, “How do you transfer what you learn in PD to your teaching?”

Overall, the results suggest that two of the three types of knowledge described by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) increased for these participants, while knowledge-of-practice remained consistent over the two-year period. In fact, three participants did not mention knowledge-of-practice at all and one participant discussed it only in the initial survey for Year 1 and another participant discussed it exclusively in the final survey for Year 2.

What is not represented in Table 3 is the change in the language in the participants’ responses from Year 1 to Year 2. The educators were much more articulate when describing what they transferred from PD and how and why they were using it with their students. Participant 2’s responses for Year 1 and 2 are provided as an example of this more explicit discussion of what, how, and why certain information was transferred from the PD to her classroom instruction. Participant 2’s responses were coded as knowledge-for-practice and knowledge-in-practice for both Year 1 and Year 2.

Year 1- I simply add it to the curriculum if I believe it enriches, enhances, or provides a new approach to a topic that children are finding difficulty. I keep the materials on my desk and “force” it into a very tight schedule. If I see success, I squeeze more time for it in my day.

TABLE 3 Overall Perception of Change in Knowledge

Types of Knowledge	Initial Yr. 1	Final Yr. 2
For Practice	2	3
In Practice	3	4
Of Practice	1	1

Year 2- Being exposed to a variety of teaching methods was an integral part of our goal of enhancing comprehension. This allowed me to choose the methods that best suit my teaching style. We know that we will use what is comfortable and right for us. For example, I instituted the Fab Four for Reciprocal Teaching. It seemed simple enough for second grade, yet encompassed many higher level skills. Within the article, “Hands-on Teaching: A Comprehension Technique”, from *The Reading Teacher*, there are many ways to vary the presentation. It’s a good, comfortable start for me.

LIMITATIONS

This study has several limitations that must be kept in mind. First, this is a small sample size, as only 5 teachers participated. Second, the data sources were self-reported surveys, so the participants’ perceptions maybe different from what really occurred. Third, all the participants volunteered. Fourth, the results may be localized to the context of the school and university partnership and their commitment to professional development.

DISCUSSION

There has been much research conducted on the characteristics of effective PD (American Education Research Association, 2005; Anders, et al., 2000; Desimone et al., 2002; Guskey 2000; Lewis-Spector & Jay, 2011; Morewood, Ankrum, & Bean, 2010; Morewood & Bean, 2009), but it is necessary to explore this more deeply. The focus of this research was to investigate educators’ perceptions of effective PD as well as perceived changes to their literacy instruction while engaging in a long-term job-embedded action research project.

Overall, the educators’ responses indicated that their perceptions of effective PD did change over time. In addition to the educators’ responses capturing the characteristics of effective PD outlined by Desimone et al., their responses also indicated that application of PD content and/or practices was necessary in order for the PD opportunity to be deemed effective. This study demonstrated that research must look next to what, how, and why educators transfer and apply information from the PD sessions to their instruction. A deeper understanding of this will allow PD providers to use these transfer and application elements in their sessions so that the PD sessions are effective and successful.

A second finding showed that four out of five participants indicated that they did change their literacy instruction based on their involvement in the job-embedded action research project. These changes, whether in form or

substance (Hiebert & Stigler, 2000), suggest that the educators in this study transferred knowledge from their professional learning to their classroom instruction. This continued learning and transfer of knowledge continues to push these educators forward on the “trajectory towards expert” (Bransford & Schwartz, 1999, p. 68).

Engaging in action research provides educators with a systematic way to reflect on their practice. This is important to build understanding of the impact these changes have on student learning. It is this awareness that allows educators to be responsive to their students' needs. A final conclusion of this study is that according to the participants, engaging in the action research process guided their instruction so that it became more explicit, deliberate, and intentional over time. The participants indicated that these more explicit, deliberate, and intentional teaching practices made them more responsive to their students' needs. The instructional changes they made were in form, substance, or both and were related to the type of knowledge (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999) they gained from the PD session.

Finally, it was interesting to see that knowledge-of-practice was not highlighted by many of the participants in either the initial or final survey. This is important to recognize because an element of the action research process is dissemination of knowledge. Each of these participants had multiple opportunities to engage in presentations and/or publications based on this research. It may be possible that the teachers neglected to report on their knowledge-of-practice because they did not consider it to be a component of PD. Research in the area of PD must continue to examine what educators view and define as PD. This is important, as more school-level leadership is demanded from our educators (Lewis-Spector & Jay, 2011).

IMPLICATIONS

As this research demonstrates, there is much complexity in understanding effective PD. It is necessary to continue to unpack this complexity so that PD providers can use this information when planning learning opportunities for educators. For example, PD must be effectively planned so that it is intentional. This will give the PD a focus and make it meaningful for the participants. In order to do this, PD providers must understand the characteristics of effective PD, the form and substantive elements of instruction, and the different types of knowledge construction.

Next, this study demonstrates that educators will engage in long-term PD that they find meaningful when given time and resources to make it successful. While these educators volunteered to participate in this action research, they

eventually owned the research. They lead the conversations, they collected and analyzed the data, and they disseminated the findings. In essence, the participants completed the entire action research cycle (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2008; Hirschy, 2008). This was important because throughout this process they learned from the research in the field, they learned from their school-based colleagues, they learned from university faculty, they learned from nationally known literacy researchers, and they learned from themselves through reflection. There were many ways to learn through this PD, which led to the effectiveness of this PD project.

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APPENDIX A

INITIAL SURVEY SPRING 2011 [JANUARY]

Please answer the following questions about professional development, professional learning, and your teaching and learning experiences. Please feel free to use the back side of this page if necessary.

1. In your own words, define *professional development*.
2. In your own words, explain the term *job-embedded professional development*.
3. Describe the best professional development session you have attended. Discuss the topic, length (number of days and/or times in hours), and explain why you feel this professional development session was beneficial for you.
4. If you could plan the next professional development session, what would the topic be? How would the session look (e.g., What would be included and how would teachers participate in it?)
5. How do you transfer what you learn in a professional development session to your teaching? Explain why you transfer the specific information that you do from different professional development sessions.

APPENDIX B

FINAL SURVEY SPRING 2011 [MAY]

Please answer the following questions about professional development, professional learning, and your teaching and learning experiences. Please feel free to use the back side of this page if necessary.

1. In your own words, define *professional development*.
2. In your own words, explain the term *job-embedded professional development*.
3. Describe the best professional development session you have attended. Discuss the topic, length (number of days and/or times in hours), and explain why you feel this professional development session was beneficial for you.
4. If you could plan the next professional development session, what would the topic be? How would the session look (e.g., What would be included and how would teachers participate in it)?
5. How do you transfer what you learn in a professional development session to your teaching? Explain why you transfer the specific information that you do from different professional development sessions.
6. Do you think your fluency lessons changed in form (changes to classroom practice that include lesson features that can easily be implemented without altering the way students and teachers “do” learning) or substance (changes to instruction that focus on content related to student learning goals) due to the lesson study?

APPENDIX C

FINAL SURVEY SPRING 2012 [APRIL]

Please answer the following questions about professional development, professional learning, and your teaching and learning experiences. Please feel free to use the back side of this page if necessary.

1. In your own words, define *professional development*.
2. In your own words, explain the term *job-embedded professional development*.
3. Describe the best professional development session you have attended. Discuss the topic, length (number of days and/or times in hours), and explain why you feel this professional development session was beneficial for you.
4. If you could plan the next professional development session, what would the topic be? How would the session look (e.g., What would be included and how would teachers participate in it)?
5. How do you transfer what you learn in a professional development session to your teaching? Explain why you transfer the specific information that you do from different professional development sessions.
6. Do you think your comprehension lessons changed in form (changes to classroom practice that include lesson features that can easily be implemented without altering the way students and teachers “do” learning) or substance (changes to instruction that focus on content related to student learning goals) due to the lesson study?

CONSTRUCTING VOICES THROUGH LIVED-EXPERIENCES: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF NOVICE READING TEACHERS' PERSONAL UNDERSTANDING OF PEDAGOGICAL OWNERSHIP AND PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

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Abstract

This phenomenological study explored the ways in which five Texas novice reading teachers constructed personal understanding of their pedagogical development and professional identity. Findings revealed that these novice reading teachers experienced (a) using prior lived-experiences to impact reading pedagogy; (b) concern for students' social, cultural, and academic well-being; (c) active reflection; (d) making pedagogical and professional connections through specific reading support systems; (e) awareness of growth as a result of these systems; and (f) recognition of strengths attributing to their professional and pedagogical identity. Implications of this study address novice reading teachers, professional development for the reading teacher and reading teacher preparation coursework.

Affecting the dynamics of classroom practices requires teachers to first realize how much influence they truly hold. On the outside it may appear that the teacher has very little power over pedagogical decisions and classroom democracies, however, teachers are only as strong as they demand and/or prove to be. Giroux (1993) discussed that "we [as educators] should transform

[teaching] into an emancipatory practice that provides the conditions for us to speak and be taken seriously” (p. 369). Literacy can be a vehicle to channel this transformation even for the teacher, as reading, speaking and listening to the diverse perspectives held by various reading teacher can be used to develop pedagogy identity.

Teachers develop pedagogy through researching themselves and forming their own identity. Therefore, professional growth support systems, when viewed as transformational, cannot be accomplished by a “one-size fits all” training exercise. Teachers’ growth occurs through “developmental learning, socialization, implementation of something new or different, cognitive and affective change, and self-study” (Richardson and Placier, 2001, p. 905).

This study embraced the theoretical lens that views professional growth of a reading teacher as the result of exploring self and pedagogy through past experiences. Exploring the life-stories of novice reading teachers can help to determine what kind of support systems novice reading teachers need (Claninin & Connelly, 2000; Kelchtermans, 1993). With so many teachers leaving the profession before their fifth year of teaching, these at-risk teachers may benefit from becoming self-aware of transformative agents that contribute to building their professional identity and their ownership for the teaching of reading. Hoffman and Pearson (2000) set forth a reading research agenda to help increase the field’s readiness in meeting the challenges of teaching reading in this millennium. They urged individuals in reading teacher education to invest time and effort into inquiring just who this 21st century reading teacher is and what s/he needs, so to better equip our classrooms and society to handle an evolving system of change. This study explored incidents that transformed professional identity and pedagogical ownership for the participating novice reading teachers.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

Interest in novice reading teachers led to this exploration of how five Texas reading teachers constructed personal understanding of their pedagogical development and their professional identity from their experiences. This inquiry was guided by the following questions: What was the essence of being a novice reading teacher for these participants? (a) How have the participants constructed personal understanding of their pedagogical development and professional identity from their experiences during their novice teaching years? (b) What critical incidents have occurred that helped shape their pedagogy and identity? (c) Did the reflective descriptions reference any form of critical pedagogy?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The heart of this literature review revolved around the idea of developmental change, identity, and ownership of the novice reading teacher. A limitation with this review rests on the fact that much research has focused on the teacher in general and has not specifically looked at grade level, content, or years of experience (Richardson & Placier, 2001).

Teacher Development

Teacher development has seen a shift away from defining stages one must travel through (Burden, 1982; Watts, 1980) toward creating critical opportunities for teachers to become aware of themselves growing and evolving (Berci, 2006; Snow, Griffin, & Burns, 2005; Steffy & Wolfe, 2001). This shift includes a developmental theory of ebb and flow based on experiences, application of knowledge, and a reflective nature, which challenges teacher's understandings and aids in forming an identity. The teacher is the pivotal component in this fluid transaction of learning, knowing, and growing. Thus, it is important that the "reading teacher education models be directed toward the development of empowered teachers who are in control of their own thinking and actions" (Hoffman & Pearson, 2000, p. 37).

Focusing specifically on the development of a reading educator, Snow, Griffin, and Burns (2005) felt that reading teachers go through phases of development not merely by facing concerns, but by adapting teaching style and perfecting their craft of teaching. By using a developmental model of teacher learning, teachers can gain knowledge and experience as well as gain a stronger identity of self. In addition, as they become life-long learners of reading instruction, they also develop a professional commitment that keeps them in a cyclical motion of learning and improving.

This developmental model of teaching is guided by the attainment of reading knowledge. Rather than stages, this model uses a pie format that includes pieces of *declarative, situated, stable, expert, and reflective* knowledge. Beginning with a basic identification of reading concepts, a reading teacher would then situate a few routines to address some of these concepts. As they become stable with specific reading concepts and routines become more automatic, a teacher can begin to adapt to the needs of individual students. At this point, they are confident about their expert knowledge and can mentor or assist fellow teachers. Reflecting on their reading knowledge, teachers can now evaluate and make critical decisions as well as problem solve regarding students, their school, and themselves. Putting teachers into the domain of life-long learners means that

these pieces of the pie must always be present. As one learns new information, their pieces of content knowledge may grow or shrink until they master that information again. Years of experience, therefore, are not relevant, as new techniques are constantly being introduced, making a master teacher become a novice once again.

Adding to this inward understanding of teacher development, Berci (2006) believes an educator travels where both the professional world and the world of “self” move along a parallel highway towards a merging destination allowing for both the craft and art of teaching to merge. “Through awareness of the continuums and their connectedness, teachers come to understand that without integrating self, their tasks remain similar to the work of machines; fragmented, mechanical, technical skill devoid of empathy and humanism, evaluated in numeric terms” (p. 56). By looking through this philosophical lens of teacher development, the educator better learns about his/her pedagogy while developing a professional identity through his/her own phenomenon of learning. Berci theorized that such a model encourages passion and commitment to the field of teaching. This theory of development could be practiced through project-based experiences that employ reflection and application of thought.

Identity and Ownership through Literacy-Related Incidents

Developing content knowledge is an essential element in developing pedagogical ownership (Shulman, 1987). Novice reading teacher research has revealed that developing content knowledge helped to build a professional identity for the reading teacher. Both the Malach et al. (2003) and the Hoffman et al. (2005) studies showed that the quality of university teacher preparation programs, which includes a specialized component of building content knowledge for reading instruction, did have an impact on the novice teacher’s identity and pedagogical growth. Valencia et al. (2006) found that reading curriculum materials, personal knowledge, dispositions, and school environment directly influenced the development of teachers’ understanding of themselves as reading teachers. However, while specific reading curriculum can provide a much needed structure for beginning teachers, they caution that it may turn into a crutch as they are ending their novice years and only developed surface level understanding of teaching reading.

The use of literature in the classroom has also been found to support the development of a teacher identity. Hall et al. (2010) found that literacy, in its multiple forms, acts as a conduit and provides a social connection among the teacher, student, and classroom culture. Through conversation that the text can

provide, personal experience and definition for understanding society can be bridged through the narrative nature of literature. Hall et al. found that teachers can also have a social objective for teaching through pieces of literature and that they intentionally use it to help form their teacher identity as well as their students' literacy identities. Additionally, when teachers knew their own literacy biographies, they included those experiences (oral narratives) in their pedagogical decision making.

Several studies also explored how reading teachers used collaboration and professional study as change agents for their ownership and identity (Raphael et al., 2001; Roe, 2004; Rogers et al., 2005). The common critical incidents found throughout these studies included collaborating with other reading teachers, holding meeting sessions, conducting literacy events, teacher reflecting, teacher researching, exploring critical literacy, using dialogic interaction, and the sharing of knowledge back into the community of reading teachers. These incidents proved to be vital components for developing critical thinking teachers that became confident in their pedagogy of reading. Through a careful analysis of novice reading teachers' experiences, this study offers additional insight into the formation of pedagogical ownership and professional identity of novice reading teachers.

METHODS

Participant Demographics

The participants were five purposely selected novice reading educators actively teaching third through sixth grades in the public school system in the South, Southeast, and West Texas areas. For this study, a novice reading teacher is at the end of the first stage of development and would be an individual who is in his/her fourth or fifth year of teaching (Katz, 1972; Snow et al., 2005). These teachers were designated to be a reading instructor by their school administration.

The participants involved in the study were all female and included Alice, Rose, Angela, Jane, and Marie (pseudonyms). While race, gender, ethnicity, and age were not considered for this study, there were two Caucasian teachers, two Hispanic teachers, and one Hispanic/African American teacher. The age span for all five participants ranged between thirty and forty.

Limitations

The participant volunteers may have wanted to have their voice heard and therefore presented a different experience from those who were not willing to

participate (Greenebaum, 2009). Additionally, the nature of retelling the lived-experiences of individuals could also be a limitation as the participants shared their stories as they remembered them which may not necessarily be the way the experience actually occurred (Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1994). Finally, these teachers were all in Texas and their literacy expectations and experiences could be different from other states.

Design of the Study

This is a phenomenological research study on the teacher and how moving the teacher into the spotlight can help the novice reading teachers experience professional growth and gain a positive “self” image (Creswell, 2007; Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1994; Moustakas, 1994). This phenomenological study allowed the researcher to capture the experiences and voices of five novice reading teachers and to look for a commonality or bond among these individuals which may carry transferability to others experiencing the same phenomena of being a novice reading teacher.

Procedure

The task of retelling the participants’ experiences began with the Memory Box project (Appendix A). The purpose of this instrument was to have the participants collect artifacts that exemplified moments in time where they took ownership of their pedagogy or gave identity to their professional self. The collection of the items created trigger moments allowing for a rich source of data to be collected. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) explained that “viewing these documents in the context of [their life stories] constitutes something that might be called archaeology of memory and meaning” (p. 114).

Next, the Literacy Genealogy Project (Appendix B) added depth to the participant’s reflection of their professional growth. The purpose of this digital journaling project was to get a clearer understanding of the ways these participants made meaning of their past experiences that have possibly influenced their identity as a novice reading teacher. Creating “professional biographies” captures a glimpse of the life histories these educators bring to form their identity (Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1994). Using data sources such as this adds an additional perspective and candid alternative to having individuals express meanings for a phenomenon (van Manen, 1992).

Last, a final interview (Appendix C) was used to clarify and build a better understanding of previous written descriptions from the literacy genealogy project and the memory box. The data from all three sources were then analyzed.

Data Analysis

All three data sources were separately analyzed. Moustakas (1994) refers to this process of horizontalization as reducing and eliminating pieces of the experience to uncover the threads of the experience that were constant or unchanging. After these *clusters of meaning* were put onto slips of paper, they were shuffled over the course of several days until they merged into categories. This led to the formation of the core and main themes that described textually the personal understanding of the participant's pedagogical development and professional identity during their novice years. This information was organized into outline form.

Next, all three data source outlines were merged to form one textual description. A textual description describes the nature and essence of the experience of being a novice reading teacher (or "what" the experience is). It provides a clearer image of the various events that helped to shape these years for the participants including providing opportunities for the participants' voice to be heard.

From the textual description of these experience emerged the structural description, which illuminated the possibilities for the origins of the core themes. Following this phenomenological reduction process, the *structural description* attempts to provide insight into "how" this experience came to be. Using Moustakas' (1994) design for imaginative variation, possible factors or meanings were formed. The "Roots" and "Fruit" sections of the journaling data source provided additional insight (see Appendix B). Concluding the analysis, all five individual *textual* and *structural descriptions* were compiled and merged into one data source to uncover the overall essence of being a novice reading teacher for the whole group. Through these narrative, the lived-experiences of the five novice reading teachers emerged.

FINDINGS

Collectively, six core themes commonly shared by the participants were found: (a) using prior lived-experiences to impact reading pedagogy, (b) concern for students' social, cultural and academic well-being, (c) active reflection, (d) making pedagogical and professional connections through specific reading support systems that developed their philosophy for reading, (e) awareness of growth as a result of these systems, and (f) recognition of strengths attributing to their professional and pedagogical identity.

Using Prior Experiences to Impact Reading Pedagogy

Novice reading teachers revealed that forming a connection with their students by sharing their own positive/negative experiences with learning to read resulted

in a stronger learning environment and identity as a reading teacher. The process of building their pedagogical ownership and professional identity came from being mindful, alert, and aware of their own learning styles and using that knowledge to make pedagogical decisions. For instance, Marie was frightened of being a reading teacher because she struggled as a younger reader herself, but she shared that experience with her students and used it as a motivational tool:

I never saw myself teaching these grades . . . because I wasn't a good reading student when I was little . . . I struggled so much, but I've seen how far I've come as an individual and as a person, and that has kind of shaped me as a teacher. I really believe that and I think it's kind of what's brought my passion.

Sharing their life stories were found to be a critical incident for all the participants, which is supported by Kelchtermans and Vandenberghe (1994). They reported that the actual event of telling lived-experiences created awareness for the value of incorporating “self” in pedagogical thinking. The act of sharing stories strengthened their identity by validating their beliefs on matters of pedagogy, student learning, and professional duties such as communication with parents.

Concern for Students' Social, Cultural, and Academic Well-being

Rose, Jane, and Marie found that their concerns for their students' total well-being developed ownership of their classroom and pedagogy. This resulted in a commitment to make their classroom a safe environment for learning, living and growing. These teachers developed beliefs about social literacies and felt a strong need to integrate literacy as a tool for social change by using personal stories or pieces of literature as vehicles that could help them navigate through both academic and social development. Through these pieces of literature, the novice reading teachers connected the day-to-day school learning with the day-to-day life learning for the students. Passion for teaching reading came from their need to make connections between literature and life. Jane describes this connection:

I think I work really hard from the beginning of the year to develop the environment in the classroom . . . where they're comfortable, and they feel safe and they know that what we say in here stays in here. We have the whole social contract. So kids share so much! Things that I wouldn't even probably share to one person let alone for a whole class. It's like, 'This

reminds me of my mom, and my mom left.' Every year I have at least two or three foster kids throughout the year, and they go through these abandonment issues... They're [students] very caring and understanding and nurturing towards each other. I think that a lot of it comes through from the novels that we read or the stories that we read because we try to make that human-real-life connection. That's why I picked Esperanza Rising (2000).

The act of studying the life-stories of the children they are teaching is a notion supported by van Manen (1992) who viewed this to be a critical component to develop pedagogy and identity for a teacher. They made it a point to know their students' social lives so that the literature could help them make sense of the sometimes chaotic world around them. The participants used their critical ability to see in the literature more than just the skills to teach, but also the life lessons to learn.

Active Reflection

The novice reading teachers in this study shared that they were mindful and alert to their pedagogical and professional needs. Reflection was a critical component for all the participants and contributed to developing this awareness. They reflected on their personal strengths and incorporated them into their professional identity. Revealed through the thick descriptions gathered during the study, these novice reading teachers used reflection to experiment and explore reading approaches that would best meet the needs of their students and their teaching style. Through reflection, they made connections to what was successful, what needed to be discarded or how they needed to adapt. This validated their growth by highlighting where they have been, what they have done, and where they want to go in regards to teaching reading.

Growth was documented to occur more rhythmically as the participants challenged and validated their pedagogy and identity through reflective action. This allowed the teachers to redefine and readjust their pedagogy and identity. As they validated their beliefs about their teaching of reading, they monitored and reflected taking on the role of problem-solver and problem-poser to understand pedagogy and identity. Teaching took on a research based interaction for most of the participants who used trial and error to create pedagogical ownership through the experiences of success and failure. This kept them in a constant role of asking questions that helped to understand the student's needs and their own, which helped to build their content knowledge for teaching

reading (Berci, 2006; Conway & Clark, 2003; Schon, 1983; Shulman, 1987; Steffy & Wolfe, 2001).

Making Pedagogical and Professional Connections

The novice reading teachers were motivated and active learners of the reading profession. They were willing to accept new ideas and took advantage of opportunities to deepen their reading pedagogy. They expressed a need at the beginning of their novice years for guidance, nurture and the opportunity to create the same environment for their students.

All participants created some form of discourse communities where they interacted with other reading professionals which changed or strengthened their teaching beliefs. These ranged from unofficial mentors, supervisors, the curriculum leaders in the district to professional conferences, graduate courses, and seminars. This out-of-school support provided the feeling of belonging, confidence, security, leadership, professionalism, and responsibility. These feelings validated and defined their understanding for being a reading teacher.

When in-school support (colleagues and curriculum) was used, they experienced guidance and structure along with collegial collaboration. Positive growth was experienced when support provided a gradual release of control. Marie's experience with reading curriculum highlights this phenomenon:

I liked how it was all planned out, and that first year or two I didn't deviate from this at all. Then I got kind of an 'ah ha' moment starting at my third year, and I was like, "I don't have to do it exactly that way." Then I did a few things differently and it worked, so I think that gave me some confidence to say, "Oh, I'm a good enough reading teacher that I can do this" . . . So I'm like, "Why am I worrying so much about this?" When I stopped worrying about that, I think it kind of freed me just to really be myself and teach more instead of worrying about all the little technical aspects of the classroom.

As the participants grew in their understanding of the content knowledge needed for teaching reading, they also grew in their pedagogical decision making and classroom autonomy. (Hall et al., 2010; Hoffman et al., 2005; Lambson, 2010). In addition, these participants' sought out support systems that treated them as professionals with discourse interaction rather than as passive learners. They craved thought provoking discussions regarding reading instruction. This created a space for them to socially construct knowledge and build ownership and identity (Bartlett, 1995; Porter, 1986).

Awareness of Growth

The participants shared that they started their career feeling confused, lonely, and sometimes inadequate. They feared being viewed by others as unknowledgeable or incapable of teaching reading. Roughly around their third year of teaching, and through their reflective actions and experiences with critical incidents; these novice reading teachers developed pride and ownership in their awareness of knowledge acquisition, professional growth, and pedagogical understanding. These participants felt professional when they identified their students' needs and strengths, the fundamentals of student reading ability, the state standards, and evolved pedagogy to meet their needs. Alice explains this sense of identity:

For the past three years I have been in that same classroom with the same team. I have had stability. I can recognize what the standards say the students should know by a certain time of the year. I can finally identify who is behind and who is ahead. I have resources I can use from year to year. I finally don't feel so lost.

Recognition of Strengths Attributing to their Professional and Pedagogical Identity

These five novice reading teachers expressed that their growth was validated through constructive feedback and recognition. They constantly worried about not knowing enough or doing enough to help their students succeed in reading but began to replace these worries as confidence grew from the validation students and others in the school environment provided. Rose, Angela, Jane, and Marie defined their reading teacher identity and validated their pedagogical decisions through the students' affirmation of their efforts to construct a literacy rich and safe learning environment. Jane and Marie experienced surprise at the students' response and progress as well as their enjoyment of teaching reading as a result of their validated efforts. Angela shared student mementos and letters from parents:

When I received this gift, it helped me feel like I am making a difference . . . knowing that you're actually helping a kid. You know, yes, teachers, they help kids, but really do they? So just for her [parent] to be able to notice the changes and to recognize and be willing to say it to me . . . I get this [gift] and I'm like, "You know what? I am doing okay."

These teachers also needed recognition by school colleagues regarding their impact and influence of student success. This recognition helped to guide their

understanding of school, pedagogy, and identity. An observation worth mentioning is that of the support given in the first year to Angela, Jane, and Marie who went through the alternative teacher certification program. All three participants mentioned the value they placed on having regular ‘outside of school’ supervisors come into their classrooms to observe. The assurance and guidance given in a positive atmosphere by these individuals helped to ground their teaching beliefs.

For the participants, these experiences with validation through recognition (personal or cultural) acted as exchange agents for “cultural capital” to be valued. When their actions and beliefs were valued by the environment, these acquired ‘tokens’ were exchanged for value that helped to build ownership and identity as a contributing member of the teaching society (Carrington & Luke, 1997).

DISCUSSION

These teachers’ awareness of growth through their support systems followed the teacher development theories presented since the start of the new millennium. These theories advocate that growth emerges through self-awareness and attainment towards ownership of professional knowledge and that it is fluid in its movement in and out of different levels of learning at different times in their careers (Berci, 2006; Conway & Clark, 2003; Steffy & Wolfe, 2001). These participants viewed themselves as learners of the reading teacher profession. While there were moments when they mastered pedagogical thinking and doing; there were also moments of reverting back to novice levels when new strategies, curriculum, or philosophies were introduced.

IMPLICATIONS

For the Novice Reading Teacher

To aid in forming their reading teacher identity, novice reading teachers need to look inward at their biographical stories to first know themselves and the critical incidents that have made a positive or negative impact on their literacy lives. Finding professional spaces to share these stories will be beneficial as well. They will also benefit from taking the opportunity to learn about the social and geographic makeup of the teaching community to get a global understanding of their students’ academic and social needs (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000). Making such social connections has been shown by these participants to positively impact their professional identity. Ways novice reading teachers can do this is by forming collaborative relationships with reading professionals such as other reading teachers, mentors or consultants, enroll in graduate level courses, become members of

organizations such as (but not limited to) the International Reading Association or the Association of Literacy Educators and Researchers, participate in local literacy conferences coordinated by their local state education service center or universities, or request through their district professional development department to attend seminars or workshops that meet the needs of their developing pedagogical content knowledge base.

For the District Professional Development Coordinator

The professional development coordinators need to redesign training to treat the audience as active-thinking participants rather than passive receivers of knowledge. One way professional development can meet the needs of novice reading teachers is by creating 'conference' like venues for learning. This appears to be very important, as the participants shared that when they were allowed to dialogue in small breakout sessions after the whole group presentation, they felt equal and knowledgeable. In addition, professional development should provide an array of sessions or workshops that cater to the needs of novice, stable, and master reading teachers. Participants of this type of training could then select sessions that meet their needs for personal growth. Development should also incorporate the opportunity for participants to register for follow-up meetings to clarify and discuss the applied/learned information.

For Teacher Education Programs

Teacher education course work could be designed to incorporate current components of teacher development theory into its curriculum framework. An ideal place to start would be to include with the course work on child development the theories of teacher development. In such a course, preservice teachers would begin to make connections between the stages of cognitive development for students with those of teacher development for themselves. While preservice teachers are learning about such theorists as Bloom, Gardner, Vygotsky, and Dewey and how their theories on student learning impacts teaching; they should also be learning about theorist of teacher development such as Schon, Shulman, Snow et al., or Berci on how these theories impact their development as a teacher.

Participants in this study wanted guidance, recognition, and nonjudgmental recommendations on their development as a reading teacher. They feared letting members of their school community know of their concerns and looked for safe landscapes that could provide private support. Extending preservice teachers' undergraduate training from the university into their novice years of teaching reading could provide such a safe landscape for discourse collaboration. Reading

education programs could provide a post-baccalaureate seminar or practicum course which provides guidance and supervision throughout a semester. These teachers valued the regular acknowledgment from outside support systems such as consultants and alternative teacher certification supervisors. They credited professional growth as a reading teacher to their presence. Such an addition to the services teacher education programs already provide would aid in filling a need called for by novice reading teachers.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the ways five novice reading teachers across Texas constructed personal understanding of their pedagogical development and professional identities during the first four to five years of teaching. With the life cycle of a teacher accelerating faster than many novice teachers can develop and mold their identities, learning from the lived-experiences presented in this study assists in moving development inward and deeper.

Furthermore, this knowledge can be used as a possible blue print for teachers in need of setting their development in motion for traveling down such an inward path (Berci, 2006; Conway & Clark, 2003; Steffy & Wolfe, 2001). Investing time and effort into understanding novice reading teachers assists in supporting an instructional level for novice reading teachers rather than keeping them at a frustrational level of “hit and miss” development that neither captures these teachers’ needs, nor moves them to develop at their own critical independent level of learning. The insights uncovered during this study about the experiences of novice reading teachers provides valuable guidance towards improving the journey these teachers will take during their first five years of teaching.

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APPENDIX A

MEMORY BOX INSTRUCTION/ DEMONSTRATION



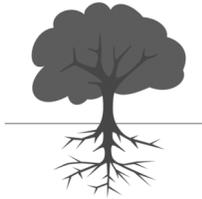
The purpose of this project is to have you collect artifacts (objects) that exemplify your teaching and allow for you to share your stories of teaching of reading. Within this box, you may place anything that gives meaning and identity to you as a reading teacher such as lesson plans, photos, students work, workshop participation, correspondence from individuals, or books. These can be direct examples of the memory, or they can be triggers for people/place/things within the memory. At the end of the time period for collection, we will meet to have a conversation about the items (i.e., stories) in your box. The conversations will be recorded.

Date we will meet to have these conversations: _____

Place: _____ Time: _____

APPENDIX B

LITERACY GENEALOGY TREE INSTRUMENT



Experiences from the Past: The roots, the branches, and the fruit of a Beginning Career

This project has three main parts:

- Roots
- Branches
- Fruit

For the first section, you will think back to before you became a teacher—the roots of your reading teacher heritage. What were some experiences (this may include people, places, and things) that impacted your path towards education? These can be either positive or negative experiences and they do not have to relate to teaching specifically.

The second section will allow you to chronicle influences that have made a difference to your teaching style (pedagogy) and teacher identity. These have been the branches that have provided support during your first years of teaching. They can include the same type of experiences such as people, places or things

that have guided you during your first four to five years of teaching. You might think of workshops, reading material, or trainers.

The final section asks you to think into the future and to describe how you see yourself in the next five years. What fruit from your labor will you novice year's bear? What does this teacher look like, act like, feel like and do as a teacher of reading?

You will have roughly three weeks to complete this project (a week per section). I would like to remind you to please routinely save to this USB memory drive. There will be reminders after each entry. The USB memory drive is only identifiable by the participation number you were assigned at the initial meeting. When you have completed the tasks, please contact me and send them via email attachment.

TIPS for journaling: If you are not use to journaling, you might try the following 10 minute exercises to help create rich, deep descriptions:

Day 1) Begin by very quickly writing the “who, what, when, and where” your experience took place. Try not to push your memory or force the writing. This should be the basics of the experience. Write until you can no longer add information with ease.

Day 2) Go back to your Day 1 entry. Reread your first posting. Close your eyes and try to envision what your surroundings might have been like (what you see and hear). If you do not know for sure, imagine what it could have looked like. Add this to your posting. Write until you can no longer add information with ease.

Day 3) Go back to your Day 2 entry. Reread your posting. Close your eyes and try to think about your emotional connections to this experience. What were the effects from this either positive or negative? Explain until you can no longer add information with ease.

THE ROOTS

It is not necessary to complete all three area of the pre-experience if you are not able. If you find that you have more than the three, select the most influential experiences. Please click the approximate date of occurrence and the type of experience.

The core of the content is what is being explored. You can decide the length you feel is appropriate for giving a good recounting of your experience. The more thoughtful and detailed you are—the more I am able to understand your

experience. Please relax and reflect to the best of your ability. If need be, follow the tips for journaling.

Pre-Experience/Moment #1

Approximate time period (click on the circle to move the dot):

Type of experience: ____positive ____negative

- pre/early elementary
- upper elementary
- junior high school
- high school
- college

Directions: Please describe to the best of your ability the experience you have selected. Include the essentials . . . who was involved, what was the experience, where did this occur, when specifically and why is this a memorable experience. How has this moment brought meaning to your teaching of reading? It may be helpful to include feelings, connections, wonders, and revelations that resulted from this experience.

Please save your work often. Please do not rename the file or change settings.

****Begin Here

THE BRANCHES

This second section will allow you to chronicle influences that have made a difference to your teaching style (pedagogy) and teacher identity. These have been the branches that have provided support during your first years of teaching. They can include the same type of experiences such as people, places or things that have guided you during your first four to five years of teaching.

It is not necessary to complete all three areas if you are not able. If you find that you have more than the three, select the most influential experiences. Please click on the year for each experience that you wish to reflect and indicate the type of experience. If your option is not available, please type that next to "other. You may check all that apply.

The core of the content is what is being explored. You can decide the length you feel is appropriate for giving a good recounting of your experience. The more

thoughtful and detailed you are—the more I am able to understand your experience. Please relax and reflect to the best of your ability.

Teacher Influences/Moment #1

Year this occurred:

Type of Influence (circle all that apply):

- Workshop in district
- Workshop out of district
- Professional Literature
- Camus Colleague
- District Colleague
- Professional Colleague
- Student
- Family Member
- Other: Specify

Please describe to the best of your ability the experience you have selected. Include the essentials . . . who was involved, what was the experience, where did this occur; when specifically and why is this a memorable experience. How has this moment brought meaning to your teaching of reading? It may be helpful to include feelings, connections, wonders, and revelations that resulted from this experience.

Please save your work often. Please do not rename the file or change settings.

*****Begin here:

THE FRUIT

This final section asks you to think into the future and to describe how you see yourself in the next five years. What will the fruit from the labor of being a novice reading teacher be? What does this teacher look like, act like, feel like and do as a teacher of reading as a result of your novice experiences? Speak to your teaching style and expectation for yourself.

The core of the content is what is being explored. You can decide the length you feel is appropriate for giving a good recounting of your experience. The more

thoughtful and detailed you are - the more I am able to understand your experience. Please relax and reflect to the best of your ability.

Please describe the future “you” to the best of your ability. Include the essentials . . . who will be involved, what experiences to you hope to have, where might these occur? How have the past moment brought meaning to your future as a teaching of reading?

Please save your work

*****Begin here

APPENDIX C

FINAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Reflecting on the past years, in your own words, please describe what it has been like being a novice reading teacher.
2. In your memory box conversation and your journaling project, you mentioned several experiences that have been meaningful to you – looking back, what would you say was a moment or moments that you are most proud of as you have developed into a reading teacher, or maybe surprised at?
3. Reflecting again, how would you say these moments have affected your teaching of reading?
4. How have you grown as a reading teacher—what changes have you seen yourself go through during your novice years?
5. How do you become aware or how do you realize when you have understood something about teaching reading? And when you might need more development to improve on teaching reading?
6. Describe a moment when you became aware of reading instruction approaches that stood out—for good or bad? What were your thoughts or feeling after it happened?
7. If we opened the dictionary to “reading teacher” and your name was next to it—what would it say about you as a reading teacher?
8. How have you understood your professional side of teaching? What things have occurred or that you did that gave you that professional identity?

9. Have you shared all that has been significant about your novice years of teaching reading?
10. Looking back over these past months that you have been working on these projects—could you describe how the experience of participating in this research project has impacted who you are as a reading teacher?

TRANSFORMING
PRESERVICE
TEACHERS'
LITERACY
PRACTICES

TABLETS IN TUTORING: WHAT IS THE RESEARCH SAYING?

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Abstract

This article reports the results and conclusions of three small mixed methods studies seeking to learn whether iPads are useful in one-on-one tutoring situations with struggling readers and how the tutors perceived their value and usefulness. The results, across the studies, revealed that the majority of the participants were positive about the use of iPads, but they were very intimidated by them. They tended to see the device initially as a motivator. This shows that tutors need specific training and instruction in how to use the iPads to build student creativity, problem solving, and critical thinking.

The educational community has rarely seen the acceptance of a new technology with the speed that has accompanied the tablet computer, especially Apple's iPad. Within months after the release of the first iPad in April 2010 and with targeted encouragement by Apple's marketing machine, schools across the country were buying iPads literally like hotcakes (Bonnington, 2013; iPad in Schools, 2012). While the acceptance of the iPad and other similar devices may seem astonishing, much groundwork had been laid in the previous decade to set the stage. For example, many schools had tried laptop initiatives in which all students in a school or at a specific grade level were provided with laptops pre-loaded with textbooks (Barrios et al., 2004). The use of e-books and Kindles were being accepted in many educational circles (Larson, 2010). Some educational leaders were using iPads to assist struggling readers (Noonoo, 2012). Still others were experimenting with allowing students to bring their smartphones and other personal devices to carry out educational tasks in the classroom (Nielsen & Webb, 2011; Norris & Soloway, 2011). Thus, many educational leaders were primed to

think of the many possibilities a lightweight, powerful, Internet-capable device to which “apps” could be downloaded much more economically could bring to learning.

While it is easy to assume that the use of an iPad or other tablet device with students would be a positive thing, especially in one-on-one or small group situations, very little research has yet been completed or published that verifies its impact or explores the responses of teachers who are expected to incorporate them into their teaching. It seems important, in the rush to provide every American student with an iPad, to step back and evaluate these concerns. The focus of this study was to explore the responses of tutors asked to use iPads during a tutoring experience in three separate exploratory studies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

One-on-one tutoring with struggling readers has a long and successful history, employing reading specialists, classroom teachers, paraprofessionals and/or trained volunteers (e.g., Brown, Morris, & Fields, 2005; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Efforts have also been made over the years to incorporate technology of various sorts within the tutoring framework (Chambers et al., 2011; Mastropieri, Scruggs, Abdulrahman, & Gardizi, 2002; Williams & Hoover, 1991).

A number of studies have looked at teachers’ responses to technology implementation in large-scale studies (Hall, 2010) while some have looked at one-to-one computer initiatives (Finger & Houguet, 2009; Storz & Hoffman, 2012; Warschauer, 2007), which share some commonalities with tutoring situations. These studies have found that implementation is a process, not an event (Hall), and that teachers have varying needs and issues regarding the use of such technology in the classroom. Challenges are both extrinsic and intrinsic, according to Finger and Houguet. Intrinsic challenges include level of teacher’s knowledge, level of teacher’s confidence, and the need for time to develop a sense of ownership. Extrinsic challenges include teacher’s concern as to how to integrate laptops into an already full curriculum and the need for effective and ongoing professional development. Although there is a significant body of research regarding technology integration efforts within teacher education programs (e.g., Doering, Hughes, & Huffman, 2003), Whitacre and Peña (2011) reported that a review of lesson plans of a group of preservice teachers revealed that very few actually implemented technology in their field placements.

A handful of studies cited by Oakley and colleagues (Oakley, Pegrum, Faulkner, & Streipe, 2012) reported positive outcomes using mobile devices, especially for literacy learning, but none of these appeared to address tutoring

situations. Hutchison, Beschoner, and Schmidt-Crawford (2012) reported a case study of a fourth grade teacher who successfully integrated iPad use into classroom literacy teaching. She used the iPad in small-group sequencing assignments using *Popplet* and for independent e-reading, guided by the Technology, Pedagogy, and Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework (Mishra & Koehler, 2006; Thompson & Mishra, 2007). Still not addressing a tutoring scenario, this study certainly points the way to the integration of mobile devices into tutoring lessons.

McClanahan, Williams, Kennedy, and Tate (2012) reported the successful use of an iPad by a preservice teacher using a variety of apps and integrated techniques to tutor a struggling reader with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). However, even though the preservice teacher's procedures and the student's progress were described, the preservice teacher's reflections on the use of the iPad were not reported. Given the lack of research relative to how inservice and preservice teachers respond to the challenge of iPad implementation, it is hoped that the exploratory studies reported here will provide some insight.

STUDY ONE

General Context, Methods and Procedures

The settings for the studies were one graduate and two undergraduate corrective reading classes at a small regional university in southwestern United States. While all students in the classes were familiar with typical desktop computers and many owned laptops, most of the students had no experience with iPads or similar devices. Each of the three studies focused on the same research question: How is the use of iPads perceived by tutors who used them in tutoring?

Each study included either undergraduate teacher candidates (TCs) or graduate students (GSs) and their tutees as participants. The TCs or GSs completed certain required assessments, determined goals for instruction, developed lesson plans, tutored for several sessions, and finally reassessed their tutees to determine progress.

The major source of data for capturing the tutors' perceptions were the transcription of the semi-structured recorded interviews completed at the end of the course. Additional data collected during the tutoring included pre/posttest documents, lesson plans, tutoring summaries and reflections, and final reports written by the tutors. The pre/posttest reading scores and frequency counts of iPad usage from lesson plans were used to confirm or disconfirm the analysis of the tutors' interviews. The interviews were analyzed using open and axial coding

(Strauss & Corbin, 1990), leading to the construction of matrices, which were then correlated with data from lesson plans and reflections.

Results

The first study took place during the fall of 2011. The participants in this study were six TCs enrolled in a corrective reading class and their 4th or 5th grade tutees. Before beginning their tutoring, the entire class was given a two-hour lesson on how to use the iPad. Each of these TCs were then issued an iPad and asked to explore it and practice with it on her own time, as they would be expected to utilize the devices during their lessons. Then three TCs were randomly chosen to use the iPad during tutoring sessions.

All five TCs (2 iPad users, as one TC who did not complete the project was dropped, and 3 non-iPad users) felt their tutee improved. However the reading pre/post assessments showed that only one of the two iPad user tutees and only two of the three non-iPad user tutees had measurable growth. These test scores showed that both groups of tutees had similar reading score results.

TC1 and TC3, the two iPad tutors, both perceived that they had made progress with their tutees. However, the pre/post reading scores for TC1 showed the tutee had no measurable progress during the tutoring sessions, and actually exhibited a decline. In addition, the lesson plan analysis showed she used the iPad only three times. During the interview, TC1 reported feeling rushed and did not have sufficient time to get adequate iPad support. Thus she did not feel that the iPad was useful, and resorted to substituting a laptop with which she was more familiar when technological issues with the iPad arose.

The pre/post reading scores for TC3 showed that her tutee had measurable progress. In addition, the lesson plan analysis showed she used the iPad 13 times during the six tutoring sessions. During the interview, TC3 reported that she expected success from the beginning, that she enjoyed using the iPad in tutoring, and that she felt the iPad was useful.

Discussion

The data showed that there was a difference in attitudes toward the usage of iPads during tutoring, even though both TC1 and TC3 felt their knowledge of appropriate apps and how to use them was insufficient. TC1, who only reported using the iPad three times, did not appear to make a good faith effort to utilize the iPad to an adequate level in her lesson plans. In addition, she did not enjoy tutoring with the iPad or find it useful. TC1 stated, “. . . with what we were doing, we really didn’t find apps for it. . . I think if I could have found the resources to

help support his needs, it'd be a lot better.” On the other hand, TC3 reported that she felt the iPad had been useful during tutoring. TC3 stated, “I don't have any Apple products. I don't know how, like, the whole App Store works. That's the only downfall to it all. I didn't know how to . . . go about finding the apps themselves. So I just worked with what was . . . already on there. However, what I did use and the few websites that I pulled up through the internet on that, I felt like it was all effective . . . in his learning.”

So, even though TCs were familiar with technology and were given some in-class practice with the iPads, it seemed clear that to be able to utilize the mobile devices effectively, tutors (in this case TCs) needed more experience and practice with both the device and with the various apps. This lack of experience impacted some TCs' attitudes toward using the iPad, which in turn impacted how they utilized the iPad strategically in their lesson planning. This realization impacted planning for Study Two.

STUDY TWO

General Context, Methods and Procedures

A cohort of six graduate students (GSs) working on reading specialist certification served as participants for Study Two, along with their tutees. Two major changes in the study design were introduced: 1) more training and experience with iPads prior to tutoring were provided, and 2) every GS used an iPad during a tutoring session with one of their tutees.

The GSs, all practicing teachers, participated simultaneously in two practicum courses during the summer of 2012. In each course, the GSs were to tutor a struggling reader, an elementary student for Practicum I and a high school student for Practicum II. The tutoring projects were an advanced version of those done by the TCs in Study One.

First, during the first day of Practicum II, all six GS tutors were assigned an iPad. This was followed by iPad and apps instruction which continued for several class meetings and included time for in-class practice and apps exploration before tutoring sessions began. Second, all six GS tutors were told that they would tutor their high school student using an iPad and their elementary student without an iPad. This decision was based on the fact that the instructor for Practicum I did not have experience with iPads to facilitate GSs' tutoring efforts.

Even though the study was designed for all six GSs to use iPads, two were not permitted by the parents of their tutees to include their children in the study. The four GSs remaining in the study proceeded as planned; however, the high school tutees of GS3 and GS4 quit before the project was finished. Without

post-assessments, the data for these two GSs could not be included. Thus, only two GSs completed the tutoring sessions.

Results

The pre/post assessment scores of all four tutees (2 with iPads and 2 non-iPads) showed very similar reading growth. The most satisfying aspect for both of these inservice teacher tutors was seeing the growth in both their high school and elementary tutee. For their elementary tutee, both GS1 and GS2 implemented research-based strategies including tactile and kinesthetic approach in their tutoring session. For their high school tutee, they both felt that the progress made by their students was facilitated to some degree by the use of the iPad. In addition, both stated that they wanted to continue using the iPad in their teaching and wished they could have used it for their elementary tutee.

The analysis of the lesson plans and reflections for GS1 and GS2 showed some interesting differences even though both used a variety of apps, ranging from those that were simply digitized versions of standard paper-and-pencil strategies to sophisticated writing and creating apps. GS1 used the iPad only three times with her high school tutee and she seemed to perceive the iPad primarily as a motivational tool. GS1 stated, “. . . I think more than anything, I went with it for the motivational factor.” GS2 used the iPad 21 times with her high school tutee, as she saw the mobility and portability of the device as a positive affordance; she stated: “. . . I could take it anywhere and, you know, pull up—like, we pulled up a YouTube video to support the lesson.” GS2 frequently utilized the Internet capabilities of the device to access websites and videos.

Discussion

Analysis of the data provided some insight as to how the two tutors perceived their work with the iPad. Both tutors felt the iPad was useful. However, GS1 viewed the iPad primarily as a motivator rather than a genuine facilitator of learning. There is ample evidence in the research of the motivating capabilities of most technology, iPads included (Arnone, Small, Chauncey, & McKenna, 2011; House, 2009; Oakley et al., 2012). However, viewing an iPad as primarily a motivator falls short of the TPACK framework mentioned earlier (Mishra & Koehler, 2006; Thompson & Mishra, 2007). GS2, who utilized the iPad in more integrated ways, clearly came to see the device as a learning facilitator as well as a motivator. She incorporated apps into several of the components of her lesson plans and responded to tutees' requests to look for new apps or videos. For example, she used the app *Toontastic* to support her tutee's attempts with multimedia,

rewriting a story he had read, and in the process, mastering the concept of plot. Despite these positive steps, it is not clear from the data that either of the GSs totally grasped the potential of tablets in tutoring or in the classroom.

STUDY THREE

Context, Methods and Procedures

Study Three took place in a later section of the same corrective reading course in which Study One had been conducted a year earlier, and the numbering of these TCs picked up where the numbering in Study One ended. A major difference in this particular group of TCs was that they had been introduced to iPads two courses earlier in their program. In addition, on the second night of class, iPads were issued to all students except to two who had their own. Several apps were demonstrated and the TCs used the iPads throughout the remainder of the course for a number of class assignments. However, three TCs were randomly chosen to use the iPad during their tutoring experience.

Results

All six TCs (3 iPad users and 3 non-iPad users) felt they had had a positive impact on their tutee. However, the reading pre/post assessments showed that only one of the three iPad user tutees and only two of the three non-iPad user tutees had measurable growth. These test scores showed that the tutees in the non-iPad group experienced more growth than the tutees in the iPad group.

TC9 believed she had used the iPad effectively, and her tutee was the only one in the iPad group who achieved measurable growth. A review of her lesson plans showed that she recorded 8 specific instances when the iPad was used while tutoring, but it also showed she used the iPad in a variety of ways. TC11 did not move beyond the safe zone of what was already on the iPad and what was easy; she acknowledged that she had not used the iPad as effectively as she might have, using it mostly as an e-reader. TC12 not only used the iPad ineffectively, but had the tutee with the least progress.

Discussion of Perceptions

The additional training provided to this group of TCs seemed to have had a small impact on the TCs ability to use the iPad during tutoring, as only TC9 experimented and explored apps and various capabilities of the iPad with her tutee and had measurable success. TC11 and TC12 acknowledged they struggled with using the iPad. Thus, even after two semester of using the iPad for assignments,

the learning curve still appears to be steep when attempting to integrate various iPad affordances to promote learning.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The results of these exploratory studies to determine how participants incorporate iPads into the tutoring framework seem to resonate with the findings of earlier studies regarding one-to-one computer initiatives, as very few of these tutors incorporated technology well into the tutoring sessions. Warschauer (2007) concluded that “laptops will not make bad schools good, but they will make good schools better” (p. 2537). Similarly, these results may suggest that an iPad *may* help a good teacher be more effective; on the other hand, it *may* frustrate a weaker teacher and make him/her less effective if required to use it.

Additionally, these results can also be explained in terms of some of the Finger and Houguet’s (2009) intrinsic challenges. The GS tutors had better success than did the TC tutors. The GSs had a higher level of teacher knowledge and confidence that was displayed during the tutoring sessions as well as in the increased reading scores of their tutees. This was not surprising as they are experienced classroom teachers whereas the TCs are still completing their undergraduate course work.

Three of the five TC tutors and all six GS tutors who used the iPad in the three separate studies had positive feelings toward using the iPad while tutoring. In addition, all the GS tutors expressed that they would have liked to have been able to use the iPad with their elementary students while several of the undergraduate non-iPad users wished they could have used the iPad during tutoring. One non-iPad user put it this way: “I can’t wait . . . it’s gonna brighten and really help their creativity to come alive. . .” Asked if she would use iPads if they were available for her future classroom, another said, “I think they would be wonderful! There’s just so much you can do with it!”

Each successive study group had received more training with the iPad than the previous group. It seems clear that this increased training was somewhat helpful. However, it is also clear that the training needs to be on-going and explicit so all tutors, especially the TC tutors, feel comfortable using various iPad affordances. In addition, they need specific instruction in how to incorporate the use of the iPad into a research-based lesson plan.

Thus, the next step is to make a concerted effort, using the TPACK Framework (Mishra & Koehler, 2006; Thompson & Mishra, 2007), to provide opportunities for TCs and GSs to gain more experience integrating mobile devices into the content and pedagogy within the coursework. This will be accomplished in

part by requiring use of the devices to complete many course assignments. Most important, however, will be instruction and practice in building lesson plans employing tablets to place the New Literacies and ICTs at the core of the learning experience. Ongoing research will continue to guide and monitor this endeavor as new and newly inspired teachers learn to utilize tablets to help students create the new worlds we are going to be living in.

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TEACHER INQUIRY PROJECTS FOR PRESERVICE TEACHERS

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Abstract

To help preservice teachers become both good classroom observers and reflective practitioners of these observations, they were given a teacher inquiry project to complete during their year-long-student-teaching experience. The results showed that the majority of these preservice teachers believed the inquiry project helped them to gain necessary practice-based knowledge to become more effective classroom teachers in the future.

Teaching is complex and studies have shown that many beginning teachers struggle (Goddard & Goddard, 2006; Hudson, 2012; Hudson, Beutel, & Hudson, 2009; O'Brien & Goddard, 2006), as there is sometimes a disconnect between university coursework and the real world application provided through student teaching (Caskey, 2005; Diana, 2011; Nahal, 2010). For example, preservice teachers learn concepts for incorporating specific teaching methods, classroom management strategies, and assessment tools into their instructional practices; however, they rarely have the opportunity to implement them or to research how these techniques are applied. Utilizing teacher inquiry projects as a form of action research is one way to build a bridge between academic knowledge and applied knowledge (Holly, Arhar, & Kasten, 2004; Mills, 2000).

Preservice teachers are often reluctant to make changes in the instructional sequences offered within the curriculum materials, believing they do not have the authority or the expertise to make knowledgeable modifications (Diana, 2011). However, when preservice teachers do make changes to curriculum materials it

is often on the basis of criteria related to classroom management problems rather than to student learning requirements. Yet, research has shown that preservice teachers who choose to participate in action research are able to expand their practice-based knowledge and are often able to develop new skills necessary to reflect on and evaluate both students' learning and best practice (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Elliott, 1991; Ferrance, 2000; Hollingsworth, 1997; Macintyre, 2002; McNiff, Whitehead, & Lomax, 2003; Mills, 2000; Schon, 1983; Stenhouse, 1975; Stringer, 2007).

The purpose of this study was to examine preservice teachers' beliefs about inquiry projects, which were required as part of a year-long intern/resident (student teaching) program. In addition, this study was driven by the following questions:

1. Do preservice teachers feel inquiry projects are beneficial to their growth as educators?
2. Do preservice teachers feel inquiry is something they will keep as part of their classroom practice after graduation?
3. Do inquiry projects provide preservice teachers with the opportunity to develop higher levels of self-efficacy in the classroom?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

The purpose of inquiry-based action research includes professional understanding and personal growth (Noffke, 1997) for both the researchers and the preservice teachers. Professional purposes for inquiry-based research included the changing of attitudes and ideas to create a better understanding of how to do and use inquiry to promote preservice teachers' understanding of what it means to be an effective teacher. Professional understanding leads to personal growth, as the knowledge base is shared and expanded, which in turn builds confidence in one's ability to teach well.

In addition, this study is supported by several bodies of research. The double-loop learning theory (Argyris & Schon, 1974) helped the preservice teachers to explore their current understanding of classroom practices while the reflection-in-action theory (Schon, 1983) helped the preservice teachers to reflect on their understanding and how it fits with what is really happening. Both of these theories help the preservice teachers to find new knowledge and create positive change (Argyris, 1991). These two theories are imbedded in action research and align with self-reflective inquiry to improve one's teaching practices as new

knowledge is gained (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). This new knowledge allows teachers to solve problems, develop understandings, as well as build confidence and efficacious feelings toward teaching (Bandura, 1997; Guskey, 1988).

Preservice Teacher Education

Preservice teachers must have quality preparation programs in order to gain the necessary knowledge that will give them the skills and expertise to meet the needs of students (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Linek, Sampson, Haas, Sadler, Moore, & Nylan, 2012; Tisher & Wideen, 1990) because the teachers are the most important influential factor in the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 2006). “Thus, schools of education must design programs that help prospective teachers to understand deeply a wide array of things about learning, social and cultural contexts, and teaching and be able to enact these understandings in complex classrooms serving increasingly diverse students” (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 3). As a result, preservice teachers need to know about their subject matter, curriculum goals, student learning and student development in order to develop the skills and ability to teach (Darling-Hammond, 2005).

However, studies have indicated preservice teachers already come to the university classroom with preconceived ideas, right or wrong, on what it means to be a teacher and it is these ideas that not only shape what and how they learn in the university classroom but their instructional practices when they get into the field (Fang, 1996; Kagan, 1992; Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991; Posner, 1993; Tillema & Knol, 1997). Thus, it is important that the university classroom provide assignments that address these preconceived ideas, as they impact positively or negatively the first few years of the teaching experience (Bezzina 2006). It is through reflective practices that preservice teachers can become thoughtful about the teaching and the learning process, link theory to practice, differentiate for student development, and self-evaluate (Cruickshank, 1987; Posner).

Action Research

Educational research can be conducted by a variety of people using a plethora of methods and designs. However, many of these methods never reach classrooms as there is often a disconnect between those conducting research and those teaching students (Diana, 2011). This disconnect relates to the researching of methods that are not applicable to the classroom. One way to bridge the disconnect between research and practice is through action research which allows teachers to ask questions and to “create new knowledge about teaching and learning, [and then use] that knowledge to make informed decisions, and develop

as a professional. [Therefore,] to do our job well, we [teachers] need to inquire well” (Caskey, 2005, p. 2). Action research is conducted by teachers which leads them to examine their own practice and/or student achievement, in the hope of initiating new and better instructional change (Arendt, 1958; Caskey; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Diana; Mills, 2000; McNiff, 1993; Posner, 1993).

While action research provides teachers with a vehicle to relate theory and research to classroom practice, it also promises to be a highly effective form of professional development in all content areas (Diana, 2011). Both novice and experienced teachers can improve their teaching skills and their student learning achievement through intentional questioning and reflection (Serafini, 2002). As a result, teachers at all levels develop valuable personal and professional skills (Dewey, 1933; Serafini). This in turn builds their teaching self-efficacy (Bandura, 1996; Cooper, 2009; Lui, 2009; Soprano, & Yang, 2012).

Inquiry-Based Projects

Inquiry is a process involving organization, information, and transformation of the teaching profession as a whole. It also does not rely on outside researchers, as the teachers themselves actively participate in the design, methodology, and data interpretation aligning with questions relevant to their practice. According to Glanz (2003), action research inquiry projects developed by teachers typically follow five steps: problem formulation, data collection, data analysis, reporting results, and action planning. Through the development of teacher research practices, practitioners increase their understandings of themselves as teachers, their students, and their profession as a whole. The successful completion of inquiry can be empowering and can lead to a better understanding of what it means to be an effective teacher, which in turn builds teacher efficacy.

Teacher Efficacy

Instructional self-efficacy refers to a teacher’s belief in his/her ability to effectively teach students (Plourde, 2002; Shunk, 2008). Instructional self-efficacy should then, in turn influence a teacher’s practice (Ashton, 1985; Ashton & Webb, 1986; Shunk, 2008). Teachers, themselves, need to understand that efficacy beliefs can influence how they feel, reason, and act.

A teacher who has high efficacy beliefs is normally more likely to enjoy their job, while a teacher with low efficacy beliefs normally are more likely to experience burnout, discontent and frustration. Ashton and Webb (1986) demonstrated that teacher efficacy was very important because it can be used as a predictor of student success and teacher effectiveness.

METHODS

Setting and Participants

This study took place at a university in northeast Texas. The four-year university has a year-long-student-teaching experience where preservice teachers are assigned to two mentors who are master teachers, one at the K-2 grade level, and the other at the 3-6 grade level. This allows preservice teachers the opportunity to gain a variety of grade-level experiences with different age groups of children, which is important as their teaching certificate allows them to teach grades 1-6.

These preservice teachers had the same two mentors for internship (first semester of student teaching) and for residency (second semester of student teaching). With the internship, the preservice teachers were in the field two-days a week and attended one-day a week in a university led seminar. During residency, the preservice teachers were in the classroom five-days a week with eight seminar days scattered throughout the semester.

While completing the inquiry-based projects, the participants were in their last semester of student teaching. There were 30 preservice teachers and their ages ranged from 22 years of age to 44 years of age. There were 28 females and 2 males that participated.

Procedures

The whole teacher-inquiry project happened in several phases. During the first phase, which was during the internship seminar, preservice teachers learned about action research. They read two articles discussing action research and read several examples. Next, several of the past inquiry projects, from questions to results were shared with the preservice teachers to help them understand what the final product would look like. While learning about the inquiry projects, preservice teachers looked at and compared the projects to an assignment rubric (see Appendix A). The rubric was developed by the researchers using the research components (Diana, 2011). This rubric was also used to help guide the preservice teachers while they completed their inquiry project in their residency semester. Finally, the preservice teachers worked in groups to brainstorm ideas that could be considered an inquiry project (i.e. behavior problems, struggling reader, student who picks too hard a book to read during independent time, etc.).

During the second phase, the preservice teachers were instructed to go back to their assigned classroom to find an idea to research further. They were asked to “kid-watch” to understand the demands of the students they would be teaching and the organization of the classroom. In addition, they were instructed to talk with their mentor teachers to determine the inquiry topic they would

work on next semester for their project. This was an important part of the project, as they needed the teachers' support to successfully complete the inquiry. They were asked to bring back to seminar their ideas to share.

The third phase was held during seminar. The preservice teachers shared their various observations and ideas from their mentor teacher. Next, they discussed topics they wanted to explore for their inquiry-based project. Each preservice teacher had to develop at least one "I Wonder" idea that would be appropriate for their situation and classroom, as seen in several examples below:

- I wonder if "R" time in my 6th grade classroom is an effective program?
- I wonder how I can help a student who was diagnosed with autism and has very low cognitive ability with his handwriting.
- I wonder why one little boy is struggling with his fast-math facts?
- I wonder what behavior management strategies can be used with this very challenging 4th grade classroom that is effective?

The fourth phase took place during residency. Preservice teachers worked on their inquiry "I Wonder" Project during this semester. In addition, there were various checkpoints throughout the semester when the preservice teachers brought to seminar their inquiry project. They met with their university liaison and used the rubric that was created using the research components (see Appendix A) to keep the preservice teacher on track and moving forward with the project. Each research component was assigned points, so the preservice teacher would know exactly what was expected of them. Finally, the preservice teachers presented their findings at the end of the semester to their peers. After the preservice teachers presented their inquiry project, they were asked to write a short reflection on the impact their project had on their learning and on the K-6 student. These reflections were used for the qualitative data.

Instrumentation

As this was a new assignment, feedback about the inquiry-based project would be used to assess its value and what needed to be modified for the course next semester. Twelve questions were developed by the researchers. The questions used a Likert-scale response, which ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The survey was put into SurveyMonkey for convenience and ease of completion by the preservice teachers. The survey was used to examine the preservice

teachers' beliefs about inquiry-based research after the class assignment was completed. As this was the first time we did the assignment, this was also the first time the survey was used.

Data Analysis

For the survey instrument, the Likert-scale results were analyzed and a simple tally was taken which was then converted into a percentage. For the final written reflections that the preservice teachers completed during seminar, a tally was used to determine if the inquiry-based project had a positive or negative impact on either the preservice teachers or the 1st – 6th grade-level students. The researchers read the reflections and looked for descriptors to help determine if the project had a positive or negative outcome. This was done separately and then the researchers met to compare scores. There was a 100% agreement.

RESULTS

First, the results of the survey (see Table 1) were used to answer the three research questions. Second, the results of the final written reflections were used to determine the positive and/or negative impact the assignment had on both the preservice teachers and the 1st – 6th grade-level students.

Research Question Analysis

To answer question #1, *Do preservice teachers feel inquiry projects are beneficial to their growth as educators?*, the results of the survey from items 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, and 10 were examined. The data showed mixed results. All 30 preservice teachers (question #1) felt inquiry would help them be a more effective teacher, however only 90% (question #5) felt that inquiry was important to their success as a teacher. In addition, 23% (question #10) of the students felt it may take time away from students and 34% (question #9) thought it would probably take away from their planning lessons.

To answer question #2, *Do preservice teachers feel inquiry progress is something they will keep as part of their classroom practice after graduation?*, the results from question #2 was examined. The results showed a positive outcome, as 28 (94%) of the preservice teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they would use this process in their future classrooms.

To answer question #3, *Do inquiry projects provide preservice teachers with the opportunity to develop higher levels of self-efficacy in the classroom?*, the results of the survey from questions 7-8, 11-12 were examined. Twenty-five of the

TABLE 1 Survey Question Analysis

Researcher Developed Questions	1	2	3	4	5
1. Inquiry helps me be a more effective teacher.	0	0	0	11 (37%)	19 (63%)
2. Inquiry is something I will continue once I have my own class.	0	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	10 (34%)	18 (60%)
3. Inquiry is useful to me as a student but not as a teacher.	7 (23%)	22 (74%)	0	1 (3%)	0
4. Inquiry is a waste of time.	14 (47%)	13 (44%)	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	1 (3%)
5. Inquiry is important for teacher success.	0	0	3 (10%)	13 (43%)	14 (47%)
6. Inquiry is important for student success.	0	0	3 (10%)	12 (40%)	15 (50%)
7. Inquiry requires additional training and professional development.	0	5 (16%)	11 (37%)	8 (27%)	6 (20%)
8. Inquiry is something that must be experienced not just learned.	0	1 (3%)	4 (13%)	14 (47%)	11 (37%)
9. Inquiry takes time away from planning lessons.	3 (10%)	17 (56%)	8 (27%)	2 (7%)	0
10. Inquiry requires more time with paperwork and takes away time with students.	2 (7%)	21 (70%)	7 (23%)	0	0
11. How confident do you feel about doing your teacher inquiry project?	0	1 (3%)	9 (30%)	13 (44%)	7 (23%)
12. How confident do you feel about using the teacher inquiry method?	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	8 (27%)	14 (47%)	6 (20%)

preservice teachers (84%, question #8) felt they needed to experience inquiry in the classroom and not just learn about the process. After the experience, only 1 (3%) of the preservice teachers did not feel confident doing a teacher inquiry project (question #11) and 2 (6%) were not confident using the inquiry method in their classroom (question #12). While 47% (question #7) of the preservice teachers felt that good inquiry would take additional training.

The qualitative final written reflections about the assignment were read to see if the inquiry projects had a positive or negative impact on the preservice teachers learning about teaching and/or students. All three researchers read and created a list of positive and negative comments from the reflections. In addition, each reflection was given a positive or negative rating. These ratings were verified between all three researchers and there was 100% agreement. All 30 preservice students used positive descriptors about this assignment. Some descriptors included “this was great”, “I learned that. . .”, “I found I could help a student do better,” “I could recognize a student who needed help and I knew how to help,” “doing an I Wonder, helped me to see. . .”, “kidwatching can be beneficial,” and “looking at a problem and finding a solution can be rewarding.” In addition, most of the statements showed that there was also a positive impact on the 1-6 grade level students. However, there were two situations that had a negative impact on the 1st – 6th grade-level students. Both of these were dealing with student behavior and in both cases, the modification the preservice teacher tried actually made the student act out more.

DISCUSSION

Comparing the current study’s findings to the research literature indicate that while preservice teachers tend to retain preconceived concepts of teaching that shape both their learning and their classroom practices (Fang, 1996; Kagan, 1992; Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991; Tillema & Knol, 1997; Posner, 1993), preservice teachers can still appreciate the value provided by the inquiry process for themselves and their students. This study suggests inquiry provided a way for preservice teachers to examine a wide array of classroom happenings and gain a deeper understanding of various teaching practices (Darling-Hammond, 2006). It also provided a way for preservice teachers to become decision makers, and reflect on how their decisions impacted the 1st – 6th grade-level students (Cruikshank, 1987; Posner, 1993) while they learn about the role of inquiry in helping them to become an effective teacher.

These inquiry projects provided an authentic way for preservice teachers to learn more about reflective practices as well as way to link research based

information with classroom happenings. This study showed that 90% of the preservice teachers thought inquiry was important both for their own success as a teacher and for their students' success. In addition, 94% indicated that they would continue this inquiry approach in their own classrooms.

While reading and reflecting on the conclusions, several limitations need to be kept in mind, as these limitations impact the generalizability of the study. First, this was a small group, of participants, as there were only 30 preservice teachers. Second, the preservice teacher may not have taken the assignment seriously, as it was just another assignment they had to complete to graduate even though there was a huge emphasis placed on this project and each preservice teacher received support from the professors, the liaison, and the mentor teacher. Third, this was all done in the same school district and only at the 1st – 6th grade levels.

IMPLICATIONS

The findings indicate that the majority of these preservice teachers recognized the value of inquiry, as they reported intentions of continuing with this process in their own classrooms upon graduation. However, less than half (43%) of the preservice teachers felt comfortable being responsible for organizing and executing the inquiry process. Thus, it is believed that that the preservice teachers need more time to become more comfortable with conducting inquiry on their own. Next semester, a variety of other steps will be added to provide more experience with inquiry in their university coursework, which will be carried over into their assigned classrooms. It is hoped this additional time with inquiry will allow the preservice teachers to see how research can be applied in the classroom.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Inquiry is systematic way of gaining understanding and informing change. It is an integral part of teacher effectiveness and teacher efficacy as well as student growth and achievement (Glanz, 2003). Development of inquiry processes and products allows teachers to acquire understandings of themselves, their students, and their profession (Argyis, 1991; Bandura, 1997; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Diana, 2011; Serafini, 2002).

As many studies do, this study led to more questions. First, how many experiences do preservice teachers need to have before they become comfortable doing inquiry. Second, do preservice teachers understand what they are seeing when they spend time kidwatching? Third, will involving preservice teachers as

both participant and data collectors enhance their understanding of how research can inform instruction?

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APPENDIX A

TEACHER INQUIRY RUBRIC 100 POINTS

		1st draft	2nd draft	final
Purpose 5pts	This includes your question(s). Remember that quantitative questions need a hypothesis. Also, you need to explain WHY you want to do this.			
Plan 10 pts	This includes what you are going to do and how you are going to get it done.			
Research 25 pts	This is your lit review. You should have pros and cons as well as other view-points about your topic. Sections are created by your literature review but also on your questions.			
Participants 5 pts	This is where you talk about the setting and the participant(s) in the study (grade level, ethnicity, gender, SES, number of learning disabilities, etc).			
Procedure 5 pts	This is where you talk about the steps you followed to complete the inquiry project. This is so others can copy your study.			
Results 25 pts	This is where you report the results.			
Conclusion 25 pts	This talks about what you did, what you found out, and how this will help you be a better teacher for your K-6 student.			
Oral Presentation 25 pts	Create a poster (pages for poster are created as a word document or PowerPoint) with the above parts for your presentation. Presentation has a separate rubric (looks at oral presentation, knowledge of the content, easy at which you talk without looking at note.)			

INQUIRY CAN BE TRANSFORMATIVE: FROM “I WILL MAKE HIM WRITE” TO “HE WILL LEARN TO WRITE”

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Abstract

This study examined changes in preservice teachers' thinking about writing and writing instruction as they used inquiry to study their individual questions about the teaching of writing in a language arts methods class. The study describes the way the teacher educator organized the class and then examines how the preservice teachers changed their thinking. The study found that the inquiry process combined with writing workshop provided an environment that impacted the beliefs and practices of these preservice teachers.

During her Intern I assignment in the final year of her teacher education program, Jo was placed in a kindergarten classroom. Because it was the fall semester, the kindergarteners were beginning to learn to write their letters. When asked about her inquiry question for her multi-genre project in the language arts methods class, Jo responded that she had one student who just could not make his letters. She stated that “*I am going to study letter formation. I will make him write. He has to learn how to make his letters correctly.*”

Jo's understandings then seemed to indicate that once the child learned to form the letters correctly, then learning to write had been accomplished. However, *writing* is more multifaceted because its meaning includes letter formation, production of various genres, and a tool for thinking. Thus, teaching writing can be more extensive than correctness of letters. And, “teaching children to write is a complex construct requiring both skill and art” (Grishman & Wolsey,

2011, p. 348). Because preservice teachers often have minimal experiences with students and their knowledge of teaching/learning often rests within their prior school experiences, the textbooks they have studied, and/or their college coursework, providing other methods for preservice teachers to inform their practice is necessary. In addition, inquiry allows preservice teachers to ask questions (Short, Harste, & Burke, 1996), which helps them to link textbook knowledge learned to practice in the classroom.

PURPOSE

Educators (Allington, 1994; Fullan, 2009) continue to discuss the changes that need to happen in our schools. Because certain patterns (e.g., graded classrooms, worksheets, teaching to the test, transmission model of teaching) have a history of existing in schools, these changes are slow to happen. However, the slowness of change cannot deter teacher educators from attempting to influence these patterns. Longstanding research (Britzman, 1991; Lortie, 1975) has reported that teachers teach the way that they were taught. Research in the teaching of writing points to the influence of prior educational experiences on beliefs about current teaching practices (Grossman et al., 2000; Mahurt, 1998). “If K-12 teaching is to adopt a different stance toward what it means to know and what is worth knowing, then teacher education will need to change in these ways, as well” (Lampert & Ball, 1999, p. 33). So, by providing opportunities for preservice teachers to experience different classroom instruction, it might impact the way that they teach.

The purpose of this study was to examine the use of inquiry in a teacher education course in order to: (a) provide preservice teachers opportunities to explore their own questions about teaching writing, (b) guide and familiarize preservice teachers with numerous resources related to writing instruction, (c) provide support for preservice teachers as they learn how to be inquirers and teachers, and (d) encourage preservice teachers to be reflective about their practice. Specifically, this article addresses the following questions:

1. How did the inquiry process help preservice teachers as they investigated their own questions about the teaching of writing?
2. What changes occurred in the preservice teachers’ thinking as they completed inquiry projects?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In thinking about teachers for future generations, it is necessary to consider that the traditional model of teaching (e.g., Skinner, 1976; Thorndike, 2011) must

change. Teachers can no longer stand in front of the class and treat students as if they were merely a vessel to be filled. This type of teaching does not address the skills that students will need to be successful in the 21st century. Future workers need to: (a) understand that learning is a lifelong process, (b) collaborate, (c) think critically and problem solve, and (d) be flexible with time, space, and knowledge. Students gain experience with these qualities when their teachers use a constructive model of teaching (e.g., Bruner, 1963; Dewey, 1997; Vygotsky, 1978). Teachers whose theoretical beliefs support constructivism often provide classrooms that are student-centered. In these classrooms, students learn the content and build skills that transfer into their daily lives. If individuals are to become independent critical thinkers who can take action, students need to have experiences with student-centered teaching throughout their schooling. Wells (1994) stated:

Schools must become places in which students are apprenticed into a way of living – of thinking, feeling and acting – that is informed by these values and which is already being practiced by the adult members of the school community (p. 3).

Constructivists support inquiry because individuals are encouraged to seek answers to their own questions developed from their personal interests and needs. To solidify this new understanding, Vygotsky (1981) maintained that one's learning happened as a result of social interaction. Consequently, students cannot be set into the process of inquiry without providing them with the social interaction that is necessary for them to make meaning. Thus, the teacher must learn to guide and apprentice (Rogoff, 1990) the students as they are in the learning process. However, Vygotsky emphasized that it is not merely a matter of learning the new information but rather that the information be transformed into the learner's own personal version of information. Wilhelm (2007) refers to this as the "arc of inquiry," which describes student learning as moving from factual information to interpretation to critical literacy and finally moving the information to the individual's own application.

Mezirow (2003) applied constructivist theories to support his notion of transformational learning. He recognized that the goal of inquiry is for the individual to identify one's own questions that arise from an experience currently beyond understanding or something that happened that is counter to one's current understanding or something that is totally different from any other knowledge. Thus, as individuals seek answers to their own wonderings, they build on what they already know, fix misconceptions and transform their understanding using metacognition.

Because learners cannot be expected to automatically transform as a result of their learning, inquiry work must be supported by first hand experiences. Using a writing workshop approach (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994; Ray, 2001) allows the learner to construct meaning about the writing process and about the content that is being studied. This format supports the social nature of learning (Vygotsky, 1978) allowing for peer collaboration. Further, in the workshop model the instructor is present so that individuals can get assistance from someone who is more knowledgeable. All of these interactions combined with the individual's reflective thoughts create the opportunity for individuals to transform their own understanding.

CONTEXT OF THE WORK

Students in the Early Childhood – 6th (EC-6) licensure program were assigned to a cadre of 20 – 30 students which were placed in a school district during their senior year. Once assigned to a school district, each student were paired with two mentor teachers for two semesters. During Intern I, the first semester, the preservice teachers spent two days a week for seven weeks in one classroom and then they moved to the second classroom for the other seven weeks. While the preservice teachers were in each of the classrooms, they were expected to assist the mentor teacher by working with students, responding to student work, developing lessons, meeting with parents or other teachers, and completing other assignments that the mentor teacher requests. Preservice teachers also completed assignments for four university methods courses that they attended on two other days of the week. One of these methods classes was a language arts class.

In order to promote student-centered learning, the language arts class was organized so that it was consistent with writing workshop (Fletcher & Portalupi, 2001), including the use of a writer's notebooks, author's chair, and a mini-lesson that demonstrated a writing strategy built on best practices in writing instruction (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994; Ray, 2001). Assignments included developing two pieces of personal writing using the writing process, identifying books to use for mentor texts, and creating writing lesson plans.

During the second placement, the preservice teachers developed inquiry questions related to the teaching of writing. Following Romano's (1995) multi-genre guidelines, each preservice teacher researched his/her own question and then created a culminating project that contained an essay and five other pieces in different genres, which illuminated their learning about their inquiry. Students were encouraged to "package" the final product in a manner that supported

their inquiry. The instructor conducted demonstration lessons about writing in different genres and provided a list of various genres. Class time was provided for completing the research so that students had access to the instructor's resources. The instructor used this time to recommend resources and to confer with individuals as they worked. Inquiry projects were presented on the last day of class. (See Appendix A for the planning sheet and memo log for the project.)

As the preservice teachers researched, they developed a one-page annotation for each of the required 12 resource in order to develop an annotated bibliography. Each annotation consisted of three parts that followed an inquiry cycle – “what” did you learn (8 – 10 bulleted ideas of what was learned from the resource), “so what” connections did you make to your current knowledge, coursework, or placement (stories of their experiences), and “now what” will you do with this new information in the future. Besides providing accountability, this format supported the preservice teachers as they learned to be reflective about their practice (Schon, 1995). (See Appendix B for an example of a resource annotation.)

METHODS

Participants

The EC-6 cadre included 24 preservice teachers (22 females and 2 males). The males were both Caucasian and the females consisted of 17 Caucasian, 3 Hispanic, 1 African American, and 1 Asian American students. With the exception of 1 older nontraditional female student all the students ranged in age from 20 – 25.

From this group, eight (7 female and 1 male) preservice teachers were randomly selected as participants in this study. All eight were between the ages of 20 – 25, and all were assigned to different elementary schools and two different grade levels so they had different mentor teachers. In addition, one student was working on ESL certification and two students were working of special education certification

Data Sources

There were three different data sources. First, the initial data source consisted of the inquiry cycle formatted annotations written by the preservice teachers. The second data source was their final inquiry projects. The last data resource was their final reflection, consisting of one to two sentences about what they learned from doing the project.

Design

Since the study was exploratory, case study (Yin, 2012) techniques were employed. Each preservice teacher was treated as a case because there was no intent to make comparisons. The sole purpose of the study was to determine if any change in the individual's thinking could be documented.

Using the qualitative methods of constant comparative (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992) each preservice teacher's annotations were read and reread independently by the researcher to note if/when the preservice teacher was making any shifts in thinking related to their question. Based on Mezirow's (2003) notion of transformation, the researcher considered it a "shift in thinking" when the preservice teacher specifically mentioned a change in understanding and explained some action that she would take in the future. The "shift in thinking" may be signaled by words like, "now I realize," "I now understand," or "information has helped me." After all of the data were read and noted for evidence of shifts in thinking, the researcher reviewed the inquiry project and the final reflection to determine if these data sources supported the shift. Of the eight preservice teachers who turned in all data sources, only five of the preservice teachers demonstrated shifts in thinking that were supported by the inquiry project and final reflection.

RESULTS

This section contains a brief description of each of the five participants, who experienced change. Their individual's research question, and examples and explanations of the "shifts in thinking" that were evident in the research annotations. The first part of the example is from "so what" section and the italicized part is from the "now what" section. Comments from their reflective final are noted. A brief description of their multi-genre creative packaging is provided.

Participant 1

Jo's two seven-week placements at the elementary school were in kindergarten (regular and special education classroom). In this program it is unusual to be placed in the same grade for both placements, but Jo was happy because she hoped to teach kindergarten. She felt like this would give her "more experience and a better chance to get a job." While completing the inquiry project, she noted that this group of kindergarteners was much different than her first rotation because they "seemed to be behind." Her inquiry question was, "How do I make my kindergarten students write?" Although the instructor/research initially balked at the question, it turned out to be the perfect question for Jo to study. Her transformation was related to learning theory.

Annotation 1

“As I read through this web document, I realized that the student I have designed my research towards does not meet most of the prerequisite skills a student needs to have before they can begin handwriting.”

“This information will help me in the future because I will be aware of signs to look out for in my lower-level students.”

Annotation 3

“After reading about how to help children participate in the writing process, I realized that the student I am basing my research upon is simply in the emergent phase of writing.”

“Another way I will incorporate the information I found in this resource is by setting aside the time to really work one-on-one with my struggling writers.”

Annotation 4

“In the case of my particular student, I know that my mentor teacher and I are always ‘correcting’ this child’s letter formations and telling him *what* to write.”

“First and foremost, I will worry less about ‘correct’ letter formation as a kindergarten teacher, but rather encourage writing in general.”

In her final reflection, Jo stated, “Writing workshop is definitely something that I will utilize and really believe that struggling writers can truly benefit from. Most importantly, as a teacher, encouragement to simply write is what all students need.”

Jo’s theory base about writing shifted in two ways. First, her definition changed from correct letter formation to writing as the message and process. Second, she moved from a behavioristic approach to teaching writing to a constructive theory in which students will develop as they are able. She now sees herself as a mediator rather than a transmitter. Her creative presentation of her multi-genre project was a model of the “original” crayon box. Inside the box were the original eight colors with the genres pieces inside. Jo chose this form because “I now know that there is more to kindergarten than correctness. Kids can color outside the lines.”

Participant 2

Karen’s two placements were in first and fifth grades. She was happy that she had received a fifth grade placement because she knows that most schools

departmentalize in fifth grade. Karen wants to teach science because “science is the only content I like.” She was happy to be with her mentor because she was a science teacher. On a notecard Karen informed her university supervisor that she did not see why she had to be in the language arts class since “writing did not have anything to do with the content that she wanted to teach.” Her inquiry question was: “What is writing in science class?” At first, her annotations focused on the vocabulary and print concepts related to the study of science. She was concerned about the students being able to read and understand the information. Her transformation is related to her perspective about how writing does happen in science.

Annotation 1

“The idea of the visual word bank reminded me of the word walls in [school name]. Although the teachers do not go over and model putting up the words for the class, they still have it as a visual.”

“This information will help me as a hopeful future science teacher to introduce my vocabulary words in an effective order.”

Annotation 4

“This chapter was very useful for me as a preservice teacher. I have always had a hard time trying to pick out age and developmentally appropriate trade books for students.”

“With this information it will help me pick out and use trade books for science lessons. When I am picking out trade books, I will strategically use the rubric and check off list.”

Annotation 7

“Science notebooks are a great way to integrate language arts in science.”

“I will be able to use this information in my classroom when I first introduce science notebooks.”

In her final reflection about the class, Karen states, “This will become handy if the grade level I am teaching in is not currently using science notebooks. This information shows that science notebooks help writers and if we can integrate 2 subjects together and save time, why not?”

Until the seventh annotation Karen never mentioned writing. In fact, it seemed that she would not get to the part of discussing writing. However, midway through her research she found a resource on writing science journals and that made the difference in her understanding of the importance of writing in science. From her final comment, it can be noted she not only was going to use

science notebooks, but she was sharing the idea with her peers. Her creative representation was a “Science Notebook” decorated with scientific items and words. Each of her genres connected writing to science ideas.

Participant 3

Genne’s two placements consisted of second and fifth grades. During the time of the inquiry project she was “happy to be with the fifth graders.” On several occasions during the class, Genne explained to me that she did not like to read because it was hard for her. Further, she did not understand how writing could support reading. As the project began, Genne had a difficult time developing her question because she only wanted to focus on reading since she “would not have to teach writing in the fifth grade.” After much discussion, Genne finally settled on the following question: “How does writing support reading comprehension?” Her transformation related to a change in her understanding that writing and reading are connected. She never mentioned writing until annotation eight after she has watched a DVD.

Annotation 8

“I can make a lot of connections to this DVD in that I have seen how writing can relate to comprehension.”

“This information has helped me think of how I can use students’ writing as a way to help their reading comprehension, as well.”

Annotation 9

“My teacher has had students’ complete worksheets that help them with the structure of their writing/reading.”

“I know that a lot of students struggle with writing, and I feel that by having them complete a story structure assignment that has to do with recalling the story, summarizing, or answering questions will only help them think about their thinking.”

In her final reflection Genne revealed that “Reading was never easy for me. I want my students to see that when they are reading they can make notes, use graphic organizers, keep a journal, and use other types of writing as a tool for their knowledge.”

Genne remained focused on reading strategies until she found the DVD of Lucy Calkins teaching writing. Through this visual representation, Genne was able to shift her thinking about the connections that writing and reading make.

In the end, she revealed that she had difficulty with comprehension so her question was deeply rooted in personal experience. Genne struggled with her creative representation. However, one of her genre was a recipe to create an effective reader because she loved to cook. After conferring with the instructor, she created a cookbook titled, *Mixing Reading and Writing*, for her creative presentation.

Participant 4

Betty is a preservice teacher who will be certified to teach EC – 6th with an ESL specialization. This district usually did not place students who were getting ESL certified; however, this semester was just the right time for Betty. She was pleased to be placed in a school with a high Hispanic population from a wide range of backgrounds. Both of her placements, grades one and three, had a large number of English learners, so she was excited to be able to apply her ESL knowledge. At this time, she had already procured a teaching job in a Spanish speaking country so she wanted to learn as much as she could about the best ways to teach writing. Betty's inquiry question was: "How will I teach writing to my English learners?" Her transformative came when she determined there were no strategies that should solely be used with English learners. She learned that the strategies are the same, but the difference is in the teacher's implementation.

Annotation 1

"I have noticed by working with 1st graders that it can be hard for all students to write their knowledge down on paper or to fully explain how they got to a conclusion."

"This information is beneficial to me and gave me a new idea of how to incorporate technology and different ways to help students, especially ELLs, to engage in expressing their ideas through art and eventually through writing."

Annotation 4

"Learning English can be extremely difficult for ELLs. There are even things as English speakers that we are not aware of."

"As a teacher I will implement writing opportunities for all students, which will also help the ELLs in the class develop their language skills in English."

In her final reflection, Betty noted, "ELLs, even though all are labeled the same, are very different. There are ELLs who are just beginning to learn English, and some ELLs who are especially proficient in English. Authentic writing should be

portrayed by real life experiences. As teachers, we need to understand EACH of our students and that EACH student needs to be treated as an individual and needs differentiated instruction.” Her creative representation was a Passport to Learning for ALL learners.

Participant 5

Patti was placed in first and third grade classrooms. She was a student who “enjoyed” everything about the methods class because she “loved to write.” After several weeks of class, she came to the realization that “you [the researcher] are using the workshop model that you want us to use.” Patti was already convinced that reading and writing workshop was the “best” way to teach. However, she admitted that she was a “visual learner” so that she did not necessarily know if she would be able to “do writing workshop” in her classroom. Patti’s inquiry question was: “How do I incorporate writing workshop in my classroom?” Her transformation was related to her own abilities. In the beginning she did not understand how to implement writing workshop because she could not envision it.

Annotation 1

“I am a very visual learner, and I constantly am creating checklists of my own, so I feel that this text really presents writer’s workshop as an approachable and useful classroom tool in a memorable manner.”

“This text is one that I plan to purchase and use in my own classroom. There are so many great ideas out there that I feel slightly overwhelmed and if I hadn’t seen this book I would have no idea where to start.”

Annotation 2

“This book gave me pictures of how to use writer’s workshop in the classroom.”

“This book gave a very insightful view on how to use writer’s workshop in the classroom. This is ‘Writer’s Workshop for Dummies.’”

In her reflection on the class, she said, “I used to think that, while writing is a necessary skill and is clearly used in everyday life, writing was an occupation that only a select few of your students would aspire to. However, in this day and age, all of your students have opportunities to be writers, regardless of whether they get published. To become an effective writing teacher, I am going to have to write for myself during writing workshop – now that I know how to incorporate it into my classroom.”

Patti's annotations and reflection demonstrated her enthusiasm for using writing workshop now that she had "seen" it. Her confidence in using this teaching format can be heard in her choice of words. Her creative representation underscored her understanding because she represented her work as a "Workshop" complete with a toolbox using the genre components to elaborate on her thinking.

DISCUSSION

We live in an ever-changing world that is moving away from traditional models of classroom instruction. To keep pace with these changes, teacher educators must reinvent the ways that instruction occurs in university courses. Incorporating the inquiry process in teacher education courses provides an instructional model that can promote curiosity among preservice teachers. Moreover, it allows the instructor to take different actions in the classroom. The instructor in this course was curious as to how to create an environment to support preservice teachers as they: (a) explored their personal questions about teaching writing, (b) became more familiar with resources related to teaching writing, (c) received support as they became inquirers and teachers, and (d) used reflection to support their learning. Further, the study investigated changes that occurred in the preservice teachers' thinking as they completed their inquiry projects.

Offering a Different Perspective: Writing Workshop

When the preservice teachers begin the class, they share stories of their prior experiences with writing instruction. Similar to other research (Grossman et al., 2000; Mahurt, 1998), these stories are riddled with experiences that have negatively impacted their beliefs and theories about writing and writing instruction. They indicate that their papers have been "bled on" or that their teacher forced them to create an outline or write in a specific format. Many of the students do not consider themselves writers nor do they believe that they can teach writing. Although research (Brouwer & Korthagen, 2005) suggests that teacher education practices have little effect on the practices that individuals use, experiencing writing workshop offers the students an alternate perspective that may disrupt their beliefs about writing and writing instruction.

Using Inquiry to See and Treat Preservice Teachers Like Professionals

Like the work of Allen (2001) and Romano (1995), the preservice teachers in this study had choice in the inquiry question. In general, their questions arose from experiences with students in their classroom placements or from their

wonderings about how to apply what they had learned from their coursework. Several students had difficulty determining their question. In those instances, the instructor assisted the students in finding their questions by conferring with them about their ideas and concerns about teaching in a manner similar to the mentors with the students in grades four through six (Allen & Swistak, 2004).

Assisting Students during the Inquiry Process

Acting as a guide for their question was not the only way the instructor supported their work. Romano (1995) and Allen (2001) recommend that the teacher be available to provide resources and assistance as students work on their projects. Although they were working with younger students, these preservice teachers needed the same type of assistance because they had little experience with guiding their own learning. Further, since they were unfamiliar with the many resources on writing, the instructor was available to identify resources that made a difference to their learning. For example, in Jo's case, instead of insisting that she change her question, she was given books that addressed emergent writers. Karen "found" the book that supported writing and science. As the "expert" in the classroom, the teacher used her knowledge of resources to provide students with books that would mediate their knowledge related to their questions. By building the reflective cycle into their annotations, the teacher monitored her student's thinking and tried to encourage further reflection through the comments that were made.

Examining Current Beliefs

Providing occasions for preservice teachers to scrutinize their current beliefs about instruction is a necessary component of teacher education coursework (Britzman, 1986; Lortie, 1975). If beliefs are not examined, then new learning may not occur prior to entering the classroom as a teacher. Through inquiry the preservice teachers in this study discovered ideas that presented a dissonance with their current beliefs. Instead of rejecting this new information, they considered how it blended with their prior knowledge and experience. These changes reflect a range of issues including: (a) learning to write is developmental; (b) writing supports content knowledge; (c) writing and reading support each other; (d) effective writing strategies are essential for all students; and (e) writing workshop is an instructional strategy that I can do.

Becoming a Thoughtful Professional

Transformation is often thought of as a dramatic change, like the caterpillar turning into the butterfly. However, Mezirow (2003) defines transformative learning

as “learning that transforms problematic frames of reference – sets of fixed assumptions and expectations (habits of mind, meaning perspectives, mindsets) – to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective, and emotionally able to change” (p. 58). This definition does not indicate an immediate change, but rather suggests that change is thoughtful and causes the individual to question their current beliefs so that there is movement towards a new frame of reference. Within this learning environment, these individuals showed signs of adapting to a different way of thinking.

CONCLUSIONS

One of the goals of a teacher education program is to develop teachers who are highly effective and continually learning about their practice. In order to build capacity in these areas, preservice teachers need multiple opportunities during their teacher education program that allow them to reflect on different theories, expand their knowledge about current issues, and explore for themselves applications in classroom settings. Teacher educators have the opportunity to influence change by providing challenging learning experiences that model effective classroom practices throughout the teacher education program so that this experience is not limited to a singular event. When taking this stance, preservice teachers are afforded the opportunity to internalize other perspectives, which may be different than the way they were taught. As they expanded their knowledge and firsthand experiences about current teaching perspectives and practices about writing and its instruction, the way they teach their future students can be impacted.

Effective instruction that includes inquiry as a construct for exploring concepts and questions can cause change. In this study preservice teachers experienced a change in their understandings about the teaching of writing. By exploring their own questions about teaching writing, they demonstrated that they could think critically about the materials they were reading, make decisions about their beliefs, and identify practices they might use in the future. Similar to Mezirow’s (2003) goals of adult education, these individuals were becoming independent in their thinking and self-directed in their actions. Being independent thinkers who know how to inform their teaching practices is an essential characteristic of a teacher.

When preservice teachers are immersed in effective writing instruction that includes elements of writing workshop, they have the opportunity to experience firsthand effective teaching practices that they can take into their classrooms. Teacher educators need to be able to assume the role of guide so that

preservice teachers can experience the full effects of this type of student-centered teaching. Using writing workshop as a frame allows teacher educators to set the conditions where preservice teachers see themselves “in charge” of their actions and can imagine themselves as successful learners and teachers of writing.

Just like the students they teach, teacher educators must examine their practices and model the use of effective teaching practices that support their growth and the growth of the future educators whom they teach. In this study one teacher educator used inquiry to determine if it would impact the preservice teachers’ thinking about teaching writing. As a result of identifying their own questions and conducting research about the teaching of writing, the preservice teachers expanded their present thinking about writing instruction. As teacher educators seek to better prepare future educators, using the inquiry process and writing workshop are practices that can make a difference.

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APPENDIX A

MULTI-GENRE PLANNING AND REFLECTIVE LOG SHEET

What Do I Need to Be Doing and When Is It Needed?

**Reflective
Notes**

Questions and overall plan – Week 7

**Read 12 articles/chapters. Remember 3 chapters can come from
Tompkins—but no more.**

3 Annotations turned in by Sunday (October 15) at 10 PM

3 Annotations turned in by October 26

3 Annotations turned in by November 2

3 Annotations turned in by November 9

Turn in all annotations again on November 30 for final scoring

(This second turn in period gives you the opportunity to revise from
the initial turning in.)

Dear Reader Letter

Topic Essay +memo—draft—November 16

Substantive Piece # 1 +memo

Substantive Piece # 2 +memo

Substantive Piece # 3 +memo

Shorter Piece #1 +memo

Shorter Piece #2 +memo

Shorter Piece #3 +memo

Reference list (made from your annotations)

Turn in final Project on December 7—Be ready to share with class.

APPENDIX B

ANNOTATION #3

Calkins, L. (1986). *The art of teaching writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

- “Human beings have a deep need to represent their experience through writing. We need to make our truths beautiful.” (p. 3)
- “Now, whether I work with children or with adults, I know that teaching writing begins with the recognition that each individual comes to the writing workshop with concerns, ideas, memories, and feelings. Our job as teachers is to listen and to help them listen.” (p. 5)
- “In our classrooms, we can tap the human urge to write if we help students realize that their lives are worth writing about, and if we help them choose their topics, their genre, and their audience.” (p. 6)
- “If our teaching is to be an art, we must remember that it is not the number of good ideas that turns our work into an art, but the selection, balance, and design of those ideas.” (p. 9)
- “For me, it is essential that children are deeply involved in writing, that they share their text with others, and that they perceive themselves as authors.” (p. 9)
- “Listening to children—taking lessons from them—is essential to the teaching of writing” (p. 10). This quote has been the most moving quote that I have read throughout my research for this project!
- “. . . writing teachers have carefully structured their classrooms so that students learn from each other as well as from their teacher.” (p. 11)
- “The writing process approach requires a radically different pace and classroom structure than we are used to in our schools.” (p. 23)

So what? I first picked this book because of the title. Then, I definitely wanted to thumb through it when I saw the author—Lucy Calkins. My kindergarten mentor teacher talks about Lucy Calkins and her strategies for writing all of the time. This book was the most interesting and intriguing book that I have read so far in my research. There were so many great direct quotes from the text and the chapters were laid out so that the majority of what I was looking at was in one area.

Now what? I think that the information in this book will give me a lot of good resources and ideas to think about when I am teaching writing. I have noticed that my teacher uses Lucy Calkins a lot, so I am hoping that I can use this book to add to my knowledge for teaching writing.

SECONDARY PRESERVICE TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND EXPERIENCES TOWARD SUSTAINED SILENT READING (SSR) IN A CONTENT AREA LITERACY COURSE

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the attitudes of two groups of secondary preservice teachers toward Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) that was offered before class for one group and during the beginning of class for the second group. This study revealed that the group of preservice teachers who read during the first 15 minutes of class preferred SSR more than those who read before class. However, there was no difference in the rating when both groups of preservice teachers were asked if they could see themselves asking students to read before class or during the beginning of class. Both groups increased their belief that SSR was worthwhile after experiencing it themselves during the course.

If we want students to read, want them to enjoy reading, and wish for them to become lifelong readers, we must give them both the freedom to choose some of the materials they read, as well as the time to read and enjoy those materials (Commeriyas, Bisplinghoff, & Olson, 2003). These two components are the essence of sustained silent reading (SSR) and are critical steps to help students become motivated to read throughout their lives (Gardiner, 2005). By allowing 15 minutes per day for reading, a teacher may promote a culture of reading and

a literate community. Students see their teacher and other students reading. They conclude that reading is a rewarding and useful endeavor.

SSR may not just be for young children, but for older students as well. Teenagers realize that their peers are reading on their own time. This may be the first time the idea that they were a part of a literate community may have occurred to them (Atwell, 1987). In contrast, for secondary students who enjoyed reading as children, but have lost sight of that enjoyment, SSR is an opportunity to become reunited with the pleasure of reading.

A hopeful sign comes from the National Education Association's (NEA, 2001) study, where it was found that many young people surveyed, described their feelings about reading outside of school positively, as "stimulating and interesting" (79% agreed), "relaxing" (87% agreed), as well as "rewarding and satisfying" (85% agreed). Moreover, according to this study, some teenagers surveyed said that they read more than ten books per year. Yet, "even for those of us surrounded by books, the culture of schooling can easily make us forget the sheer pleasure of the reading experience" (Fried, 2001, p. 142). Bintz (1993) noted that many students in his study complained about the contrast between their in-school and out-of-school reading experiences. One student confessed to staying home sick and reading all day. Schwartz (1996) concluded that for her, it was a mercy to be out of school to be able to read again.

Educators have reported the benefits of SSR on students' reading skill enhancement and their motivation to read. Yoon's (2002) meta-analytic study of SSR found that it facilitated students' attitude toward reading. By reading silently at the beginning of a class, teachers found that students settled down sooner. Gardiner (2005) recalled looking around his classroom during SSR time and observing high school students' faces of concentration. It was the first time he saw them excited as a group. Occasionally, there would be a student reading before the bell rang. His students would complain when asked to put their books away.

Researchers have found that SSR increases students' vocabulary and knowledge of sentence structure. For example, Nagy, Anderson, and Herman (1987) found that students enhanced their vocabulary ten times faster by reading than through intensive vocabulary instruction. This is because, as Nagy and Anderson (1984) assert, the key to vocabulary learning is experiencing language. Willingham (2009), an educational psychologist, believes that knowledge acquisition can be incidental through reading books and magazines for pleasure. The benefits of SSR continue into higher education. For instance, Dwyer and West (1994) conducted a study of 76 college education majors involved in SSR for 15 minutes per day, five days per week, for five weeks. As a result of this activity, they increased their reading rate. Gallik (1999) found a positive correlation

between the amount of time college students spent in recreational reading and their GPA. It is important to note, however, that according to the National Reading Panel (NRP, 2000), studies of SSR demonstrated correlation rather than causation between independent silent reading and fluency, vocabulary development, and reading comprehension.

Secondary preservice teachers need to experience and be immersed in a culture of reading. In a recent study, Daisey (2010) asked 82 secondary preservice teachers to draw their favorite reading experience. Only 17% drew themselves reading in or for school. In another study of 124 secondary preservice teachers, high school teachers were cited as the most negative influences on them as readers (Daisey, 2009). Secondary students need to see their teachers reading. This is why McCracken and McCracken (1978), who examined many SSR programs, concluded that "all adults in the classroom have to read or SSR does not work" (p. 406).

One challenge faced by educators who wish to offer SSR to their students, is finding the time to do so. As a teacher educator, I also have struggled with time constraints, to provide future secondary teachers class time to read during a semester. When I taught the secondary content area literacy course in a six-week format during the spring (when the classes met for three hour and 15 minute twice per week), there seemed to be time to devote 15 minutes to SSR at the beginning of the class. However, during a 15-week semester (when 75-minute classes met twice per week), there never seemed to be time to spare. Then one day, I sat in a middle school language arts class before a practicum observation (Daisey, 2012). I noted that students who came into the classroom before the bell rang went to their cubbyhole, retrieved their SSR books, sat, and read until the teacher began the class. I wondered how this strategy would work with secondary preservice teachers before 75-minute classes. Would preservice teachers come into class and voluntarily read before class started when they could have been on their phones or talking to classmates?

Thus, the purpose of this study was to explore the attitudes of two groups of secondary preservice teachers toward SSR when it was offered before class for one group and during the first 15 minutes of class for the second group. In addition, preservice teachers' predictions of whether they thought that they would offer SSR time to their future students and if they thought their future students would enjoy SSR were compared. The research questions that guided this study were the following:

1. Did a group of secondary preservice teachers who engaged in free reading before class report enjoying SSR more, less, or the same as a group

of secondary preservice teachers who read for the first 15 minutes of class? What reasons did they give for their enjoyment or lack of it?

2. Which group of secondary preservice teachers thought that middle and high school students would enjoy SSR more: those who read before class or those who read during the first 15 minutes of class? What reasons did they offer for their predictions of their future students' enjoyment or lack of it?
3. Which group of secondary preservice teachers rated the likelihood that they would offer SSR to their future students: those who experienced SSR before class or those who read during the first 15 minutes of class?
4. Did secondary preservice teachers think that SSR improved their vocabulary and comprehension?
5. Did secondary preservice teachers increase their rating for the value of SSR after they experienced it for a semester?
6. What percent of secondary preservice teachers read using hand-held devices?
7. What percent of preservice teachers have seen a teacher in their subject area offer SSR to the students?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Motivation is critical to learning. Campbell and Kmieciak (2004) reported that one of the top challenges of high school teachers is motivating their students to achieve literacy in their subject area. Researchers have learned that positive literacy motivation fosters reading achievement, cognitive processing, concept comprehension, and perseverance (Gambrell, 2002). Educators have found that adolescents need to understand why they should devote their time and efforts to enhance their reading ability (Atwell, 2007). When teenagers read material that is important to them, they realize why they might choose to use and become proficient in reading strategies and skills (Greenleaf, Jimenez, & Roller, 2002). Although the National Reading Panel (2000) did not include motivation and engagement as a central part of their meta-analysis, other reports, such as *Reading Next—A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy* (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006), recommended voluntary reading because it promotes student motivation. According to Ryan, Connell, and Grolnick (1992) in order for intrinsic motivation to occur an individual needs to sense relevance, competency, and autonomy. Thus, researchers have found that offering students' choice in reading is significantly correlated with intrinsic motivation (Ivey & Broaddus, 2001).

Secondary teachers face innumerable curriculum requirements, yet there is a need for room in secondary schools for the enjoyment of reading and the curriculum to coexist (Sumara, 1996; Daisey, 2010). This union would act to promote students' interest, motivation, and achievement. Of concern is the reality that some secondary preservice teachers enter a content area literacy course saying that they do not enjoy reading (Powell-Brown, 2003-2004; Daisey, 2009). Moreover, Bean (1994) reported that only 62% of his secondary preservice teachers thought about and/or could describe how they were going to increase the love of reading in their future students. Lee (2011) worries that SSR programs all too often are entrusted to teachers who have not experienced its benefits themselves.

Another issue relevant to this study is the increase of electronic reading. PricewaterhouseCooper researchers predict that by 2016, e-books will account for 50% of the U.S. book market and that physical book sales will stabilize with only small percentage increases from year to year (Publishing Unleashed, 2013). From January 2011 to January 2012, e-books sales increased by 50% for adult books and 475% for children and young adult books.

One researcher from Simba Information calculated that 20% of adults are reading e-books on a digital device (Publishing Unleashed, 2013). Yet, the initial e-book fascination is waning. The technology's first adopters, a small but enthusiastic group, embraced e-books quickly. Future converts may be more difficult to attract. A 2012 survey by Bowker Market Research indicated that only 16% of Americans have bought an e-book and that 59% say they have "no interest" in purchasing one. The researchers found that e-readers typically read genre novels. These books tend to be discarded. In contrast, readers of literary fiction and narrative nonfiction have less of an affinity for reading electronically. These books are more likely to be saved by their readers. Hence, e-books might become another form of paperbacks. This idea would correspond with the finding that readers of e-books have not stopped purchasing printed books. According to Pew Research (cited in Carr, 2013), nearly 90% of e-book readers continue to read paper volumes. Regardless of whether students prefer digital or paper books, the struggle to find time to read remains for educators, as well as teacher educators.

METHODS

Design of Study

Mix methods were used in the design of this quasi-experimental study, which took place at a Midwest university that produces many educational personnel.

Participants

Participants in this study were two groups of secondary preservice teachers who were enrolled in a required content area literacy course. The first group of 72 was enrolled during a winter semester (a 15-week course from January through April) and included 26 males and 46 females. Six African-American, three Asian, three Hispanic, and 60 Caucasian preservice teachers were among the group. The majors represented were as follows: special education (15), English (14), mathematics (11), social studies (9), Spanish (5), physical education (4), biology (4), art (3), business/marketing (1), technology (1), integrated science (1), communication arts (1), music (1), earth science (1), and physics (1).

The second group of 33 was enrolled during a spring semester (a 6-week course in May and June) with 12 males and 21 females. One African-American, one Asian, and 31 Caucasian students were in this group. The majors represented were as follows: special education (9), art (5), social studies (4), physical education (3), biology (3), music (2), English (1), Japanese (1), mathematics (1), earth science (1), French (1), home economics (1), and integrated science (1).

Context for SSR in the Secondary Content Area Literacy Course

On the first day of class, preservice teachers in the winter semester (who met twice per week for 75 minutes each class for 15 weeks) were asked to bring a pleasure reading book each day. Preservice teachers in the spring semester (who met twice per week for three hours and 15 minutes for six weeks) also were asked the first day to bring a pleasure reading book each day. Preservice teachers were asked to bring a book (either paper or digital version) rather than a magazine or newspaper in order to promote a continuity of reading. It was explained to the winter semester preservice teachers that they would read before class. On the class door, a sign was posted, “Shhhh . . . readers reading.” For the spring semester, preservice teachers were told that they would read for the first 15 minutes of class. As the instructor, I sat and read during these times also.

In both semesters, preservice teachers were not required to discuss, write, or complete any assignment related to this reading (as Lee, 2011, suggests). Fisher (2004) found that high school teachers with whom he worked struggled with this lack of accountability. But as an instructor, I stepped back. There was no teacher looking over students’ shoulders. It was time for the teacher “to tiptoe away” (Pennac, 2008, p. 12). There were no points awarded for their grades for reading. There were no “withering effects” of accounting (Pennac, 2008, p. 12). This was because, if an absorbed reader is disturbed with demands of evaluations such

as worksheets, tests, and grades, then the reading experience is likely to become thwarted. "You can't have it both ways: a reader feeling intimacy with the writer and the text, and the text being appropriated by someone else" (Feinberg, 2004, p. 65). This was reading without strings attached. There was no pizza or party. The reward was the reading and the time to read. My intent was to remind preservice teachers of the pleasure of reading, to permit them to see others reading, and to give them a chance to consider future reading instructional possibilities.

Data Collection and Analysis

Toward the end of the semester, I asked preservice teachers to complete an anonymous survey regarding their feelings about their SSR experience in the course. (See Appendix). There were both Likert-like and open-ended questions.

The Likert-like questions were analyzed using *t*-tests that compared the ratings on a scale from 1 (low) to 10 (high) by preservice teachers who read before class versus those who read for the first 15 minutes of class. The open-ended questions were analyzed by typing out all the quotes. I then read and reread the quotes looking for key words to form categories. Then categories were connected to form themes and patterns using constant comparison analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2007).

The purpose of the first open-ended question, "Did you notice anything about the class when you were reading?" was to gain insights into why preservice teacher enjoyed or did not enjoy SSR. The purpose of the second open-ended question, "Do you think that middle school and high school students would be into reading for 15 minutes at the beginning of class (*before class*) like we did? Please explain your answer," was to explore the reasons why preservice teachers would offer SSR to their future students.

For the first of these two open-ended questions, I also compared the responses of those preservice teachers who rated their enjoyment for their SSR experience as low (between 1-5) to all preservice teachers, in order to gain further insights as to why this group did not enjoy SSR. For the second open-ended question, I also compared the responses of those preservice teachers who rated their prediction of their future students' enjoyment for SSR as low (between 1-5) to all preservice teachers, in order to understand their perspective.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, the study used all self-reported data, which may cause some concerns as people tend to rate themselves higher than they really are. Second, this was done at only one university in one state. Third,

it was done with only secondary students. Finally, the author was the sole interpreter of the results.

RESULTS

Quantitative Research Questions

First, it was determined that both groups of preservice teachers enjoyed reading, as the mean score for the group that read during the first 15 minutes of class had a mean score of 8.05 while the group that read before class had a mean score of 8.01. Thus, both groups enjoyed SSR.

To answer question #1, which group enjoyed SSR the most, it was found that the group that read during the first 15 minutes of class had a mean score of 8.64 while the group that read before class had a mean score of 7.18. This difference was significant ($t = -2.64$, $df = 102$, $p = 0.0048$). Thus, the group that read during the first 15 minutes of class enjoyed the free reading the most. In addition, more preservice teachers who read before class thought that they should have had an opportunity to talk about their reading (mean 5.58, range 1-10) than those who read during class (mean 3.91, range 1-10). This difference was statistically significant ($t = -2.56$, $df = 103$, $p = 0.0119$). Also, a few preservice teachers in both semesters thought that they should have had an opportunity to write about their reading. More preservice teachers in the winter semester who read before class thought that they should have had the chance in comparison to those in the spring semester who read for the first 15 minutes of class. The means were 4.83 and 3.36, respectively. This difference was statistically significant ($t = -2.37$, $df = 103$, $p = 0.0097$). Finally, preservice teachers in neither semester wanted points or grades for their reading. The means for those who read before class was 2.49, and those who read during the beginning of class was 2.48 ($t = -0.00$, $df = 103$, $p = 0.4990$).

To answer question #2, the group that read during class (mean 8.03) thought that middle and high school students would enjoy SSR more than the group who read before class (mean 6.81). The different mean scores showed a statistical difference ($t = -2.69$, $df = 103$, $p = 0.0042$). Thus, those preservice teachers who read during class were more positive that their secondary students would enjoy SSR.

To answer question #3, which group would most likely offer SSR to their students, it was found that the group that read before class had a mean score of 7.89 while the group that read during class had a mean score of 7.79. Because there were slight difference in the means, this was not statistically different ($t = -0.19$, $df = 103$, $p = 0.4266$). Thus, both groups would most likely make available SSR and free reading to their students.

To answer question #4, it was found that both groups of preservice teachers believed that reading their choice of reading material improved both their vocabulary and their comprehension. However, for the students who read before class only 58% felt they gained vocabulary and only 64% believed their comprehension improved, while in the group that read during class 82% felt their vocabulary increased and 76% felt their comprehension increased. Thus, those who read during class felt that SSR had a more positive impact on their vocabulary and comprehension.

To answer question #5, the preservice teachers were asked to compare their beliefs about the value of SSR from the beginning to the end of the semester. The group that read before class rated their pre-beliefs to be 6.72 while their post-beliefs were 8.06. This difference was statistically significant ($t = -2.42$, $df = 32$, $p = 0.0105$). For the students who read during class, their pre-beliefs were 7.48 while their post-beliefs were 8.60. Again, this difference was statistically significant ($t = -3.43$, $df = 71$, $p = 0.0005$). Thus, both groups saw value in the free reading that was provided by SSR.

To answer question #6, about half (47%) of the preservice teachers who read before class and a third (33%) of the preservice teachers who read during class reported owning a Kindle, Nook, or read on an iPad. In addition, 37% of the preservice teachers who read before class and 5% of the preservice teachers who read during class reported that they planned to buy or use technology to read. Thus, those who read before class were more prone to embrace technology to read than those that had read during class.

To answer question #7, only 42% of preservice teachers who read before class and 33% of preservice teachers who reading during the beginning of class had ever experienced a teacher in their subject area engage their students in SSR. Thus, the majority of the students in both groups had not experiences SSR in prior classrooms.

Qualitative Research Questions

Preservice teachers responded to two open-ended questions. First, "Did you notice anything about the class when you were reading?" This question provided insights regarding preservice teachers' enjoyment for reading or the lack of it (the first research question). Second, "Do you think middle and high school students would enjoy reading for 15 minutes at the beginning of class (or before class) like we did?" This question provided insights regarding preservice teachers' prediction for use of SSR with their future students or the lack of it (the second research question).

For the first question, the following six categories of responses from preservice teachers were: Classmates were engaged, It was quiet, Some were not

reading. It was relaxed and calm, A variety of materials were read, and Nothing noticed or no answer. Preservice teachers over both semesters noted that those who enjoyed SSR time (rated their enjoyment between 6-10) in both semesters were more engaged than classmates who rated SSR low (1-5 on a scale from 1-10). (See Table 1.)

For example, one preservice teacher (who read before class) and who rated his/her SSR experience an "8" wrote, "I usually observe the class before I read. Other students were enjoying their reading." Yet, one preservice teacher who rated SSR as a "1" also thought that "people genuinely seemed engaged."

Both groups of preservice teachers noticed the quiet. One preservice teacher in the winter semester (who read before class) observed, "Silence roamed the room until the clock tower rang the hour." More preservice teachers (13%) who read before class than those who read during the first 15 minutes of class (3%) noted that some classmates were not reading. For example, a winter semester preservice teacher who rated SSR as an "8" wrote, "It was hard to get used to reading around my classmates."

Some preservice teachers noticed the relaxed and calm atmosphere in both semesters. One preservice teacher in the winter semester (when reading occurred before class) who rated SSR as a "5" explained:

I enjoyed reading before class, however I would usually get to class about 5 minutes before class started, which does not leave much time for

TABLE 1 Observed SSR Behaviors of Preservice Teachers Made by All Preservice Teachers and Those Who Rated SSR as Invaluable

	<i>Winter Semester (Read before class) N = 72</i>		<i>Spring Semester (Read 1st 15 minutes) N = 33</i>	
	All Preservice Teachers (N = 72)	Those Rating SSR Low (N = 21)	All Preservice Teachers (N = 33)	Those Rating SSR Low (N = 3)
Engaged	41.67%	28.57%	54.54%	0%
Quiet	30.55%	28.57%	33.33%	0%
Some not reading	11.11%	4.76%	3.03%	0%
Relaxed, calm	9.72%	4.76%	15.15%	0%
Variety of materials	4.17%	4.76%	6.06%	0%
No; NA	20.83%	38.10%	18.18%	66.66%

reading. However the class was so calm during/after the reading. Calm, quiet environment. Very relaxing and peaceful.

One preservice teacher who read before class and rated his/her SSR experience as an "8" reported, "I noticed that I was relaxed, and it kind of prepped me for class." Likewise, a preservice teacher who read during the first 15 minutes of class and rated his/her SSR experience a "10" noted, "It started the class in a calm manner. Our minds were ready to learn because we were relaxed." A few preservice teachers noticed the variety of materials that were read. For instance, one preservice teacher who rated SSR a "5" noted, "people were reading different things, newspaper, books, Kindles."

For the second open-ended question ("Do you think middle and high school students would enjoy reading for 15 minutes at the beginning of class (or before class) like we did?"), preservice teachers answers included the following six categories: Teenagers would enjoy, There would be problems; Choice would be important; There are time issues to resolve; There would be classroom management issues to consider; It would promote a calm beginning to class. (See Table 2.)

Those preservice teachers who predicted future students' enjoyment as high (ranged 6-10) explained why they thought so. For example, a preservice

TABLE 2 Predictions of Preservice Teachers about Teenage Students' Enjoyment of SSR

	<i>Winter Semester (Read before class) N = 72</i>		<i>Spring Semester (Read 1st 15 minutes) N = 33</i>	
	All Preservice Teachers (N = 72)	Those Predicting Low Teenagers' SSR Enjoyment (N = 16)	All Preservice Teachers (N = 33)	Those Rating SSR Low (N = 3)
Will enjoy	54.17%	25.00%	24.24%	0%
Problems	50.00%	81.25%	39.39%	100%
If choice	26.39%	6.25%	42.42%	0%
Time issues	12.50%	25.00%	6.06%	33.33%
Class management	11.11%	0%	12.12%	0%
Relaxed; calm	8.33%	0%	27.27%	0%

teacher who read during the beginning of class and rated the statement “9” explained, “I came from an 8th grade class (in a field experience last semester) where students read pleasure reading for 20 minutes at the start of everyday. They loved it!” In contrast, a preservice teacher who read before class and rated SSR a “5” said, “I’ve been a substitute in classrooms with this practice and I’ve found that students responses are extremely mixed with a range from 1-10.”

Preservice teachers who predicted their future students would enjoy SSR highly (6-10) spoke about teenagers’ ability to choose what they wanted to read. For example, a preservice teacher who read before class and rated teenagers’ enjoyment a “10” felt, “Yes, if it is something they want to read they will.” Similarly, a preservice teacher in the spring semester whose rating was also a “10” thought, “When given a choice of reading material students like to read.”

Two other categories where there were more preservice teachers who rated their predictions for their future students’ enjoyment of SSR high (6-10) included the need for classroom management and the calm atmosphere. For instance, a preservice teacher who read before class and rated teenagers’ SSR enjoyment an “8” wrote, “Each group of students is different, some may look forward to silent reading time and some may find it as a time to do nothing. It will be up to me to change that behavior.” A preservice teacher who read at the beginning of class and whose rating was an “8” wrote, “I believe most students would be open and cooperative although use of the technique should be closely monitored, especially at the start.” Regarding the calm atmosphere, a preservice teacher who read before class and whose rating was an “8” observed, “I think it’s a very relaxing and a great way to begin class, so I think that middle school students would like that. I think they need that time to relax and mentally prepare for class.” A preservice teacher who read at the beginning of class and whose rating was a “9” wrote, “We all benefit from a ‘moment to gather ourselves,’ a moment of calm and if it is at first not desired, students will learn to fill the space positively by watching others.”

In contrast, preservice teachers who rated their prediction for their future students’ enjoyment as low (1-5) foresaw problems that could detract from SSR. For instance, a preservice teacher who read before class and rated teenagers’ SSR enjoyment a “1” wrote, “I think they would be interested in a silent time but, would not like being reprimanded when not reading.” Two preservice teachers whose ratings were a “1” wrote, “They are into socializing,” and “I believe they would rather socialize with their friends in between classes than get to class early to read.” Other preservice teachers who read before class whose ratings were a “6,” and “4” respectively reported, “I think forgotten books would be an issue,” and “I feel that they may not have access to all possible

reading material.” A preservice teacher who read during the beginning of class predicted teenagers’ enjoyment for SSR was a “3” wrote, “I think they would find ways to be unproductive and not read because they would find it to be boring and pointless.”

Preservice teachers whose ratings were low (1-5) for their prediction of their future students’ enjoyment for SSR, pointed out that time issues might explain low implementation. For example, a music preservice teacher whose rating was a “5” and read before class explained, “general music class-yes, rehearsal (band, choir, jazz, orchestra), no. That’s warm up time.” Yet, a physical education preservice teacher who also read before class, whose rating for teenagers’ enjoyment of SSR was an “8” wrote, “I think it would have to be for a short time before class (5 minutes). After class they would be too concerned with changing back into regular clothes.”

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study revealed that preservice teachers, who read during the first 15 minutes of class, preferred SSR in comparison to those who read before class and thought that their future students would also. However, the results of this study do suggest that time before class was valuable and that teachers need to make the most of it.

It is interesting that those preservice teachers, who read before class and did not enjoy SSR, noticed the quiet. Perhaps they were not reading. However, this is not to say that these preservice teachers did not enjoy reading throughout their lives. Perhaps, they preferred to read on their own terms and alone. A third of the preservice teachers, who did not enjoy SSR, predicted that their future students would prefer to socialize than to read. Perhaps they would have preferred this themselves.

This study suggests the value of SSR as a calm transition as well as an opportunity to read. This could help to explain why some preservice teachers enjoyed SSR. I believe to walk into a quiet classroom sanctuary has value. In *Pursuit of Silence* (2010), Prochnik explained the need for and power of silence to calm the human spirit. He believes that his love of silence is connected to his passion for books. Reading is a retreat and a meditative act, filling or replenishing the mind (Ulin, 2010).

The results of this study found that many preservice teachers felt that they improved their vocabulary and comprehension through SSR. Perhaps this was because during SSR, preservice teachers had control over how and what they were thinking. They were conscious enough to choose what they paid attention

to and motivated to construct meaning (Jacobs, 2011). Empowerment is the first step to the construction of knowledge (Hanrahan, 1999). This is to say, reading had become an avocation rather than a vocation (Jacobs, 2011). This could be another reason why preservice teachers enjoyed SSR.

A few preservice teachers were happy to discover that they could continue their recreational reading with just a few minutes twice per week. It is lamented that readers in the general public are in the minority (Carlsen & Sherrill, 1988). Yet, Jacobs (2011) notes two studies where it was found that reading was not a diminishing past time. For example, a Northwestern University study reported that of the people it surveyed, 46% of them predicted that they would read more in the future, 3% thought less, while 51% said the same. Burke (1999) encouraged his students to get into the reading habit by reading even a little bit daily. He tells his students that reading is a present that can be opened continually throughout their lives. A photo on the back of Kindig's (2012) book, *Connecting Middle Schoolers to Books: Choosing to Read*, shows students holding signs of the number of books each has read during the year. My intent during a content area literacy course was to provide an opportunity for preservice teachers to read, so that they might enhance their value for SSR after experiencing, and replicate it for their future students.

Preservice teachers' platform for reading was evolving. A MIT futurist predicted that in five years we will read almost no paper books, just digital devices (Charlton & Henderson, 2011). The use of hand-held devices seems to be on the verge of a dramatic increase, at least for those preservice teachers who read before class.

Preservice teachers need to be walked through the SSR experience to decide for themselves its worth. This study suggests that attitudes toward SSR were malleable since the rating for SSR increased significantly over the semester. Preservice teachers increased their value for SSR after they had experienced it themselves. Few preservice teachers reported seeing a teacher in their subject area offer their students SSR time. Roe and Vukelich (1998) found that teacher education classes overshadowed the influence of preservice teachers' previous negative literacy experiences. In a previous study with secondary preservice teachers, a statistically significant increase was found in the number of preservice teachers who predicted that their future students would enjoy the reading in their instruction. This was after these preservice teachers were walked through the activities themselves in a required secondary content area literacy course (Daisey, 2009). Thus, teacher educators are encouraged to develop a culture of reading through SSR and to consider the value of the few minutes of time before class begins.

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APPENDIX

(*Note:* There were two versions of this survey: one for the preservice teachers who read before class began, which appears here in regular font, and one version for preservice teachers who read during the first minutes of class, which appears here in italics.)

Sustained Silent Reading Survey

1. Throughout my life I have enjoyed reading.
Did not enjoy 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Enjoyed
2. How much did you enjoy reading before class began (*during the first 15 minutes of class*)?
Did not enjoy 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Enjoyed
3. Did you notice anything about the class when you were reading?
Yes No
- 3a. If so, what was it?
4. Do you think middle school and high school students would be into reading before class began (*during the first 15 minutes of class*) like we did?
No 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Yes
5. Please explain your answer to question 4.
6. Could you see giving your students in your future classes time to read before class began (*during the first 15 minutes of class*)?
No 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Yes
7. Do you think we should have:
 - 7a. Talked about what you read?
No 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Yes
 - 7b. Written about what you read?
No 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Yes

- 7c. Received points/grades
No 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Yes
8. Have you ever seen teachers in your content area ask students to read their choice of reading material before a class began (*during the first 15 minutes of class*)?
Yes No
9. Do you think reading before class (*during the first 15 minutes*) helped to improve:
9a. Your vocabulary Yes No
9b. Your comprehension Yes No
10. At the beginning of the semester when you heard that we were going to read before class began each day (*for the first 15 minutes of class*), did you think it was going to be worthwhile?
Yes No
11. At this point in the semester, do you think that reading your choice of material before class (*during the first 15 minutes of class*) has been worthwhile?
Yes No
12. Do you own a Kindle, Nook or read on an iPad?
Yes No
13. Do you think you will buy a Kindle, Nook, or iPad for reading?
Yes No

TRANSFORMING
LITERACY
PRACTICES FROM
A STUDENT
PERSPECTIVE

PERCEPTIONS OF WRITING AMONG SECOND GRADERS IN AN EXEMPLARY SCHOOL: LANGUAGE AND GENDER ISSUES

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Abstract

Heeding the call for more research on writing development among young English learners (ELs), this report addresses the writing dispositions among second grade students who experienced a year-long, school-wide focus on writing. In a formative experiment, 70 students participated in a comparison study of an intervention called Modeled Writing that was designed to support the language development and expository writing of ELs. Responses to three items of the Primary Writer Perception Survey indicated that the students remained positive about writing through the school year, evaluated themselves generally high as competent writers, and enjoyed writing on a variety of topics and genres. However, the Modeled Writing intervention program seemed most effective for EL boys indicating that language and gender are factors in writing development that need further research and instructional consideration.

Among its many findings and recommendations, August and Shanahan's (2008) landmark report on literacy development of ELs noted the lack of and need for more attention to the writing development of second language learners in U.S. schools. Only one of the four writing studies selected for review in the Report of National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth focused on elementary school students (August & Shanahan). The scarcity of research targeting beginning EL writing may be due to the oral language proficiency focus, with a delayed focus on writing. Or, it may mirror the instructional challenge to successfully equip young ELs to express themselves in

written English while they are acquiring oral proficiency in English. Regardless of the causes, the writing development of younger students, especially ELs, has remained an undermined field of literacy research. Yet, ELs are the fastest growing population in U.S. public schools (Kindler, 2002) and writing is arguably the most complex of the language skills excepted of students across content areas.

The Davis et al. (1999) study recognized that cross-linguistic transfer plays an important role in second-language writing. Thinking in Spanish and writing in English obviously complicates an already challenging task for younger students. The existing research is not sufficient to afford substantive conclusions about writing among ELs (August & Shanahan, 2008). However, researchers have argued for more emphasis on writing, for modified instructional methods to support ELs, and for the elevation of expectations for ELs' writing (Mohr & Mohr, 2009). In addition, related research supports general instruction that promotes the interaction of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in a mutually reinforcing manner (August, 2002; Echevarria, Short, & Powers, 2006). Writing may be the most challenging of these language domains as it demands integration of word-level skills, cognitive abilities, and higher-order skills (August & Shanahan). ELs must develop low-level transcription skills, along with genre-specific discourses in order to communicate their ideas in English (Berninger et al., 1992). The focus on form that characterizes many writing programs complicates the process and actually creates more problems. This can be seen in the decrease of motivation to write. Another result of these low expectations is that neither the teachers nor the students view the ELs as competent writers (Mohr & Mohr). And, what ELs have to say is often reduced or obscured by how to say it in the format that is expected.

With the state-mandated writing assessments, teachers and students see writing as a product and the value of writing as a cognitive process is minimized. Instead, writing should be viewed as a developmental process that moves writers forward in their abilities to communicate their ideas and attitudes about writing. This process is more recursive than linear, but the goal is to acquire skills, knowledge, and positive dispositions related to writing. These components do not necessarily develop proportionally or in concert. In other words, writers could actually gain writing skills (e.g., handwriting fluency, spelling, mechanics, etc.) yet lag in their abilities to organize their compositions or suffer setbacks in their views of themselves as accomplished writers (Pajares, 2003).

In some significant ways, second-language writing development develops similarly to that in the first language (August & Shanahan, 2008; Leki, Cumming, & Silva, 2008). ELs benefit from structured writing instruction that explicitly teaches written communication skills. Additionally, as with native-English

speakers, ELs respond well to feedback that helps them to revise their writing. Moreover, coverage of a wide variety of writing genres may stimulates students' interests in expressing themselves and their ideas and can connect students to various kinds of reading, which can be mutually reinforcing to their composing. Therefore, students' attitudes about themselves as writers can be influenced by their writing instruction, the opportunities to write, the feedback that they receive, as well as their exposure to various genres, and the kinds of assessments that are used to evaluate and inform their writing. In addition, ELs' writing dispositions are influenced by their levels of language proficiency in both their first language and English. ELs' writing requires more attention to expanding their vocabulary, orthographic knowledge, and use of syntax while expressing themselves on paper (Leki, et al.).

Writing as a Developmental Process

Writing development takes time and extended practice, especially among younger students who are still developing the subordinate skills of handwriting and spelling fluency. It requires teachers to be models, guides, assessors, and cheerleaders of writing. Yet, many teachers do not deem themselves strong writers and thus must promote writing skills and proficiencies despite some doubt in their own abilities (Draper, Barksdale-Ladd, Radencich, 2000). School-wide efforts to focus on writing can attend to these issues by providing professional development training, curriculum, resource materials, and allocated time to plan and deliver instruction. Programs such as *Write from the Beginning* (Buckner, 2000) and *Write to the Future* (Buckner & Johnston, 2002) have been adopted to provide teachers and students with a framework for writing. These particular programs use visual tools, called Thinking Maps (Hyerle, 2004), to help writers organize their ideas on concrete structures (e.g., bubble maps, tree maps, flow maps) as pre-writing activities. Buckner (2011) claims that her developmental process for guiding students to respond to a prompt using her method for visual planning results in better organized compositions. However, teacher reviews of the *Write from the Beginning* (WFTB) program are mixed because its implementation can be viewed as formulaic (ProTeacher Community, 2013).

For decades, however, several writing methods have been promoted among native-English-speaking populations and leveraged for use with ELs. For example, the Language Experience Approach (LEA; Hall, 1999) is frequently noted as an appropriate writing model for ELs because it affords the integrated use of language and privileges what students say. Guided Writing is another documented writing method that is espoused by Meeks and Austin (2003) as appropriate for all levels of student writers. Interactive Writing (Button, Johnson, & Ferguson,

1996; Collum, 1996; McCarrier, Pinnell, & Fountas, 2000) is a related term describing the teacher-modeling and the sharing of writing with students as an active process.

Perhaps a lesser known approach is the Picture Word Induction Model (Calhoun, 1999; Wood & Tinajero, 2002), which uses pictures to generate language that becomes the premise for written text. In these related approaches, teachers and students engage in shared writing experiences and then use the written product to examine a variety of linguistic elements. These approaches all entail writing-related elements that are shared, guided, or modeled by teachers, then supported in students.

Modeled Writing

Modeled Writing (MW) (Mohr & Mohr, 2009) is a brief, teacher-directed lesson framework that incorporates a context-based discussion (Saunders & Goldenberg, 1999) that ELs can use to “launch” a writing assignment. It is a customized writing process utilizing aspects of the LEA, interactive writing, and sentence dictation that includes eight steps.

1. **Situated Talk.** The teacher initiates a discussion of an experience, a picture or text, (e.g., how a snowflake is shaped) allowing for rehearsal of English vocabulary, the sharing of thoughts and ideas, generation of questions and related sentences. This instructional conversation allows for student input and encourages the use of listening and speaking skills.
2. **Vocabulary Brainstorming or Word Web.** The teacher elicits and records 8–10 key vocabulary words that were generated during the situated talk. The teacher may ask the students to repeat the pronunciation of these words and use them in sample sentences. The teacher may also select a few of the words to feature in a word web, showing students how key terms are related to other words. (e.g., *snow*, *snowing*, *snowflake*, *snowed*, *snow-white*, etc.).
3. **Modeled Sentence Writing.** After the oral discussion and focus on key words, students are encouraged to generate several sentences related to the experience, picture or text. Recording on chart paper or white board, the teacher writes a composite of the student-generated sentences, helping to refine these initial sentences so that they serve as an introduction for further writing. As the teacher writes, he or she can highlight pronunciation, grammatical structures, key words,

and spelling patterns. Students should participate in the sentence generation as much as possible, spelling words, clarifying word endings, etc. The teacher can use think-aloud comments to address expository discourse, various mechanical and orthographical elements, such as plural endings, compound words, or the need for a capital letter (e.g., *Snowflakes are beautiful. Snowflakes have six matching sides.*)

4. Mini-lesson/Language Analysis. The drafted sentences provide an opportunity for a brief analysis of similarities and differences between English and students' first languages. For example, the teacher can demonstrate how to attend to cognates or point out spelling patterns particular to English, such as "ng" used after short, single vowels (e.g., snowing).
5. Rereading. The next step is a shared rereading of the sentences. This brings the parts back to a whole and allows students to develop reading fluency (Hastings-Gongora, 1993). Students are encouraged to be able to read the sentences successfully and in collaboration with their peers. Mastery of these sentences prepares student to use them for their writing.
6. Sentence Dictation. Students apply what they know (and remember) to record the sentences, which have been removed from sight. The teacher repeats the sentences in word phrases slowly and distinctly so that students can attend to their spelling and mechanics.
7. Adding More. After the dictation of the shared sentences, students write additional sentences related to the topic. Students are challenged to write their own ideas that build upon the shared beginning. Because some students write faster than others, allowing students to illustrate their work is one way to manage this difference and extend the activity, if necessary. This is an important step because it allows the students to use words and pictures to show what they know about the instructional topic. It also provides the teacher with examples of individually generated sentences that can be used as diagnostic tools to target future instruction.
8. Individual Instruction. If time allows, individual students read back the sentences to the teacher who responds to students' needs, asks questions, or makes comments to extend the text. At this point, reminders about vocabulary, mechanics, and spelling patterns can be addressed with individual students and the teacher can note which writing elements to target in instruction.

A Classroom Example

One example of the MW approach is when the author consulted with second-grade teachers about their science curriculum and decided to target a unit on gravity in some MW sessions. To begin, the researcher conducted a brief experiment in which she used a small blow dryer and ping pong balls to demonstrate the force of air to lift the ping pong balls off the surface of the blow dryer. The second graders were impressed with how the force of air caused the balls to “dance” above the blow dryer. This quick demonstration was a shared experience that led to a discussion about force and gravity. The author guided the discussion and using the steps to the MW method, helped students write sentences describing the experiment. The students went on to analyze and reread the sentences before writing them down on paper and adding to them to generate an informational paragraph. In the following example, Daniela, a seven-year-old, Spanish-speaking EL, wrote the first three sentences from memory, based on the group’s shared writing and teacher dictation, but then added her own three sentences to complete the task.

*A force is the power to push or pull. Air can push up. Gravity pulls down.
The hair driyer pulled up the ping pong ball. It was up for a little whle
and was danced in the air. It fell on the grownd when the ping pong ball
wasn't near the hair driyer.*

Daniela’s example shows that the MW process can help students, including ELs to communicate their ideas in declarative sentences—writing, analyzing, and rehearsing those sentences—and record them successfully. The three additional sentences show Daniela’s ability to extend the paragraph, communicate her understanding, and apply her developing spelling and writing knowledge. Her extended writing shows some confusion about English orthography that the teacher can use to plan subsequent instruction. Most importantly, Daniela was proud that she could write six sentences to describe the experiment and communicate her knowledge in English.

Research Focus

The MW approach as described here largely targets word-level items for students in the earlier stages of English language development. The process may be modified according to students’ needs and teaching goals. The goal in this case was to implement this version of MW with young ELs over an extended period of time to determine the impact of the intervention on students’ attitudes, language,

spelling, and writing development. What follows describes and reports just one aspect of a larger study and answers the following research question: How does the use of MW as a complementary writing approach influence students' perceptions of themselves as writers?

METHOD

Context

This research report relates one aspect of a year-long formative study (Reinking & Bradley, 2008) with seven second-grade classrooms in an exemplary school in the Southwest U.S. The selected elementary school had received Exemplary status based on state test scores the summer before the study. The school principal was a teacher trainer and promoter of *Write from the Beginning* (WFTB; Buckner, 2000). He led the school-wide effort to focus on writing and participated in the district's efforts to promote writing achievement. At the time, the WFTB program for primary grades incorporated the use of basic graphic organizers, called Thinking Maps, to organize personal narratives (Hyerle, 2004). Thus, there was a school-wide focus on narrative writing based on teacher-determined narrative prompts.

The school collected student writing samples and related data at the beginning, middle, and end of the year. The researcher met with the school principal to discuss the school's success, its focus on writing, and the WFTB program. The researcher proposed an additional emphasis on expository writing to be delivered in a quasi-experimental manner. The principal agreed to allow the researcher to employ her version of MW with second graders because writing was being emphasized at this level, it offered a proportionately larger number of students, and there were no state-mandated testing requirements to interfere with instruction. The second-grade teachers comprised a newly reconfigured team and welcomed the researcher as a member of its language arts program. The researcher met with the principal and the teachers frequently to discuss the project, plan assessments, and to share feedback.

Participants

The participating elementary school was a K-4 program with approximately 480 students. The school's percentage of economically disadvantaged students was 56%. Two of the seven second-grade classes were bilingual (Spanish-English) classrooms. However, Spanish-speaking ELs were also distributed among the other five classes. Approximately 51% of these 105 second graders were Hispanics, with approximately 40% (42 of 105 students) identified as limited-English proficient. Although there were seven second-grade classrooms, there were eight

second-grade teachers, all with several years of experience. (One of the classes was team-taught by two special education teachers who shared responsibility for several special needs students.) Although all second graders were interviewed as part of this formative experiment, 70 students (approximately 67% of the second graders) provided consent to participate in the study.

Study Goals

This researcher sought first to observe the writing development of second graders in a school with a district-wide focus on narrative writing to understand how younger ELs develop as writers and to consider instructional methods to support writing development and dispositions toward writing. The researcher was able to observe the implementation of the WFTB program in the seven classrooms from the first day of school until the last day during the 2009-2010 school year.

The goals of the year-long study were to compare the writing development and achievement of ELs and native-English-speaking second graders, explore ways to enhance expository writing instruction, monitor students' attitudes about themselves as writers, and to assess measures of writing development beyond the planned program assessments. The role of the researcher was to provide the MW experience focusing on informational writing for selected second graders in four classrooms.

The researcher accessed the school's literacy assessment data for the second graders participating in the study and administered additional assessments. The researcher attended the language arts time (approximately two hours) daily for the first semester, then two or three days a week during the spring term, essentially teaching as a member of the language arts instructional team. Initially, the researcher observed in all seven classrooms and administered early assessments: the Primary Writer Perception Survey (PWPS), English and Spanish spelling tests, and the Test of Written Language (TEWL).

At the beginning of the year, the researcher taught lessons to review handwriting as a means to get to know students and function as a part of the grade-level team. Once approval was received to conduct the study by both the researcher's university and the district, the researcher initiated the MW program in four classrooms. The MW program using informational writing was delivered in both bilingual classrooms and two other second-grade classrooms in cooperation with the respective classroom teachers who kept responsibility for the WFTB instruction. Thus, the researcher spent over 200 hours in the classroom, but her 30-minute MW intervention was delivered twice a week from October until June. Each MW group received approximately 12 hours of expository instruction across 24 weeks. The MW samples generated by the participating

students were collected, but the researcher did not grade the students' written work during the intervention. No direct instruction of expository writing was included in the second-grade curriculum, so the control group focused solely on personal narratives.

The MW promoted by the researcher provided a shared experience for oral language discussion, followed by co-constructed expository sentences about the day's topic that were reread, then analyzed, and reviewed before being removed from sight. The researcher would then dictate the co-constructed sentences to students to write the sentences as best they could. Students were challenged to extend the modeled text with sentences of their own and draw an accompanying picture. This finale allowed students who finished quickly to work quietly (on their drawings) while other students completed the writing portion. The researcher would also use this time to walk around and have students read their work aloud to her and to answer questions and make comments. Thus, the researcher functioned as a writing coach to the students participating in the project.

Primary Writer Perception Survey

This current report focuses only on the measurement used to monitor students' perceptions of themselves as writers during this formative experiment. The researcher administered a five-item survey to all second graders ($N = 105$) at the beginning and end of the school year. The Primary Writer Perception Survey (PWPS) (Mohr & Mohr, 2009) was designed specifically for this study to engage students in a conversation about writing and to elicit students' responses to the following prompts:

1. What does a good writer do?
2. How much do you like to write? (With options provided)
3. What helps you to be a good writer?
4. What do you like to write about?
5. How would you describe yourself as a writer? (With options provided)

Students ($N = 105$) were individually interviewed using the five survey items in the first and last two weeks of the year. The researcher asked the questions orally in English or Spanish depending on each student's preference and recorded each student's answers on a record sheet. (To offset any concerns about the interview procedures, the researcher told the students that she was writing down what they told her so that she could remember it later.) The interview format was friendly and somewhat informal in that the researcher met with students at their desks,

in the hallway, or at tables in the school cafeteria and included conversational courtesies and some follow-up questions and comments when time allowed.

Data Analysis

The researcher entered the students' responses to Questions 2 and 5 using a Likert-scale, into an Excel spreadsheet and computed descriptive statistics. The higher the score, the more positive the student responses were to the question. For Question 4, the researcher listed and tallied the students' responses according to their language status and group assignment. (L1s represents the native-English speakers.) Responses to Questions 1 and 3 are not included in this analysis.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents the numbers of students participating in the study delineated by gender and treatment group. The findings that follow relate to Questions 2, 4, and 5.

TABLE 1 Second Graders Participating in Study by Group and Gender

Groups	ELs	L1s	Total
MW Group			
Girls	14	8	22
Boys	11	5	16
Total	25	13	38
Control Group			
Girls	4	16	20
Boys	4	8	12
Total	8	24	32
Grand Total	33	37	70

Question 2: How much do you like to write?

This question asked students to report how much they liked to write from a list of responses representing increasing intensity, essentially a five-item Likert-scale ranging from "Don't like to write" to "Love to write." As shown in Table 2 the mean scores of both the MW and Control groups were comparable and relatively high, evidencing that these second graders were rather positive about writing at the beginning of the year. The Control group's mean score initially exceeded that of the MW students.

TABLE 2 Pre/Post-Responses to Question 2 and Mean Scores

	Beginning of Year MW Group	Beginning of Year Control Group	End of Year MW Group	End of Year Control Group
Don't like to write	3	2	1	0
Like to write a little	3	1	1	4
Like to write sometimes	4	9	7	9
Like to write a lot	16	4	6	3
Love to write	12	15	20	16
Mean Score	3.82	3.94	4.21	3.97

The last two columns in Table 2 show the students' PWPS responses to Question 2 at the end of the year. Both mean scores increased showing that the students continued to enjoy writing during the program, but the increase was greater for the students in the MW group (+.39 versus +.03). A comparison of the students by group revealed that the majority of the students in the MW group reported that they loved to write at the end of the school year, while only half of those in the Control group reported the same. Perhaps most noteworthy is that scores from all but one boy in the MW group showed an increase on Question 2 at the end of the year, evidencing practical significance on this item.

Table 3 below compares the pre/post scores by gender. It is interesting to note that girls in both groups were positive about writing at the beginning and the end of the year-long program with modest increases from beginning to end. However, only the boys in the MW group had an increase in their interest in writing from beginning to end. The boys in the Control group reported decreased interest in writing in their post-survey. In addition, a comparison of native English speakers (L1s) and the ELs provides a more intriguing picture. The mean scores for ELs in both groups increased from the pre- to post-administrations. However, scores for native speakers in the MW group increased while scores in the Control group decreased.

TABLE 3 Question 2 Mean Scores for Gender and Language Groups

Sub-Groups	MW		Control	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Girls	4.00	4.24	4.32	4.45
Boys	3.56	4.21	3.33	3.17
ELs	4.00	4.20	3.43	4.00
L1s	3.46	4.30	4.08	3.96

Question 4: What do you like to write about?

As shown in Table 4, when asked about favorite writing topics, the MW group expressed more diversity in what they like to write about. The MW group of students reported more interest in animals, activities, and writing letters. They also expressed a sense of genre and audience. From pre- to post-survey, the MW group increased in the number and variety of writing topics/genres (i.e., 1.05 mentions per student at the beginning of the year to 1.37 at the end of the year).

TABLE 4 Percentages of Students Naming Preferred Writing Topics by Group

Topic	MW Beginning of the Year	MW End of the Year	Control Group Beginning of the Year	Control Group End of Year
Stories	25%	32%	43%	42%
Self	10%	8%	14%	11%
Animals	33%	20%	23%	8%
Activities	5%	8%	0%	0%
Things	15%	6%	9%	8%
Letters	10%	2%	0%	5%
Poems	0%	8%	6%	8%
Other	2%	20%	6%	11%

The Control group students reflected the school program's focus on personal narratives. Approximately 20% of the suggested preferences among the MW group were not among the options noted by the Control group students. In addition, they included songs, comic books, biographies, and jokes (written under Other). The Control group also made fewer suggestions (38 versus 52) and were more restricted in genre. From pre- to post-survey, the control group increased in number and variety of writing topics/genres, but to a lesser extent (i.e., 1.09 topics per student at the beginning of the year to 1.19 at the end).

Question 5: How would you describe yourself as a writer?

The PWPS interview ended with the fifth question, which asked students to describe themselves as writers by selecting from a set of descriptors. Table 5 (column 1 & 2) shows the distribution of students' responses at the beginning of the year. Essentially half the students in both groups initially described themselves as great writers. These positive appellations correlate with the positive responses to Question 2, asking how much the students like to write.

TABLE 5 Students' Descriptions of Themselves as Writers

	Beginning of the Year MW	Beginning of the Year Control Group	End of the Year MW	End of the Year Control Group
Not Very Good	1 (3%)	2 (7%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)
An Okay Writer	7 (18%)	7 (22%)	7 (18%)	9 (28%)
A Good Writer	5 (13%)	5 (16%)	8 (21%)	5 (16%)
A Very Good Writer	6 (16%)	2 (7%)	8 (21%)	6 (19%)
A Great Writer	19 (50%)	15 (48%)	14 (37%)	12 (37%)
Mean Group Scores	3.92	3.67	3.71	3.65

Interestingly, as shown in Table 5 column 3 & 4, mean scores for their descriptions as writers decreased for both groups at the end of the year. Fewer students in the MW group described themselves as great writers in May. Several students in the MW group shifted from the upper two categories into the middle category, describing themselves as good writers.

The mean scores for both groups decreased on their personal estimation as writers, but the decrease is more marked among the MW students. Table 6 compares the sub-groups, showing that at the beginning of the year, girls were more positive in their responses than boys. At the end of the year, the EL boys in the Control group scored markedly lower than the other sub-groups, but scores for boys and L1s in the MW group increased.

TABLE 6 Question 5 Mean Scores for Gender and Language Groups

Groups	MW		Control Group	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Girls	4.35	3.63	4.05	4.00
Boys	3.31	3.79	3.08	3.08
ELs	4.00	3.52	3.57	3.75
L1s	3.77	4.10	3.71	3.63

DISCUSSION

In general, these second graders were excited about being writers and sustained their positive view of writing throughout the academic year during which the school, teachers, and a researcher focused on developing writing proficiencies. Given the less-positive attitudes that older students demonstrate related to writing (Pajares, 2003), the main findings are encouraging.

When asked, “How much do you like to write”, 74% of both the MW and the Control groups were positive about writing at the beginning and the end of the year. However, only the mean scores of the MW group went up from pre- to post-administrations for this question. All sub-groups of the MW group had very comparable, and positive, mean scores at the end of the year, but the greatest increase in mean scores for sub-groups was for EL boys. Interestingly, while responses to Question 2 increased overall, responses to Question 5 decreased for both groups. Knowing which students deemed themselves as lower on the scale (Question 5) could help teachers identify students who may need some encouragement and support, although it would be unreasonable to expect all students to like writing or evaluate themselves as strong writers on a sustained basis. In addition, the more conservative estimations of themselves as writers may reflect some students’ maturity in that some may realize that being a good writer is difficult to achieve and they are modest about claiming this for themselves. Thus, a decrease in self-estimations about writing need not be a negative finding.

Fortunately, the Spanish-speaking second graders in this study were generally quite positive about themselves as writers, indicating that there are both gender and language/cultural differences among these second-grade writers. Customized MW focusing on expository writing appears to have had a positive effect on the attitudes of second-grade writers, especially EL boys while sustaining the enthusiasm that girls brought to the task. It is difficult to untwine the effects of the writing instruction in this context, but the positive affect among students, especially boys, found here may relate to the focus on expository writing and the shared experiences that preceded it for the MW group. While the school-wide program promoted the extensive use of personal narratives, students seemed to enjoy the hands-on experiences, such as cutting out snowflakes, making clay pots, drawing bluebonnets, and describing field trips that characterized the shared experiences of the MW group. They were very engaged in talking and writing expository discourse around these sessions. Further research and instruction should pursue primary-students’ interest in informational writing to better understand the value of approaches like MW, particularly for ELs and males.

LIMITATIONS

The design and implementation of the PWSP Survey supported the goals of the described formative experiment and served to acknowledge and monitor students’ self-perceptions about writing development. However, there are limitations to its role in this study. The use of five simple questions limits the amount of data collected and second-graders are less likely to understand and communicate

awareness of themselves as developing writers than are older, more experienced students. These students may have been overly positive about their writing, given the one-on-one interview format where they talked individually with the researcher. Simple survey items that use a five-point scale of responses, although appropriate for this age-group afford less definitive analyses and there were some missing data due to student absences that could have compromised validity. The use of descriptive statistics likewise reduces the interpretation of the data and limits the findings from this relatively small group of students. Importantly, the small sizes of the sub-groups restrict the interpretation of the findings. Too offset some of these limitations, the researcher completed all the survey interviews and communicated in English or Spanish to best determine students' responses.

CONCLUSION

Related research indicates that students' confidence in their writing capabilities influences their writing motivation as well as various writing outcomes in school (Pajares, 2003) and that girls report more writing confidence than boys in the earlier grades. Teachers need to find ways to increase students' self-perceptions, as personal perceptions influence "the choices students make, the effort they expend, the perseverance with which they approach new tasks, and the anxiety they experience" (Pajares, 2003, p. 151). In addition, personal perceptions are often lower for EL students, which can contribute to their "at-riskness" (O'Hare, 1992).

Language minority students face enormous challenges to develop written English and may be more susceptible to being discouraged about their progress. However, this study showed that informational writing helped to sustain motivation and its positives findings related to boys are noteworthy and encouraging. Educators seeking to promote early writing development, particularly among ELs, need to investigate ways to sustain growth and student motivation over time. Utilizing a self-perception instrument and communicating in person with students about their development, in conjunction with customized writing interventions and programmatic instruction that support writing across subject areas, can support these critical goals.

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SELF-EFFICACY OF GRADUATE-LEVEL READING STUDENTS: DOES PROGRAM AND COURSE CONTENT MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to measure change in students' self-efficacy from the beginning to the end of their respective graduate-level reading preparation program. Students in the Masters of Reading and Reading Endorsement programs at one university completed the Reading Teacher Self-efficacy Scale (Haverback & Parault, 2011) at the beginning and at the end of their program. They also completed an end-of-program survey in which they identified the activity they believe most contributed to their feelings of self-efficacy related to teaching reading. The results of an analysis of these surveys will be presented and implications for future research will be discussed.

With the implementation of a new Reading Endorsement program at the author's university, the question of how graduate-level teacher education programs impact students' perceived self-efficacy related to teaching reading had taken on new importance. Self-efficacy refers to one's beliefs in his or her own abilities to perform specific tasks well; in the case of teachers, self-efficacy refers to their belief in their ability to positively impact students through their teaching. Already offered was a Master's Degree in Education program focusing on preparing teachers to work as reading specialists in K-12 schools; the addition of the Reading Endorsement program made it possible for these graduates to work with K-12 students in the area of reading, but without spending as much time preparing for it at the university. Though only graduates of the Master's program

would be qualified to work as reading specialists, graduates from both programs (Master's and Reading Endorsement), would be considered by the state to be highly qualified to work with K-12 students in the area of reading in the general education classroom. Without the additional preparation via coursework and field experiences would the self-efficacy related to teaching reading of students in the Reading Endorsement program be as high as the self-efficacy of graduates of the Master's program?

The self-efficacy of teachers is an important concept to research as it can impact teachers' work in the classroom (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk-Hoy, & Hoy, 1998), as well as the work of their K-12 students (Bandura, 1997; Barkley, 2006; Gibson & Dembo, 1984). Likewise, the author was interested in determining which course activity, regardless of program, contributed most to the graduate students' increased self-efficacy.

The following three questions framed this research project:

1. Does self-efficacy related to teaching reading among candidates in graduate-level reading programs change from the beginning to the end of their respective program?
2. Is there a difference in students' reported self-efficacy related to teaching reading among Masters' of Reading Education and Reading Endorsement programs?
3. Is there a specific program factor that students view as attributable to an increased sense of self-efficacy?

Two hypotheses were made prior to the start of the study. First, it was hypothesized that reported self-efficacy would increase over time for all students, regardless of the program, but that students enrolled in the Masters of Reading Education program would have higher end-of-program self-efficacy than those from the graduate-level Reading Endorsement program. Second, the additional field work completed by students in the Masters of Reading program would be noted as the specific program factor contributing most to students' increased feelings of self-efficacy related to teaching reading.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research was framed by social cognitive theory and Bandura's concept of self-efficacy. Bandura (1997) defines self-efficacy as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (p. 3) and is derived from social cognitive theory, which emphasizes

the idea that people are proactive and organize, regulate, and reflect in order to shape their own learning. Self-efficacy, when applied to teachers, is known as teacher efficacy (Armor et al., 1976). Plourde (2002) defined personal teaching self-efficacy as a belief in one's ability to teach effectively. High self-efficacy beliefs of teachers can positively impact their work within the classroom (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk-Hoy, & Hoy, 1998), as well as the work of their K-12 students (Bandura, 1997; Barkley, 2006; Gibson & Dembo, 1984). Teacher self-efficacy is related to "the attitude to use a wide variety of teaching materials, the desire to search for new teaching formulae and the use of innovative teaching methods" (de la Torre Cruz & Casanova Arias, 2007, p. 643). Conversely, preservice and inservice teachers exhibiting a low sense of self-efficacy are likely to suffer stress or leave their educational program or position in the K-12 schools (O'Neill & Stephenson, 2012; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007; Ware & Kitsantas, 2007); therefore, self-efficacy is an important concept to research.

SELF-EFFICACY, TEACHING READING, AND FIELD EXPERIENCES

Bandura (1994) identifies participation in mastery field experiences (i.e., fieldwork) as the most effective way one can create high self-efficacy. Research indicates that students and reading educators alike place high importance on fieldwork associated with literacy coursework (Helfrich & Bean, 2011; Hoffman & Roller, 2001). At the preservice level, self-efficacy related to teaching reading is influenced by participation in a field experience (Haverback & Parault, 2011); field experiences affect beliefs and attitudes about teaching reading (Duffy & Atkinson, 2001; Haverback & Parault, 2008; Linek et al., 1999). Even though much has been done to describe the effect of fieldwork on the self-efficacy of undergraduate-level preservice teachers, little is known about the self-efficacy of early career teachers continuing their education at the graduate level.

METHODS

Programs

Students in both the graduate-level Reading Endorsement [RE] and Masters of Reading Education [MRE] programs at the author's university were involved in this study. Both programs were taught fully online. Students, regardless of program and course content, completed independent readings (from textbooks, journal articles), listened to prerecorded video lectures created by the instructor, participated in asynchronous discussions via discussion board and synchronous

discussions via Skype, and submitted written individual and/or small-group assignments. All assignments (readings, discussion prompts and topics) and materials (textbooks, journal articles) were identical, regardless of program. Additionally, all students completed work in the field with K-12 students, but the required field hours varied between programs.

Reading Endorsement (RE) program. The RE program includes four reading courses (20 total quarter credit hours) spanning three academic quarters. Students in this program complete 60 hours of fieldwork with K-12 students across these four courses. The courses taken by students in this program were also completed by students in the MRE program; all students in this study completed these courses together with the same instructor. Table 1 outlines the coursework, including fieldwork, in this program.

Masters of Reading Education (MRE) program. The MRE program includes seven reading courses (36 total quarter credit hours) spanning four academic quarters. Students in this program complete 100 hours of fieldwork with K-12 students across these seven courses. Additionally, MRE students complete four non-reading courses as part of their program of study, but because the focus was not reading/literacy, these courses were not addressed in this study. Table 1 outlines the coursework, including fieldwork, in this program.

TABLE 1 Reading Courses by Program

Reading Course & Credit Hours	Reading Endorsement	Masters of Reading Education	Field Component	Quarter Taken
Foundations of Reading Theory (5)	X	X	N/A	Summer Session I
Foundations of Language (5)		X	N/A	Summer Session II
Diagnosis Reading/Language (5)	X	X	20 hours	Fall
Secondary Reading Instruction (5)	X	X	20 hours	Fall
Children's & Adolescent Literature (5)		X	N/A	Winter
Reading/Language Laboratory (5)	X	X	20 hours	Winter
Coaching Classroom Teachers in Reading/Literacy (6)		X	40 hours	Spring

The reading coursework shared by students in the Reading Endorsement and Masters of Reading programs is rigorous, graduate-level work. All course activities and assignments are aligned with International Reading Association Standards for Reading Professionals (2010), and promote engagement in and reflection on best practices in the area of reading instruction and assessment. Students read and discuss both research-based and practitioner-focused journal articles; design and implement lesson plans; differentiate instruction based on assessment results; and engage in regular discussion about their work with K-12 students with their peers in order to continuously improve their teaching skills.

Participants

Reading Endorsement (RE) Students. At the time of this study, there were 14 students in the RE program. Twelve (86%) were female and the average age at the start of the study was 26.5 years. One of the requirements of the RE program is that students are licensed to teach in the state in which this study took place, or be eligible to obtain a teaching license within the state, in the case of those individuals initially certified elsewhere. Students in this program were seeking the reading endorsement to add to their teaching license as part of a non-reading Masters of Education program (i.e., Special Education) (n=10) or as a stand-alone program (not working on any other degree program and thus not enrolled in any additional coursework) (n=4). At the time this study began, only one of the students in this program had prior full-time teaching experience. The only male participant in this group worked as a middle school English/Language Arts teacher at a private religiously-governed K-8 school, entering the Master's program with four total years teaching experience.

Masters of Reading Education (MRE) Students. Eleven students were enrolled in the MRE program at the time of this study; ten (91%) were female. The average age at the start of the study was 24.5 years. During the program, nine (82%) students worked as Teaching Fellows, members of a highly selective program run by the university in which, in exchange for tuition and a small stipend, graduate students are placed in classrooms in various schools throughout the surrounding county where they co-teach half-day with the classroom teacher for the entire school year. Requirements for the Teaching Fellows program include having a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood (K-3), Middle Childhood (4-7), Adolescent-to-Young-Adult (9-12) education, or Special Education (K-12); a current in-state teaching license; current admission to a master's program; high commitment to teaching and student learning; strong leadership and

collaboration skills; and a minimum undergraduate grade point average of 3.30. If all of these requirements have been met, the student is interviewed by a panel of teachers and principals from the schools participating in this program in the spring preceding the start of the upcoming school year. Those that are offered a Teaching Fellow position begin their studies in the summer and start working in their new classroom in the fall. At the time this study began, each of these nine students had recently graduated with their Bachelor of Arts in Education degree and had no prior full-time teaching experience.

One of the remaining students in the MRE program worked as a graduate assistant in the Teacher Education Department at the university in which this study took place, entering the program with no prior teaching experience. The final student in this program was a practicing teacher. As the only male participant in this group, he worked as a middle school English/Language Arts teacher in the district in which the university is located, entering the MRE program with three total years teaching experience. Table 2 illustrates the basic demographics of participants in this study.

TABLE 2 Demographics

Program	N	Gender	Age		Years Prior Teaching Experience	
			Mean	Range	Mean	Range
Reading Endorsement (RE)	14	86% female; 14% male	26.5	22-39	0.29	0-4
Masters of Reading Education (MRE)	11	90.91% female; 9.09% male	24.5	22-31	0.38	0-3

Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher collected basic demographic data (gender, age, prior teaching experience) from program application materials. Participants in this study completed the Reading Teacher Self-efficacy Scale [RTSES] (Haverback & Parault, 2011) at the beginning of their coursework (June) and again at the end of their program (March for RE students; May for MRE students). The RTSES is a 16-question Likert-scaled survey based closely on the Teacher Self-efficacy Scale developed by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk-Hoy (2001). These surveys were not completed anonymously; participants' names appeared on the surveys so the researcher could compare pre- and post-program results. Table 3 includes the questions on the RTSES.

TABLE 3 Reading Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale

Question	Ranking								
	Nothing								A Great Deal
1 How much can you do to help your students think critically while reading?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2 How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in reading?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
3 How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in reading?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
4 How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students about reading?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
5 How much can you do to help your students value reading?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
6 How much can you do to gauge student comprehension of reading skills you have taught?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
7 To what extent can you craft good reading questions for your students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
8 How much can you foster student creativity while reading?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
9 How much can you do to improve the understanding of a student who is failing reading?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10 How much can you do to adjust your reading lessons to the proper level for individual students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
11 How much can you use a variety of reading assessment strategies?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
12 To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused about reading?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

(continued)

TABLE 3 (continued)

13	How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in reading?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
14	How well can you implement alternative reading strategies in your classroom?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
15	How well can you provide appropriate challenges for very capable readers?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
16	How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students in reading?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

From Haverback, H.R., & Parault, S.J. (2011). High efficacy and the pre-service reading teacher: A comparative study. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27, 703-711. Printed with permission.

Additionally, students were given the opportunity to complete an anonymous online survey at the end of their respective program. It was developed by the author and based loosely on end-of-course evaluations students are familiar with, but made more specific so as to reflect various program components (courses, assignments, materials). This survey was comprised of three open-ended questions, one multiple-choice question, and one Likert-scaled question, as illustrated in Table 4.

TABLE 4 End-of-Program Survey

- 1 In general, do you believe the program made you a more confident teacher of reading? That is, do you feel more confident when it comes to teaching reading now that you did prior to taking the reading courses in your program? Why or why not?
- 2 Of the reading courses that were part of your program, which one(s) do you feel were most valuable in your becoming a more confident teacher of reading?
 - Foundations of Reading Theory
 - Foundations of Language
 - Diagnosis Reading/Language
 - Secondary Reading Instruction
 - Children's & Adolescent Literature
 - Reading/Language Laboratory
 - Coaching Classroom Teacher in Reading/Literacy
- 3 In Question 2, you indicated the course(s) you felt were most valuable in your becoming a more confident teacher of reading. Please explain your reasoning for the making the choice(s) you did for Question 2.
- 4 Please rank on a scale of 1 (very low) to 5 (very high) the importance of each of the following activities with regard to helping you become a more confident teacher of reading.

Activity	Ranking				
Readings – text	1	2	3	4	5
Readings – articles	1	2	3	4	5
E-journals	1	2	3	4	5
Discussion Boards	1	2	3	4	5
Discussion of articles on Crocodoc	1	2	3	4	5
Analyzing videos of yourself and others teaching	1	2	3	4	5
Narrated PowerPoint presentations (lectures)	1	2	3	4	5
Personal communication with professor(s)	1	2	3	4	5
Assessing K-12 students	1	2	3	4	5
Writing lesson plans	1	2	3	4	5
Tutoring K-6th grade students (EDTE 522 and 523)	1	2	3	4	5
Tutoring 7-12th grade students (EDTE 526)	1	2	3	4	5
Writing case study reports (EDTE 522 and 523)	1	2	3	4	5
Developing a Literacy Tool Kit (EDTE 526)	1	2	3	4	5
Discussing and writing about theories of literacy development (EDTE 520)	1	2	3	4	5
Creating/presenting a Professional Development program (EDTE 623) (<i>MRE only</i>)	1	2	3	4	5
Working with a Reading Specialist/Coach (EDTE 623) (<i>MRE only</i>)	1	2	3	4	5
Creating a coaching portfolio (EDTE 623) (<i>MRE only</i>)	1	2	3	4	5

- 5 What activity or activities did you participate in this year that you believe contributed most to your becoming a more confident teacher of reading? Please be as specific as possible, including course name.

RESULTS

An analysis of basic demographic information indicates that there was little difference between students enrolled in the RE and MRE programs (illustrated in Table 2). While students' main program of study varied, program entry requirements (i.e., undergraduate GPA) were similar for all prospective graduate students. Though this does not mean students in the different programs were identical, it is reasonable to infer that they had similar prior educational experiences and were not markedly different upon entrance to their current program.

Analysis of the Reading Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (RTSES)

A *t*-test and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was performed on the data obtained from the RTSES. Students in the RE program were labeled as the control group; students in the MRE program were labeled as the treatment group.

The *t*-test. An independent *t*-test of baseline (pre-program assessment) differences indicates a standardized mean difference of approximately 0.21, favoring the treatment group ($t=0.590$, $p=0.876$), meaning there was not a significant difference between the perceived self-efficacy regarding teaching reading scores of RE and MRE students at the start of their respective program.

A *t*-test with post-program assessment means as the dependent variable shows that students in the MRE program ($n=11$) had a higher mean post-program assessment score than students in the RE program ($n=14$) ($\mu=8.33$, $\sigma=0.458$; $\mu = 7.13$, $\sigma=0.65$ respectively). This yielded a mean difference of 1.2 and a standardized mean difference of approximately 2.1, illustrating a large treatment effect ($t=5.6$; $p\text{-value}=0.00$). This analysis suggests there was a group effect and the treatment – students completing more reading-focused courses and spending more time working in the field had a positive impact. Had students been randomized to study conditions, that is, been randomly placed into control and treatment groups rather than self-selecting their group based on program of study, it would be reasonable to assume results would be similar; the lack of randomization, however, requires a more tentative interpretation. Table 1 illustrates this finding.

TABLE 1 Pre/Post Comparison of Reading Programs

Self-efficacy	Reading Endorsement	Masters of Reading
Pretest Scores	6.77	7.09
Posttest Scores	7.13	8.33

Analysis of Covariance. When running an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA), Levene's test ($p=.422$) suggests a homogeneity of variance assumption is not violated. Regarding the test of between subject effects, the significant value associated with the pre-program assessment mean indicates the post-program assessment scores are related to pre-program scores, which is not surprising given the better subjects score on a pre-program assessment, the better they score on a post-program assessment. When the effect of pre-program assessment is removed, there exists a statistically significant treatment impact (group $F=30.734$). The

new adjusted means are $t=8.27$ and $C=7.18$ for a mean difference of 1.09. The ANCOVA is a slightly more conservative estimate than the t -test, because the baseline difference has been accounted for, but this does not change the overall results. The homogeneity of the slope assumption was tested and was not significant.

Analysis of the End-of-Program Survey

Students were given the opportunity to complete an anonymous end-of-program survey upon completion of their respective program. On the survey, they were asked five questions about their perceptions of their own self-efficacy and the course activities they believed contributed most to their feelings about teaching reading, as illustrated in Table 4. Students from both the RE and MRE programs were invited to complete the survey; four students (16%), all from the RE program, responded. In reporting the data, students' names were replaced with pseudonyms.

When asked if students believed their program made them more confident teachers of reading (Question 1), all four respondents (100%) indicated yes, they believed their work in the reading courses helped to make them more confident teachers of reading. Michelle stated that, because of the program, she "became much more familiar with an array of diagnostic assessment tools and instructional practices;" Ellie wrote she now has "more knowledge about issues students may have with learning to read, and various methods to help students overcome their issues."

Students were asked to indicate the course or courses they believed to be the most valuable in helping them become more confident teachers of reading (Question 2); EDTE 522 Diagnosis Reading/Language and EDTE 523 Reading/Language Laboratory were each selected three times, while EDTE 520 Foundations of Reading and EDTE 526 Secondary Reading Instruction were each selected once. Students' written responses elaborating on these choices (Question 3) focused on the fieldwork components of the courses. Michelle wrote "in [EDTE 522 Diagnosis Reading/Language and EDTE 523 Reading/Language Laboratory], I was able to work directly with a student utilizing the information from the courses. The application of the information from the courses made a huge difference in my confidence level," which was similar to Logan's statement, indicating the "ability to practice remediation strategies with real students" helped him become a more confident teacher of reading.

Students indicated several activities they participated in during their program that helped them become more confident teachers of reading (Question 4), as illustrated in Table 5.

TABLE 5 Breakdown of Activities Ranked for Importance Related to Students' Perceived Self-Efficacy Related to Teaching Reading*

Question	Ranking by Votes Received				
	1 Not at all important	2 Somewhat unimportant	3 Neither important/ unimportant	4 Somewhat important	5 Very important
Assessing K-12 students	0	0	0	0	4
Tutoring K-6th grade students (EDTE 522 and 523)	0	0	0	0	4
Discussion of articles on Crocodoc	0	0	0	1	3
Writing case study reports (EDTE 522 and 523)	0	0	0	1	3
Developing a Literacy Tool Kit (EDTE 526)	0	0	0	1	3
Personal communication with professor(s)	0	1	0	0	3
Tutoring 7-12th grade students (EDTE 526)	0	1	0	0	3
Readings - articles	0	0	0	2	2
Discussion Boards	0	0	0	2	2
Writing lesson plans	0	0	0	2	2
Discussing and writing about theories of literacy development (EDTE 520)	0	0	1	1	2
E-journals	0	0	1	2	1

Readings - text	0	0	1	2	1
Analyzing videos of yourself and others teaching	0	0	0	4	0
Narrated PowerPoint presentations (lectures)	0	1	0	3	0

*Only those activities that were part of the RE program coursework appear in this table

Nine activities were viewed as important, receiving rankings of either *very important* or *somewhat important*: assessing K-12 students; tutoring K-6 students; discussing articles using an online forum (Crocodoc); writing case study reports; developing a literacy tool kit (a summary of strategies and materials used while tutoring students in grades 7-12); reading journal articles; posting to discussion boards; writing lesson plans; and analyzing videos of themselves and their peers working with K-12 students. The remaining six activities received generally positive but mixed results, with three students perceiving each activity as important while the fourth student perceived it as *neither important nor unimportant* (tutoring students in grades 7-12, discussing and writing about theories of literacy development, writing weekly e-journals, and reading the textbook) or *somewhat unimportant* (personal communication with professors and narrated PowerPoint presentations (lectures)). None of the listed activities received a ranking of *not at all important* from any of the students. When asked what activity or activities they believed contributed most to their becoming a more confident teacher of reading (Question 5), Michelle, Ellie, and Logan indicated tutoring K-12 students and coursework related to tutoring (analyzing assessment results, writing case study reports) as the most valuable activities, while Lisa noted writing weekly e-journals was the most helpful activity because it allowed her to reflect on her work in class and in the field.

DISCUSSION

In the following sections, the results of this study will be discussed in relation to the three original research questions.

Research Questions One and Two

An analysis of the data collected as part of this study indicates, regardless of the program, graduate students' perceived self-efficacy related to teaching reading increases over time. While students in the MRE program did have higher self-efficacy related to teaching reading prior to starting the program than their peers in the RE program, this difference was not significant. It is clear, however, from the results of this study that students in the MRE program had significantly higher self-efficacy upon completion of their program than those in the RE program.

Research Question Three

The results of the data obtained from the analysis of the Reading Teacher Self-efficacy Scale revealed that students in the MRE program participated in more reading-related coursework than students in the RE program (seven versus four reading courses, respectively). It may be that more time spent learning about reading and reading instruction played a role in teachers' increased self-efficacy related to teaching reading. A foundation of knowledge regarding reading theory and instruction within the context of rigorous, university-based coursework is necessary to help students become quality teachers of reading (International Reading Association, 2010).

As students in the MRE program spent more time working with K-12 students in the field than students in the RE program (100 contact hours versus 60 contact hours, respectively), it may be more time working in the field helps increase teachers' self-efficacy related to teaching reading. MRE students' increased opportunity for mastery experiences – experiences in which individuals have the opportunity to practice a specific skill in order to become more proficient, such as one-on-one tutoring and instruction in reading (Bandura, 1994; Haverback & Parault, 2008) may lead to higher self-efficacy compared to RE students that did not have as many opportunities to participate in similar mastery experiences. More time spent working with K-12 students in the field helps solidify university-students' understanding of and ability to deliver effective reading instruction (Ball & Forzano, 2009; Fang & Ashley, 2004; Sailors, Keehn, Martinez, & Harmon, 2005). While the data collected from the RTSES does not clearly indicate which of these two factors contributed most to students' increased self-efficacy related to teaching reading, more instruction on teaching reading and more time practicing newly-acquired skills with K-12 students in the field contributed greatly to the MRE students' increased sense of self-efficacy related to teaching reading.

The addition of the data collected from the end-of-program survey may help clarify which of these factors contributed most to students' learning about reading and reading instruction, despite all respondents being from the RE program. Based on the results of the data obtained from the survey, working with K-12 students in the field is the experience students find the most valuable and the one activity contributing most to their becoming more confident teachers of reading, a finding also supported throughout published research (Haverback & Parault, 2008; Haverback & Parault, 2011; Helfrich & Bean, 2011).

LIMITATIONS

This research has several limitations that must be discussed. The number of participants was low, especially in response to the end-of-program survey; therefore, the findings of this study, while valuable, should not be generalized across all settings.

The end-of-program survey was not piloted, which may impact its validity. This reinforces the importance of not generalizing the findings across all settings. All data was self-reported, again raising possible issues of validity. The results of this study, and the interpretation and implications of those results, rely on the assumption that participants responded truthfully to the survey questions. Participants included their names on the RTSES surveys in order for pre- and post-program comparisons to be made; participants may have felt that, by including their names on the surveys, if they responded with answers that indicated they did not have high self-efficacy as it relates to teaching reading, they would be identified and viewed negatively by the author. While it cannot be determined with complete certainty that participants did not alter their answers to appear more self-efficacious to the author, they were encouraged to answer truthfully and were made aware throughout the study that their responses would have no impact on their work or their grade in the program courses; therefore, it is reasonable to think that the participants' answers were truthful.

Finally, all participants in this study attended the same university. While this was helpful in that it allowed for a more clear interpretation of the program component perceived as being the most helpful – all students had the same instructors, took the same courses, and participated in the same activities, eliminating concern that program variables such as instructor or activity played a role in self-efficacy development – the broader picture of large-scale program effect could not be analyzed. This research, however, has built a solid foundation for continued work in this area in which multiple programs will be analyzed for their effect on student self-efficacy related to teaching reading (Clark & Helfrich, in progress).

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study show that students in the more comprehensive program (Master's of Reading Education) had statistically significant higher self-efficacy related to teaching reading upon completion of their studies than students in the less comprehensive program (Reading Endorsement), but regardless of program, the self-efficacy of students from both groups increased over time. The most important conclusion that can be drawn from this current research is not in regard to which type of program helps to create more self-efficacious teachers of reading, but rather that we as teacher education researchers must examine various programs to see just how effective they are at developing well-rounded, quality teachers of reading. While a teacher's sense of self-efficacy can impact his or her work in the classroom (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk-Hoy, & Hoy, 1998) as well as the work of his or her K-12 students (Bandura, 1997; Barkley, 2006; Gibson & Dembo, 1984), self-efficacy related to teaching reading is just one of many issues that needs to be addressed when researching the effects higher education programs have on the skills of reading teachers. Given the variety of programs currently available to teachers, it is imperative that researchers examine how factors such as academic rigor, alignment with educational content standards, adherence to professional educator standards, and contact hours and K-12 students affect the self-efficacy, content, and pedagogical knowledge of their graduates.

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KOREAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGY USE: EFL VS. ESL CONTEXTS

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Abstract:

This study examined changes that occurred in the use of language learning strategies by Korean university students as their language learning context shifted from an EFL to ESL setting. The data were collected three times over the course of three semesters using the SILL (Strategy Inventory for Language Learning). The study found Korean university students utilized different strategies while in an ESL setting (Korea) than they did while in an ESL setting (US).

Researchers in the field of second or foreign language teaching and learning began to investigate what language learners do to facilitate their own learning by determining the characteristics of “good” language learners (Allwright & Hanks, 2009; Ellis, 2008; Lightbown & Spada, 2006; Naiman, Frohlich, Porte, 1988; Rubin & Thompson, 1994; Vann & Abraham, 1990). It was generally agreed upon that the learning behaviors and thought processes of successful language learners differ from those of less successful learners in terms of using materials, seeking opportunities to use language, using language learning strategies, and having strong motivation in language learning. In addition, successful learners exhibit a more responsible attitude towards learning, as well as autonomy in managing their own learning.

Purpose of the Study

Many researchers have studied various variables that influence learners' language learning strategy use. However, the majority of research in the field of language

learning strategies to date has been conducted in language learning settings where a language is being taught and learning is either a foreign language or a second language. To date, little comparative analysis has been conducted; examining how the same group of language learners' strategy usage in an EFL context is different from their strategy usage in an ESL context. Such a comparison study of language learners in two different learning settings may provide important information about the impact of socio-cultural and educational context on learners' language learning.

Thus, the purpose of this study was to examine the difference in language learning behaviors and thought processes of an intact group of Korean university students when learning English in two geographically and culturally different contexts: learning English as a foreign language (EFL) in Korea and English as a second language (ESL) in the United States. The following three research questions framed the study:

1. What are the reported language learning strategies used by Korean university students in an EFL setting?
2. What are the reported language learning strategies used by the same group of Korean university students in an ESL setting?
3. Are there any differences in the use of language learning strategies reported by the intact group of Korean university students in an EFL and ESL settings?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

The monitor theory and the acquisition theory (Krashen, 1988) supports this study. Acquisition requires meaningful interaction with the language that is being learned. These Korean students were acquiring English both in Korea and the U.S. However, when they came to the US, they had to monitor their use of strategies, as the need for English had changed. In Korea, they were learning the formal language of books while in the US they were using English for both learning and socializing.

Language Learning Strategy

Language learning strategies are defined as techniques, learning behaviors and thought processes used by learners to assist in acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of language (Cohen, 1998; Fazeli, 2011; O'Mally & Chamot, 1990; Oxford,

1990; Stern, 1983; Wenden, 1987). A considerable number of research studies on language learning strategies have been carried out since the 1970s. The studies included defining and classifying language learning strategies (Cohen, 1998; Fazeli, 2011; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Rubin, 1987), high interest in what constitutes good language learners (Cervatiuc, 2009; Reiss, 1985; Rubin & Thompson, 1994; Takeuchi, 2003; Vann & Abraham, 1990), various factors influencing learners' use of learning strategies (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Kheziou, 2012; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Wharton, 2000), and the effect of learning strategy instruction (Chamot & Küpper, 1989; Plonsky, 2011). The studies have shown that good language learners adopt different types of learning strategies to facilitate their language learning and seek opportunities to practice the strategies they have learned. For instance, good language learners take an active approach to the learning task, constantly search for meaning, are willing to practice and use the language, and self-monitor and plan language learning (Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975). Thus, good teachers need to explicitly teach various strategies that will promote their students' personal success in language learning (Rassaei, 2012; Stafford, 2012).

EFL versus ESL Contexts

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) refers to students who study English in a country that has a native language other than English. China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan and Thailand are major locations in Asia where English is taught and normally the students in those countries learn English as part of their educational program. Thus, EFL classrooms tend to have culturally homogeneous students. In this setting, teachers may be the only native English speakers that converse with the students, as outside the classroom they have very few opportunities to speak English, as English is not the dominate language (Kim, 2001; Maple, 1987; Snow, 2006).

English as a Second Language (ESL) is when students study English in a country where English is the official language. These students need to learn English to get along in their environments, to get an education and even to find jobs (Maple, 1987; Snow, 2006). Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand, United Kingdom, and the United States are countries that commonly have ESL programs. Thus, ESL classrooms tend to have a mix of culturally diverse students. In this setting, students are surrounded by English and have daily opportunities to speak English.

EFL vs ESL Studies

Many research studies have found that language learners' choice of strategies are affected by variables such as the learners' individual background and the learning

environment where language is being taught and used (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989; Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2006, 2007; Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995; Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Politzer, 1983; Wharton, 2000). There is also increasing evidence of the influence of the context on language learning (Hismanoglu, 2002; Lee, 1994; Lee & Oxford, 2008; Lengkanawati, 2004; Oh, 1992; Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995; Politzer & McGroarty, 1985). For instance, the language learning approach in an EFL setting where English is learned as a foreign language in a formal classroom may differ from that of an ESL setting where English is being spoken in everyday life.

Several studies have examined the strategy use of EFL students. In some EFL contexts (e.g., China, Taiwan, and Korea) where national examination systems are common, traditional lecture-and textbook-centered teaching approaches make EFL students' choice of strategies different from that of students of western cultures where a student-centered teaching approach is emphasized. As an example, Asian students in an EFL setting preferred to use strategies involving rote memorization which assists language learning in a test-driven learning context, while Hispanic students in an ESL setting were more likely to engage in communication strategies which are essential strategies in the ESL learning environments (Politzer & McGroarty, 1985; Park, 1997; Sheorey, 1999).

The use of learning strategies in multilingual EFL context (e.g., Singapore, Hong-Kong) is somewhat different from the language learners in monolingual learning context. For instance, bilingual university students in Singapore showed their preferences in the use of communication strategies and metacognitive strategies, while strategies related to memorization and emotion/attitudes were their least preferred strategies (Wharton, 2000). In a similar study, bilingual Korean-Chinese students in China preferred to use metacognitive strategies most and strategies for memorization least (Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2007). Strategies such as guessing or making gestures and metacognitive strategies were most used by university students in Hong Kong and strategies related emotion/attitudes or memorization were their least used strategies (Bremner, 1998).

The consensus of the research is that ESL students reported different approaches to language learning according to their cultural and educational background. For instance, Osanai (2000) conducted a comparison study of strategy use between two ethnic groups in an ESL setting, Asian and Latino ESL students. The study reported that Latino students showed more use of social strategies and metacognitive strategies than did Asian students, while Asian students used memory strategies and compensation strategies slightly more frequently than Latinos. O'Malley, et al. (1985) found in a study with high school students that Hispanic students showed more willingness to learn new strategies than did Asian

students. In sum, the differences in the use of strategies between EFL students and ESL students may occur because of the difference in the learning setting and the socio-cultural and educational backgrounds between two learning contexts. However, to date, few comparative studies have been done, following the students from one setting to another.

METHOD

Participants

The participants in this study were 101 Korean students who first attended a university in Korea for one year as freshmen and then transferred to a United States university, in northeast Texas, as either a freshmen or sophomore. The participants consisted of 58 males (58%) and 43 females (43%). The majority of the participants were freshmen (74) with 27 sophomores. When asked to rate their overall English proficiency, 18% considered themselves beginners, while 73% considered themselves to be intermediate English learners and 10% to be advanced learners.

Setting

Korea - EFL context. The Korean university students attended a large university in Korea for one year as freshmen before they transferred to a university in the US. During the first year, the participants enrolled in a special academic program established by the two universities. The purposes of the academic program were to develop students' English language skills which would be required to manage college course work taught in English and to obtain a minimum of 21 credit hours in order to be eligible for transfer.

While in Korea, the students attended English language courses during their first year. This program consisted of 20 hours per week for 16 weeks (spring and fall semester) and 40 hours per week for 8 weeks (all day long in the summer). The intensive English courses consisted of instruction that emphasized the development of all four areas of English language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) and were taught by native English-speaking instructors. The students were placed in different level of English classes (Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced) based on their English proficiency as measured by a placement test that was given in the beginning of spring semester.

In addition to taking intensive English language courses, the participants were also required to take a minimum of seven general college courses (21 credit hours) offered by the university in Korea which included College Algebra,

Biology, Chemistry, Political Science, Speech, Economics, or American History. The instructional language of the courses was both Korean and English and the courses were taught by either native English-speaking instructors or native Korean instructors who were fluent in English and earned their doctorate degree in an English speaking country (e.g., USA, Canada).

All textbooks used for the general courses were written in English and the college courses usually required the students to manage a great amount of reading and assignments every week. Therefore, the participants in the study were exposed to English at least 8-9 hours daily in this EFL academic context. Although the students spent several hours learning English in classrooms and using English for an academic purpose, English language input and the exposure to English was somewhat limited in this learning setting compared to an ESL setting where the input of English language is unlimited.

United States - ESL context. The students transferred to a large American university upon the successful completion of the intensive English language program and required general college courses. As the students arrived in the university, they were admitted either as freshmen or sophomores based on their earned course credit hours. During the first semester at the American university, the students took four to six courses that were either general studies courses or related to their major. The participants chose four academic major areas: 49 had Social Studies major; 12 had Humanities major; 9 had Engineering major and 31 had Science major.

Instrument

The *Strategy Inventory for Language Learning* ([SILL], ESL/EFL version, Oxford, 1990) was utilized for the study to measure Korean university students' language learning strategy use. The SILL can be found at <http://richarddpetty.files.wordpress.com/2010/03/sill-english.pdf/>. The SILL is a self-report questionnaire that contains 50 items which are grouped into six categories:

- 1) memory strategies for storing and retrieving information (9 items),
- 2) cognitive strategies for understanding and producing the language (14 items),
- 3) compensation strategies for overcoming limitations in language learning (6 items),
- 4) metacognitive strategies for centering and directing learning (9 items),
- 5) affective strategies for controlling emotions, motivation (6 items), and
- 6) social strategies for cooperating with others in language learning (6 items).

The SILL uses a five-point Likert-scale system for each strategy ranging from 1 ("never or almost never true of me") to 5 ("always or almost always true of me").

The SILL (ESL/EFL version) reported consistent reliability coefficients using Cronbach's alpha, ranging from 0.87 to 0.94 (Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2007; Phillips, 1991; Yang, 1992). The current study also found a high reliability: 0.94 (beginning of first semester in Korea), 0.91 (end of second semester in Korea), and 0.95 (end of first semester in the US).

Data Collection and Analysis

To examine any changes in the Korean students' use of learning strategies, the SILL was administered three times over three semesters: the first one was given at the beginning of first semester (spring) in Korea, the second one was given at the end of second semester (fall) in Korea, and the third time was at the end of first semester (spring) in the US. The first two questionnaires were distributed to the students by the instructors of the Intensive English language classes and general courses in Korea. The third questionnaire was administered through the freshman survival course the students were enrolled in on the American campus. This course prepares students for optimal success at the university and beyond by motivating them to develop skills, knowledge and behaviors that will create confident, self-sufficient learners.

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, and frequencies) were computed to summarize the participants' background information and responses to the SILL. An ANOVA was used to examine the differences in overall strategy use over the three semesters and to determine the differences among categories of strategies. Scheffé post-hoc procedure was used to determine any statistically significant differences in strategy use. Finally, a Cronbach's alpha test was conducted to determine the internal reliability of the SILL for this study.

RESULTS

Overall Strategy Use

First, descriptive scores were run on the overall strategy use for each semester (Spring 1, Fall, and Spring 2). As shown in Table 1 on the next page, the responses were grouped in three categories (High, Medium, and Low Usage) based on the mean scores and frequency of the strategy usage using the Oxford's reporting scales (Oxford, 1990). The results showed that 52% of the Korean students reported high strategy use ($M \geq 3.54$) during Spring 2, while only 44% was reported in Spring 1 and 32% in the Fall semester. Medium use of strategies was reported by

TABLE 1 Overall Means of Reported Language Learning Strategy Use

Usage	Spring 1 (In Korea)		Fall (In Korea)		Spring 2 (In US)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
High ($M \geq 3.5$)	44	44	32	32	53	52
Medium ($2.5 \leq M \leq 3.4$)	56	55	68	67	48	48
Low ($M \leq 2.4$)	1	1	1	1	0	0
Total	101	100	101	100	101	100

more participants (67%) in the Fall semester than Spring 1 (55%) and Spring 2 (48%). The table also showed that no students reported a low strategy use ($M=2.4$ or below) in Spring 2 while one student reported a low strategy use in both Spring 1 and the Fall semester.

Because there was a difference in mean scores across all three semesters, an ANOVA was run, which showed that the differences were statistically significant ($F=8.49$, $p=.000$) at $p < 0.05$ level and the Scheffé post-hoc procedure showed the statistically significant differences to be in the Fall semester.

Next, the data were examined to determine the differences in strategy use of the six categories of strategies over the three semesters. As shown in the Table 2, an ANOVA revealed a higher use of strategies in three categories (cognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies). In addition, cognitive strategies ($F=7.72$, $p=.000$), affective strategies ($F=13.92$, $p=.000$), and social strategies ($F=12.00$, $p=.000$) were used more significantly in the Fall and Spring 2 rather than Spring 1. The use of the memory strategy, compensation strategy, and metacognitive strategy increased across the semesters, but the differences were not significant.

The current study looked at use of language learning strategies by the same group of Korean university students learning English in an EFL context (Korea) and an ESL context (US) using the SILL Likert-scale survey. To answer research question #1 (*What are the reported language learning strategies used by Korean university students in an EFL setting?*), and research question #2 (*What are the reported language learning strategies used by the same group of Korean university students in an ESL setting?*) the overall scores from Table 2 were used. It was revealed that students used strategies from all six categories over the three semesters. But an ANOVA revealed a higher use of strategies in three categories: cognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies.

Because strategies were used in all six areas of the SILL in both locations, in order to answer research question #3 (*Are there any differences in the use of*

TABLE 2 Mean Scores and *F*-test for Six Categories of Strategies in the SILL

	Semester	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	Sig.	Difference*
Memory	S1	3.07	.66	2.08	.127	—
	F	3.08	.66			
	S2	3.21	.60			
Cognitive	S1	3.39	.59	7.72	.001	F, S2>S1
	F	3.62	.58			
	S2	3.69	.57			
Compensation	S1	3.53	.56	2.15	.119	—
	F	3.60	.59			
	S2	3.70	.63			
Metacognitive	S1	3.59	.57	2.29	.103	—
	F	3.61	.62			
	S2	3.76	.66			
Affective	S1	2.77	.59	13.92	.000	F, S2>S1 S2> F
	F	3.00	.76			
	S2	3.30	.77			
Social	S1	3.20	.80	12.00	.000	F, S2>S1
	F	3.56	.66			
	S2	3.67	.68			

Note: S1=First Spring Semester; F=Fall Semester; S2=Second Spring Semester

* $p < 0.05$ level (Scheffé post-hoc test)

language learning strategies reported by the intact group of Korean university students in an EFL and ESL settings?), an ANOVA and a Scheffé was conducted to examine differences within each category. As seen below, the strategies used within each category on the SILL did differ from an EFL setting to an ESL setting.

Strategy Use in the Six Categories

The strategies described in this section were determined by the frequency of strategy usage reported by the participants. Thus, the mean score was used to determine growth.

Memory Strategies. Table 3 shows that the Korean student used three of the nine memory strategies more often in an EFL setting. These strategies included

TABLE 3 Frequencies (%), Means, and Standard Deviation for the Memory Strategies

Items		1	2	3	4	5	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
		Never	Somewhat	Always				
1. I think of the relationship between what I already know and new things I learn in English.	S1	0†	8	34	33	26	3.76	0.93
	F	0	5	41	34	21	3.70	0.85
	S2	0	3	40	39	19	3.73	0.80
2. I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.	S1	7	32	39	14	9	2.86	1.04
	F	8	40	29	19	5	2.73	1.02
	S2	1	18	43	24	15	3.34	0.97
3. I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word.	S1	1	12	28	35	25	3.70	1.01
	F	3	17	22	34	25	3.60	1.12
	S2	2	7	41	29	22	3.61	0.97
4. I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.	S1	0	12	37	34	18	3.57	0.92
	F	5	16	31	34	15	3.38	1.08
	S2	0	6	36	38	21	3.73	0.86
5. I use rhymes to remember new English words (e.g., know-no, nail-snail, cat-bat).	S1	8	34	27	18	14	2.96	1.18
	F	15	39	23	17	7	2.62	1.14
	S2	9	28	30	25	9	2.97	1.12
6. I use flashcards to remember new English words.	S1	27	35	20	15	4	2.35	1.14
	F	26	27	20	17	11	2.60	1.33
	S2	28	24	34	11	4	2.40	1.12
7. I physically act out new English words.	S1	28	31	27	10	5	2.34	1.13
	F	32	30	22	13	4	2.28	1.16
	S2	22	18	34	19	8	2.73	1.22
8. I review English lessons often.	S1	11	36	43	6	5	2.58	0.94
	F	5	27	44	20	5	2.93	0.93
	S2	5	31	42	17	6	2.88	0.95
9. I remember new English words or phrase by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign.	S1	2	9	37	37	16	3.55	0.93
	F	2	10	32	40	17	3.59	0.95
	S2	2	9	43	29	18	3.51	1.96

Note: S1=First Spring Semester; F=Fall Semester; S2=Second Spring Semester

† The percentages (%) have been rounded to the nearest tenth.

using flashcards (Item 6) and making connections between the sound of a word and an image or picture of the word (Item 3). In addition, Korean students reported to use the location of word on the page, on the board, or on a street sign to remember new words (Item 9) more often in an EFL setting than in an ESL setting.

However, when looking at the mean scores of each item in Table 3, five of the nine memory strategies were used more often when in the US. Students in this study reported using more often new words in a sentence (Item 2), making mental images of a situation in which the word might be used (Item 4), using rhymes to remember new words (Item 5), reviewing their English lesson more frequently (Item 8), and physically acting out new words (Item 7).

Cognitive Strategies. The mean score in Table 4 shows that three of the 14 cognitive strategies were used more often in the EFL setting. As seen below, more students reported watching English television programs or movies (Item 15), trying to find grammar patterns in English sentence (Item 20), and trying not to translate word-for-word (Item 22) while in Korea. Two of the 14 cognitive strategies were used almost equally in both settings. They were trying to talk like native English speakers (Item 11), and looking for words in my own language (item 19).

TABLE 4 Frequencies (%), Means, and Standard Deviation for Cognitive Strategies

Items		1	2	3	4	5	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
		Never	Somewhat	Always				
10. I say or write new English words several times.	S1	2†	3	30	38	28	3.86	0.93
	F	1	5	21	28	46	4.12	0.97
	S2	0	3	28	35	35	4.01	0.87
11. I try to talk like native English speakers.	S1	0	7	23	43	28	3.91	0.88
	F	0	7	24	31	39	4.01	0.95
	S2	1	5	29	28	38	3.96	0.98
12. I practice the sounds of English.	S1	1	7	33	36	24	3.74	0.93
	F	0	18	26	31	26	3.64	1.05
	S2	0	6	32	36	27	3.83	0.90
13. I use the English words I know in different ways.	S1	2	6	45	30	18	3.55	0.92
	F	1	20	49	24	7	3.16	0.86
	S2	1	10	35	32	23	3.65	0.97

(continued)

TABLE 4 (continued)

14. I start conversations in English.	S1	0	8	27	34	32	3.89	0.95
	F	3	22	37	26	13	3.24	1.03
	S2	0	7	34	31	29	3.81	0.94
15. I watch English language television shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English.	S1	0	8	24	22	47	4.07	1.01
	F	3	13	15	32	38	3.88	1.14
	S2	1	2	30	35	33	3.96	0.89
16. I read magazines, books, newspapers, and textbooks written in English.	S1	5	27	35	19	15	3.12	1.12
	F	18	34	27	18	4	2.56	1.10
	S2	2	12	39	35	13	3.45	0.93
17. I write notes, messages, letters or reports in English.	S1	2	23	37	19	20	3.32	1.09
	F	15	38	24	16	8	2.64	1.15
	S2	1	11	33	42	14	3.56	0.90
18. I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully.	S1	2	11	40	29	19	3.51	0.99
	F	3	22	29	37	10	3.29	1.01
	S2	2	6	35	37	21	3.68	0.94
19. I look for words in my own language (Korean) that are similar to new words in English.	S1	1	8	33	31	28	3.76	0.98
	F	2	12	22	41	24	3.72	1.02
	S2	1	9	28	40	23	3.74	0.95
20. I try to find patterns (grammar) in English.	S1	1	9	30	38	23	3.72	0.95
	F	4	19	35	23	20	3.72	1.02
	S2	0	13	29	39	20	3.65	0.94
21. I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.	S1	4	21	32	30	14	3.29	1.07
	F	7	30	32	22	10	3.36	1.12
	S2	4	16	40	23	18	3.35	1.07
22. I try not to translate word-for-word.	S1	1	13	31	29	27	3.67	1.04
	F	3	12	29	35	22	3.60	1.05
	S2	4	14	31	26	26	3.55	1.14
23. I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English.	S1	2	20	37	33	9	3.27	0.95
	F	4	20	38	26	13	3.24	1.04
	S2	4	7	40	33	17	3.51	0.99

Note: S1=First Spring Semester; F=Fall Semester; S2=Second Spring Semester

† The percentages (%) have been rounded to the nearest tenth.

When in the US, the participants reported using nine of the 14 cognitive strategies more than when they were in Korea. These strategies included saying or writing new words repeatedly (Item 10), practicing pronunciation of words (Item 12), using words in different ways (Items 13), practicing starting conversations in English (Item 14), reading magazines, books, newspapers, and textbooks in English (Item 16), writing notes, messages, letters or reports in English (Item 17), and re-reading textbooks (Item 18). In addition, they found meaning of English words by dividing them into known parts (Item 21), and making summaries of English text (Item 23).

Compensation Strategies. The mean score in Table 5 reveals, two of the six strategies were reported to be used more often in the EFL setting. They included

TABLE 5 Frequencies (%), Means, and Standard Deviation for Compensation Strategies

Items		1	2	3	4	5	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
		Never	Somewhat	Always				
24. To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.	S1	2†	3	22	43	31	3.97	0.91
	F	1	3	25	38	34	4.00	0.89
	S2	1	6	30	40	24	3.79	0.91
25. When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures.	S1	3	14	33	26	25	3.55	1.10
	F	2	15	20	36	28	3.72	1.09
	S2	1	7	31	31	31	3.83	0.98
26. I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.	S1	7	17	34	25	18	3.30	1.15
	F	6	23	28	30	14	3.23	1.13
	S2	3	16	32	28	22	3.50	1.09
27. I read English without looking up every new word.	S1	2	14	32	38	15	3.50	0.98
	F	13	26	24	29	9	2.95	1.19
	S2	3	12	35	37	14	3.47	0.98
28. I try to guess what the other person will say next in English.	S1	1	20	40	28	12	3.30	0.95
	F	4	19	35	35	8	3.24	0.98
	S2	4	8	33	34	22	3.61	1.04
29. If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.	S1	0	4	26	38	33	3.99	0.87
	F	0	3	22	43	33	4.05	0.82
	S2	0	4	24	39	34	4.02	0.86

Note: S1=First Spring Semester; F=Fall Semester; S2=Second Spring Semester

† The percentages (%) have been rounded to the nearest tenth.

guessing the meaning of English words (Item 24) and looking up words in the dictionary (Item 27).

Three of the six strategies were used more often in an ESL setting. These strategies included using gestures for unfamiliar words during a conversation (Item 25), making up new words for unknown words (Item 26), and guessing what a conversation partner would say next (Item 28).

One of the six compensation category strategies was used almost equally in both settings. This strategy had the students using words or phrases that mean the same thing when the correct English word could not be remembered (Item 29).

Metacognitive Strategies. The mean score in Table 6 shows that six of the eight metacognitive strategies were used more in an ESL context than in an EFL. For instance, the participants tended to find a variety of ways to use their English (Item 30), and began to notice their English (Item 31), as they paid more attention while having a conversation in English (Item 32). They planned their study schedule so they would have more time to study English (Item 34), as they wanted to become a better learner of English (Item 33). In addition, they looked for more people they could converse with in English (Item 35), as well as reading more in English (Item 36).

Lastly, the participants in this study were more goal-oriented in learning (Item 37) and were more aware of their English learning process more when in

TABLE 6 Frequencies (%), Means, and Standard Deviation for Metacognitive Strategies

Items		1	2	3	4	5	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
		Never	Somewhat			Always		
30. I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English.	S1	1†	2	40	41	17	3.70	0.81
	F	1	15	37	39	9	3.40	0.88
	S2	0	10	31	39	21	3.70	0.91
31. I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better.	S1	2	14	34	35	16	3.49	0.99
	F	4	17	30	29	21	3.46	1.12
	S2	2	12	32	35	20	3.58	1.00
32. I pay attention when someone is speaking English.	S1	0	5	37	36	23	3.76	0.86
	F	1	5	29	41	25	3.83	0.90
	S2	0	4	23	50	23	3.92	0.85

33. I try to find out how to be a better learner of English.	S1	0	8	39	32	22	3.67	0.91
	F	0	4	40	35	22	3.74	0.84
	S2	0	5	30	41	25	3.85	0.85
34. I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English.	S1	5	20	48	18	10	3.08	1.01
	F	3	25	40	26	7	3.09	0.95
	S2	1	21	32	27	20	3.44	1.06
35. I look for people I can talk to in English.	S1	2	10	36	30	23	3.61	1.01
	F	6	21	33	25	16	3.24	1.13
	S2	2	9	24	38	28	3.80	1.01
36. I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English.	S1	1	9	48	25	18	3.50	0.92
	F	0	16	42	32	11	3.38	0.88
	S2	1	9	34	37	20	3.65	0.93
37. I have clear goals for improving my English skills.	S1	2	6	33	33	27	3.76	0.98
	F	0	3	30	36	32	3.96	0.86
	S2	0	4	31	44	22	3.83	0.81
38. I think about my progress in learning English.	S1	1	4	25	41	30	3.94	0.89
	F	0	2	12	49	38	4.22	0.73
	S2	0	2	17	53	28	4.07	0.72

Note: S1=First Spring Semester; F=Fall Semester; S2=Second Spring Semester

† The percentages (%) have been rounded to the nearest tenth.

Korea (Item 38). Thus, two of the eight metacognitive strategies were reported used more often while in the EFL setting.

Affective Strategies. The mean score found in Table 7 showed that all six affective strategies were used more often in the ESL setting. The mean scores of each strategy indicated that strategy use in this category decreased in the fall semester but significantly increased in the second spring semester (US), indicating the participants were more comfortable talking about their feelings about English learning. For instance, when the participants were in the US, they noticed more often if they were nervous when using English than in Korea (Item 42). Therefore, they tried to relax when using English (Item 39), encouraged themselves to speak English more (Item 40), and rewarded themselves when they did well in English (Item 41). The participants also reported they talked or wrote more about their learning or use of English in the US rather than in Korea (Item 43 and 44).

TABLE 7 Frequencies (%), Means, and Standard Deviation for Affective Strategies

Items		1	2	3	4	5	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
		Never	Somewhat	Always				
39. I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.	S1	5†	17	39	28	12	3.25	1.03
	F	5	20	46	23	7	3.07	0.95
	S2	1	16	34	31	19	3.50	1.01
40. I encourage myself to speak English even when I feel afraid of making a mistake.	S1	5	17	36	25	18	3.34	1.11
	F	1	25	41	23	11	3.18	0.96
	S2	2	10	37	33	19	3.56	0.97
41. I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English.	S1	5	24	38	16	18	3.18	1.13
	F	10	26	34	22	9	2.94	1.11
	S2	3	16	43	22	17	3.34	1.03
42. I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English.	S1	8	16	33	30	14	3.26	1.13
	F	7	28	28	25	13	3.09	1.15
	S2	6	8	33	35	19	3.52	1.07
43. I write down my feelings in a language learning diary.	S1	44	23	18	11	5	2.11	1.22
	F	50	32	15	3	0	1.70	0.83
	S2	30	15	29	18	9	2.61	1.32
44. I talk to someone else about how I feel about learning English	S1	20	16	34	18	12	2.88	1.28
	F	24	27	21	21	8	2.62	1.27
	S2	11	12	36	26	16	3.24	1.18

Note: S1=First Spring Semester; F=Fall Semester; S2=Second Spring Semester

† The percentages (%) have been rounded to the nearest tenth.

Social Strategies. For the social aspect, the mean scores in Table 8 showed five social strategies had high mean usage during Spring 1, dipped during the Fall semester, and increased during the Spring 2 semester, except Item 45, asking others to slow down. In addition, there was a significant increase in the use of five of the six social strategies in the ESL setting. As seen, more participants were not afraid of asking English speakers to correct their mistake (Item 46), more students enjoyed practicing English with native English speakers when in the US than in Korea (Item 47), were comfortable to ask for help (Item 48), and asked questions in English to native English speakers (Item 49). Finally, the participants were interested in learning about the culture of English speakers

TABLE 8 Frequencies (%), Means, and Standard Deviation for Social Strategies

Items		1	2	3	4	5	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
		Never	Somewhat	Always				
45. If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.	S1	0†	9	21	37	34	3.95	0.95
	F	2	4	18	40	37	4.05	0.94
	S2	0	6	26	36	33	3.95	0.91
46. I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.	S1	2	16	38	30	15	3.40	0.99
	F	9	16	34	27	15	3.23	1.16
	S2	5	9	36	26	25	3.56	1.11
47. I practice English with other students or native speakers of English.	S1	5	26	30	23	17	3.21	1.15
	F	19	29	31	19	3	2.58	1.09
	S2	5	11	40	33	12	3.36	1.00
48. I ask for help from English speakers.	S1	3	21	37	32	8	3.21	0.96
	F	15	30	30	19	7	2.73	1.14
	S2	5	10	40	30	16	3.42	1.03
49. I ask questions in English to other students or native speakers of English.	S1	5	8	33	35	20	3.56	1.05
	F	22	20	24	18	17	2.88	1.39
	S2	1	7	30	37	26	3.79	0.94
50. I try to learn about the culture of English speakers.	S1	2	2	26	34	37	4.01	0.94
	F	5	13	21	30	32	3.70	1.19
	S2	1	4	26	39	31	3.94	0.90

Note: S1=First Spring Semester; F=Fall Semester; S2=Second Spring Semester

† The percentages (%) have been rounded to the nearest tenth.

while they were in Korea, but they were even more interested while in the US (Item 50).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The current study found that these Korean students used all 50 strategies and the use of strategies in the six categories steadily grew over all three semesters (as seen in Table 2). However, it was found that this growth was significantly different in only three categories (cognitive, affective, and social). As previous research reported (Green & Oxford, 1995; Wharton, 2000), the findings of the current study also confirmed a higher frequency of strategy use in the ESL environment

than in an EFL setting. Further, the current study revealed the Korean students used communication strategies (social strategies) more often in an ESL setting than in an EFL setting which supports previous research (Park, 1997; Politzer & McGroarty, 1985; Sheorey, 1999).

When examining Tables 3-8, several interesting patterns of strategy use were identified. One pattern showed that the use of some strategies decreased throughout the semesters. For example as students are immersed in English they spend less time looking for grammar patterns than they did in the EFL setting, but instead were using English language for communication purposes rather than formal language purposes (Item 20).

Another pattern showed a dip and recovery in the use of strategies. This pattern was seen in 35 individual strategies. This makes sense as the EFL students were in a familiar EFL setting and a more familiar structured traditional classroom context in the fall semester, but when they moved to the ESL environment, they had to increase the use of these strategies in order to be successful. The third pattern observed showed a consistent increase in the use of 4 strategies over the three semesters. For example, students reported using more gestures (Item 25) and paying more attention to others during conversations (Item 32). It was important for them to communicate in order to be successful in an all English setting.

The last pattern observed showed an increase from the first spring semester to the fall semester but a decrease from the fall semester to the second spring semester. Some examples of this pattern are using flash cards (Item 6), rewriting new English words (Item 10) and practicing the sounds of English words (Item 11). These strategies are traditional in nature and are found in the EFL environment; when moving to a collaborative ESL environment these strategies are not as useful.

Thus, we have found that the strategies used in an EFL and ESL setting are different, because of the environment the students find themselves. But, it is believed that the classroom environment and the teaching approach may also help determine the strategies students use while learning. In the EFL setting, memorization, rules, patterns, and a testing approach to learning is more common than in the ESL setting where cooperative learning and communication skills are important for understanding the content of the course.

Several limitations are associated with this study. The study is done with only Korean students who are in the university setting. They are also young adult learners who have followed the traditional learning pattern and enrolled in university coursework right after high school graduation. In addition, they took one year of coursework at the university in Korea in both Korean and English

and then came to the US University where they enrolled in English classes as well as regular coursework. The students in this study may not represent all Korean university students and their unique educational background may affect the generalizability of the results of the study. Caution will also be needed when making generalizations of the findings to other populations with different ethnic, linguistic, and educational backgrounds. The current study used the SILL based on a 5-points Likert scale system, so the characteristics of a retrospective self-reported survey can be problematic and the self-reported questionnaire may not report all types of language learning strategy use.

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