

Understanding the Stages of Concerns: Implementation of the Common Core State Standards in Louisiana Schools

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Abstract: This study investigated initial implementation processes of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in public and private schools in a single Louisiana district. Results suggested participants' high level of concern in many aspects of the implementation of the CCSS in public schools related to timeline and instability of curriculum decisions, which negatively affected teachers' confidence levels. Private school teachers experienced greater stability in their curricula, a more feasible timeline of implementation, positive professional development, and positive experiences with CCSS implementation, affecting their teacher identity and impact on students. However, public school teachers reported instability in their curricula, difficult timelines of implementation, unsupportive professional development, and overall negative experiences, affecting their teacher identity and impact on students with the implementation of the CCSS.

Keywords: accountability, Common Core State Standards, Compass Evaluation, concerns, implementation, principles of change, Louisiana

In 2014, the Louisiana Department of Education reported that ongoing professional development takes place to assist teachers and administrators in the implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS; Louisiana Department of Education [LDOE], 2014). To best support this new reform, many districts hurriedly utilized teachers to collaborate on writing new assessments, planning activities, designing materials, or adopting textbooks claiming to be CCSS-aligned (Hess & McShane, 2013). The mission statement of the CCSS states, "The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting

the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers" (Common Core State Standards [CCSS] Initiative, 2018, para. 5). The objective was to discover better ways to support teachers in building confidence in delivery of these new teaching practices.

In this study, we examined how the CCSS were initially implemented in selected Louisiana school settings and how the change in teaching standards impacted teachers. Two research questions guided the study: a) How were the CCSS initially implemented in Louisiana public and private school settings? b) What were teacher perceptions about the implementation of the CCSS?

Related Literature

Recently, the CCSS have been at the focus of educational reform in American schools. So far 42 states, the District of Columbia, four territories, and the Department of Defense Education Activity have adopted the CCSS (Standards in your state, 2017). Many states have been motivated to support the CCSS because a requirement for states applying for federal funds from the Race to the Top program was to adopt a "common set of standards." States also have the option of modifying the standards by adding up to 15% of new content (McLaughlin & Overturf, 2012). The CCSS provide higher academic expectations to increase learning (Jaeger & Pearson, 2017; Keazer & Gerberry, 2017; Lee, 2017), allowing students to learn "fewer core concepts in greater depth—a formula for challenging them academically, promoting deeper understanding, and enabling students to apply what they have learned" (Jones & King, 2012, p. 39). For example, in their mathematics Common Core implementation guide, O'Connell and Sangiovanni stated, "The goal in mathematics education was to apply, communicate, make connections, and reason about math content

rather than to simply compute" (2013, p. 2).

Krashen (2014) argued that there is no real evidence that national standards or increased standardized testing have positive effects on student achievement. He claimed the real problem of low student achievement in America lies in poverty. In her book on testing in American schools, Ravitch (2010) described the negative impact of accountability measures imposed by Bush's No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). She supported the idea that curriculum was largely replaced by testing and suggests that schools need stability, not constant turnover and change. Long (2013) argued that some of the criticisms of the CCSS focus on the loss of state authority because of curriculum influenced by assessments and the cost of CCSS assessments. However, teacher organizations such as the National Education Association have taken the initiative to partner with teams of educational professionals to develop support materials and share information in CCSS classrooms.

Critics of the CCSS oppose the idea of the increased rigor of standardized testing and measuring student achievement and effective teaching (Casbergue, 2017; Kamil, 2016; Lee, 2017). Porter, McMaken, Hwang, and Yang (2011) focused on the quality of the standards to determine their criticisms of the CCSS. International benchmarking revealed top-achieving countries provided more emphasis on "perform procedures" rather than the standards' emphasis on higher order cognitive demand (Porter et al., 2011).

CCSS and its Challenges in Teaching and Learning

The implementation of the CCSS has required states, districts, and schools to make major changes to their curriculum, assessments, and teacher training. Schools are taking chances on the cost of time and money invested in the implementation of the standards. Hess and McShane (2013) discussed four major issues affected by the implementation of the CCSS: new tests, materials and professional development, new expectations, and new stakes.

The Partnership for Assessment and Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) (Hess & McShane, 2013) were developed by two consortia of states organized to design CCSS-aligned tests (Hess & McShane, 2013). The plan was for students to take one of these two assessments in place of their state-level assessment in the 2014-2015 school year. However, many states decided not to use the assessments or did not commit to field-test the assessments in the 2014-2015 school year (Hess & McShane, 2013). In addition,

the cost of these assessments, including technological-specific costs, became an issue for many states.

The need for high-quality professional development and instructional alignment to the CCSS is crucial. Hill, Schilling, and Ball (2004) advocated for using measures to identify the effects of teacher knowledge on student achievement via the development of teacher knowledge and certification. Other critics fear that the standards may expect children to progress at a developmentally inappropriate rate. Main (2012) worried that the youngest learners have the most to lose if this new initiative does not work out. Main used the example of how a particular math standard is set in both kindergarten and first grade, suggesting the standards expect students to progress prematurely. McLaughlin and Overturf (2012) found that some elementary teachers feel the ELA standard implementation process to be challenging. Changes to teaching styles and instructional methods are known to be challenging to teachers, especially when it is not their choice (Kamil, 2016).

The CCSS have set rigorous expectations for students in literacy, language and writing, and mathematics. Ostenson and Wadham (2012) suggested young adult literature could be a strong fit with CCSS expectations because it meets the standards for quantitative and qualitative text complexity. The CCSS use a three-part model for measuring text complexity that includes "levels of meaning or purpose; structure; language conventionality and clarity; and knowledge demands" (CCSS Initiative, 2018, para. 4). Much young adult literature provides opportunities to explore multiple levels of meaning; complex structure; and use of figurative, ironic, or ambiguous language. Additionally, this literature often requires complex prior knowledge (Ostenson & Wadham, 2012). The quantitative measure of text complexity includes word length or frequency, sentence length, and difficult text cohesion (CCSS Initiative, 2018). The CCSS have brought more emphasis to teaching writing with more evidence-based practices (McDuffie et al, 2017). Troia and Olinghouse (2013) conducted a content analysis of CCSS writing and language standards to identify strengths and weaknesses along with the degree of evidence-based practices included in the standards. They found that the standards provide a coherent framework and consistency across grade levels to ensure writing expectations and content in a spiraling format, increasing the range of expectations across grade levels. As Faulkner (2013) and McDuffie et al. (2017) explained, the math standards encourage students to discuss, make mathematical connections, and use explicit mathematical language in order to

better understand the “why” behind mathematics. Ediger (2011) acknowledged the standards suggest that students must learn to reason abstractly and quantitatively and to justify their thinking. Researchers suggest that the CCSS provide opportunities for higher order thinking, student choice, and creative ways to display knowledge (Adams, Ely, & Yopp, 2017; Howard, 2016). The standards require students to use technology and collaborate with peers to produce writings that build on each other’s ideas (Casbergue, 2017; CCSS Initiative, 2018; Tucker, 2012).

CCSS in Louisiana and Stage of Concerns

The Louisiana State Board of Education adopted the CCSS on July 1, 2010, and it began implementation of the standards during the 2013-2014 academic year (CCSS Initiative, 2018). The state adopted these standards because they believed Louisiana students possess the same capabilities as other students around the country, although Louisiana students ranked 44th in nation in English language arts and 46th in math in 2014. Louisiana recognized the CCSS were more rigorous than the previously implemented Louisiana grade level expectations in ELA and math that were last updated in 2004 (LDOE, 2014).

According to the Louisiana Department of Education (2014), students in grades 3-8 were assessed with the PARCC assessment aligned to Louisiana’s new standards in the 2014-2015 school year. The Louisiana Department of Education developed a teacher evaluation system known as Compass, in which half of the evaluation is based on student growth and half is based on their supervisor’s formal classroom observation (LDOE, 2014).

Hall and Hord (2011) identified several methods to cope with change, including understanding how the new initiative works, how to support the process, and how to learn from previous experiences. The authors also described *principles of change*, which are patterns they observed repeatedly in their research when organizations experience change. This research focused on organizational change and understanding feelings and perceptions about change (Hall & Hord, 2011). Frances Fuller (1969) originally proposed the idea of calling one’s feelings and perceptions *concerns*. Fuller described a teacher’s progression of concerns through four levels: Unrelated, Self, Task, and Impact. Hall and Hord added that within each level, teachers experience seven stages of concern: Unconcerned, Informational, Personal, Management, Consequence, Collaboration, and Refocusing. Identifying teachers’ stages of concerns within this study can provide information on how prepared these teachers feel for CCSS

implementation and assist in guiding these teachers to experience greater confidence in implementation of this initiative.

Method

We used both qualitative and quantitative methods in this research study. Qualitative data were collected through schoolteacher interviews in which they shared their CCSS implementation experiences. The nature of qualitative data focuses on data in the form of words or “language in the form of extended text” (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014, p. 10). As such, interview questions asked how the teachers were putting their practices into action and how the presence or absence of a teacher accountability system affected them. We used the pragmatic process of thematic content analysis to analyze this qualitative interview data. Quantitative data were gathered using the Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoCQ) to collect information on participants’ feelings/experiences about the initial implementation process. The SoCQ has been found to be a valid and reliable instrument used in numerous research studies (e.g. Bogue, Marrs, & Little, 2017; Gudyanga & Jita, 2018) that measures “what a teacher or user is feeling about an innovation” (George, Hall, & Stiegelbauer, 2006, p. 7).

Participants

This study took place in a single school district in Northeast Louisiana, which was selected through purposeful sampling. The district serves K-12 students and consists of six elementary schools, three middle schools, and one high school. Purposeful sampling was also used to select the two elementary schools--one private and one public--and a principal and two teachers--one kindergarten and one first grade--from each site to participate in interviews. Elementary was chosen because this was the first level to fully implement the CCSS in the selected Louisiana school district in 2013. Both kindergarten teachers had over 20 years of teaching experience, and both first grade teachers had over 10 years of teaching experience. All four teachers had a bachelor’s degree.

A total of 403 teachers from all public schools in the district were invited to take the online SoCQ. While 146 public school teachers responded to the survey, 22 participants did not complete all parts of the survey, resulting in a total of 124 (N) participants included in final analysis. Table 1 displays demographic information of survey respondents.

Table 1

Demographics of Respondents Included in Stages of Concern Questionnaire

Demographic	Number	Percentage
Years of Teaching Experience		
0- 10	63	50.8
11- 20	41	33
21- 30	14	11
31- 40	5	4
over 40	1	.8
Gender		
Female	103	83.1
Male	18	14.5
Missing	3	2.4
Level of Education		
Bachelor's Degree	71	57.3
Master's Degree	44	35.5
Specialist Degree	4	3.2
Doctoral Degree	3	2.4
Other	2	1.6
Teaching Position		
Principal or Assistant Principal	3	2.4
Elementary School Teacher	57	46
Middle School Teacher	24	19.4
High School Teacher	29	23.4
Other	11	8.9
Professional Development		
Received Formal Training	95	76.6
Have NOT received formal training	29	23.4
Non-user	12	9.7
Novice	31	25
Intermediate	71	57.3
Old Hand	9	7.3
Past User	1	.8

Results and Discussion

Qualitative Data

This section includes findings from interviews with principals and teachers from two school sites. After a reduction of the categories in the initial coding framework, the following themes emerged from the final coding framework and provided a descriptive account of the study.

One of the most important differences discovered in these principal interviews was the schools' transition to the CCSS. The public school was mandated to follow the Louisiana Department of Education's im-

plementation process plan, whereas the private school was allowed to determine its own individual implementation process plan according to the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Public schools in Louisiana were fully implementing the CCSS in both math and English language arts for grades K-2 in the 2012-2013 school year. This particular private school decided to implement the CCSS one subject at a time and with only a few grade levels at a time. The private school's implementation plan included adopting a new math textbook series aligned to the standards, whereas the public school began implementing the standards by using

a district-created curriculum aligned to the standards.

When principals were asked their opinions about the idea of implementing the CCSS across states, they agreed on the idea being very beneficial for “raising expectations and rigor nationwide.” Both principals mentioned that although the transition had minimal negative impact on students, it affected their teachers the most. All of the teachers mentioned benefits of the flexibility of the standards and the capability of sharing ideas across states, which could benefit transfer students.

When asked about their transition to the CCSS in the initial interview, both public school teachers mentioned gathering resources and materials as being a challenge, while both private school teachers were pleased with all of the materials their textbook series provided. For example, a first grade public school teacher stated, “It has been difficult finding resources to develop materials and tests,” and the first grade private school teacher replied, “I use all of the manipulatives available for me to teach in a different way.” The public school teachers stressed their concern for the transition period set by the state. One first grade private school teacher was surprised at the way public schools were asked to implement the standards:

I just don't think they introduced it correctly . . . You can't do both math and reading at the same time and expect teachers to do a good job their first year with two totally different ways of teaching than we were taught and how we learned. None of us have had this . . . even the young new teachers haven't had Common Core, so it's a lot . . . and if a teacher is not comfortable and doesn't know what they are doing, the children don't get everything out of that. I think all the schools should do the same workbooks and series. It's all a big business and company. Let's all do the same thing, especially in the same state.

The same four teachers were revisited and interviewed a year later in order to determine whether or not their opinions about the implementation process of the CCSS had changed. All four teachers remained in the same position at the same schools. Surprisingly, in just a year's time, much had changed for the public and private school teachers. These teachers expressed a great deal of frustration and anxiety over a major change in curriculum that their district had implemented. After attempting to implement district-made curriculum aligned to the standards over the past two years, this district decided to adopt new curricula aligned to the standards. A first grade public school teacher remarked, “This year has been a little chal-

lenging as opposed to last year. We started a new curriculum in ELA and math and it's been a little challenging.” A kindergarten public school teacher stated, “It's completely and totally different than it was last year. Nothing is the same. I can't do all of the things I used to do and it's all new. So it's stressful.”

The public school teachers expressed the greatest frustrations over what they perceived as constantly changing curricular decision-making that was occurring and mandated in their school district. They did not have a role in the decision-making, but they were mandated to follow resulting decisions, parts of which forced them to change their teaching styles and methods. A first grade public school teacher stated,

I don't think the Common Core was the issue, but the way they are presenting it to the kids and the order and just some of the methods they are using to teach the different strategies in math . . . I just felt like they had a better grasp of it last year than they [do] this year. It is confusing the kids the way we're teaching it. It's not the concept or the standards, it's the way we're teaching it to them and going about it. It's been negative in the public eye. Parents haven't been taught that way, so it's just been a challenge.

Conversely, the private school teachers were pleased with their new curriculum in a variety of ways. They were accepting of the challenge because they were able to implement the changes one subject at a time, and they played a part in deciding what curriculum to adopt. For example, a kindergarten private school teacher stated, “I always tried to do large group and small group, but this new reading series forces you to do small group . . . It just kind of made you accountable a little bit more.” In addition, another first grade private school teacher explained, “It's helped me advance my skills in teaching writing. It's a very systematic way in teaching writing.”

The public school teachers reported that they did not have much support implementing the new programs. They mentioned feeling “powerless” and having a lot of “pressure” to implement the program in its entirety. One kindergarten teacher conveyed these ideas:

Professional development was kind of a joke if I can be honest. We didn't have the manuals over the summer. We didn't even know what we were getting, so we didn't get to see anything and nothing made sense. We were given no preparation time, and when the manuals did get here it was like, ‘go do exactly verbatim and do exactly as

you are told to do, because this is the end all cure all programs.' I'm just not feeling it.

In contrast, the private school teachers mentioned the professional development provided for their programs was beneficial to them because they were allowed to analyze and sort through materials and learn each piece. They were given the entire summer to review their materials, and the workshops clarified several questions they had after reviewing the materials.

The other major difference between the public and private school was the teacher evaluation systems. When asked about Compass evaluation, the public school principal believed that the idea was highly beneficial to everyone in the state because it would create a consistent instrument to evaluate teachers. The public school principal reported that this evaluation made everyone accountable and increased academic achievement. She also mentioned that the principals were receiving training on the Compass rubric by watching videos of teachers so that they could develop into more reliable observers and evaluators.

Because the private school is not under the jurisdiction of the Louisiana Department of Education, private schools use their own teacher evaluation and accountability systems. The private school principal talked about their form of teacher evaluation called *Discovery Walks*. She explained that this evaluation system is based off an overall school goal. A team of outside evaluators, along with a few volunteer teachers from their school, visits each classroom to rate a variety of items.

When asked about their experience with the Compass teacher evaluation system, both public school teachers expressed many negative and anxious feelings. They mentioned how little control they had over the way they were being evaluated. Teachers felt it was unfair that they were observed only twice per year using a rubric that they felt was inappropriate for the age levels taught. Similarly, the teachers found that the evaluation was unfair because the student learning targets were not based on individual student growth data, but on the expectation that a certain number of students reach a specific score. A first grade teacher expressed her particular concerns:

I wasn't too pleased about it. I'm all about holding people accountable, but with education overall it's hard to just hold a teacher accountable on tests when so many factors contribute to kids: SES, low-income families. I also think parents need to be held accountable. We can only do so much in the classroom. It should have been growth, not every child scores basic or above. Not all children can

possibly get there.

The public school teachers felt that the Compass evaluation system was becoming unrelated to their implementation of the CCSS. For example, a kindergarten public school teacher stated, "I don't think Compass helps standards. It's not hindering me, but they don't go hand in hand with each other."

The private school teachers talked about their evaluation process, which included the principal walking through their classrooms throughout the year and their school's participation in *Discovery Walks* four times a year. They felt comfortable with this process because they were evaluated as a school group, not as individual teachers. They knew the results were not tied to a raise but were simply used for analyzing overall school performance. First graders do take a standardized test called the *Terra Nova*, but results are only used for informational purposes. One teacher mentioned that receiving more feedback would be helpful in order to improve in specific teaching areas.

In terms of teacher efficacy, all of the teachers seemed to agree that more experience and preparation time provided them with greater feelings of control and confidence in what they were teaching. They mentioned feeling the least amount of control when they felt unprepared or were experiencing something new, whether it was the first weeks of a new school year teaching new policies and procedures or the first few weeks of learning their new curricula.

The public school teachers expressed greater concern over their professional identity than the private school teachers. Although they did not say they were looking for a career change, they both wondered how much longer they would be able to continue teaching if things continued changing. A kindergarten public school teacher remarked, "It made me question, 'What else are they going to do to us, and am I able to keep this up?'"

Another first grade public school teacher remarked,

In this past year I've wondered if I made the right decision. I am overwhelmed because I spend my weekend working trying to stay ahead and prepared. It's been really stressful bringing so much work home to prepare. Because I was so overwhelmed, I felt like the fun was taken out of learning.

Quantitative Data

This section includes the findings received from teachers using the SoCQ. The questionnaire consisted of 35 items representing potential concerns about the implementation of the CCSS. The instrument measured seven different stages of concern, listed from earliest to latest: Awareness, Informational, Personal, Management, Consequence, Collaboration, and Refocusing. Participants responded to each survey item on a 0-7 scale in which 0 indicated the item was irrelevant and 7 indicated the statement was very true. Means and standard deviations were calculated for each of the 35 questions in the SoCQ. The highest mean (6.45) was for question 29: "I would like to know what other faculty are doing in this area." The second highest mean (6.24) was for question 11: "I am concerned about how the innovation affects students." The results indicate that teachers experienced a high level of concern within each stage.

Scaled scores for each stage of concern were also calculated. Stage 0 resulted in a mean scaled score of 20.15, indicating that teachers reported little concern about or involvement with the implementation of the CCSS. A resulting Stage 1 mean of 26.39 indicates the teachers wanted more information about the CCSS. The highest intensities of concern occurred at Stage 2, where a mean scaled score of 29.36 indicates the respondents had intense personal concerns about the standards. At Stage 3, teachers' mean scaled score of 26.25 indicates they reported concerns about logistics, time, and management. A mean scaled score of 28.20 at Stage 4 suggests the teachers had concerns about the consequences of the use of the standards for students; $M = 27.08$ at Stage 5 indicates concerns about

working with others in relation to using the standards; and $M = 26.02$ at Stage 6 indicates that teachers could potentially have ideas about exploring ways to change the innovation with a better alternative.

Professional development is often provided for teachers to coincide with the implementation of a new innovation in order to support and ease the concerns of teachers involved in the implementation process. In the second part of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they had received formal training on the CCSS. The results indicated that the respondents' concerns remained at high levels at every stage whether or not formal training was included. Table 2 displays the Stages of Concern scaled scores along with the corresponding percentiles organized by whether or not the respondent indicated they received formal training on the CCSS.

The state-required CCSS implementation process began with elementary teachers and progressed to middle and high school teachers over a series of five years. Therefore, it would seem that the elementary teachers would report more experience with the standards than teachers in middle and high school. Further, one would expect elementary teachers to experience a smoother transition with their students than middle and high school students because younger students would experience change in the early stages of their educational development as compared to older students. However, this study's results did not support these ideas. Table 3 displays the mean stages of concern scaled scores and corresponding percentiles organized by teaching level. George et al. (2006) suggested that these concerns generally progress in a developmental way in which earlier concerns must be

Table 2

Stages of Concern Scaled Scores by Professional Development Level

Stage of Concern	Received Formal Training		No Formal Training	
	<i>M</i>	<i>Percentile</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Percentile</i>
Stage 0 (Awareness)	19.54	97	22.10	99
Stage 1 (Informational)	25.81	91	28.31	95
Stage 2 (Personal)	29.30	92	29.59	94
Stage 3 (Management)	26.09	92	26.83	94
Stage 4 (Consequence)	28.20	66	28.22	66
Stage 5 (Collaboration)	27.42	76	25.94	72
Stage 6 (Refocusing)	25.90	87	26.41	87

lowered in intensity before later concerns increase in intensity. Although the intensity of concerns in the results of this study appears to be somewhat higher in the earlier stages of concern, the intensity is not much lower in the later stages of concern. This suggests that this group of public school teachers experienced a wide variety of concerns across the district and across grade levels about CCSS implementation.

Conclusion

This study investigated the perceptions and confidence levels of teachers and principals in the initial implementation of the CCSS at two schools. The public school began implementing the standards before standard-aligned textbooks were made available, so teachers were developing their own curriculum and materials to align with the standards. Conversely, the private school waited to begin CCSS implementation

Table 3

Stages of Concern Scaled Scores by Teaching Position

Stage of Concern	Elementary		Middle		High	
	Mean	Percentile	Mean	Percentile	Mean	Percentile
Stage 0 Awareness	18.51	97	21.42	99	22.12	99
Stage 1 Informational	27.15	93	26.29	91	25.75	91
Stage 2 Personal	30.71	95	30.09	94	28.24	91
Stage 3 Management	26.75	94	26.75	94	26.32	92
Stage 4 Consequence	29.12	71	28.09	66	27.57	63
Stage 5 Collaboration	27.94	80	27.66	80	25.13	68
Stage 6 Refocusing	25.74	87	26.33	87	27.00	90

until textbooks were made available, and teachers were involved in the textbook selection process. The public school began implementing the math and English language arts standards simultaneously, whereas the private school implemented one subject area at a time. While the public school changed their curricula in both subject areas to textbook-aligned curricula two years into the implementation process, the private school continued with the series they originally chose. The public school teachers were individually evaluated using the Louisiana Compass teacher evaluation tool in which half of their score was determined by classroom observations and the other half was determined by student growth. The private school teachers were evaluated school wide using Discovery Walks, which are classroom observations that lead to a school-wide performance reflection.

Both public and private school teachers and principals recognized the costs and benefits of CCSS implementation. The public school teachers expressed concerns about the professional development they received on their curricula, while the private school teachers were pleased with the professional development provided for their curricula. The public school teachers expressed concerns about their teacher

identity and impact on students due to the many changes they were experiencing in curricula and in the evaluation process. The private school teachers expressed opinions that were more positive concerning their teacher identity and impact on students because they experienced minimal changes and low-pressure evaluation methods. Teachers expressed high levels of concern at every Stage of Concern regardless of the grade they taught or whether or not they received formal professional development training. Results also indicated that the highest levels of concerns were related to what other faculty were doing with the CCSS and how the standards affected students.

Change is necessary in education in order to keep up with the demands of an ever-changing society. To implement educational reform, departments rely on teachers to serve as the primary agents of change. Therefore, adequate teacher preparation along with integration of these initiatives is important to support teachers in the changes that must occur within their classroom (Adams et al., 2017; Casbergue, 2017; Jaeger & Pearson, 2017). However, even providing professional development and materials may not be enough to support teachers in times of change (Kamil, 2016). Inadequate professional development or inappropriate

ate interpretation of professional development can negatively affect the implementation process (Jenkins & Agamba, 2013; McLaughlin & Overturf, 2012; Swars & Chesnutt, 2016).

Unfortunately the present study, like several previous studies (Ajayi, 2016; Howard, 2016; Lee, 2017), has found teachers to perceive their professional development and curricular materials to be inadequate to meet the high standards set in the CCSS. The implementation timeline and inconsistencies of curricular materials appear to have had the greatest negative impact on teachers' confidences and concerns for the public school teachers included in this study. This created an uncomfortable environment, which directly impacted the effectiveness of the CCSS implementation process. The concerns and struggles the teachers faced will likely affect the confidence that parents have in the educational system, potentially creating instability in the education of our students.

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