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Content Area Teacher Perspectives on Integrating Literacy Strategies

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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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Osha Smith

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2017

Abstract

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MA, Temple University, 2006

BS, Albright College, 2001

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

The Common Core State Standards recommend that all educators prepare students with the literacy skills needed for college and careers. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to examine 7th and 8th grade content area teachers' perspectives towards teaching literacy. The research questions addressed teachers' capabilities in the role of literacy instructor as well as the actual application of literacy. The conceptual framework included Bruner's constructivist, Bandura's self-efficacy, and Knowles's andragogy theories. These theories informed the investigation of adult learners' perspectives regarding the way they learn and gain confidence to provide literacy instruction. Eleven English, math, science, and social studies teachers participated in this study through interviews. Data were also gathered via classroom observations and lesson plans. A qualitative data analysis software program was used to manage the qualitative data. Inductive and deductive coding were used to analyze the data and identify themes. The findings of this study indicated that teachers felt unprepared to teach reading. While teachers saw value in literacy, their perspectives were affected by their commitment to content instruction and time constraints to meet disciplinary curriculum requirements. This study affects positive social change by providing increased understanding of literacy instructions in the content classroom. These findings can facilitate communication between teachers and other stakeholders regarding school literacy initiatives. Further, the findings informed creation of a professional training program to provide teachers with on-site support for literacy integration.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this paper to my husband, Bill, my biggest cheerleader. Honey, thank you for carrying “the boulder” in our marriage while I focused on my doctoral writing. Thank you for waiting patiently for “your turn” while I stayed up late at night and all day most Saturday’s to write just one more section. I would not have been able to finish strong without you. I would also like to dedicate this paper to my father whose support and encouragement kept me moving forward. My one regret is that my father passed away in April of 2015 and did not get to witness my graduation. I know he is smiling down on my completion of this journey. Finally, I dedicate this ultimate degree to my mother and my four beautiful daughters, Alyssa, Talitha, LaNiesha, and Domonique. All of you gave me space to do what I needed to do and encouragement every step of the way. I love you all, and I sincerely thank you.

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I would not have been able to complete this phenomenal task without my Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ, who gave me the wisdom, knowledge, and stamina to achieve this goal. I would like to thank my mother, Audrey Fielder, who modeled faith, love, and determination in every situation. You taught me that with God, all things are possible.

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Thank you to my methodologist, Dr. Kathrine Hayes Fondation and the URR Dr. Nyaradzo H. Mvududu for reviewing and providing feedback on each draft of my study. I also would like to thank the IRB director for reviewing and granting approval of my IRB application to conduct research. I am indebted to the staff of Walden University, including advisors, library personnel, writing center, and the academic skills center for providing on-time support when needed.

I would not have been able to conduct my research without the administrators, staff, and study participants of my school district. Thank you for believing in me and granting me permission to perform this research study in the school. I appreciate the flexibility and support provided while I collected data. To my participants, your patience

and taking time to meet with me, allowing me entrance to your classrooms, and giving access to your lesson plans, provided the data I needed to answer questions that will benefit the educational community.

Special thanks to my friends, Martha Squaresky, Patricia Derk, Dusty McMillan, and Paula Kennedy for reading over my study and providing writing support along with much needed encouragement when I needed it the most. Finally, I give thanks to my family and friends too numerous to mention for praying with me and for me, and sustaining me with words of encouragement that inspired me throughout the course of this journey. Thank you all for believing in me.

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Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

The recently adopted and implemented Common Core State Standards (CCSS) call for students to have access to more rigorous content in their classrooms than they have had in the past. The current shift in practice is intended to advance students into higher levels of academic achievement. Teachers have been given the responsibility to create curricula with full-bodied and diverse narrative and informational passages so that students can be exposed to a variety of texts and develop as readers who can read texts of various lengths and difficulties (Akhondi, Malayeri, & Samad, 2011; CCSS Initiative, 2015; Gilles, Wang, Smith, & Johnson, 2013). The CCSS developers further recommended that all educators teach research-proven reading comprehension strategies and guide students in the application of strategies while reading challenging texts (Akhondi et al., 2011; Gilles et al., 2013; International Reading Association Common Core State Standards Committee, 2012; Wendt, 2013).

In the area of vocabulary instruction, teachers are advised to plan for vocabulary development in all content areas throughout the school day (Gilles et al., 2013; International Reading Association Common Core State Standards Committee, 2012). In addition, because students need opportunities to write in content areas in response to reading digital text and print, it is recommended that teachers provide opportunities for students to read various types of text (Cosmah & Saine, 2013; Leu et al., 2011). Therefore, because the CCSS emphasize teaching reading and writing in disciplinary courses and other technical subjects, teachers may benefit by being aware of the

specialized ways that can be used to show students how to think, problem-solve, and communicate in each discipline (Gilles et al., 2013; Wendt, 2013). Content area reading strategies may be discipline specific, thus, due to their expertise, content teachers should provide this instruction (Gilles et al., 2013). Even though the CCSS call for teachers in all subject areas to teach and implement literacy strategies, barriers still remain.

One barrier to meeting the recommendations of the CCSS is that many disciplinary teachers do not welcome the integration of reading strategies into their instruction (Bayar, 2014; Bullock, 2011; Cosmah & Saine, 2013; DeVries, Vande Grift, & Jansen, 2014; McCoss-Yergian & Krepps, 2010; Warren-Kring & Warren, 2013). Content area teachers have varied levels of competency in providing literacy instruction and may, therefore, be unwilling or unable to teach literacy strategies within their disciplines (Hurst & Pearman, 2014; Vaughn et al., 2013; Wilhelm & Lauer, 2015; Wilson, Grisham, & Smetana, 2009). This could be the result of the education or experiences that these individuals have had in the past either during their preservice or in-service training. Wilhelm and Lauer additionally noted that many disciplinary teachers have internalized their proficient content area approaches, but may not realize the need to teach them explicitly nor know how to teach in their content area using literacy strategies. Consequently, many districts are forced to address this inconsistency. As teacher perspectives are brought to light, districts can begin to address the problem of teacher reluctance to embrace integration of literacy strategies across the curriculum. All components of this study are aligned to examine content area teacher perspectives towards teaching CCSS literacy strategies currently adopted by most school districts.

This study addresses the teacher perspectives about district leaders' expectations that the teachers become literacy instructors in all content areas. The implementation of a new district-wide initiative (which focuses on literacy across the curriculum) at XYZ School District (pseudonym) has brought teacher resistance to the forefront. In addition to administrative changes and discontinuation of the Learning Focused Schools initiative, the district leadership also put an end to the use of literacy coaches and incorporated a train-the-trainer approach to implementing a Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships (RRR) program in March, 2013 (personal communication from teacher, March 15, 2015).

The RRR initiative is a four-quadrant framework that reflects two aspects of raised standards and learner success (see Appendix B). The initiative has been designed to support the CCSS literacy recommendations, and the resulting train-the-trainer approach was implemented in response to direct feedback from the October, 2013 RRR training (personal communication from administrator, March, 15, 2015). A district-wide online student and staff WE Learn survey was conducted throughout the 2014 school-year and again throughout the 2015 school-year to measure staff and student perspectives regarding rigor, relevance, relationships, and leadership (Successful Practices Network, 2013). While these data have been helpful, the school has not fully examined the impact of teachers' attitudes toward implementing the literacy practices embedded in the new RRR initiative which can influence instruction in all disciplines. Additionally, the school administrators are unaware of the impact that either teacher literacy experience or the value teachers place on literacy instruction at the secondary level has on school literacy practices (Personal communication from teacher, March 15, 2015). Therefore, no definite

prediction can be made as to the outcome of this program. The examination of results in student achievement due to the RRR initiative are not expected to take place for another year or two.

Nevertheless, teachers are charged with the responsibility of implementing literacy strategies within all disciplines to include English, math, science, and social studies curricula. During XYZ School District's fourth year of RRR implementation, all teachers were expected to incorporate close reading, reflective writing, and performance tasks into their daily practice (Personal communication from administrator, August 6, 2015). This study attempts to determine through interviews, observations, and documentation review whether teachers' sense of self-efficacy, their perspectives on integrating literacy instruction into their content teaching, and the value they attribute to literacy instruction has an impact on their application of literacy approaches in content area instruction.

School administrators and professional development facilitators may benefit from knowing the perspectives and values of content area teachers in regard to integrating literacy approaches in their classrooms so they can create a safe, nonthreatening atmosphere for teachers to learn. Teachers who feel safe may be more motivated to want to learn the content presented to them and therefore be more accepting of teaching literacy in their content areas. It is equally important that teachers have an awareness of the impact their perspectives about literacy have on their instruction (Routman, 2012). The overarching problem driving this study was that teachers and administrators were not aware of content teacher perspectives towards teaching literacy or the extent that teacher

perspectives affect the learning environment teachers create. The awareness of this information may promote social change by providing a better understanding of teacher perspectives toward teaching reading in the classroom. Understanding and considering teacher perspectives may promote acceptance and increased compliance with school literacy reform.

Definition of the Problem

Whenever new programs are implemented, problems may arise. The newly implemented CCSS, the change in student demographics, and the rapid advances in technology have all impacted literacy instruction requirements for educators in many school districts (CCSS Initiative, 2015; Cosmah & Saine, 2013; Wood, Jones, Stover, & Polly, 2011). All of the above-mentioned issues have affected the educators in XYZ School District through the addition of new responsibilities. The overarching local change impacting teachers in this large suburban school district was the literacy-focused RRR school initiative, now in its fourth year of implementation. In compliance with the RRR initiative, teachers are expected to implement literacy strategies such as close reading, reflective writing, and performance tasks as part of their disciplinary instruction. However, many content area educators are reluctant to welcome the addition of literacy approaches into their practices (Personal communication from teacher, December 10, 2014; Personal communication from teacher August 6, 2015).

While it is vital for social studies, English, mathematics, and science educators to teach literacy approaches, they may not have the necessary training nor see the value of doing so. In an effort to address this problem, it is necessary to explore the perspectives

and experiences of the content area educators to establish how best to uphold them in providing literacy instruction within their disciplines. The district's new RRR initiative emphasizes literacy and requires the use of literacy strategies across the curriculum on a daily basis. Administrators need to consider how a mandated emphasis on literacy will impact teacher practices to pave the way for individual teachers to effectively participate in future school initiatives.

Routinely, teachers' practices are affected in various ways by constant changes to and new requirements for classroom instruction. As districts attempt to bring curriculum in alignment with the CCSS, new initiatives are being tried and implemented. Professional development has been provided; however, little consideration has been given to the specific and varied needs and perspectives of teachers across content areas to effectively teach literacy strategies. Considering the perspectives and requirements of teachers may help to ensure buy-in of literacy initiatives and may subsequently improve student academic achievement in the area of literacy (Bullock, 2011; Warren-Kring & Warren, 2013).

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

This project has the potential to contribute to improving instruction in XYZ School District because it provides insight into content teachers' responses to the new initiative adopted as a result of district leaders' attempts to align existing curriculum with the CCSS. At this point, the perspectives of the teachers about teaching literacy have not been considered. In addition, educators at the school have varied literacy experiences,

levels of education, and values. Some content area teachers have taken a literacy education course; however, most lack training on how to provide effective literacy instruction within their disciplines (Shanahan, Shanahan, & Misischia, 2011). The lack of exposure to literacy experiences leading to low teacher self-efficacy has been a topic of discussion among teachers at the school. Teachers have also expressed concern about the importance placed on literacy over all other core subjects. Furthermore, administrators are well aware of the potential value in knowing teachers' viewpoints toward implementing literacy in disciplinary classrooms and finding out if there is a difference in teacher perspectives between the disciplines (personal communication from Superintendent, May 20, 2015). There remain multiple avenues to explore in this area such as the challenges of additional time commitments and monitoring authentic integration of literacy in all subject areas.

Therefore, in this study I investigated teacher perspectives regarding teaching literacy, as well as teacher self-efficacy, in regard to their ability to effectively provide instruction in literacy. Hence, in this study I investigated whether teachers believed they could fulfill the expectation set in place by the CCSS and implemented by the school district that all teachers integrate literacy into their instruction. The main contribution this study provides to the study school was awareness of teachers' individual perspectives and experiences regarding reading instruction, as well as possible suggestions from teachers as to what they need to become literacy instructors within their disciplines. Furthermore, the study results may serve to pinpoint the level along with the content of training that educators may still need. In addition, the principal could profit from the study results to

aid in bringing teachers on-board for future school reform initiatives. More importantly, teachers would benefit if the study confirmed the need for relevant professional development and showed the value in collaborating with other teachers about ways to include reading in their instruction. What is more, educators would have the sense of being heard pertaining to their concerns about additional responsibilities and expectations as the result of new school initiatives, thus improving teacher self-efficacy and support for integrating literacy in the classroom.

Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature

Research into teacher perspectives is not an area that is new to the educational community. Warren-Kring and Warren (2013) documented a large number of studies on the impact of teacher perspectives on the decisions they make for classroom instruction. Researchers agree that there is value in understanding how teachers think, what they know and believe, and how their perspectives and experiences affect instructional practices (Wilcox, Murakami-Ramalho, & Urick, 2013). Wilcox et al. (2013) agreed that considering the teacher's role is critical for successful implementation of new initiatives. Teachers are on the front line in the delivery of school initiatives; therefore, educational stakeholders should be aware of how educators' perspectives impact their role in the implementation process. Teachers' perspectives regarding their profession may include inaccurate assumptions.

For example, teachers assume that because students should have mastered reading in earlier grades and seem to be able to read classroom texts, they have the skills to comprehend what they read (Israel, Maynard, & Williamson, 2013; Taylor & Kilpin,

2013). Teachers further make the assumption that basic learned skills will automatically move forward to advanced and high-level literacy skills as students move through grade levels (Taylor & Kilpin, 2013). Another important consideration for secondary content teachers is to avoid the assumption that their students are able to competently navigate and comprehend informational text (Moehlman, 2013). Because of these assumptions, content teachers often neglect instruction in content-area reading while attending to disciplinary teaching because they continue to assume that early reading and writing skills will automatically transfer into high-school content area classrooms (Moehlman, 2013; Taylor & Kilpin, 2013). On the other hand, effective instruction in literacy strategies when integrated in science and social studies classrooms has been shown to improve student learning (Adams & Pegg, 2012; Israel et al., 2013).

The priority teachers place on content instruction may be the result of a lack of experience or literacy course-work training offered at teacher preparatory colleges and universities. Gillis (2014) and Adams and Pegg (2012) pointed out that content area teachers do not think about the seamless integration of literacy instruction because they are focused on content; therefore, they seldom use literacy strategies they may have learned. Despite previous training, teachers may not be able to effectively teach what they have mastered or consider as falling within their area of expertise.

In support of the newly adopted CCSS, some researchers advocate the creation, evaluation, and communication of content knowledge in ways specific to each discipline (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2014; Shanahan et al., 2011; Wilhelm & Lauer, 2015). Studies showed that while history, science, and mathematics

teachers all used similar strategies, such as contextualization, argument analysis, attention to text structure, and graphic images, they used these strategies in different ways and for different purposes (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2014; Shanahan et al., 2011; Wilhelm & Lauer, 2015). Content teachers are now required to teach literacy so that learners can take part in specific applications of literacy in all of the content areas; therefore, teachers need to be aware of their strengths and weaknesses concerning literacy practices as outlined by the CCSS. One way for teachers to become aware of how they read and write within their disciplines is by thinking aloud when reading, writing, or solving problems (Wilhelm & Lauer, 2015). Wilhelm and Lauer (2015) discovered "that thinking aloud was their most powerful tool for gaining metacognitive awareness of what concepts to teach, how to teach them, and how to model, scaffold, and develop student procedural knowledge" (p. 69). It thus behooves educational investigators to examine the influence of educators' perspectives on teaching literacy and to raising teacher self-efficacy for effective literacy instruction. To that end, Miller and Veatch (2010) and Wilhelm and Lauer (2013) presented the notion that all teachers are teachers of reading and should build vocabulary, oral reading fluency, and comprehension while teaching in their content areas. Anthony, Tippett, and Yore (2010) argued that science instruction should focus explicitly on the languages of science to provide opportunities for students to interpret and build knowledge with science texts. Israel et al. (2013) also pointed out that secondary teachers who provide science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) instruction admit that they lack the time or knowledge to provide reading instruction. This admission provides an explanation for student difficulty in gaining the

access to the vocabulary and key background knowledge that they need to support comprehension and new knowledge construction (Israel et al., 2013). In order to support today's students, teachers should continue to educate themselves in literacy practices (Adams & Pegg, 2012; Arrastia, Jakiel, & Rawls, 2013).

Educators may want to consider the use of specific components of literacy instruction to be used by all teachers when providing literacy instruction to today's young people. Researchers have identified vocabulary, reading comprehension, and oral fluency as critical components for content area instruction (Adams & Pegg, 2012, Anthony et al., 2010; Kim, Samson, Fitzgerald, & Hartry, 2010; Miller & Veatch, 2010; Warren-Kring & Warren, 2013). For example, in the use of twenty-first century reading materials, all teachers who utilize graphic novels would require sophisticated instructional skills along with the understanding of the differences between illustrated and text-limited narratives to effectively teach the media literacy core principles through the use of multiple literacies (Karchmer-Klein & Shinas, 2012; Seelow, 2010; Watts, 2015). Watts (2015) further pointed out the narrative or dialogue textual differences and variations in how words and images may be placed on the pages. The strategies designed to help students become readers require teachers to be able to model and teach appropriate application of research-proven techniques in reading instruction (Fang, 2014; Murnane, Sawhill, & Snow, 2012). Subsequently, teachers should be willing to share innovative teaching methods and strategies with their colleagues (Parsons, Richey, Parsons, & Dodman, 2013).

Although literacy in the content area has a long history, the manner in which it is implemented has changed over the years (Adams & Pegg, 2012; Fang, 2014). While the reading community does share the viewpoint that reading remediation is still necessary for students in fourth grade and beyond, serious implications often arise for secondary educators because of this situation (Fang, 2014; Kim et al., 2010). The change from teaching standard literacy strategies to disciplinary literacy strategies allows for student development in areas of social, semantic, and thought practices (Fang, 2014). Teachers' voices should be considered in regard to these changes in instructional practices to lessen their resistance to content area literacy practices because they are the ones who will take the lead in promoting education in their schools long after the new school initiatives have ended (Anthony et al., 2010; Storz & Hoffman, 2013).

Definition of Terms

Listed below are terms along with definitions that are specific to this qualitative study. Definitions are provided for terms that may be unfamiliar or have multiple meanings. The definitions provided are expected to add clarity and understanding to the material presented in this paper.

Andragogy: A theory specific to adult learning, emphasizing that adults are able to guide themselves and take responsibility for the decisions they make (Akin, 2014; Culatta, 2013, & Henschke, 2008).

Close reading: Encourages learners to directly engage with complex text through a thorough and methodical manner. Students read the text multiple times seeking to comprehend central ideas and supporting details. This definition has been provided by the

Center for Educational Leadership, https://www.k-12leadership.org/ (Personal communication training facilitator, April 15, 2016).

Common Core State Standards (CCSS): New goals of learning for English, mathematics, social studies, and science intended to ready learners for college and vocations (Shanahan, 2013).

Conceptual framework: Includes the concepts, postulations, expectations, perspectives, and theories that uphold and enlighten research (Maxwell, 2004).

Content literacy: Consists of the techniques and study skills students use to comprehend disciplinary text (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012).

Disciplinary literacy: The knowledge and ability to construct, communicate and use experience within the disciplines to participate in instruction (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012).

Job-embedded professional development: Encompasses the provision of practical strategies and processes in educational situations with actual students and actual curriculum through coaching and extended and sustained collaboration (Goldring, Preston, & Huff, 2012; Green, Gonzalez, Lopez-Velasquez, & Howard, 2013).

Literacy: The capability to identify, comprehend, explain, create, converse, and process through the use of contexts that are written or in print (Ahmed, 2011).

New literacies: A requirement to understand how to navigate text that is nonlinear, consistently evaluate resources, filter out extraneous materials, make inferences, and use a range of features to create messages (Bezemer & Kress, 2008; Lankshear & Knobel, 2011).

Pedagogy: A method of providing instruction specific to children (Akin, 2014; Henschke, 2008).

Performance tasks: Learning tasks or assessments designed to allow students to show knowledge and proficiency of concepts through real world application. Students produce a product as evidence of their learning. Each performance task must show evidence of the following *real-world* components: G-Goal, R-Role, A-Audience, S-Situation, P-Products/Performance, S-Standards. This definition has been provided by the Center for Educational Leadership, https://www.k-12leadership.org/ (Personal communication from training facilitator, April 15, 2016).

Perspective: Refers to the way educators view their educational experiences and then conceptualize their positions in educating and gaining knowledge (Ajayi, 2011).

Reflective writing: Writing using emotions, thoughts, reactions, or memories about a subject after reading to determine important points or gain new understanding about the subject. This definition has been provided by the Center for Educational Leadership, https://www.k-12leadership.org/ (Personal communication from training facilitator, April 15, 2016).

Response to intervention (RTI): A system with three levels to provide effective classroom reading instruction for every student that is a component of the 2004 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA; Lenski, 2012).

Rigor, relevance, and relationship initiative (RRR): A framework consisting of four quadrants showing two aspects of raised standards and learner achievement. The study school has implemented this framework and subsequent professional development

offerings to enable educators to examine curriculum and develop lesson plans and assessments within the four quadrants. The four quadrants contained within the framework include acquisition, application, assimilation, and adaptation. The framework has a strong literacy focus within each of the four quadrants.

Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM): A technique that is an interdisciplinary learner-focused approach to collaborative education that gives students an opportunity to learn through authentic experiences (Israel et al., 2013).

Teacher self-efficacy: The self-belief held by the teacher regarding their ability to motivate themselves in their practice (Bandura, 1993). Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2014) defined teacher self-efficacy as "individual teachers' beliefs about their own abilities to plan, organize, and carry out activities required to attain given educational goals" (p. 69. Examples of teacher self-efficacy may therefore be teachers' expectations to be able to engage all students in learning activities, to keep discipline, or to explain a mathematics problem so that even low-achieving students understand it.

Significance

While there are many studies on literacy across the curriculum, there are few studies that have examined the extent to which secondary teachers incorporate literacy in content area classrooms. Adams and Pegg (2012) and Hall-Kenyon and Smith (2013) confirmed gaps in the overall body of knowledge and in our understanding of teachers' practices, thus supporting the need for further study of teachers' roles in integrating literacy strategies. Teacher literacy practices may be the result of their perspectives or

value placed on literacy instruction or due to the fact that this has not been the expectation for their work.

The problem addressed in the study was the required application of literacy instruction at the secondary level by content area teachers in a context devoid of their perspectives in regard to their role and readiness in this process. This project is significant because it focused upon the implementation of a new literacy program for the XYZ School District and the teachers' perspectives that were not given consideration before the program execution. While some disciplinary teachers may have been exposed to a literacy education course, most have had little training on ways to facilitate literacy instruction in their classrooms.

To better support the district initiative, administrators have expressed the desire to examine content teachers' viewpoints about teaching literacy (personal communication from administrators, March, 5, 2015). In addition, teachers have speculated that there are more possibilities to study in relation to the role of literacy provided in content area classrooms (personal communication from teachers, March 15, 2015). Therefore, educators may need to be reminded that teacher perspectives have an impact on authentic literacy instruction within the classroom.

This study examined teacher perspectives towards implementing literacy instruction in non-English language arts content classrooms, and the expectation that they integrate literacy across the curriculum. In addition, it explored how efficacious teachers feel with respect to their abilities to teach literacy in their non-English language arts content classrooms. The impact of this study at the local level is the possibility for a

deeper understanding of teachers' perspectives and feelings of self-efficacy regarding literacy instruction in non-English language arts content classrooms as well as potential directions for future professional development. I anticipate that this study would assist professional development by ascertaining the type and focus of professional development that teachers believe would increase their ability to provide literacy instruction. Sharing the results of the study may ensure that XYZ School District administrators have the data they need to consider teachers' perspectives and literacy needs as well as corresponding data to make decisions regarding the future of literacy development in the school.

This research may also increase district decision-makers' understanding of disciplinary teachers' needs and perspectives by identifying the level of training and experience teachers have, determining what further needs should be considered, and providing the best methods to support educators as the district moves forward in implementing revisions to realign current curriculum with the CCSS. Realignment in this case means that a comprehensive professional development initiative has been initiated and includes: examination of department curriculum maps, assistance for teachers in writing lessons designed to engage 21st century learners and opportunities for collaboration with colleagues to design and evaluate lessons (personal communication from teachers, March, 2014). For these reasons, administrators and training facilitators could reap rewards from the study outcome. More significantly, educators will profit if the results indicate that administrators should be providing opportunities for teachers to receive relevant, job-embedded professional development and chances to dialogue with other teachers on ways to improve the reading comprehension of students in their

classrooms. Teachers also may feel that someone is listening to their concerns and reservations about their enhanced role. Moreover, this study has significance for school administrators who want to develop a culture of literacy that could be beneficial to educators, and prove effective for learners through presenting the perspectives of teachers and gaining insight into their needs for providing literacy instruction. Research has indicated that teacher education, involvement, and buy-in are critical to building positive and effective educational environments for students (Hall-Kenyon & Smith, 2013; Miller, 2014; Storz & Hoffman, 2013). Therefore, results from this study may provide administrators with the tools they need to understand the perspectives, experiences, and needs of their educators, thereby, increasing teacher support of new initiatives. The questions that follow are intended to provide administers with knowledge of teacher perspectives, experiences, and specific needs in teaching literacy.

Guiding/Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative study is to add to the body of research by examining the perspectives of eleven suburban middle-school content area teachers towards their expanded role and abilities to provide literacy instruction within their disciplines. The constructivist approach utilized in this study acknowledges that teachers best build knowledge from learning experiences based on their existing perspectives and understandings. Therefore, the study used the following questions to explore and support the need to better understand teacher perspectives of their role in providing literacy instruction. The questions guiding the study also supported Knowles' andragogy framework, which acknowledges the unique instructional needs of adult learners, and

Bandura's theory of perceived self-efficacy. Teachers' sense of self-efficacy influences how they think, feel, behave, and create learning environments.

RQ1: What are teachers' perspectives regarding their roles as literacy instructors?

RQ2: How capable do teachers feel regarding teaching literacy to their students?

RQ3: Does the current literacy professional development engage teachers? Why or why not?

RQ4: To what extent do teachers demonstrate evidence of adopting literacy strategies presented in professional development in their classrooms?

Review of the Literature

I collected the articles for this literature review from peer-reviewed journals, educational journals, academic journals, and textbooks made available by Walden University and received through in-home delivery subscriptions. I also accessed databases from Walden's library through ProQuest and EBSCO. The databases used were Sage, Education Research Compiles, and ERIC. The key phrases used to conduct the searches and locate articles included teacher attitudes, content area reading, content literacy, disciplinary literacy, core curriculum, integrated curriculum, professional development, technology, teacher efficacy, teacher perspectives, teacher perceptions, middle school teachers, secondary school teachers, and collaboration.

Because of the adoption of the CCSS, districts are pushing forward to align school curriculum with the standards. The impact of the CCSS on school reform has shone a spotlight on what students need to be taught so that they are prepared for college and the workplace and on what teachers should be doing to prepare them. Research has shown

that 42% of students require remediation upon entering college (Shanahan, 2013). Therefore, the intent of the CCSS is to help secondary schools better prepare students for college by increasing the rigor in reading and writing as a vehicle to increased content mastery. A primary focus of the CCSS is to make sure that students are taught to use literacy strategies specific to each subject area (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2015). In addition, the new standards emphasize the specialized reading and writing requirements of literature, science, and history so that students know how to write a science experiment, or how to evaluate primary and secondary sources for history class. Content area teachers are faced with two closely related methods of literacy instruction: the first method is content area literacy and the second is disciplinary literacy. Consideration should be given to both approaches.

The purpose of the varied approaches to content area literacy is to equip learners with a tool-kit of common reading approaches and techniques to enhance knowledge in all content areas. Alternatively, disciplinary literacy is specific to each discipline as the strategies and insights are elicited from each discipline and are reported not to create similar challenges to content area teachers as do content area reading strategies (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2014).

According to Shanahan and Shanahan (2015) and Gilles et al. (2013), learning advantages grow for students when teachers are competent in providing instruction using both disciplinary and content literacy strategies. Because content area teachers possess the disciplinary knowledge and abilities to create, communicate, and use knowledge within their disciplines, they should be delivering this instruction to their students. School

districts would be wise to extend opportunities for teachers to collaborate with colleagues and share what they know about teaching literacy. To that end, many content teachers need to be taught how to combine the literacy strategies they themselves use with content literacy strategies to improve students in the types of analysis, disagreement, and literacy application specific to their disciplines (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2015).

As long as professional development is considered the primary vehicle used to prepare teachers for additional roles and new initiatives, administrators should consider how best to deliver professional development that would effectively and relevantly support their staff. Teachers are taught to provide classroom instruction to support the way students learn and consider their different learning styles. Teachers also have varied learning styles. Therefore, since teachers learn differently than their students, and because teachers present at different levels of experiences and backgrounds, the following frameworks were used to support this study and provide answers to the research questions.

Theoretical Framework

A descriptive qualitative case study and conceptual framework based on social constructivism was used to make sense of the phenomenon of interest from a viewpoint that is situation-specific (Culatta, 2013; Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010). This project study employed a constructivist framework in an attempt to answer four questions pertaining to content area teachers' perspectives on teaching literacy. Those questions are intended to determine content area teachers' perspectives as literacy instructors, how capable teachers feel regarding teaching literacy to their students, their engagement in

current literacy professional development, and whether they adopt the literacy strategies presented in professional development in their classrooms.

Bruner (1960) posited that learners build meaning from new concepts dependent upon their present knowledge. Bruner's constructivist theory holds that learning is an active practice. Constructivism in education is a term used to represent learning that happens because of active student involvement in a shared learning environment (Khanal, 2014). As such, constructivism is founded on the principle that understanding is created by persons through contact and participation with their environment. The study included examination of teacher perspectives through the use of a constructivist approach because the expectation was that the participants' views would be varied and subjective (Creswell, 2014). Teachers' perspectives of their roles as literacy instructors and their individual needs for teaching literacy provided the answers to the research questions. The constructivist approach provides the freedom to explore teacher perspectives in a broad and general manner and interpret their perspectives from the data (Creswell, 2014). In addition, an approach based on constructivism would allow the furtherance of data collection procedures in the form of in-depth observations and individual interviews to allow closeness to each participant, thus, affording the perspective of literacy training and instruction through the lens of the participants (Lodico et al., 2010). Learners build knowledge on prior learning and experiences, and consideration has been given to the fact that teachers learn differently than the students they teach.

Regarding adult learning, I have relied on Knowles' andragogy framework to examine the perspectives and learning needs of adult learners, as well as Bandura's

theory of self-efficacy. Knowles' theory of andragogy describes the specific learning needs and recommended methods used to teach adults (Culatta, 2013; Henschke, 2008), The study participants are adult learners and their needs and learning styles are different from those of the children they teach (Henschke, 2008). A final framework that influences this study is Bandura's theory of perceived self-efficacy. Bandura's framework is included in support of the exploration of the impact of teachers' perspectives on the learning environments they produce, which ultimately affect student achievement (Bandura, 1993). Combined, these frameworks offer insight on teacher perspectives and adult learning in respect to professional development.

Bruner's Constructivist Theory

While constructivism is viewed as a qualitative framework, it is also seen as a learning theory. The research discussed in this study has shown that while adults learn differently than the students they teach, they learn in a constructivist fashion. Arab et al. (2015) have identified the constructivist learning theory as one of the most recent approaches worldwide. The learner builds knowledge and learning experiences and adds them to their existing perspectives and understandings. This constructed knowledge is influenced by individual perspectives that result in the unique learning of each individual. Deep understanding and changes in the perspectives of adult learners happens internally in the creation of new ideas. This study took a look at adult learning through the use of a constructivist framework.

Bruner's constructivist framework states that learning requires action on the part of the learner to construct new ideas based upon their acquired knowledge (Bruner, 1960;

Bruner, 1966; Culatta, 2013). Bruner went on to say that in the learning environment, the learner would choose and transform the information, build a hypothesis, and then make a decision, which would be dependent upon a cognitive structure. In a constructivism teaching environment for adults, facilitators should encourage adult learners to build their own meaning of the concepts they learn (Ishaq & Rani, 2011). Also, learning should be conveyed in a manner applicable to student's present level of comprehension, with instruction that is structured in such a way that the learner consistently adds to their knowledge (Bruner, 1960; Culatta, 2013). Principles outlined in Bruner's framework are applicable to the ideals surrounding teacher learning within this topic of study. Bruner maintained that instruction must be about experiences and contexts that motivate the learner to be willing and able to learn. Another principle addressed spiral organization, and a final principle encouraged the learner to fill in the gaps thereby facilitating extrapolation. Bruner's framework includes principles that are evident in the level of teacher motivation and application in integrating disciplinary literacy strategies. Examining teacher perspectives has provided insight into the teachers' at XYZ Middle School motivation with respect to their role as literacy teachers.

Knowles' Theory of Andragogy

Knowles is known as the promoter of andragogy, the science of adult learning. This research is focused on the perspectives of adult educators and their experiences with learning and teaching literacy, therefore, it is fitting that I include Knowles' theory of andragogy as a major component of the theoretical framework. Kapp was the first to use the term "andragogy" in 1833, followed by Plato who said it was the natural participation

of adults in the learning progression (Arab et al., 2015). The andragogy theory was furthered by “Dewey,” “Lindeman,” and “Anderson” in the 20th century (Arab et al., 2015, p. 291). Finally, in 1980, Knowles made changes to and finalized the theories. Knowles believed that the distinctive learning process for adults should be acknowledged in that learners present with varied educational experiences and desire to quickly transfer learning to their practical lives (Akin, 2014; Henschke, 2008). When applying andragogy in education, classroom authority is shared between the student and the teacher, which is not the case in pedagogical educational practices (Akin, 2014). In addition, in andragogical education, both teacher and students set up the physical environment, while in a pedagogical environment, the teacher arranges the learning space without the students’ input (Akin, 2014). Additionally, there is a difference in the attitudes and actions of teachers who teach adult learners and those who teach young people (Akin, 2014). Training programs for adults must consider these concepts (Akin, 2014). Knowles further found that the climate for adult learning should be one of acceptance and respect (Merriam, 2001). The understanding is that adults are capable of managing many aspects of their lives and, therefore, should be capable of taking part in assisting in the planning of their own learning. Subsequently, adult education should focus more on the learning process and less on the content being taught. The learner’s experience is the foundation for their learning pursuits (Akin, 2014; Bruner, 1960; Culatta, 2013). Therefore, the instructional material must have immediate relevance to the adult learner’s profession or personal life.

Bandura's Theory of Perceived Self-efficacy

The field of education has placed much emphasis on how the mind works to process, organize, and recover data (Bandura, 1993). Bandura (1993) addressed a gap in the research regarding the self-governing processes that dictates human development and adjustment. Bandura also argued that exercising human agency is a motivating factor that determines the way people function. Bandura's theory further addressed the effect of ones' beliefs in their ability to govern the way they function and manage the aspects of their lives. Bandura identified four forms that self-efficacy beliefs take on in teachers' lives. In effect, self-efficacy perspectives influence how teachers think, feel, behave, and motivate themselves and are evident in the learning environments they create in their classrooms (Bandura, 1993).

Literature Review

The subsequent evaluation of the literature documents the impact of educational reform on literacy integration across the curriculum in the disciplines of English, math, science, and social studies. One should note that the perspectives and values of content area teachers are examined paying special attention to the classroom environment they create, along with the extent to which they apply new initiatives. Daisey (2012) and Tam (2014) both stated that the use of a constructivist framework shows how teachers build knowledge by reflecting on their experiences. Teachers enact literacy across the content areas based on the value they place on it (Daisey, 2012). Outlined in the CCSS are recommendations for content teachers to use their expertise to help students overcome literacy challenges in their content areas. (CCSS Initiative, 2015). Also, the adoption of

the CCSS has led to the realization throughout the K-12 educational community that adolescent literacy should continue on into secondary education and be integrated in the content areas (Nokes, 2010; Wendt, 2013). An additional area for educators to consider is the creation of opportunities for students to engage with media through curriculum integration to develop the understanding and abilities to be effective in the digital world of the 21st century (Moore & Redmond, 2014; Redmond, 2015).

The review of literature has primarily addressed the importance of considering teacher experiences, perspectives and values on teacher perceived self-efficacy and actual classroom practices (Vaughn et al., 2013; Warren-Kring & Warren, 2013; Wendt, 2013). What strategies do teachers currently use in their classrooms for cross-curricular learning? Is it possible for teachers to change their perspectives and values? In addition, the review has examined the benefits of collaborative learning and the importance of knowing about the diverse needs and learning styles of adult learners as they prepare to meet the unique instructional needs of today's 21st century learners (Corrin et al., 2012; Draper, Broomhead, Jensen, & Nokes, 2012; Fenty, McDuffie-Landrum, & Fisher, 2012; Warren-Kring & Warren, 2013). Disciplinary and technological literacy crosses all content areas and we can no longer ignore this fact. University pre-service and school district in-service offerings must provide support to teachers in engaging and preparing today's students for college and the workplace in accordance with the recently adopted CCSS (Cosmah, & Saine, 2013; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2015).

Common Core Standards and Literacy Reform

The most recent response to educational reform is the adoption and implementation of the CCSS. To date, the standards have been adopted by 46 states including Pennsylvania, home of the study school. Botzakis, Burns, and Hall (2014) contended that the educational community acknowledge that the teaching of literacy requires ongoing, consistent balanced instruction. The CCSS established guidelines for mathematics and English, with the inclusion of reading for social studies, science, and technology (Common Core English/Language Arts Standards n.d.; Jenkins & Agamba, 2011). Furthermore, the standards encouraged history/social studies; science and technology teachers to rely on experience in their content areas to ensure students overcome the trials of reading challenging texts, reflective writing, effective speaking, listening, and language across each discipline (Common Core English/Language Arts Standards (n.d.). The CCSS also placed emphasis on disciplinary literacy, which involves instruction in reading and writing across the curriculum. Focus should be placed on the particular methods that literacy applies to each content area to guide students' thinking, problem-solving, and communication (Brozo, Moorman, Meyer, & Stewart, 2013; International Reading Association Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Committee, 2012; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2015). Subsequently, the standards recommended that content teachers be instrumental in providing instruction in disciplinary literacy standards that are relevant to their discipline (International Reading Association Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Committee, 2012). However, the CCSS are only guidelines and

states have the freedom to determine how they choose to align their curriculum with the standards.

In other words, each group of state policy makers has the freedom to determine whether they would incorporate the standards into their existing curriculum or chose to adopt the CCSS as content area literacy standards (Common Core English/Language Arts Standards, n.d.; Harvey & Goudvis, 2013). Some teachers believe that they must either teach content or literacy, but not both at the same time (Botzakis, Burns, & Hall, 2014) The researchers also found that teachers paid attention to basic literacy and language arts skills but did not support diverse reading and writing skills for disciplinary purposes. In addition, the CCSS presented an extended definition of literacy for the 21st century appropriate to the requirement for students to navigate through digital and print information (Common Core English/Language Arts Standards, n.d.; Cosmah & Saine, 2013; Goatley & Hinchman, 2013; Murnane et al., 2012).

Redmond (2015) supported the 21st century issues stated in the CCSS and said there should be movement beyond the traditional print media taught in content area classrooms. Therefore, teachers should take steps toward engaging students by designing instruction that considers the media sphere of today's children and youth (Moore & Redmond, 2014; Redmond, 2015). Teachers would be wise to be willing and proactive in order to keep abreast of changes in instruction to be prepared to teach today's students. Being wise involves an understanding of how their values shape their perspectives and filter in to the environment they create.

Teacher Knowledge, Beliefs, Values, Attitudes and Perspectives

Current research contains many studies on teacher perspectives (Ajayi, 2011; Bullock, 2010; Dunn, Airola, Lo, & Garrison, 2013; Hall-Kenyon & Smith, 2013; McCoss-Yergian, 2010; Ozgen, 2013; Park, 2013; Spitler, 2012; Warren-Kring & Warren, 2013). In order to understand teacher perspectives, one should also examine the beliefs, values, and attitudes teachers have towards teaching. Teachers are on the front-lines of school reform and are the primary facilitators of new school initiatives, therefore, having knowledge of what they think is important. Numerous researchers conducted research on the perspectives pre-service and disciplinary classroom teachers hold towards teaching reading strategies within their classrooms (Ajayi, 2011; Bullock, 2010; Dunn, Airola, Lo, & Garrison, 2013; Hall-Kenyon & Smith, 2013; McCoss-Yergian, 2010; Ozgen, 2013; Park, 2013; Spitler, 2012; Warren-Kring & Warren, 2013).

While, it may be difficult to ascertain how teachers feel towards teaching reading through observation alone, it is possible to infer the presence of perspectives toward reading through the monitoring of teacher behavior (Summers, 1977). Summers went on to say that a person's perspective toward reading will influence his ability to consider literacy practices and his desire to purposefully practice literacy behaviors. In other words, teachers choose what and how they teach behind closed doors.

Park (2013) reported that, while there has been an increase in research in the area of teacher perspectives, there are few studies that center on teacher autonomy and self-assessment. How prepared do teachers feel they are to meet unfamiliar expectations? Unfortunately, there has also been limited research regarding the impact of teachers'

perspectives on actual classroom practices and students' academic achievement (Park, 2013). Park, Bullock (2011), and Hall-Kenyon and Smith (2013) found that an awareness of how teachers think, know, believe and do is essential for the implementation of new approaches to be successful. Bullock further noted that teacher perspectives are not always indicative of practices and should therefore be measured. On the other hand, Clary, Styslinger, and Oglan (2012), Falk-Ross and Evans (2014), Parsons et al. (2013) found that teachers' perspectives are an inseparable component of their instructional practices, although, it is possible for teachers' perspectives to change over time depending upon their new learning experiences and improved understandings. Often times listening to and addressing teacher perspectives may open the door to new knowledge and changes in practice.

Therefore, understanding teacher perspectives to content literacy instruction may lead to improved classroom instruction. Ayaji (2011), Orr, Mitton, and Timmons (2014), and Warren-Kring and Warren (2013) found that novice teachers begin their profession with a gap in knowledge between their perspectives of future classroom teaching and theories of changing 21st century multi-literacy practices. This understanding should be considered when designing curriculum for teachers as the perception of the learner can define the challenge and motivation necessary to apply expectations to practice. McCoss-Yergian and Krepps (2010) provided five ways teachers were justified in their hesitation in providing content literacy instruction:

- Content is considered the primary focus in secondary classrooms

- Limited time for teaching was identified by teachers who say they are under pressure to teach content area subject matter as efficiently as possible.
- Teachers also said that they lacked confidence and were not trained to integrate reading strategies into their instructional practices.
- Teachers hold the belief that the responsibility to teach literacy lies with the English teacher.
- There seems to be a lack of funding and mandate by the government for disciplinary teachers to incorporate literacy instructional practices in content classrooms.

On a positive note, a study conducted by Warren-Kring and Warren (2013) showed that teacher perspectives in the areas of English, science, history, and mathematics significantly improved after learning and applying literacy strategies, thereby raising teacher self-efficacy. Teacher self-efficacy perspectives influence how teachers think, feel, behave, and motivate themselves to do what they do. In addition, the studies conducted by Dunn et al. (2013), Dunn, Airola, and Garrison (2013) and Dixon, Yssel, McConnell, and Hardin (2014) all confirmed that teacher self-efficacy was heightened and teacher perspectives and practices were changed as a result of continuous job-embedded professional development focused on teaching content literacy practices.

Content Literacy Instruction and Teacher Practices

The preparation teachers receive, along with their perspectives and feelings of self-efficacy, impact the instruction that occurs in classrooms. Teachers are faced with numerous demands, which include current educational practices, political agendas, and

school literacy initiatives (Parker-Corney, Kilpin, & Taylor, 2011; Wendt, 2013). The result is a mix of implementation practices conducted with or without fidelity, increased awareness of teacher roles as disciplinary literacy providers, and changed teacher perspectives and instruction (Feldman, Feighan, Kirtcheve, & Heeren, 2012; Parker-Corney et al., 2011). Teachers are unsure of their role in ensuring students learn intentional content-specific reading behaviors (Cantrell, Burns, & Callaway, 2009; Carney & Indrisano, 2013). It is also important to understand that many teachers at the middle-school level prefer to concentrate their efforts on teaching content rather than providing literacy instruction (Carney & Indrisano, 2013; Guthrie & Klauda, 2012; Hurst & Pearman, 2013). Cantrell, Burns, and Callaway (2009) and Hurst and Pearman (2013) showed that secondary teachers viewed their role as teachers whose purpose is to enhance students' content learning and not provide reading instruction in conjunction with content area teaching.

Interestingly, content teachers should not teach the same literacy strategies in the same manner as reading teachers, but should identify which literacy strategies would be most relevant in nurturing their students' disciplinary academic language (Townsend, 2015). Teachers do seem to understand the importance of literacy activities in content area learning, and understand that content teachers should have a role in meeting their responsibility to improve students' literacy in the disciplines; however, many lack an understanding of how to integrate literacy in content learning (Cantrell et al., 2009; Wendt, 2013). In one case, Ciecierski and Bintz (2012) were able to stimulate personal interest and active engagement from teachers by introducing the concept of chants and

cadences to encourage literacy across the disciplines. This study involved teachers in collaborative training that resulted in personal reflection and authorship of a combined and exploratory curriculum (Ciecierski & Bintz, 2012). It seems that new initiatives may pave the way for new practices and innovative concepts that will change teacher practices across the disciplines.

Literacy in Social Studies and History

Social studies and history curriculum objectives state that secondary students should show that they can build new knowledge and comprehension, decisively analyze text, and assess the usefulness of informational text. Students should then be able to reconstruct the facts in diverse ways. A primary task in the social studies discipline is for students to make inferences and use reading comprehension strategies to learn concepts as they engage with multiple levels of informational data (Parker-Corney et al., 2011; Vaughn et al., 2013). Finally, students are expected to use the information gathered to provide substantiation when writing a summary, a generalization or filling in a graphic organizer (Parker-Corney et al., 2011). Because of these expectations, secondary social studies and history teachers must be prepared to teach students to read purposefully, to understand clearly what they need to find out, how to find the necessary facts, how to organize and record the information, and how to put it all together to show comprehension before they engage in close text reading.

It follows, therefore, that content-area teachers must make a commitment to including literacy strategies in their practices to support students in comprehending historical content (Nokes, 2010). Giles, Wang, Smith, and Johnson (2013) and Nokes

(2010) introduced strategies to uphold literacy instruction for social studies teachers. Those strategies included: active reading by making connections to text, marking text, writing questions and notes in the margins, and completing performance tasks. Interestingly, Giles et al. (2010) and Gilles et al. (2013) found that disciplinary teachers were well equipped to educate students on how to comprehend content text by employing the literacy strategies they themselves use to construct meaning within their individual disciplines.

Because social studies teachers use personal comprehension strategies when reading in their disciplines, students can best learn these strategies from their social studies teachers. Literacy is critical in history classrooms, but literacy demands on social studies teachers involve concerns that are limited to the discipline of history (Nokes, 2010; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2014). Nokes (2010), Shanahan and Shanahan (2012), and Shanahan and Shanahan (2014) argued that teachers of content disciplines, including math and science, have different methods of approaching reading particular to their disciplines that should be passed on to their students. Passing on these discipline specific skills would promote academic achievement for students in the content areas, however, content teachers focus their efforts on teaching the content and not on teaching students how to comprehend what they read (Nokes, 2012; Shanahan & Shanahan 2014).

Teachers have been found to administer instruction in the historical literacies based on their perspectives about the process of teaching history and their capability to provide instruction (Nokes, 2010; Taylor & Kilpin, 2013). Subsequently, teachers must

be equipped with disciplinary literacy skills to be effective in this type of instruction as well as accept and embrace their role as teachers of literacy. In contrast to the needs called for by the CCSS, some social studies educators may not be committed to or may not have accepted the role of providing the literacy skill instruction students need for social studies text reading and writing. This challenge is joined by a second challenge that some social studies teachers, due to a lack of familiarity about literacy instructional practices, may have "adopted a dichotomous view of students' literacy in their classes – those who can read and those who can't" (Parker-Corney et al., 2011, p. 15). Teachers with this perspective view literacy as an entrance skill and not as a progressive skill that evolves as students move through their educational journey.

Parker-Corney et al. (2011) documented one social studies teacher's change in practice while using a methodology which incorporated the four components of literacy; reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The teacher first set a purpose for reading prior to reading the text to explain what the students needed to locate in the text. Next, the teacher provided open-ended inquiry questions to guide students while reading. Finally, the teacher led the students in constructing a way to journal the information in response to the purpose set for reading. Parker-Corney et al. reported that this teacher effectively changed her practice to address reading in her social studies classroom by equipping students with the literacy tools needed to navigate texts and promote critical literacy thinking. The same considerations and expectations for changing perspectives in the areas of social studies and history can be applied to the area of math and science.

Math and Science Content Literacy

Teachers who support literacy in the content areas and who embrace their role of literacy teacher generally assist colleagues and, as a result, may have a voice in the methods used to employ literacy strategies in their discipline areas. Research by Adams and Pegg (2012) confirmed that teachers also had the opportunity to provide input as to the methods used to deliver literacy strategies. Adams and Pegg also noted that there has been a lack of uniformity in the association between content and literacy approaches across the field and that little is known about how math and science teachers incorporate the literacy strategies that they learn. Israel et al. (2013), and Nixon, Saunders, and Fishback (2012) believed that the instructional strategies used by literacy teachers should be reinforced in science classrooms. This belief is in contrast with research supporting the specific content literacy strategies that should be taught by disciplinary teachers in content classrooms (Jewett, 2013; Nokes, 2010; Parker-Corney et al., 2011; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2015). There are very few studies that investigated the quality of teachers' integration of literacy in secondary level math and science content classrooms because there seem to be so few teachers engaging in the practice. Jewett (2013) also acknowledged the lack of research that examined how teachers learned to consider literacy in ways specific to their content areas.

Language and literacy skills and strategies for content areas take on constructivist approaches as aspiring teachers acquire and retrieve prior knowledge, act on their perspectives and suppositions and gather information from various sources (Jagger & Yore, 2012). The constructivist approach is also applied as learners interact with

understandings, perform inquiries, create knowledge claims, justify and assess ideas. Jewett (2013) pointed out the commonly-held belief that generic reading skills would be effective in all content areas and would automatically develop into the multifaceted reading skills necessary as students progressed through school and disciplinary areas. She based her research and development of a content-area literacy course on the premise that students need opportunities to participate in literate practices specific to academic disciplines. Fang (2014) and O'Neill and Geoghegan (2011) agreed that more time should be given to instructing teachers on teaching literacy approaches to future students. Teachers who taught literacy strategies with fidelity, per the instructions, were found to use the tools they learned on a more frequent basis (Fang, 2014; Feldman, et al., 2012). In fact, Jewett argued that literacy within the mathematics classroom involves numeric and symbolic non-print materials, and the mathematics teacher should be the one responsible for teaching students to create and make use of the multiple texts and sign systems specific to the discipline. The successful integration of literacy across the curriculum requires educators to perceive a holistic curriculum, prepare thematic curricular lesson plans, make strategic cross-subject connections, and plan as a team (Israel et al., 2013; Wood et al., 2011). The STEM curriculum is one area where it is imperative that teachers across disciplines work together and understand the importance of their roles as literacy teachers.

The STEM curriculum spans multiple disciplines and recognizes basic literacy skills along with discipline specific strategies. "STEM reading has a personality all of its own. It has its own jargon. Sentence structures and content are more complex. Charts,

symbols, diagrams, and equations populate the pages" (Hill, 2013, p. 31). It has been noted that the STEM curriculum consists of abstract concepts, and difficult vocabulary within challenging informational texts which, if not directly taught, may compromise accessibility and benefit to all students. For these reasons, secondary teachers need to become teachers of both content and literacy (Townsend, 2015). If STEM educators explicitly taught using STEM literacy instruction, the STEM experiences would promote language growth, which in turn would improve content-area comprehension.

Israel et al. (2013) and Wood (2011) looked at STEM literacies and ways to integrate the literacy in this science, technology, engineering, and math program to assist students of all levels, and thereby achieve the level of expertise required to be effective in the 21st century. Israel et al. pointed out the similarities between STEM and reading as they both consist of inquiry steps which lead students to "discover, find out, and investigate" (p. 20). The benefit is that students who are active participants in both STEM and reading constantly "think through processes such as predicting, inferring, and questioning" (Israel et al., 2013, p. 20). STEM learning is designed to benefit learners at all levels of ability and provide collaborative opportunities for content area teachers.

Hence, it is essential for disciplinary teachers to collaborate and identify supportive literacy strategies to introduce into science and mathematics curricula. Useful approaches to help secondary students increase content literacy understanding specifically in the area of science are sorely needed (Anthony, Tippett, & Yore, 2010; Herman & Wardrip, 2012; Seifert & Espin, 2012; Taylor & Kilpin, 2013). Science education researchers agreed that students must know how to gain meaning and decipher

scientific discussions and textbooks to be considered knowledgeable in science classrooms (Anthony et al., 2010; Taylor & Kilpin, 2013).

Although reading is believed to play a crucial role in a child's education, many students cannot read well and therefore are unable to gather meaning from their textbooks (Orr, Kukner, & Timmons, 2014). Herman and Wardrip (2012) stated that, while secondary students can read, many students do not know how to "read to learn" science (p. 48). In support of this effort, the ongoing Pacific Crystal project team, with a goal of identifying, developing, and embedding literacy instruction in science curricula to enhance science literacy, provided its preliminary results that suggested the project effectively improved students' ability to perform tasks related to reading and writing (Anthony et al., 2010). Results from the study conducted by Herman and Wardrip indicated that by "actively attending to, planning for, and supporting reading in science classrooms, teachers help students develop a deep understanding of science phenomena and the role of science in their lives" (p. 50). An additional component in providing reading support in science and math classrooms is making sure students have strong vocabulary skills.

Vocabulary Practices in Content Area Classrooms

As teachers provide opportunities to read rigorous text as required by the CCSS, and students read challenging texts in content area classrooms, they confront unfamiliar words that they are unable to read or understand. It is difficult for learners to fully understand what they read if they cannot make meaning from the words in the text. Jewett (2013) and Smith and Angotti (2012) confirmed the vast amount of reading

required in middle and secondary mathematics classes. Smith and Angotti's study on Teaching Mathematics in a Technical World (TMTW) project prepared teachers to integrate technology, authentic experiences, and instructional literacy strategies into science and mathematics practices. Participants identified the different backgrounds, diverse experiences, and various levels of learned vocabulary of the students, as challenges in their classrooms.

Smith and Angotti (2012) presented a 5 Cs planning tool to assist English, science, mathematics and social studies teachers with the major issue of vocabulary instruction in content-area classes. The vocabulary presented in mathematics classrooms is unique as the words have both a general and a specific meaning and must be precisely defined (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). The 5 Cs tool consists of the following areas; concepts, content, clarify, cut, and construct to help students learn vocabulary through the connection of unknown words to familiar words and ideas. First, Concepts addresses the mathematics words that appear in the lesson. Next, Content implies the subject-matter words that appear in the lesson. After that, Clarify identifies the words the teacher should mention and clarify for the students. Then, Cut helps the teacher identify the words that should be rephrased or eliminated from the lesson. Finally, Construct points out the words that should be explicitly taught by the teacher. Smith and Angotti provided a template for teachers to use to implement the 5 Cs vocabulary strategy in English, mathematics, science, or social studies classrooms (Appendix B).

Another tool to support content area vocabulary learning is Ten Important Words Plus (Yopp & Yopp, 2007). The teacher provides students with the text and post-it notes

and uses a “think aloud” to introduce this strategy (Wood et al., 2012). The teacher instructs students to read over the text and use 10 post-it notes to list the top ten words they felt were most important. Each student posts their notes on a graph, which shows the common words written in each column. The teacher then asks open-ended questions to encourage students to participate in a discussion as to why the words selected were of value to the text. This strategy will allow students to engage deeply in the text and raise their understanding of the vocabulary. Through multiple exposures and interactions with vocabulary the students are prepared to read, record, discuss, write and think about words to extend their learning. These strategies would provide teachers with tools to overcome the lesson’s vocabulary demands and plan instruction based on the essential words needed for comprehending English, math, social studies, or scientific concepts. Classroom practices need to allow for vocabulary instruction and educators will need to be prepared to learn effective methods to provide vocabulary instruction within each discipline. While vocabulary is a main component in literacy instruction, many districts have adopted the Response to Intervention (RTI) program as a universal design for delivering literacy to all learners.

Response to Intervention in the Integration of Content

In another examination of classroom practices, Brozo (2010) and Lenski (2012) supported the integration of content literacy in Response to Intervention (RTI) programs. The RTI method has become a powerful school reform method for literacy that is used primarily in the elementary grades across the United States. RTI has since become known as an acceptable design for the delivery of literacy programs for grades K-12 world-wide

(Brozo, 2010; Lenski, 2012). The multi-tiered program is data-driven, and includes a comprehensive screening process, effective teaching for every student, and identified mediations for struggling learners (Brozo, 2010 & Lenski, 2012). Research supports using RTI literacy approaches for all students along with instruction by experienced and competent educators. One must note, however, that secondary teachers' perspectives should be considered as failure to do so would impact the success of implementation (Isbell & Szabo, 2014). Isbell and Szabo (2014) pointed out the concerns content teachers had regarding their roles, communication with administrators and colleagues, and extra responsibilities. Regardless of teachers' concerns, Brozo and Lenski endorsed the addition of content reading in RTI applications that have proven to be a strong influence on reading programs in elementary schools across the United States. In addition, Brozo promoted the awareness that content learning and content literacy learning are in each other's pocket. Moreover, it has been found that expertise in the ability to read and write must be acquired through instruction that is "coherently structured to develop rich content knowledge within and across grades" (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010, p. 10).

There are three purposes for RTI implementation for grades K-12. Specifically, RTI can increase student capability to meet graduation requirements, guarantee appropriate teaching and intervention, and provide continuing school improvement (Lenski, 2012). Brozo (2010) and Isbell and Szabo (2014) upheld that if content area teachers were unable to respond appropriately with literacy instruction and differentiated support, the preventative potential of RTI would be lost. In other words, teachers must be

taught how to effectively implement the RTI program, take ownership of their role as a literacy teacher and provide authentic instruction through the use of effective literacy strategies.

Effective Strategies for Content-Area Literacy Instruction

The research presented has provided information on effective strategies and teaching methods for literacy instruction to be used in each core subject area across the curriculum. Multiple strategies have been created to improve reading across the curriculum for secondary. Academic literacy is essential for reading and decoding the complicated text experienced in middle and high school coursework as it is needed to gain understanding from challenging descriptive passages and disciplinary text (Marchand-Martella et al., 2013). In order to close the scholastic achievement gap of middle and high-school learners, literacy practices should be combined with content area instruction (Palumbo & Sanacore, 2009 & Taylor & Kilpin, 2013). Subsequently, researchers have provided a response to the need for teachers to have access to effective strategies to help students develop critical reading-to-learn skills that are essential for academic success (Herman & Wardrip, 2012).

Sewell (2013) has identified ten of the most effective literacy strategies, based on preservice teacher perspectives, including: Interactive Word Wall, Analytical Graphic Organizer, Fishbowl Discussion, Triple-Entry Vocabulary Journal, Quick Write, Discussion Web, Bloom's Critical Thinking Cue Questions, Knowledge Rating Guide, Jigsaw, and Problematic Situation. These top ten preferred strategies were the result of a

two-year study whereby preservice teachers participated in coursework to explore and learn 35 research-based literacy strategies.

An additional strategy used to comprehend informational text is the Question Answer Relationships (QAR) strategy, which has been shown to be an effective strategy to advance comprehension across content areas. In addition, the Literacy in Context (LinC) cycle was a process described by Miller and Veatch (2010). The cycle included the following components: plan, teach and reteach, assess, and reflect and repeats as needed and has resulted in gains in student achievement (Miller & Veatch, 2010). Researchers agreed that all teachers should integrate vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and motivation strategies when teaching with expository text (Fisher & Frey, 2014; Miller & Veatch, 2010; Palumbo & Sanacore, 2009).

Educators have worked together to practice and implement the strategies in their classrooms to improve content-area literacy instruction. Certainly, collaboration among literacy and content teachers is needed to increase content-area reading instruction as teachers could support each other on a regular basis by sharing their individual expertise (Fang, 2014; Seifert & Espin, 2012; Wilcox et al., 2011). The sharing of strategies and skills between content-area and literacy teachers as they implement reading instruction using content-area text may assist in improving students' academic reading skills (Fang, 2014; Seifert & Espin, 2012).

21st Century Literacy Considerations

The Internet is viewed as the primary literacy and learning technology for today's students. According to the Internet World Stats (2015), more than three-billion persons

utilize the Internet. While, today's students have been born into a digital world, they still have much to learn about reading in a digital context (Flynt & Brozo, 2010; Karchmer-Klein & Shinas, 2012; Redmond, 2015). Content teachers are called upon to acknowledge the influence of the Internet and the impact of visual media. Both should be used to take advantage of students' interests and technological skills by integrating multi-media literacy into content area instruction (Flynt & Brozo, 2010; Moore & Redmond, 2014; Redmond, 2012).

Redmond (2015) provided a definition of media literacy to entail being able to retrieve, analyze, assess and create text in many different non-print and non-alphabetic versions. Teachers are called to change the way they think about texts and expand the forms of texts used in instruction. While today's middle-school students are proficient in using information and communication technologies (ICTs), they are not able to effectively choose, evaluate, and judge the multitude of media texts to which they are exposed (Redmond, 2015). In support, Moore and Redmond (2014) presented five key ideas that link media literacy with the CCSS. The five key ideas include:

1. Media literacy widens the perception of text.
2. Media literacy integrates and does not replace the standards.
3. Media literacy uses a variety of sources to perform rigorous research.
4. Media literacy includes both informational and nonfiction texts.
5. Media literacy uses civic situations to link students' academic life to real world experiences.

Middle-school teachers can use the five key ideas presented by Moore and Redmond to connect to areas in the CCSS to make clear, enhance and support literacy practices in the classroom.

In addition, Leu et al. (2011) pointed out three issues regarding technological literacy that have been ignored in educational reform. The first issue is that the nature of literacy and its meaning are continuously changing. The second issue has to do with the instructional attention necessary to adding reading comprehension strategies and skills to effectively access online information. Finally, assessments, public policy, and instruction do not support teachers' capacity to prepare students to communicate and use online information. Leu et al. (2011), and Moore and Redmond (2014) found that to be literate in the 21st century, one needs to be able to use a combination of new technologies such as Google Docs, iMovie, blogs, wikis, texting, and a variety of search engines. Accordingly, Nelson, Courier, and Joseph (2011) have identified 20 aspects of digital literacy that students should be taught to ensure they are completely prepared to participate in a digital world (see Appendix D).

While today's youth live in a visual culture, they are not born with the necessary visual literacy skills needed for online comprehension (Flynt and Brozo, 2010; Redmond, 2015). Goldman (2012) held that one should know that to be effective, 21st century readers will need to be taught to use different reading and comprehension strategies to analyze and use multiple forms of textual content such as fiction, history, science, news accounts, and manuals. Among the strategies, students need to know how to evaluate evidence for relevance, reliability, neutrality, and completeness. Students must also be

able to perform these tasks across multiple sources while using both general reading strategies and discipline-specific procedures. Therefore, teachers will need to be able to navigate and subsequently teach students to navigate the new literacies of the Internet.

Teacher preparation and readiness to provide 21st century technological literacy will involve an investigation of teachers' pedagogy and commitment in developing and implementing a technology-rich literacy curriculum (Redmond, 2012). Indeed, teachers will need to understand the difference between authentic online reading comprehension and reading an individual webpage (Leu et al., 2011). That is to say, a single webpage requires one to read limited and static text, without social interaction, not looking for other information, nor using other texts. In this situation, the reader has little control over what needs to be read to find the desired information. On the other hand, authentic online reading understanding involves a method of problem-based investigation through the use of varied online sources (Flynt & Brozo, 2010; Leu et al., 2011; Moore & Redmond, 2014). Recursive reading practices involved in online reading include: reading to identify pertinent questions, to find information, to evaluate material in a critical manner, to synthesize data from multiple sources, and to transfer information (Leu et al., 2011; Moore & Redmond, 2014; Murnane, Sawhill & Snow, 2012). All of these practices require the ability to perform specific literacy skills that will lead them through to the next level of online comprehension.

Additionally, students must be taught to navigate non-linear text, evaluate sources, discard unnecessary materials, make inferences, and compose cohesive messages using a range of features (Karchmer-Klein & Shinas, 2012; Taylor & Kilpin, 2013). It is

imperative that teachers are prepared to manage today's wide range of technologies and multiple text types (Ajayi, 2011; Jagger & Yore, 2012). Therefore, teachers will need to be receptive to web-based professional development in addition to traditional professional development methods. Researchers found that, teachers were open to web-based professional development when it was useful, easy to use, pleasant, and did not cause undue anxiety (Chien, Kao, Yeh, & Lin, 2012). To be sure, in order to help students integrate new and traditional literacies, teachers will need to stop treating these varied literacies as separate and unrelated entities (Ajayi, 2011; Saine, 2013). To further develop students' knowledge means to accept the idea students must learn in real time and virtually across all content areas as teachers integrate instruction through connections made with other teachers, the community and the world (Flynt & Brozo, 2010; Saine, 2013). This message is conveyed in the CCSS and can be seen in school districts' adjustments to curriculum.

The United States has adopted the CCSS initiative to ensure students are ready for higher education and 21st century vocations. One of the primary designs of the initiative involves equipping students with the proficiency to "gather, comprehend, evaluate, synthesize, and report on information and ideas, to conduct original research in order to answer questions or solve problems, and to analyze and create a high volume and extensive range of print and nonprint texts" in a technological world (Common Core State Standards, n.d., p. 4). Ironically, the bulk of this plan is contained in Anchor Standards six – nine of CCSS for writing, and only found in Anchor Standard seven for reading (Leu et al., 2011). The gap in the construction of the reading standards implies

that there is little support to inform educators in developing online reading comprehension skills.

Another gap is found in the absence of assessments of online reading comprehension skills. The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium have received funds from the United States federal government to create assessments that would be aligned to the CCSS (Leu et al., 2011). A major issue that may not have been considered when designing the technological component of the standards was that all schools do not have consistent and high speed Internet access (Saine, 2013). This main issue will need to be addressed as all schools will need to be fully connected to the Internet and have sufficient hardware to allow for all students to have equal access to technology (Saine, 2013). Saine (2013) further noted that insufficient and unreliable technology and ill-prepared educators can present more of a distraction than a fulfillment of the intended purpose.

Therefore, it is imperative that school districts receive the support and training needed prior to attempting to implement technology instruction (Saine, 2013). Teachers should be receptive to adjusting their methods of instruction to integrate these technological advances and not fear that text-based literacies will be replaced by new literacies. The new literacies, which include technological, visual and media literacies can be used to support and further students' competencies in reading and writing for realistic purposes (Karchmer-Klein & Shinas, 2012; Moore & Redmond, 2014). Hence, all teachers will need to become proficient in using and teaching technological skills because

they are as equally important as conventional literacy skills, and enhance meeting the CCSS recommendations (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011; Moore & Redmond, 2014).

Implications

The research presented above indicates that teachers are sorely under-prepared when it comes to ensuring students are proficient in 21st century literacies. Students will need to become proficient in evaluating their history, mathematics, science, and literary texts (Goldman, 2012). Educators are responsible for teaching students how texts operate within each of the core disciplines, and equipping them with the skills they need to be successful. In order to provide effective instruction to students, it is imperative that districts provide opportunities for teachers to gain the instructional content expertise to know how to combine disciplinary learning and literacy skills and strategies within the discipline (Goldman, 2012).

It is also important for educators to seek the advice of colleagues and literacy leaders as they make changes to disciplinary practices so to include literacy strategies. This literature shows that teachers are struggling and may feel frustrated when students come to them unable to read disciplinary text. In addition, the literature indicates that many teachers are not prepared or are unwilling to take on the role of literacy teacher. There are several potential projects based on consistent job-embedded professional development that may address this issue. School districts may consider creating professional learning communities, employing literacy coaches, or changing school schedules to allow teachers regular time for collaborative professional development. These changes may promote a culture of literacy for the school.

Summary

Today's students count on teachers to impart literacy strategies and proficiencies that are critical for college and the workplace. All educators, including middle and high-school teachers should understand the responsibility they have to prepare learners for life after high-school and college. It should not matter what subject one teaches, all educators are reading teachers (Moehlman, 2013). Now is the time for educators to shoulder their responsibility, make use of the accessible resources available, and genuinely improve the lives of today's learners. This study examines teachers' perspectives in an attempt to determine whether teacher self-efficacy, perspectives, and importance attributed to literacy instruction makes a difference on the application of literacy integration in content area classrooms.

The problem driving the study was presented and then discussed in regard to the local setting and in the field of literature. Also included were the rationale for the problem selection and the significance of the issue. The case study research method chosen to explore the problem was supported by three theoretical frameworks, Bruner's Constructivist Framework, Knowles' Andragogy Theory, and Bandura's self-efficacy theory. Accordingly, a description of each framework was provided along with an explanation on how each relates to the study. Next, the literature review described teachers' current literacy instructional practices towards meeting the recommendations of the CCSS in the disciplines of English, mathematics, science, social studies, and technology. Research presented in the literature review further confirmed the benefit of considering teacher perspectives towards their role in teaching literacy in order to equip

learners with the skills they require to be literate in the 21st century. Section 2 of this paper addresses the procedures and methodology that was used to examine teacher perspectives and the values they hold towards their role as content area reading teachers.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

The nature of this research was qualitative in both methodology and design. I selected a qualitative case study design to explore the complex phenomenon of literacy instruction in the content areas as it is practiced in a middle school. The RRR program and the requirement to teach literacy across all subjects and grade levels in the school district was in its fourth year and needed to be explored. Creswell (2014) proposed the qualitative method as a useful avenue for cases in which a concept communication had not taken place with a specific sample or group of people. Yin (2014) reinforced the choice to employ a case study method because the objective of the study was to explain the *how* and *why* of a present situation (p. 11). The research questions called for a broad and "in-depth" examination of teacher perspectives and a concentrated look at the phenomenon implemented in teacher classrooms (Yin, p. 4).

A qualitative bounded case study gave useful results to support the theory, assess the current literacy and training programs, and create possible interventions (Baxter & Jack, 2008). I interviewed eleven teachers of English, mathematics, social studies, and science to determine their perspectives on the value of literacy and their perceived roles. I wanted to find out what the content area teachers believe are their strengths and weaknesses in providing literacy instruction and the barriers they believe hinder their efforts. I wondered if one of the barriers could be the result of a lack of attention to Knowles andragogy framework in professional development experiences, as suggested by Arab et al. (2015). Moreover, I conducted a descriptive case study, which consisted of

formal interviews with aforementioned educators, classroom observations, and examination of teachers' lesson plans. I noted the type of literacy instruction, methods used for instruction, and the frequency of literacy instruction provided by teachers. I analyzed the information collected to determine teacher effectiveness in integrating literacy strategies. I also examined the data for evidence of quality literacy instruction in the form of research-based instructional strategies. I then used the information gathered during the observations and from lesson plans to support teachers' thoughts brought out in the formal interviews, thereby gaining insight on teacher self-efficacy and perspectives toward teaching literacy. In addition, I analyzed teacher self-efficacy through the interview process and examined teachers' instructional and personal behaviors by observing the teachers' classroom instruction; time spent on literacy learning, and number of mastery literacy experiences. Finally, I examined teacher lesson plans and the quantity and type of literacy strategies used during instruction.

Support for a Qualitative Research Design

I selected a qualitative case study approach as a way to provide an insightful and thorough investigation of the perspectives of English, mathematics, social studies, and science teachers toward teaching reading in their classrooms and to examine the extent to which literacy instruction was impacted by their perspectives. Qualitative research was selected to explore and understand the perspectives of the participants to a change in their professional role (Creswell, 2014). I conducted the study and collected data in the participants' choice of setting, which included my home, the school, and a neighborhood park. The inductive data analysis process grew from specifics to general themes, and I

interpreted the resulting data. The goal was to understand the meaning of the experience from each participant, and I was able to follow-up with participants on questions that emerged from the research.

The research questions for this study were designed to explain the present circumstance for the teachers in the school district (Yin, 2014). The district had decided upon a literacy focus and all teachers were expected to teach and track the teaching of close reading, reflective writing, and performance tasks, which are all literacy strategies. Answering the research questions also required an in-depth description of a phenomenon (Yin, 2014). Each participant's perspective toward teaching literacy was deeply explored through an interview, classroom observation, and examination of documents. A qualitative study is not limited by planned groupings or measures but lends itself to openness and allows for depth and discovery.

Justification for Rejection of Other Research Designs

A quantitative research design was not selected because the study did not involve a true experiment with subjects randomly assigned to treatment conditions (Creswell, 2003). I was interested in knowing and understanding the perspectives of individuals. A quantitative research design would not allow the freedom to deeply explore the perspectives of the participants. All participants took part in the study, which did not involve a control group to determine if a specific treatment influenced an outcome (Creswell, 2014). A quantitative approach would not answer the research questions I sought to answer. The interview questions allowed for the collection of demographic

information and answers to the research questions through open-ended responses or multiple choice options.

Likewise, a mixed-methods approach was not the right choice for this study because the study was primarily qualitative in design. Two forms of data were not collected simultaneously for interpretation because the questions that were answered lent themselves to an in-depth qualitative manner of collection. Participants were encouraged to respond openly to get to the heart of their perspectives.

Additionally, among the qualitative designs, grounded theory research would not have been appropriate for this study, because I did not pursue multiple stages of data collection over a long period of time. Also, this study did not involve multiple sites, nor was the intent to build a theory based on the data collected. Ethnography is the investigation of communities or cultures over a long time frame as described by Lodico et al. (2010), which was not the intent of this study. Furthermore, ethnographic studies must emphasize the study of culture, and my study did not. A case study design allows a researcher to develop an in-depth analysis of one or more persons bounded by time and activity through the collection of detailed information (Creswell, 2014). This study consisted of the in-depth exploration of the perspectives of a small number of purposefully selected individuals regarding a specific phenomenon. Therefore, the case study approach was the optimal qualitative design to utilize.

Data Collection Process

The goal of this research was to take a close look at teachers' perspectives towards teaching literacy through observation, the collection of lesson plans, interview

data from all selected teachers, and examination of RRR data from the 2015-2016 school year. I choose to use multiple methods of data collection to enhance the credibility of the study results (Creswell, 2014). Triangulation of data through the use of multiple sources is an acceptable strategy used to increase the validity of the study (Creswell, 2014). Conducting interviews allows for in-depth discussions and the development of closeness to participants (Lodico et al., 2010). Interviews were the primary method of data collection used to address the following research questions:

RQ1: What are teachers' perspectives regarding their roles as literacy instructors?

RQ2: How capable do teachers feel regarding teaching literacy to their students?

For each of the eleven classroom observations, I assumed the role of a nonparticipant or passive observer and did not interact with the teacher or the students in any way during the class period in which I observed. I looked for evidence in the teachers' instruction of the strategies learned in the recent RRR trainings. Finally, I examined data collected from participants' lesson plans and data regarding RRR activity required each semester by the district. Together, all data collection methods provided the rich data needed to answer the research questions.

Individual Interviews

The sample size included three English teachers, one mathematics teacher, three science teachers, and four social studies teachers. To collect data for this study, I first conducted individual interviews with each of the 11 participating teachers. The interviews took place with each participant at a convenient location and lasted from 25 to 55 minutes. Because school was out for summer break, I focused all attention on

conducting interviews during the months of June through September 2016. I found most participants to be receptive and relaxed during those summer months while school was not in session. However, it was during the interview process that I realized how precious time was for some of the selected participants.

I initially planned to include all seventh and eighth grade content area teachers, and was encouraged when all sixteen of them willingly provided their summer contact information. Setting up the interviews started out according to plan as the initial participants were anxious to meet once school was out. This changed when the school year began in August, and five of the originally selected participants declined to participate. Because participation was voluntary, I graciously accepted their declinations. With the remaining teachers, I found that conducting individual interviews allowed for rich, in-depth discussions with each of the participants. I was friendly and approachable and maintained the confidentiality and anonymity of all teacher responses. I audio recorded each interview and transcribed the recordings within three days of the interview to maintain the reliability and validity of the participants' responses. Taping the interviews helped eliminate bias during the transcription process. I was able to replay the recording many times during the transcription process to ensure that I accurately captured the participants' responses.

After transcribing each interview, I emailed a copy of the transcript to the participant for the purpose of member-checking in order to ensure that I had accurately captured the participants' responses to the interview questions (see Appendix E). After each participant responded that all was well with the interview transcripts, I uploaded the

data files from the recorder along with the interview transcripts into a project in Atlas.ti called a Hermeneutic unit (HU) for later coding and analysis. I also assigned each participant a pseudonym to maintain confidentiality of the data, and that pseudonym was also used to label the data. I then proceeded with the next step of the data collection process, that of scheduling and conducting classroom observations.

Classroom Observations

A month after school resumed, I emailed each participant to schedule classroom observations at a time that was agreeable. I was given permission from building administrators and support from secretarial staff and building substitutes to cover my classes while I completed these observations. I had optimistically, assumed it would be a smooth and quick process to complete 11 classroom observations. However, I discovered that a few teachers ignored emails and needed to be reminded numerous times of what I needed from them. I would pass them often in the hall and again remind them to schedule a time when I could observe them. I used my planning time to conduct observations to avoid inconveniencing office staff. I accepted disappointment graciously when a substitute was pulled because a teacher left early. Eventually, I was able to schedule and complete all observations. I observed literacy inclusive instruction taught by each participating teacher across the disciplines of English, math, science, and social studies using a classroom observation form suitable for running records (see Appendix F).

Because I was observing the teacher, his or her instruction and interactions with the students, I had elected not to participate in the lesson in any manner. Creswell (2012) stated that the role of a non-participant or passive observer is best used when observing

teachers who may not feel positively towards implementing strategies required by the district. While, I am comfortable at the study school and I am knowledgeable about the school's literacy initiative, I was not familiar with the routines or literacy environments of the classrooms I observed. Therefore, it was important that I was conscious of any biases I held towards either the participants or their teaching practices so as not to impact my interpretations or data collection. For this reason, I entered the classroom upon invitation, situated myself where the participating teacher instructed me to sit, and paid attention to and took notes on the phenomenon I was studying. During the observation, I took descriptive field notes and recorded the teachers' lesson. By recording the instructions and the teachers' interaction with students, I gained an accurate account of each observation. Finally, I showed appreciation and respect for each participant's willingness to invite me into their classroom.

I used the data collected from the classroom observations to answer the following research questions:

RQ3: Does the current literacy professional development engage teachers?

RQ4: To what extent do teachers demonstrate evidence of adopting literacy strategies presented in professional development in their classrooms?

By sitting quietly in the room, writing field notes on the observation form and collecting descriptive data during each 45-minute class period, I was able to capture reading strategies used during instruction. In addition, I was able to gain an understanding of how instruction takes place in a content area classroom. I recorded instructional practices, resources and texts used for instruction as well as teacher behavior and actions while

teaching. I looked for evidence of comprehension and vocabulary strategies used during each lesson (see Appendix J). I hoped to see a carryover of the observed literacy strategies in the teacher lesson plans collected from each participant. I then transcribed each observation and emailed them to the participants for member-checking. Once the participant responded that I had captured what they intended, I labeled and uploaded the observation transcripts into the HU in Atlas.ti for coding and analysis. The next step was to examine teacher lesson plans to understand how content teachers planned for literacy integration.

Teacher Lesson Plans

I collected and examined teacher lesson plans from each participating teacher, in addition to looking in each classroom for evidence of student work that had a literacy focus (see Appendix J). When conducting classroom interviews, I looked for and noticed evidence of student writing and student use of graphic organizers on the walls of many of the classrooms. When I examined the lesson plans, I looked to see if there was a carryover of what I saw in the classroom in the documents submitted by the teachers. I had to remind teachers several times to submit their lesson plans. I was surprised by this because I asked for lesson plans written during the last school semester. Because I am employed by the district and work at this school, I am aware that all lesson plans are submitted each week to a specific data base and maintained for two years. It is a quick process to access this database and open the lesson plan for any week in that two-year time frame. I did not ask teachers to write anything additional or prepare any plans over and above what they had previously submitted. Despite this fact, it took a few teachers

several weeks to submit their plans. I then examined the lesson plans for evidence of literacy strategies, and RRR professional development requirements such as close reading, reflective writing, and performance tasks. Finally, I labeled and uploaded the lesson plans to the HU in Atlas.ti for coding and analysis. The final piece in the data collection process was to download and examine the RRR accountability data. This is evidence that all teachers must report on a common Google document to show that they have completed the required number of close readings, reflective writings, and performance tasks during the required time-frame.

Rigor, Relevance, Relationships Accountability Data

The district leadership incorporated a train-the-trainer approach to implementing the RRR program in March 2013. The RRR initiative is a four-quadrant framework that reflects two aspects of raised standards and learner success (see Appendix B). This initiative had been designed to support the CCSS literacy recommendations, and a train-the-trainer approach was implemented to train teachers how to teach close reading lessons, include reflective writing and incorporate performance tasks in their classroom instruction. Last year, the district instituted a requirement for all teachers to report the number and type of RRR instruction they provided in the classroom each marking period. Specifically, each teacher was directed to include 2 performance tasks, 1 close reading lesson, and 33 reflective writings into their instruction each marking period. A common RRR accountability excel document was created In Google for teachers to use to show evidence of meeting the requirement each marking period.

I examined the RRR data entered by the 11 participants for the 2015-2016 school year in order to determine the extent that teachers demonstrated evidence of adopting the literacy strategies presented in professional development in their classrooms in the manner required by the district. After examination of this data, I was able to determine the extent to which the participating teachers were meeting the district's requirement (See Appendix K). All of the above-mentioned collected data was analyzed and coded in an inductive and deductive manner to identify themes and answer the four research questions. I maintained research logs within Atlas.ti to keep track of the ongoing data. In addition, I maintained a reflective journal to record emerging themes and thoughts throughout the study.

Sampling Procedures

I had obtained a signed Letter of Cooperation from the school superintendent to move forward with this study and to interview, observe teachers, and review documentation (Appendix G). I used purposeful sampling intentionally to select only seventh-grade and eighth-grade English, mathematics, science, and social studies teachers at this suburban middle-school. Participants included eleven seventh-grade and eighth-grade English, math, science, and social studies teachers, in the study school who volunteered to be included in the study. I anticipated that there would be a total of 16 middle school teachers participating in the study. However, five teachers declined to participate, therefore, the sample included eleven teachers. The demographic make-up of the eleven teachers were as follows:

- Seven female teachers, Four male teachers

- Seven seventh-grade teachers, Four eighth-grade teachers
- 10 Master's Degrees, 1 Bachelor's Degree holding teachers
- Seven teachers with 12-20 years teaching experience
- Four teachers with 20-26 years teaching experience

"Purposeful sampling" is the method of choice for selecting participants and locations in qualitative research studies (Creswell, 2012, p. 206). The middle school is one of four in the district and was selected because I am employed at the school and would have convenient access to interview and observe the participants. I work in the same school with these teachers but do not supervise them or have any power over them. These grade level and subject teachers were selected because they are middle school content area teachers who are accessible and can assist in understanding the above-mentioned phenomena across the core content areas (Creswell, 2012). In addition, these teachers have all participated in the RRR implementation initiative and are required to teach literacy strategies within their disciplines.

The case study focused on the application of literacy strategies used in the content area classrooms as a requirement by the district in alignment with the CCSS. Moreover, the study investigated the individual perspectives of each teacher, their self-efficacy, and value placed on teaching literacy in content areas. The case was a bounded case in that it was separated out for the study in terms of the 2015-2016 school year and only occurred at a single school in XYZ School District. The results of the study should be applicable to any school where administrators wish to consider teacher perspectives to an additional role of teaching reading in content areas.

Methods for Protection of Human Subjects

In compliance with IRB requirements, I maintained project data in Word and Excel format in a password-protected file and, at the completion of the project study, will dispose of the project data. I also took care to remove participants' names, addresses, and telephone numbers from all data collected. Within the study, teachers were given pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality. In addition, I have not divulged to anyone any information that may be linked to the participants' identities. Moreover, I have ensured the voluntary participation of all participants by not offering payments or reimbursement of any kind including gifts or preferential treatment. Most importantly, I have not pursued protected populations, including: children, prisoners, mentally or emotionally disturbed individuals, or elderly persons, as participants. All participants were asked to sign a consent form, prior to taking part in the study. Each participant was then given a copy of the signed consent form. All of these precautions were for the purpose of protecting the rights of the participating individuals and maintaining researcher accountability as required by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). In compliance with the IRB, my application to conduct this study was approved on July 8, 2016, approval #07-08-16-0374834. In addition, I have completed the NIH web-based training for the Protection of Human Research Participants on July 17, 2014, Certificate #1504577.

Data Analysis Procedures

Qualitative studies generate a large amount of data, which must be organized, typed, and coded. I had to decide whether to organize the data into paper folders or use one of the many computer programs available for organizing data. For my first qualitative

study, I originally planned to organize the data by hand, however, I decided to use an online qualitative analysis program to organize the data. For this qualitative study, I considered HyperRESEARCH (www.researchware.com) because Creswell (2012) reports it as being easy to use and allows for coding, retrieving information, and analyzing data. Another software I considered was MAXQD www.maxqda.com because I planned to pursue further research, and this program works well with both qualitative and quantitative research. Another online software option I considered was Nvivo (http://www.qsrinternational.com/nvivo-product) because it was recommended by a colleague and said to be user friendly. I have tried out several qualitative data management programs and like Atlas.ti the best (www.atlasti.com).

The sources for this study represented interviews, observations and lesson plans collected from the participants along with accessible RRR data. I used both inductive and deductive codes to examine the data. Because this was a qualitative study, I expected to discover unexpected concepts, therefore, the need to anticipate inductive codes. I have found and addressed discrepant cases by honestly reporting them and following up when appropriate with member-checking to clarify possibly misunderstood responses. I also examined any of the discrepant cases to determine if they would lead to new findings.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

There are many methods to choose for the analysis and interpretation of qualitative data. Creswell (2014) described data analysis as “peeling back the layers of an onion” (p. 195). The process of data analysis in qualitative research is different from quantitative research is that it will move forward hand-in-hand with data collection and

writing up of results (Creswell, 2014). In addition, the textual data is so dense and rich that all of the information collected will not be used in the study. For this reason, Creswell (2014) stated that researchers need to focus on some sections of the data and disregard other sections. I used Atlas.ti, a qualitative online computer software program to facilitate the process of description, analysis, and interpretation of the research data I collected through interviews, observations, and documentation review. Creswell (2014) said that hand coding qualitative data can be a "laborious and time-consuming process" (p.195), therefore, I found this software to be a helpful resource during the difficult process of organizing, sorting, and searching for information within the text.

The first stage of data collection began with familiarizing myself with the data. I started by transcribing each interview. I found listening to each participant's responses to the interview questions to be enlightening. As I listened, I made notations of quotes that directly addressed the research questions. I then reread each of the transcripts several times to become familiar with the perspectives of the participants. In addition, I reviewed the theoretical framework and research questions that the data collection was based on to identify broad topics as initial categories. Next, I went on to follow this process when examining the observation transcripts. I then read over each lesson plan to gain a sense of the process each participant followed when planning instruction. While I read, I made notes when I noticed strategies and techniques that could serve as initial categories.

The second step I took was to upload each interview and observation transcript into a HU in Atlas.ti. I had been proactive in uploading each piece of data into Atlas.ti as I collected it. Once all data had been collected and uploaded into Atlas.ti, I started with

initial coding. I created inductive codes in Atlas.ti based on an examination of the data. As I read and coded the data, I continued with an inductive coding process and identified themes that emerged from the data as I delved deeper. Codes were sorted into themes that related to teacher perspectives, ability to deliver literacy strategies and professional development. Figure 1 displays the initial codes based on the initial coding process. So my interpretation of the Code-Filter Output is that the first number is the number of times the code appeared and the second number speaks to the number of times, the code co-appeared with other codes.

HU: Project Study - Content Area Teacher Prospectives on Integrating Literacy Strategies
File: [C:\Users\Lyne...\Project Study - Content Area Teacher Prospectives on Integrating Literacy Strategies.hpr7]
Edited by: Super
Date/Time: 2016-11-20 16:16:22

5 Ws & H Strategy {2-1}
Annotation of text {5-2}
Capable {95-0}
Challenges {37-0}
Choice {5-0}
Classroom environment {30-1}
Close Reading {25-0}
Collaboration {48-0}
Collaborative Partners {23-2}
District RRR training {9-0}
Exit Slip strategy {1-2}
Experience {45-1}
Finding Articles {9-0}
Frayer Model {2-1}
Generate Background Knowledge strategy {10-1}
Graphic organizer {20-1}
Guided notes {15-1}
I do vocab all the time, I hav.. {1-0}
Inexperienced {9-1}
Literacy Environment {9-1}
literacy frequency {9-0}
Literacy training {12-0}
Make connections {1-0}
Negative perspective {83-1}
Notetaking {17-1}
Performance Tasks {20-0}
Picture Wonder Activation strategy {1-2}
Planning {40-0}
Positive perspective {81-1}
Questioning strategy {17-1}
Reading {12-0}
Real World Experience {1-1}
Reflective Writing {15-1}
Relevant {25-1}
Rereading {1-0}
RQ1 What are teachers' perspectives {regarding their roles as literacy instructors? {30-3}
RQ2 How capable do teachers feel regarding teaching literacy to their students? {24-2}
RQ3 Does the current literacy professional development engage teachers? {8-0}
RQ4 To what extent do teachers demonstrate evidence of adopting literacy strategies presented in professional development in their classrooms? {45-5}
Socratic Seminar strategy {1-1}
Strategies {56-20}
Strengths {1-0}
Student writing {24-1}
teacher modeling 11-0}
Technology in the classroom {48-1}
Text-based evidence strategy {6-1}
Text Structure Strategy {1-1}
Think-Pair-Share Strategy {2-1}
Think aloud strategy {1-0}
Ticket-out-the-door Strategy {1-1}
Time {107-0}
Training {46-0}
Turn and Talk {1-0}
visual literacy {26-2}
Vocabulary {34-0}
Weakness {2-0}
Word Splash strategy {2-1}
Writing Wall-Student work {1-0}
Years of teaching experience {11-0}

Figure 1. Code-filter: All

In the final step of coding, I matched names of ideas, joined sections of data (text) as illustrative of characteristics of the same phenomenon, distributing the text into topics

and thematic ideas. I also considered the amount of times responses occurred in the open response data. I then disregarded repetitive and like codes, joined like codes, and devised ways to group the codes. To facilitate coding, I used Atlas.ti. This online tool allowed me to use free coding to create the initial deductive codes, in-Vivo coding to use the text segment as the code name, select codes from a list of previously created codes, and perform auto coding. Together, these functions help clarify aspects of qualitative practice and are meaningful to the intent of this study. Because I was working with data in Atlas.ti, I used the NCT model for computer-assisted qualitative data analysis. "The three basic components of the model are noticing things, collecting things, and thinking about things" (Friese, 2014, p. 12). Noticing things refers to identifying interesting things when reading over transcripts, documents, and field notes. Codes may be developed both inductively and deductively during this process. Collecting things comes into the picture as one notices things that are similar and may be connected to other codes. The final component, thinking about things, is used throughout the analytic process as one notices things, comes up with names for codes, and discovers patterns and relationships in the data (Friese, 2014). I searched the data to set up emerging codes, quotes, and memos. I continued this process until I could no longer add new codes, therefore coding ended. I then began to link related codes together with codes, quotes, and memos. Finally, I pinpointed core codes and examined their relationship to other codes. I continued with this process until I reached data saturation, which signifies there are no new codes noticeable in the data (Creswell, 2014). Themes emerged from the data which created a data-based appreciation of the impact of the phenomenon.

Findings

For this study, I focused on content area teacher perspectives to teaching literacy. I wanted to determine whether or not content area teachers realized the importance of literacy to content learning. In addition, I wanted to examine teacher perspectives to the RRR literacy initiative undertaken by the district and implemented in all district schools. Interview data was the primary source of data, and was enriched by examination of lesson plans, and classroom observation. I also examined district required RRR data to confirm compliance with mandated close reading, reflective writing, and performance tasks, which are all literacy strategies. The interview data allowed me to capture teachers' beliefs and values about teaching reading and gain insight as to their capacity to implement literacy strategies in the content areas of English, math, social studies, and science. See Appendix I for an overview of interview responses as they related to the research questions. Below are some significant findings related to each of the four research questions. Table 1 shows a summary of the findings including key themes.

Table 1

Summary of Findings

Research Questions	RQ1: What are teachers' perspectives regarding their roles as literacy instructors?	RQ2: How capable do teachers feel regarding teaching literacy to their students?	RQ3: Does the current literacy professional development engage teachers?	RQ4: To what extent do teachers demonstrate evidence of adopting literacy strategies presented in professional development in their classrooms?
Themes	Positive perspectives	Comfort level & ability to teach strategies	Delivery of Professional Development	Connection to the curriculum
	Negative perspectives	I want to do it my way	I'm interested if I like it	Specific to needs
	Importance of Reading instruction	I'm not a reading teacher	Where does it fit in my instruction?	time-consuming
	Value placed on literacy			

The themes indicated the varied perspectives of the participants towards the role of literacy instructor. Themes emerged from the data that indicated that teacher buy-in of the RRR initiative impacted their engagement of the ongoing literacy professional development. Teachers were open and honest about discussing their perceived capability to deliver close reading instruction, provide opportunities for reflective writing and prepare performance tasks, thereby giving insight into teachers' needs and concerns. While the data showed evidence of teacher compliance with the district initiative to

implement literacy strategies, there was also a clear indication of teachers' viewpoints towards the district expectations.

Research Question 1

RQ1: What are teachers' perspectives regarding their roles as literacy instructors?

Interview data were the primary source for the findings in answer to the research questions. Participants' perspectives regarding their roles as literacy instructors centered on key themes such as *Importance to Content Area*, *Specific to Content Area*, and *One More Thing to Do*. Other themes that emerged were *Lack of Collaborative Opportunities* and *Forced Compliance*. Several participants openly supported reading as being important across the content areas. One participant said, "It is important across the content areas that it is being reinforced. What's being taught in the English and reading courses are being reinforced in the other content areas. Kids see the value in it and don't get confused." Another participating teacher said, "I believe it is something that you need in every class. I think it is extremely important. I just think it is something that all teachers no matter what their discipline, should try to be a reading teacher."

My research showed that literacy was also viewed as important over all content areas including science, math, and social studies. Some participants seemed to feel that literacy strategy instruction enhanced their subject area and was important in helping students learn. "I think it is good because I feel that history is just an extension of that. I feel that history should be like a part of English or Academic Literacy." As one participant stated, "I think it is great to teach literacy strategies in all content areas, I think it is necessary but reading in science is different than reading a history article." I was

pleasantly surprised that this teacher was aware of and spoke on the difference in reading between the content areas. Another participant saw the value in teaching literacy, yet was unsure of having the ability to teach reading or assess students' abilities. "I think it is an integral part of math. I don't know that I do a good job of teaching. I expect the kids kinda come into my classroom knowing how to read." This teacher's expectation confirmed one of my early assumptions that content area teachers expect students to come to them knowing how to read.

While many participants believed that teaching literacy was important, they also were upfront in speaking out that their primary concern was teaching the content. "I don't like spending a lot of time just on the reading aspect of it. I want to get to the content. I want to teach history." In addition, teachers felt that their plates were full and being asked to teach reading was just one more thing to do. "I mean I think it's still kind of hard to completely embrace it because we have had so much put on our plate." I sensed that there was some frustration affecting teacher perspectives as I listened to this participant share thoughts about a specific literacy strategy requirement.

> I mean I can't help but to speak to our situation because there are so many requirements. It is not just you know once a marking period find an article that relates and make sure. It's just a no you have to do this and you have to do that and there is like 25 steps to it and it takes you five days to get through an article rather than just have the kids read the article, have them reflect on it, talk about how it compares with what you are doing, which to me would be much more effective than going through all the steps of the close reading.

As I listened to each of the participants share their perspectives, I discovered that although seeing the value in teaching reading was evident from the interview data, it was affected by commitment to content instruction and time constraints. Time spent teaching literacy strategies was viewed negatively by several participants. “Like the closed reading just takes too much time. To really do it effectively to do it justice and to do it the right way.” Another participant stated, “I think on the teachers it has probably been negative to start because I think all of the content teachers saw it as something extra that they had to do, something that they didn’t feel prepared to do.”

Research Question 2

RQ2: How capable do teachers feel regarding teaching literacy to their students?

The interview questions and classroom observations provided insight into the level of teacher capability to teach literacy to their students. I was able to observe teachers providing literacy instruction and gain a sense of their comfort level and knowledge. I made several notations in the observation field notes as seen in Table 2.

Table 2

Researcher's Comments

Teacher seems comfortable assisting with the activity
Teacher knows the story and appears to know the value of using the text to support the students' activity.
This teacher shows knowledge of the literacy strategy and how to teach it to students.
Teacher appeared calm and comfortable during this part of the instruction.
Teacher supports students' drawing and connection to the vocabulary words
While drawing, teacher is talking about the task with students at table where teacher is sitting. Teacher is modeling what students should be doing

The classroom observations also provided a glimpse into the value teachers placed on time devoted to literacy instruction. All observations contained either vocabulary instruction, close reading, or reflective writing activities. I observed teachers using the strategies taught in the RRR professional development sessions. I noticed that several teachers projected their instruction on the screen and was informed this was done to make sure steps were not missed.

Teachers seemed willing to share their true feelings and readily admitted to not feeling competent in delivering some literacy components.

> I am not a reading teacher, I'm not a literacy coach and I'm not trained in that regard. I know how to read, I know how to guide students in reading and I know how to kinda help them within the content. I don't know all the other strategies that could help them or how to help them with the content reading. So in that

> regard, I don't think I am overly prepared to act in that regard as a surrogate reading teacher in my classroom.

Another participant appeared to be more confident and said "I am more conscious of, you know, making sure the kids are reading, checking for understanding, introducing vocabulary, trying to find some articles that would give students background knowledge about something they are currently reading." The requirement to teach reflective writing was looked upon more favorably than the close reading or performance tasks as seen in this participant's response. "I like reflective writing. I don't have a problem incorporating that at all. You can do it, it's quick, easy umm, doesn't take a lot of time."

Research Question 3

RQ3: Does the current literacy professional development engage teachers?

The study yielded multiple viewpoints in regard to this question. While many of the teachers were involved in one or more of the cohorts as trainers, they had different views on the training that was provided. I heard several comments that showed engagement among the teachers. A participant said, "I think we're learning some good strategies and once people get over the initial shock of this is really different . . . it's good for our kids, and I feel it's making me a better teacher." A teacher suggested, "My go to's at this point are all of the things that we are using in RRR. Those expected things from the close reading and the reflective writing. I use graphic organizers, the KWL charts, things like read alouds." Another participant stated,

> I liked the delivery from the people that you teach with, not from these hired guns. The hired guns, that whole year was awful. Until they started the cohorts, I

was tuned out. As a matter of fact, I was confused. And the vocabulary one was one of the earlier ones, it was like the second one, I was confused.

Research Question 4

RQ4: To what extent do teachers demonstrate evidence of adopting literacy strategies presented in professional development in their classrooms?

I notated numerous field notes on strategies I observed in the classroom and identified in lesson plans in response to this research question. Teachers were observed using many literacy strategies in their classroom instruction. Lesson plans included the following strategies along with many others: 3-2-1 Exit slips, the use of text evidence, questioning, Frayer models (http://www.adlit.org/strategies/22369/) , think alouds (http://www.adlit.org/strategies/22735/), turn and talks, close readings, graphic organizers, Socratic Seminars (http://www.readwritethink.org/professional-development/strategy-guides/socratic-seminars-30600.html), and reflective writing (Fisher & Frey, 2014; Sewell, 2014). Teachers were transparent in describing the impact of adopting literacy strategies in their classrooms. “Oh, it’s had a dramatic impact. Specifically the close reading.” Teachers admitted to the great amount of time to develop the lessons and obtain resources, but saw its importance. “I work with other history teachers, and it was real important for us in our close reading to really hit the curriculum, not just be this extra thing, hey we did it, we can cross it off the list.”

I found that teachers were willing to use the materials provided during the RRR professional development sessions because they provided clear guidelines for them to follow. “I have all the information they have given us. They’ve showed us the studies

how important it is." "I go through that form that they make you go through" I also found evidence of forced compliance where some teachers informed me that incorporating literacy was just something that good teachers did along with skepticism, "Well if there was no expectation to do it, how many people would?"

Discussion

The interview process was instrumental in identifying what teachers felt they needed to have in order to meet the guidelines of the districts' RRR initiative and to become more adept at teaching reading. Overall, participants seemed comfortable talking and sharing their thoughts about teaching reading, therefore, I trusted that they were honest and open with their comments and suggestions. The majority of the teachers were not opposed to teaching reflective writing and planning performance tasks within their curriculum, however, many teachers did not feel prepared to teach close reading with fidelity. In addition, several teachers expressed that they did not see the value in teaching close reading, that it took time away from the curriculum and that students were not receptive to the close reading lessons. Another challenging aspect of preparing to teach close reading was the time and effort it took to find rigorous and relevant articles that related to what the teacher was teaching at the time the lessons needed to be taught. Teachers that saw the value in teaching close reading were concerned that some teachers may not be teaching with fidelity and, therefore, would not support reading in the content area if it was not monitored. I did not find this to be the case based on the individuals I interviewed. Table 3 highlights the needs of the participants as they were relayed during the interview process. The most common need expressed by the participants was time to

collaborate within grade and across grades for planning purposes and to share expertise among colleagues. These participants also wanted periodic refresher courses to help them remember what was taught in professional development courses.

Table 3

Teacher's Perceived Needs

Common planning period or collaboration time during the day – per grade as well as within grades to talk and share expertise
Eliminate close reading mandate forced into all content areas several times per year
Additional training on literacy strategies in plain language
If close reading must be done, help finding rigorous, relevant articles that relate to subject matter
Strategies for helping struggling readers
Collaboration and refresher courses on the expected literacy requirements
An RRR help desk
Flexibility and respect for teacher instructional decisions
Team time with all team members present
Time to collaborate more, maybe during faculty meetings or department meetings
Chance to observe other teachers

The words expressed by the participants were supported by the theoretical framework that guided the study. Bruner's (1960) constructivist theory was evident in that learners build meaning dependent upon their present knowledge. All participants were certified and qualified within their content areas and were tasked with adding a level

of expertise to the knowledge they already had. Each participant accepted the new assignment in a unique way.

In addition, in regard to Bandura (1993) and self-efficacy, which stated that human agency affects how people function, I noticed that each teacher's level of comfort with integrating the literacy strategies impacted his/her perspectives and implementation of the reading strategies. Finally, I noticed evidence of Knowles theory of andragogy as setting the climate for adult learning based on acceptance and respect. The participants who took part in the Cohort training and delivery of training looked more favorably upon the professional development and components of the RRR initiative than those that were not involved in any of the Cohorts.

Validating Findings

Qualitative research is said to be interpretive and to be influenced by the self-reflective nature of the researcher, the way the findings are interpreted, and the researcher's background or history (Creswell, 2012). For these reasons, it is extremely important that steps are followed to ensure the validity and credibility of the study results through member checking, triangulation, and auditing. I facilitated member-checking by providing study participants with copies of their interview transcripts to ensure that I had accurately captured and understood their responses. Participants were also invited to review the transcribed field notes of the classroom observations to impart insight that I may have missed. I wanted to know from each participant whether or not my descriptions were realistic and if my interpretations were fair and accurate. I also allowed for triangulation of data in the design of this study. I collected multiple types of data through

audio-recorded interviews, field notes from observations, and lesson plans. In addition, I planned for various methods of collecting data from the teacher interviews, classroom observations, and lesson plans. I examined all of the data to identify prevailing themes so that I could produce a report that would be accurate and credible. Finally, I conducted an external audit by soliciting an overview of the study by someone not affiliated with the research to help identify the strong points and weak areas of the study. This person assisted me in determining if the results were grounded in the data, if the themes identified were appropriate, if I had failed to eliminate researcher bias, and if I had used strategies to ensure credibility of the findings as recommended by Creswell (2012). These three checks for validity are critical in providing evidence of the accuracy and credibility of this qualitative research study.

Conclusion

This section provided justification for conducting a qualitative case study to examine teacher perspectives to teaching literacy in the content areas. The observational and descriptive design of the case study should provide an in-depth look at what teachers believe is their role in providing literacy instruction and the level of teacher self-efficacy held by seventh-grade and eighth-grade teachers in XYZ Middle School. Other research methods such as quantitative, mixed-methods, grounded-theory, and ethnography were rejected after deciding that an openness and depth of discovery were needed to answer the research questions. I explained the purposeful sampling procedures for participant selection, and detailed steps taken to protect human subjects. Data collection methods included field notes to record and manage data from interviews, and an observation form

to collect data from classroom observations. Finally, this section included the procedures for data analysis and plans to validate the findings. The next section has detailed the components of the project, presented a literature review in support of the project, and outlined the plans for presentation of the study results.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of content area teachers' perspectives to becoming teachers of reading and to examine the problem of teacher reluctance or unpreparedness to embrace integration of literacy strategies across the curriculum. To accomplish this purpose, I introduced a bounded qualitative case study design to gain insight as to what middle-school teachers thought about their roles as teachers of reading and how prepared they felt they were to integrate literacy strategies into their disciplines. In addition, the case study design proved instrumental in bringing to light the value these teachers placed on reading as well as identifying their needs to authentically support the districts' initiative. The project described in this section was developed based on the results of this in-depth qualitative case study. The main data source was face-to-face interviews with each participant. Additional data resulted from the examination of lesson plans, and classroom observations. I thoroughly examined the data, analyzed the results and weighed them against current research.

In addition, I discussed the results of the study and shared the project particulars with trusted colleagues, including two secondary reading specialists, a middle-level English teacher, a doctoral colleague, and a district curriculum and development director. I requested feedback from each to ascertain the feasibility of such a project in the culture of the school. One reason for consulting with other educators was to tap into their knowledge of previous professional development endeavors prior to my employment

with the district. Another reason was to reduce the presence of researcher bias in the development of the project.

This section of the paper provides a full description of the project along with the intended goals and rationale for each component of the project. Also included is an exhaustive literature review to support a project of this nature and plans for implementation. Following the literature review, I have identified all potential resources and existing supports needed to implement the project. Then, I explored potential barriers to project acceptance and implementation. After that, I outlined the proposal for implementation and included a clear time-table for the project execution. Finally, I provided a comprehensive chart to show the roles and responsibilities of persons responsible for the project implementation.

Description and Goals

The project of this study was a professional development/training curriculum and materials. The project consists of three modules with the primary focus on collaboration and job-embedded ongoing professional development. The first module involved the creation of an online database for the collection of nonfiction articles for close reading. Articles will be selected and cataloged, first by content area and then by unit of study within each content area. One of the main concerns made clear through the research was the amount of time and effort teachers spent looking for appropriate close-reading articles and preparing the high-level questions needed to accompany each article. The online database would provide each content area with a variety of articles to select from for each unit in their curriculum along with the high level questions required for instruction.

Teachers would then be able to select and provide instruction with articles that appeal to them and are relevant to each unit within the curriculum. The project will use the Google platform as the vehicle for maintaining and managing these articles and accompanying questions. The goal is for all teachers to take advantage of the capacity to add articles to the shared Google document file as well as collaborate as a department to compose the required questions.

The second module addresses participants' concerns that some literacy strategy instructions are unclear, and they do not feel prepared to teach these strategies within their content area. Select strategies will be compiled in a manual titled *Recommended Literacy Strategies for all Content Areas* and provided to all teachers to ensure consistency across all content areas. These strategies will address annotation, notetaking, and before, during, and after reading strategies, as well as vocabulary strategies. This selection of specific strategies and clear guidelines identifying when they ought to be used should alleviate teacher confusion and ensure teachers do not become overwhelmed in making decisions as to which strategies to use for each purpose. The goal is to facilitate consistent use of strategies and expectations across the core content areas to promote continuity and a sense of community among teachers, and to reinforce literacy expectations for students.

The final module of this project is an online educator blog designed to provide ongoing job-embedded professional development to address teachers' feelings of isolation and provide a vehicle to communicate with reading specialists, administrators, and colleagues. To accomplish this, educators will regularly participate in posting to a

dedicated Google group site designed for the purpose of communicating with colleagues, sharing expertise, and supporting one another in the effort of teaching reading. Teachers will be able to acquire ongoing assistance from reading specialists and colleagues as they implement literacy strategies and teach reading in their content areas. All teachers and administrators from the middle school will be a part of the blog community. If desired, this audience could later be expanded to include all teachers in the other middle schools within the district. Building administrators would institute a special schedule designation once a month to allow 30 minutes within the school day for teachers to check in, post, and comment on at least two colleagues' posts. During this 30 minutes, students would remain with that teacher and be given 30 minutes for silent reading while teachers completed this task. This support from administration is necessary to promote willing participation and maintain consistent collaboration. Teachers would have access to the blog at any time for posting and commenting; however, this dedicated time addresses the study results, as many teachers complained of new tasks being "just one more thing to do and not enough time to do it." Reading specialists will be tasked with posting helpful information monthly to add an ongoing job-embedded professional development element to the blog. In addition, the reading specialists would respond to literacy questions on a monthly basis to support their colleagues. In summation, all three modules for this project are designed to work together to provide support, collaboration, and a means of communication between all educators in the middle school and promote buy-in of the school RRR initiative through an awareness of teacher perspectives to teaching reading

and by addressing the teacher concerns identified through the data collection and analysis process.

Rationale

When deciding upon a genre for this project, I considered all of the options. As I contemplated the evaluation report, I knew this was not an option because I did not intend to evaluate the current RRR literacy program. An evaluation of the RRR program would not align with the guiding research questions. In response to the problem, I designed all four of the research questions to help me examine teacher perspectives to teaching literacy and not the current literacy initiative. The goal of this study and consequently the project was to support and extend the current RRR program. The district is in the fourth year of implementing the RRR literacy professional development program and is fully vested in this program. There are processes currently in place to evaluate this program as it moves forward. Therefore, an evaluation report was not the best choice for the project.

The next genre I considered was the curriculum plan. Since literacy strategies in the form of close reading, reflective writing, and performance tasks have already been added to the curriculum, there was no need to change the curriculum any further. This project was intended to address teachers' perceived needs in fulfilling the added role of teaching reading. Additionally, the purpose of the project was not to make recommendations to school policy because that did not seem to be a problem at the school and was therefore not addressed through this study. The findings showed that participants were in need of professional development to support collaboration and

enhance teacher self-efficacy in teaching literacy strategies. Therefore, the curriculum plan and the policy recommendation genres were not good choices for this project study.

The genre of professional development/training curriculum was designed in response to the case study data analysis and in consideration of the culture of this school district and possibly many other districts. School schedules are often dictated by bus schedules and other factors and do not allow for collaborative learning or professional development during the school day. This project was designed to eliminate the need to significantly alter school schedules or require teachers to work outside of the school day in order to ensure collaborative learning and instructional support. It should be noted that the school schedule has changed very little over the past several years, with the exception of the addition of a club day schedule. The club day schedule shortened each class period by five minutes to allow for 30 minutes at the end of the day for relationship building through teacher-facilitated clubs, which meet twice each month.

The project will rely on the addition of a similar schedule once per month for teachers to participate in an educator blog. Participation in the blog will provide time for collaboration. Teachers in the secondary schools in this district do not have common planning periods with reading specialists, and teaching team meeting times are not held when reading specialists are able to participate. Therefore, all components of the project were designed to afford all core content teachers the means to collaborate across grade levels and across content areas at times that are convenient for them. The design of the project includes the teachers as collaborators in the design and development of the three

products to be used during the school year. Finally, the project allows for ongoing evaluation of project effectiveness and teacher participation.

This professional development/training curriculum is a good fit for the middle school as it addresses all four of the research questions.

RQ1: What are teachers' perspectives regarding their roles as literacy instructors? While the results of the data analysis showed that teachers agreed it was important to carry literacy instruction across the content areas so that students see the value in literacy and not be confused by multiple approaches, teachers repeatedly stated, "I am not a reading teacher" and "I am not prepared to teach reading." This project was designed to provide ongoing job-embedded professional development opportunities to equip teachers and support them in teaching reading through participation in an educator blog. This project supports consistency across the content areas and supports all teachers in becoming reading teachers no matter their discipline. Teachers will have the training and resources to use the same strategies in each content area, yet be able tailor them to fit each discipline.

RQ2: How capable do teachers feel regarding teaching literacy to their students? The data analysis confirmed that many teachers did not feel competent delivering some literacy components. The ongoing blog and literacy strategy resource would be available for teachers to support one another as well as provide clear guidelines for teaching with the preferred literacy strategies. Teachers would also be able to share tips and tricks on the delivery of those strategies and ask questions in a nonthreatening environment. This

project was designed to incorporate opportunities for collaboration across grade levels and departments, as well as within grade levels and departments.

RQ3: Does the current literacy professional development engage teachers?

The study results indicated that for many teachers, the strategies they were using were those taught in the RRR professional development sessions delivered by the district, showing that teachers were responsive to literacy integration as taught in the current professional development sessions. This project will support the current literacy professional development as it builds on it by enhancing the level of consistent, ongoing, job-embedded professional development through the online database, the manual, and the educator blog.

RQ4: To what extent do teachers demonstrate evidence of adopting literacy strategies presented in professional development in their classrooms?

It was evident from the classroom observations and examination of lesson plans that teachers are using some of the strategies and graphic organizers provided to them at professional development sessions. The online database for article collection, the literacy strategies manual, and the educator blog will enhance teacher efficacy and collaboration and move the middle school in the direction of a school-wide culture of literacy.

The problem as stated in Section 1 identified barriers to meeting the recommendations of the recently adopted CCSS. It was important to consider these barriers as the study school is in the fourth year of a district-wide RRR school initiative that requires all teachers to teach literacy strategies and incorporate close reading practices, Reflective writing, and performance tasks into their curriculum in response to

the CCSS. The district has outlined a time-frame and guidelines for integrating these practices and is using teacher cohorts to deliver professional development during school building days. Therefore, the professional development modules presented in this project address the following barriers:

- Many disciplinary teachers do not welcome the integration of reading strategies into their instruction (Bayar, 2014; Cosmah & Saine, 2013).
- Teachers have varied levels of competency in providing literacy instruction and may be unwilling or unable to teach literacy strategies within their disciplines (Hurst & Pearman, 2014); Vaughn et al., 2013; Wilhelm & Lauer, 2015).
- Many disciplinary teacher have internalized their proficient content area approaches and may not realize the need to teach them explicitly, nor know how to teach in their content area using literacy strategies (Wilhelm & Lauer, 2015).
- Some teachers have been reluctant to embrace integration of literacy strategies across the curriculum.

The content of this project addresses each of these barriers by providing solutions in the way of ongoing professional development, in addition to the district provided professional development sessions. The three project modules result in a depository for resources that are relevant to each content area and encourage teachers to bring their individual expertise to the table. Also, the project entices teachers out of isolation by giving them the means to collaborate with all colleagues through the educator blog

module. Finally, teachers will be trained on specific strategies to be used across the curriculum. Teachers will be taught to adapt the strategies to specifically fit their content goals.

I have carefully considered the methods, benefits, and time tables for implementing the each of the modules in a manner that does not put undue stress on administration or the educators as shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Project Modules

Modules	Online Data Base (Google Docs)	Recommended Literacy Strategies for all Content Areas Manual (Google Docs)	Educator Blog (Google Groups)
Purpose	To address teachers' frustration finding appropriate articles for close reading. To address complaints of "time consuming" and "Having to come up with high-level questions"	To address teachers' concerns that the "literacy strategy instructions are unclear" and not feeling "prepared to teach literacy strategies in content area". This manual of strategies would also help teachers meet the needs of struggling readers.	To address teachers' feelings of isolation and give them a place to communicate with Reading Specialists, Administrators, and Colleagues to get assistance with implementing literacy strategies and teaching reading. The blog will provide 24/7 access making it available when teachers have questions and need assistance.
Method	Collaborative training sessions held with seventh and eighth grade teachers to examine websites to be used to compile a variety of articles to be used with each unit of study for each content area specific to grade level. Teachers will be invited to share articles currently being used. Teachers will also work together to compose high level questions to be used with each article	Reading Specialists and teachers will work together to compile a list of research-based literacy strategies along with clear instructions on delivery. Strategies will include graphic organizers, note-taking vocabulary acquisition, comprehension, before, during, and after reading strategies and annotation. Reading Specialists will train teachers to properly use each strategy and make adjustments to the instructions based on teacher feedback.	A shared Google document dedication for this purpose, will be shared with seventh and eighth-grade teachers from the middle school. Teachers will be trained on how to check in, post, and comment. Training will take place during the school day on three separate days in October, November, and December. Reading Specialists will post helpful information monthly to provide on-going job-embedded professional development to educators. Administration will provide 30 minutes during the school day to accommodate this task.

(table continues)

Modules	Online Data Base (Google Docs)	Recommended Literacy Strategies for all Content Areas Manual (Google Docs)	Educator Blog (Google Groups)
Collaboration	Collaboration will be between every teacher as often as once per month.	Cross-content planning to share these strategies with content area teachers to ensure understanding and application. Content teachers will be encouraged to share strategies they have found helpful in their classes to be added to the manual. Learning support teachers will be invited to share comprehension and vocabulary strategies used with struggling readers.	Teachers will have a forum to collaborate with all educators within the school to share information and support one another. Teachers will have the opportunity to build relationships thus facilitating collaboration and ongoing professional development.
Benefit	Teachers will be introduced to several resources for articles, resulting in a compilation of several articles to choose from for each unit in their curriculum for close reading. Articles and questions will be available and ready to use.	Teachers will have access to strategies they understand at their fingertips. Teachers will be involved in the compilation of strategies. There will be consistency with the literacy strategies across the curriculum. Students will become familiar with strategies and realize that literacy crosses content areas. Teachers will have a repertoire of strategies.	Teachers will have a forum to ask questions, share ideas and receive responses from multiple participants. Because the blog is available 24/7, teachers may access it at their convenience. Another benefit is that the blog could be expanded to include all district educators.
Preparation Time/ Professional Development	Professional development will take place over the course of three days during the months of October, November, and December during school year 2017-2018.	Professional development will take place over the course of three days during the months of October, November, and December during school year 2017-2018.	Professional development will take place over the course of three separate days during the months of October, November, and December during school year 2017-2018. Reading teachers will facilitate the blog.
Evaluation	Evidence of articles and questions for all units of study for each grade level and content area appear in the online data base. Suggested is three articles for each unit of study with five open-ended questions and one reflective response prompt. Teachers will complete a training evaluation form.	Compilation of a database of Literacy strategies, including a hard copy manual to be provided to each teacher. Literacy strategies would include graphic organizers, note-taking, annotation, vocabulary strategies, and strategies specific for struggling reading in areas of comprehension and vocabulary. Teachers will complete a training evaluation form.	Tracking to confirm that all teachers are posting on the blog at least once per month. Ongoing tracking will confirm teachers' activity. The goal is for teachers to post, comment on others' posts and add additional resources. Teachers will complete a training evaluation form after the initial training.

Review of the Literature

To collect the articles for this literature review I relied on peer-reviewed journals, educational journals, academic journals, and textbooks made available by Walden University. I also searched for articles using databases from Walden's library through ProQuest and EBSCO. I used the following databases; Sage, Education Research Compiles, and ERIC. The key phrases used to conduct the searches and locate articles included educational blogs, blogs, online learning, teacher learning, literacy strategies, content area reading, content area literacy, disciplinary literacy, google, teacher collaboration, professional development, technology, collaboration, vocabulary strategies, cross-curricular strategies, and professional learning communities.

The literature review presented in the first section of this project study supported the need for school administrators to consider teacher perspectives when implementing school reform initiatives. The adoption of the CCSS brought about the most recent school reform initiative highlighting the importance of raising the literacy abilities of students in preparation for college and careers in the 21st century. To be prepared, students are expected to be able to read deeply from a wide range of high quality and challenging literacy and non-fictional text (Fang & Pace, 2013). While the CCSS identified this need, they did not prescribe how to accomplish the literacy directive (Fang & Pace, 2013). The review of literature also upheld the value of literacy integration across the curriculum along with a theoretical framework to be mindful of when designing teacher professional development. I relied on Knowles' theory of andragogy, which outlined the needs of adult learners that should be considered when designing teacher professional

development (Arab et al., 2015). First, the learner must experience self-guided learning in a free, open atmosphere. Next, the learner needs to feel that his opinions are respected. Relevancy is crucial and cannot be ignored for it is in relevancy that the learner finds meaning. Finally, the instructor must be organized, have good communication skills and be adept at helping the learner realize all of the above (Arab et al., 2015; Moreillon, 2016). In agreement, Murphy (2015) pointed out that teachers will gain the most benefit from training that is collaborative, extends over time, and provides coaching opportunities and feedback, as well as active learning that is teacher-centered.

The review of the literature in this section of the project study reflects the data analysis process results supported by recent literature from the field. Vaughn, Swanson, and Roberts (2013) reported that the major dilemma for many secondary history educators is figuring out how to integrate literacy instruction to help students with comprehension, without setting aside content learning. Shanahan and Shanahan (2008) said that the readability levels of content area texts are elevated and often above the reading proficiency of many students. Hence, it should be noted that content teachers were reported to address this problem by either replacing the texts with information presented on PowerPoint slides or by reading the text out loud to students (Vaughn et al., 2013). Researchers found that when teachers read content text aloud to their students, most would then summarize the passages and define the vocabulary, thus, bypassing the reason for students to read and comprehend for themselves (Vaughn et al. 2013).

Therefore, the literature review for the development of the project supports the research findings that many teachers feel unprepared to teach literacy, do not have the

time to gather and prepare the required materials, and would welcome the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues. In addition, this literature review will substantiate the appropriateness of collaborative professional development to address the problem of content area teachers' unwillingness or inability to integrate reading strategies into their curriculum and the need to consider teacher perspectives to the additional role of teacher of literacy. Next, the literature review for the development of the project will include research to define and describe professional learning communities along with the benefits and barriers, followed by research supporting online methods for professional development. Finally, literature will be presented describing cross-curricular strategies that would support any teacher needing to provide literacy instruction.

Teacher Professional Development

Professional development is the primary method used to educate teachers, implement school reform and introduce new initiatives. It should be noted that professional development can be delivered through a plethora of approaches dependent upon school administrators and training facilitator's objectives. The adoption of the CCSS specifically address literacy across the curriculum and districts have been focused on training teachers in this area. Teacher professional development, however, must recognize that secondary teachers have inadequate knowledge to provide literacy instruction to adolescents (Meyer, 2013; Smith, 2012). Meyer (2013) also discovered that there was little difference between the knowledge of content area teachers and English and Language Arts (ELA) teachers. It should be noted that research performed by Meyer found that despite the current focus on discipline-specific literacy, content area teachers

did not show evidence of literacy strengths. Therefore, ELA teachers should be viewed as experts in their content area just as math, science, and social studies teachers. For this reason, they should not be looked upon as literacy leaders (Meyer, 2013). In addition, Smith (2012) noted a possible gap between teaching theory and classroom instruction. Therefore, if teachers do not have a foundational understanding of literacy, support must be provided so they can appropriately meet the needs of 21st century learners.

Professional development can also be said to promote ongoing learning by giving teachers exposure and context to new ideas and concepts (Jones & Dexter, 2014). Many teachers have reported basic satisfaction with the prescribed professional development offerings, however, some recommendations should be noted. Most importantly, teachers should be given choice in the training sessions they attend so they can select those that are useful and appropriate for their content area (Jones & Dexter, 2014). Teachers also expressed a need for training specific to their content, on-going learning, and on-time support outside of district jurisdiction (Jones & Dexter, 2014). The four qualities of an effective learning atmosphere include focus on the learner, knowledge, assessment, and community (Jones & Dexter, 2014). Jones and Dexter also identified sharing of information as a preferred quality of an effective learning atmosphere. The perspectives and needs of adults must be considered when providing adult learning.

The optimum type of professional development is job-embedded training, which allows teachers to hasten professional growth through collaboration with other adults (Moreillon & Ballard, 2012). Moreillon and Ballard further pointed out that it is best to implement adult learning at the time of practice. Merriam (2001) held that, professional

development facilitators should keep in mind the five assumptions of andragogy when planning and implementing teacher training sessions. The five assumptions of andragogy are as follows: first, adult learners have an autonomous self-concept and can manage their own learning. Next, adult learners have a life-time of experiences that can be used as resources for learning. Additionally, the learning needs of adult learners may need to change as social roles change. Adult learners are known to focus on the problem and want to immediately apply what they learn. Finally, adult learners are internally motivated. Subsequently adult learners want to feel that they are respected, accepted, supported and seen as joint owners of their learning (Merriam, 2001). Since professional development is needed to equip teachers, it is important to consider the most effective approaches.

Collaboration

An important component of job-embedded professional development regardless of the approach taken is collaboration. Woods (2014) wrote that the days are gone when teachers should continue to work in isolation, and that today's schools are to be considered to be learning communities. Woods went on to say that intensive collaboration requires consistent attention to ongoing changes in curriculum, instruction, and relationships for effective growth. In support, Moreillon and Ballard (2012) wrote that the spread of improvements in literacy instruction that meet the needs of 21st century students and teachers will not occur unless teachers work collaboratively. Jordan and Kaplan (2014) further stated that authentic collaboration requires working with other educators in different disciplines to co-construct knowledge. Jordan and Kaplan went on

to explain that in addition to co-constructing knowledge, collaboration is defined as meeting with others with an understanding of the reasons for working together. Collaboration also means coming together intentionally to discuss one's work and ideas, questions, and challenges. In addition, collaboration means sharing best practices and comparing them to what actually happens in the classroom, agreeing to try new strategies and reflecting on what worked and what should be done differently (Jordan & Kaplan, 2014). As an added bonus, collaboration between teachers of like or different content areas has been shown to enhance student learning (Ladda & Jacobs, 2015; Woods, 2014). Additionally, the research holds that meeting to talk about best practices in instruction, on a regular basis, helps teachers grow as collaborators and learners (Butti, 2015; Jao & McDougall, 2015; Jordan & Kaplan, 2014). Jordan and Kaplan also communicated the feelings of the content area teachers who were reluctant to collaborate. These teachers reported that there was not sufficient time to meet with their same subject content teachers and said that, in addition to grading, testing, and lesson planning, there was no time to meet with teachers from other content areas. Another concern expressed by researchers Jordan and Kaplan and echoed by Cohen (2015) was that teachers may resist collaborating with others for group projects because, usually, one teacher ends up left with the entire project. For these reasons, collaboration usually does not happen during faculty meetings, on team projects, or during professional development. I found it important to note that the teachers in the Jordan and Kaplan research later discovered that collaboration time was not planning time wasted, but was followed by improved lessons for students and feelings of support and validation by the teachers. Cohen also found that

the additional time to connect with other educators to communicate by putting ideas together and coming up with something larger than one could do alone, was worth the added time. Research supported that collaborative relationships nurture an environment where teachers can feel safe to take risks, improve professional practices, and learn new instructional strategies thus raising self-efficacy (Butler, Schnellert, & MacNeil, 2015; Woods, 2014). Subsequently, Main (2012) identified six primary characteristics that could either positively or negatively affect collaboration. These characteristics included: pre-training and in-service training, ongoing administrative support, perspectives of team members to collaboration, relationships, conflict and school culture (Main, 2012). In addition, Butti (2016) said that one must be clear about the expected outcomes of any collaboration. Butti also stated that it is critical for participants to reach consensus during collaboration, especially when working with new initiatives. The overarching determinant to effective collaboration is administrative support, because without it, research showed that teams struggled to find time to plan effectively, and teachers did not feel supported in their attempts to work together (Main, 2012; Schechter & Ganon, 2012).

One reported method to facilitate collaboration among teachers is to provide for common planning time. Butti (2015) and Wardrip, Gomez, and Gomez (2015) supported common planning time for teachers to occur on a regularly scheduled basis. Common planning time for teams of teachers places focus on the social processes that take place during the collaborative process (Main, 2012; Szczesiul & Huizenga, 2014; Wardrip et al., 2015). These social interactions promote an expectation that teachers are putting

student needs and advancement as the primary focus of their work. Another benefit from this social interaction is the creation of shared norms for academics and behavior by teachers (Butti, 2015; Szczesiul & Huizenga, 2014). Lastly, this social interaction provides opportunities for ongoing improvement that is job-embedded, focused on meaningful issues, and anchored in reflective practices (Szczesiul & Huizenga, 2014).

In order for successful collaboration to occur, the school must have a professional culture that supports collaboration as well as teachers who have efficacy and are motivated to participate collaboratively with their peers (Butler, Schnellert, & MacNeil, 2015; Schechter & Ganon, 2012; Szczesiul & Huizenga, 2014). Research conducted by Szczesiul and Huizenga (2014) found that teachers wanted administrators to establish the direction for teacher collaboration. Szczesiul and Huizenga further found that while principals required teachers to meet for the purpose of collaboration, they paid little attention to what actually occurred and relied on formal methods. Teachers desired a framework for instruction and learning, but were left to their own devices to set the goals and expectations in isolation within their teams. This resulted in a lack of shared goals and teachers who were unmotivated to effectively collaborate (Szczesiul & Huizenga, 2014). Main (2012) described effective collaboration to require the following three processes; task process, team processes, and relationship processes. These three processes are interdependent and involve teachers' self-efficacy, satisfaction, and relationship to the team (Main, 2012). Butler et.al (2015) highlighted Bandura's work with self-efficacy by stating that persons who see themselves as capable to accomplish a task are more likely to persevere through challenges. Teachers also are said to desire having a voice in

determining goals to be met and how to go about meeting them (Butler et al., 2015). As such, the collaboration pendulum has been shifting over the past few years with the putting into practice of common planning time or professional learning communities (Cohen, 2015).

Professional Learning Communities

Consistent and ongoing collaborative learning is evident in professional learning communities (PLCs). DuFour (2004) presented three big ideas about PLCs in an effort to avoid the loss of meaning regarding the concept and ensure its core principles are acknowledged. The first big idea and core principle is to ensure that students learn by shifting the emphasis from teaching to an emphasis on learning (DuFour, 2004). DeFour also said, that in order to create a school learning community, all educators at the school must work together to explore the answers to the following questions; what should each student learn, how will we know learning has taken place, and what will we do for the students who struggle? The second core principle is for educators to work together to build structures that promote a collaborative culture (DuFour, 2004). Wardrip et al. (2015) supported the deliberate effort administrators need to take to ensure teachers have time to work together. The research has shown that it is critical for collaborative teams to be afforded regular time during the school day and all during the year to meet, plan, and assess their efforts (Ciampa & Gallagher, 2015; Dillon, Erkens, Sanna, & Savastano, 2015; DuFour, 2004; & Ullman, 2009). DuFour then presented a third core principle, which is to focus on the results in order to judge the effectiveness of one's efforts. Dillon

et al, (2015) also believed that there are definite benefits to be gained through ongoing validation and responses on the developments made by collaborative teams.

Both Dillon et al. (2015) and Wardrip et al. (2015) presented research showing that teachers who work together are in an ideal position to realize their beliefs, reflect on instruction and collaborate in worthwhile manner to initiate the reforms needed to improve scholarship and instruction. Wardrip et al. and Ullman (2009) additionally, stressed the importance of nurturing trust between the participants in a professional community. The goal would be to create an environment where teachers can test ideas and make mistakes in a safe place (Ullman, 2009; Wardrip et al., 2015). The most important take-away from DuFour (2004) was that creating a PLC within a collaborative community is a question of will; educators who make up their minds to collaborate will find the means.

Online Professional Development

In consideration of online professional development, Rodesiler et al. (2014) discussed the climate change teachers experience from the beginning of the school year where enthusiasm and feelings of community are generated through a few days of professional development offerings to later in the year. Once the school year begins, teachers retreat to their classrooms where they will spend most of their time (Rodesiler et al., 2014). Teachers rarely have time to communicate about their practice with other adults in the school. Hence, online learning tools can open the door to new ways to provide professional development to teachers. Research conducted by Prestridge and Tondeur (2015) examined the discussions that took place among educators during online

professional development means. In support, Prestridge and Tondeur reported two key elements that emerged in the online discussion forum. One element was the building of community as teachers got to know one another and the second element was analytical questioning as teachers shared ideas and provided feedback (Prestridge & Tondeur, 2015).

In addition to the benefits of online professional development, one must consider that some teachers may not feel comfortable making their practices public or inviting criticism from their peers (Rodesiler et al., 2014). Rodesiler et al. (2014) also pointed out the fear some teachers have regarding the risks of public profiles and the permanence of online information. However, there is much to gain through the use of the new technology and by acting in a professional and responsible manner. Rodesiler et al. (2014) stated that the benefits gained are greater than the risks. Educators are now using a multitude of online tools to collaborate and learn from each other. Online communities are growing because they can be instrumental in sharing ideas, and asking and receiving questions any time of the day or night (Rodesiler et al., 2014). Consequently, the research conducted by Rodesiler et al. (2014) found that participants in online communities like Twitter organized chat sessions and educational blogs, experienced enhanced classroom instruction and an increased knowledge of literacy instruction all while building relationships with colleagues. As an added benefit, students also reap the benefit of online learning as educators blend knowledge and skills from multiple contributors to create innovative and engaging instruction (Rodesiler et al., 2014). A popular and research supported online tool is Google, a world-wide technology platform leader that

had changed the way persons find and make use of information (http://redfusionmedia.com/google-how-does-it-work/). Educator blogs and wikis are also among the online tools being used by today's educators for communication and professional development.

Google

According to Hunt-Barron, Tracy, Howell, and Kaminski (2015), Google applications were viewed as applicable tools to maintain and disburse information such as professional development materials. The use of Google docs help teachers and students to work together efficiently and effectively (citi@stern.nyu.edu, nd). Carey (2014) supports Google Docs as a strong word processing tool accepted by many schools. Here are some of the benefits of using Google docs to facilitate collaboration.

- *Team projects:* A group of people can work together at the same time without having to keep track of versions of revised documents. In addition, each collaborator is able to see what he or she put into the document. The use of this application means that a person's work cannot ever be lost (http://stern.nyu.edu/citl).
- *Team project feedback:* Google docs offers the convenience of providing feedback on a person's own time.
- *Multiple user-friendly platforms:* Google offers a wide variety of products that can be used in the classroom. All are editable and sharable with a single person or multiple people working on the same document. Google classroom is a collaborative tool available to teachers and students that is accessible with

a Google log-in, on any device that can access the Internet (https://www.google.com/edu/).

Teachers would be wise to become as familiar as possible with Google Docs and all of the capabilities that would boost their instruction. Carey (2014) listed ten functions of Google Docs that all teachers should learn in order to simplify their practice:

1. Use Google Docs to share documents and collaborate with others.
2. Use Google Docs to comment and edit shared plans or student papers.
3. Google Docs maintains a revision history and tracks who made changes.
4. Use the available add-on Extensions for creating bibliographies, diagrams, and mind maps.
5. Use the Google Docs option to leave voice comments with Kaizena, a free tool that can be added.
6. Use Google Docs research tools to conduct research within the document.
7. Use Google Docs features to edit images while working on a document.
8. Use the extensive collection of special characters while typing.
9. Use the Download As feature to save documents in other formats to enable sending to others and accessing on other devices.
10. Use Google Docs to email documents to other persons who may not have a Google account.

Google Docs has been proven to be able to be used as a word processor, an editing platform, research aid, and collaboration tool to name a few. (Carey, 2014).

Educator Blogs

As a result of the emergence of new technologies, educators are now blogging to share instructional techniques, and to share beliefs and resources as a way to improve their professional expertise (Rodesiler et al., 2014). One should note that while blogs promote collaboration, most blogs do not provide the interactivity required by some adult learners for successful online learning (Moreillon, 2016). According to Ciampa and Gallagher (2015), teachers experienced challenges to embracing blogs such as; not enough time, absence of engagement, technical problems, an inability to properly navigate the technology platform and timely interactivity. However, Moreillon (2016) found that while some blog posts do not generate comments or the give-and-take of ideas, blogs that include multiple bloggers do offer various perspectives. Participation in blogs opens the door to opportunities to initiate discussions, exchange professional experiences, debate an issue or find one's professional niche (Fisher, 2015). Writing blogs allows educators to share individual perspectives, while reading blogs helps teachers discover different ways to enhance their professional practice (Fisher, 2015). Additionally, Fisher (2015) stated that responding to blogs read or interaction within the blog forum paves the way for professional discourse and collaboration. In support, the Ciampa and Gallagher study provided three reasons for using district sponsored e-learning. Those reasons included an increase in teachers' ability to navigate the links to blogs and other tools for professional learning, the sharing of literacy resources and lesson plans, and the sharing of strategies learned in professional development trainings (Ciampa & Gallagher, 2015). Additionally, the research supported blogging to promote collaborative analysis and also

found that online learning combined with face-to-face professional development supplement each other (Ciampa & Gallagher, 2015). In order to gain teacher buy-in, educators must see the value in using blogs to increase collaboration and reflection of their practices (Hunt-Barron, Tracy, Howell, & Kaminski, 2015). Additionally, teachers' perspectives must be to see blogs as the collaborative communities they are and not a forced activity tangential to collaboration (Ciampa & Gallagher, 2015). Finally, administrators must set aside time dedicated to online communication during the school day (Ciampa & Gallagher, 2015; Hunt-Barron et al., 2015). Ferriter (2009) provided three blog services for educators.

- Typepad (www.typepad.com): With Typepad, participants must pay a subscription price for this service, however, it provides technical support and file storage choices.
- Blogger (www.blogger.com): Blogger is a free product from Google. One username and password allows users to sign in to all Google services. An example can be found at http://thefischbowl.blogspot.com.
- Edublogs (www.edublogs.org): This blog is a free service dedicated to educators and users will be connected to a like-minded community. An example can be found at http://inpractice.edublogs.org.

Wikis

Wikis are similar to blogs in that they are web sites that can be edited, yet can be mastered with a small amount of technical skill (Ferriter, 2009). Wikis are constructed for collaboration between groups of participants, unlike blogs (Ferriter, 2009). Ferriter

(2009) said that the wiki toolbar is similar to those used in familiar word processing programs. Wikis contain discussion boards for each individual page, which facilitates users participating in ongoing conversations and reflecting on the qualities of effective teaching (Ferriter, 2009). Ferriter (2009) pointed out that wikis are less intimidating because one person is not responsible for writing the entire selection of a wiki, which is an appealing benefit. Three wiki services recommended by Ferriter (2009) are:

- PB Wiki (http://pbwiki.com): Educators find this wiki service popular because it is easy to use. An example can be found at http://staycurrent.pbwiki.com
- Wikispaces (www.wikispaces.com): This pioneer wiki service was welcomed by educators and has resulted in thousands of wikispaces to be used as samples. One can be found at http://digiteen.wikispaces.com
- Wet Paint (www.wetpaint.com): this wikispace is relatively new, available to educators, and offers collaboration tools and professional templates. An example can be found at http://anatowkik.wetpaint.com

These digital tools promote change for educators as learners in preparation for the future. One must have a desire to explore and an understanding of these technological tools to enhance and simplify the process of educating today's young people (Ferriter, 2009). The use of blogs and wikis promote teacher leadership and give teachers a voice in improving their practice.

Cross-Curricular Strategies

The challenge facing today's educators is finding a balance between general and discipline-specific literacy strategies that meet the developmental and academic needs of

students along with meeting the demands of content learning (Monahan, 2013). As a result of the CCSS and a school-wide concentrated focus on literacy across the curriculum, I have examined literacy strategies to support the areas teachers identified as areas of need including, close reading, vocabulary, and supporting struggling readers in the content areas. The research supports the difficulties many teachers experience providing engaging instruction to meet the need for close reading of high-level disciplinary text (Ford-Connors, Dougherty, Robertson, & Paratore, 2015).

Close Reading

Close reading involves comprehensive investigative interpretation; which requires careful consideration to words, sentences, paragraphs, and longer passages to examine their meaning within the text (Fang & Pace, 2013). At the secondary level, students are expected to be able to think critically, and analyze disciplinary text in order to build knowledge (Ford-Connors et al., 2015). Close reading in the content areas is complex as it requires students to make and support predictions, make meaning from various cues in the book or article, make inferences, and monitor comprehension (Ford-Connors et al,. 2015). In addition, Ford-Connors, Dougherty, Robertson, and Paratore (2015) said that students must be able to blend what they know with what they learn and then participate in discussions. To support learners, teachers will need to be able to teach students how to choose the appropriate generic or discipline-specific strategies required for their needs (Ford-Connors et al., 2015). The CCSS recommends close and purposeful reading within content area texts in order to acquire key ideas, details and to comprehend text structure (Fang & Pace, 2013). However, Fang and Pace (2013), Ford-Connors et al. (2015) and

Hinchman and Moore (2013) pointed out that the CCSS did not specify the integrative micro-level approaches used to construct meaning within sentences and across paragraphs. Teachers have the freedom to use the tools and knowledge they choose while following the grade specific standards (Hinchman & Moore, 2013).

Students are often asked to locate the main idea and supporting details in text, however teachers rarely instruct students how the strategies and comprehension processes are different dependent upon the text (Ford-Connors et al., 2015). Fang and Pace (2013) reported that teachers shared that they did not have the confidence nor were they prepared to use complex texts to teach reading. In response, Fang and Pace (2013) said that teachers should use paraphrasing, an awareness of text structure to help students understand dense language found in texts. Current close reading practices include the selection of a complex text by the teacher, then the teacher asks deep text-dependent questions followed by instructions for the students to read the text several times to find the answers, and finally the teacher leads a group discussion (Fang & Pace, 2013). Fang and Pace shared several close reading routines following similar steps, and found that they all failed to provide details as to how teachers should offer language support for reading complex texts. Hence, Fang and Pace recommended that teachers explore the texts with students to determine how the choices in language build knowledge and value in content area texts.

The explicit focus on language is important to enable understanding, and boost using text evidence to aid interpretation, support writing, facilitate disciplinary learning, and increase capacity for independence (Fang & Pace, 2013). To address this issue, Fang

and Schleppegrell (2010) introduced *functional language analysis* as a way to help students talk about content area text by analyzing the language patterns. Fang and Schleppegrell (2010) provided actual strategies for teachers to use to engage students in analyzing language to develop content area comprehension. The analysis focuses on three questions that can be used with both literary and informational passages:

1. What is the passage about?
2. How is the passage structured?
3. What is the writer's perspective?

Fang and Schleppegrell believed that by showing students how disciplinary language leads to meaning, teachers can help them learn to read independently while also comprehending and reflecting in a critical manner. More importantly, teachers need to realize that each disciplinary subject has a distinct way of employing language that adolescents may find challenging.

Close reading is said to support disciplinary literacy and should be practiced in the content areas by using content area texts while focusing on the unique language patterns found in each discipline. Hinchman and Moore (2013) offer additional guidance for close reading by providing three websites where teachers will find instructional guidelines on close reading as well as samples of units and lesson plans.

- Council of Chief State School Officers: CommonCoreImplementation Video Series:

  www.ccsso.org/Resources/Digital_Resources/Common_Core_Implementation_Video_Series.html

- EngageNY: engageny.org
- Student Achievement Partners: www.achievethecore.org

Vocabulary

Research supports the notion that students who know many words are able to read more complex texts (Fisher & Frey, 2014). Fisher and Frey (2014) also reported that writers are able to write more high-level documents, when they have an extensive knowledge of words at their disposal. Subsequently, four of the CCSS focus specifically on vocabulary, they include, Reading Standard 4, Language Standard 4, Language Standard 5, and Language Standard 6 (Fisher & Frey, 2014). In effect, the CCSS recognize the value of vocabulary, and do not restrict it to the standards in English language arts, but also emphasize vocabulary in the Content area standards (CCSS Initiative, 2015; Fisher & Frey, 2014). Fisher and Frey highlighted vocabulary as the foundation of literacy and support instructional strategies that focus on nurturing vocabulary knowledge.

The vocabulary found in disciplinary texts is usually Tier three context specific vocabulary consisting of unique words and phrases that contain important content area concepts (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2013; Fisher & Frey, 2014). Teachers should focus on these words in class discussions to support reading proficiency, access content, and nurture content knowledge (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2013). However, it is also important that teachers pay attention to Tier one words and other high-frequency, Tier two words, when they have significant meanings within their discipline (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2013;

Fisher & Frey, 2014). Fisher and Frey (2014) recommended that teachers follow the following four components for vocabulary instruction:

1. Wide Reading: students need to practice reading many texts in order to develop background knowledge and grow their vocabulary. Students should be reading every day.
2. Selection of Words and Phrases for Instruction: Teachers are not able to teach students the thousands of words they should learn, and therefore should be selective in teaching general academic as well as domain-specific words, so that students acquire deep knowledge.
3. Modeling Word Solving: Teachers should select sections of text that contain complex vocabulary to read aloud and then model the thought process needed to show students how word solving is to be done.
4. Using Words in Discussion: Students need to participate in a variety of collaborations and conversations with their peers and with their teacher (Wasik & Iannone-Campbell, 2012).

Fisher and Frey (2014) went on to suggest some examples reflecting the four components recommended for word learning; read-alouds, collective readings, collaborative discussions based on text, games, and opinion stations. Learning is a social activity and as such, vocabulary should take advantage of opportunities for students and teachers to interact with text, giving students chances to describe, explain, and question (Fisher & Frey, 2014).

Literacy Instruction to Support Struggling Readers

All of the above strategies and approaches to close reading and vocabulary would be helpful to struggling learners in content area classrooms. At the secondary level, low level readers are not usually found in English and reading classrooms, but are present in content area classrooms. Cronin (2014) pointed out that those readers who struggle can be helped, but must be given more time on learning. Cronin (2014) also shared observations which indicate that, although a student is able to decode words correctly, this student may not have the automaticity or fluency needed to read at the same pace as higher functioning students. Students who may be looked upon as being recalcitrant may just be trying to tell the teacher that they just cannot do what they have been asked to do (Cronin, 2014).

Cronin (2014) and Ford-Connors et al. (2015) recommend that content teachers work closely with literacy specialists to learn enough about foundational literacy skills to tell the difference between students who can read but chose not to and students who do not read because they are unable to read. Correspondingly, Cronin referred to The Key Comprehension Routine (see Appendix L) as a protocol containing comprehension, study, and writing strategies to help students understand content instruction (Sedita, 2010). One strategy to help students identify the main idea in informational text and tell the difference between this main idea and its supporting details is to use two-column notes (Cronin, 2014). To teach theme, Cronin suggests think-alouds, which allow for teachers to model the thought process to identify the theme for students. Another important practice in helping struggling learners, is for teachers to use the same templates

in literature class as those used in content area classes, as a way to develop comprehension skills (Cronin, 2014).

The American Psychiatric Association (2013) reported that about 5% of children in school have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). These students often present as struggling readers in content area classrooms (Caroll, Maughan, Goodman & Meltzer, 2005). Research also supported the fact that between 25 and 40% of students with ADHD have reading disorders (Caroll et al., (2005). In order to meet the needs of the struggling readers in their classrooms, the general practice has been to simplify the text to match the reading levels of the students (Ford-Connors et al., 2015). Ford-Connors et al. (2015) noted that while students, may be able to read the text, they have lost the essential learning of syntax, vocabulary, and academic density. Additionally, when teachers read aloud or have other students read grade-level text aloud, it is not likely that they are helping to build students' vocabulary, help them acquire concept knowledge, or learn to comprehend by themselves (Ford-Connors et al., 2015). For these reasons, Murphy (2015) supported professional development specifically focused on increasing teachers' knowledge about teaching literacy to students who have ADHD or are found to be struggling readers.

Murphy (2015) found that teachers gained a deep awareness of the literacy needs of their students and learned how to support them. Teachers in the study also came to an understanding of how ADHD students' reading and writing abilities may be influenced by executive functioning problems like a weakness in working memory and speed of processing (Murphy, 2015). As a result of the professional development; teachers

reported that their students responded positively to new teaching strategies, teachers saw themselves as capable of meeting their students' literacy needs and teachers also noticed a decline in their stress levels related to their practice (Murphy, 2015). In effect, professional development should involve teachers in collaborative and active ways of learning that are linked to research, teaching, and instruction (Murphy, 2015).

Therefore, professional development is one of the key ingredients for implementing school reform or supporting new initiatives. However, administrators should consider providing opportunities for training that is job-embedded, relevant, and ensures supportive collaboration. Two methods that afford teachers collaborative chances would be PLCs and online professional development. The benefits of these types of learning venues are that they are job-embedded, can be structured according to relevance to the learner, are on-time accessible, and provide ongoing learning driven by the participants. Finally, teachers must be equipped with the appropriate cross-curricular strategies and the knowledge of how to implement those strategies in the best way possible for all of their students (Cronin, 2014).

The Project

The project (see Appendix A) begins with a step-by-step presentation to communicate the results of this study to administrators and faculty. The project is in response to the research questions stated in the methodology section. To implement the project, I created a PowerPoint presentation to be presented to the building administrators and faculty.

Implementation

Potential Resources and Existing Supports

There are several potential resources and existing supports in place to implement this project. First, an online database has been developed to contain non-fiction articles to be used for close reading. Several of the content area teachers have identified articles they like using and have already composed questions to accompany them. These articles would be included along with additional articles appropriate for every unit of study and grade level within each disciplinary curriculum; to include seventh and eighth-grade math, English, science, and social studies. I will train teachers on the use of the shared Google file and show them how to access the necessary documents. I intend to use the Google Platform as the vehicle for maintaining and managing these articles and the accompanying questions. I selected Google for the reason that each teacher currently has a school supported google account, which can be used on any device that can access the Internet.

Next, Reading Specialists will work together with content area teachers to compose a manual containing select literacy strategies, complete with step-by-step easy to follow instructions. Teachers would receive training on each strategy and provide input as to the verbiage used in the instructions. The manual will be titled, *Recommended Literacy Strategies for all Content Areas*, and provided to all teachers to ensure consist use of research-based strategies school-wide. Since content area teachers, Reading Specialists, and learning support teachers all have a few strategies that they find work in their classrooms, these strategies would be considered as potential resources to be shared

with school staff via the manual. Finally, I have set up an online educator blog, again using the Google platform to be used to provide ongoing, job-embedded professional development for teachers. All teachers would be trained on the proper way to access the blog to maximize its benefits.

Additional resources include support from the Reading Specialists in the building during the training and after the training has ended. The tasks of compiling literacy strategies for the manual, providing insight through tips and techniques on the blog, and modeling strategies when needed, will be performed by the Reading Specialists. In addition, Walden University chairs helped ensure that the findings were accurate and supportive of the project by providing feedback throughout the study.

Potential Barriers

There are several potential barriers that exist to prevent all modules of the project from happening. The primary barrier would be the beliefs and perspectives of the faculty and administrators. Additionally, because one module of this project relies on the continuation of the current RRR initiative as implemented, any changes to the requirements for close reading would impact the need for an online database for articles and questions. Another barrier exists regarding teachers' willingness to use the strategies provided as part of the project recommendation. Since the goal is for all teachers to employ the same expectations for notetaking, vocabulary, and before, during, and after reading strategies, all educators should use them to ensure students gain a sense of continuity. A final barrier would be lack of administrative support to allow teachers a regular time during the school day to participate in the blog, thus impeding the

development of a Literacy PLC by way of the educator blog. Because the goal of this project is to provide the support and resources teachers say they desire, these barriers need to be addressed. Table 5 outlines the anticipated barriers and suggestions on how to handle them.

Table 5

Recommendations, Anticipated Barriers, and Resolutions

Recommendations	Anticipated	Resolutions
Emphasize a school-wide literacy culture based on collaboration	Negative beliefs and perspectives of faculty and administrators	Provide research-based information and training to support literacy learning
Create an online database of close reading articles	Reduced number of close readings required	The barrier exists if the RRR initiative changes
Collaborate with teachers to compose a manual of select research-based literacy strategies	Teachers' unwillingness to integrate literacy strategies	Supportive training and modeling from Reading Specialists
Compile articles by disciplinary departments. Train teachers to integrate literacy strategies.	Insufficient time allotted during the school day for teachers to work together on project tasks	The project would be delayed as this would then occur during monthly faculty meetings
Adjust the school schedule to allow 30 minutes once each month for teachers to blog.	Lack of administrator support of time during the school day for teachers to blog on a regular basis	Suggest an additional schedule be added to mirror the club day schedule, which provides for an extra 30 minutes twice a month. This schedule would reduce each class period by a few minutes and while teachers blog, students would read

Proposal for Implementation and Timetable

Upon gaining approval for this Project Study, I would meet with the building administrators to determine the best time to share the study. I envision several stages of implementation that would begin with a meet and share with the technology facilitator and the Reading Specialists in the building. Next steps would be to develop the online database, set up the teacher blog site, and identify the initial literacy strategies to include in the *Recommended Literacy Strategies for all Content Areas* manual. Once the Project Study implementation details have been finalized, a communication would be distributed among the school faculty to announce the time and location for professional development training sessions. Training would consist of a total of three days between October and December. The timetable anticipated to complete these steps is three months.

Roles and Responsibilities

My primary responsibility would be to share the findings of this study with the school administrators. In my presentation, I would effectively communicate the results and suggestions and respond to any questions or concerns. Should the administrators chose to incorporate any of the recommendations presented, I would make it clear that I would support and take on the lead role during implementation of the selected recommendations. Once the Project Study is accepted, my next responsibility would be to meet with and gain the support of the technology facilitator and the Reading Specialists and to explain the roles I need them to assume.

Project Evaluation

An important step will be a formative evaluation of the project to determine what works and what does not. I plan to closely monitor teacher activity on the blog to ensure that all educators are using this resource as recommended. I expect to see all teachers logging in and commenting at least once per month. I will also monitor the content of the blog to see the extent of collaboration between users. I expect to read about teachers' experiences with the literacy strategies and close reading articles. I also expect to observe a sharing of techniques between teachers. I will ask for time during the monthly faculty meetings to hear feedback from teachers and answer on-time questions. I will also place a suggestion box in the teacher lunch room for the specific purpose of encouraging teachers to honestly and anonymously offer ideas to improve both the online database and the educator blog. Responses from the above resources will determine the next steps as well as indicate the level of participation among educators. I anticipate support from administration to ensure teacher compliance with these expectations.

Next steps could involve the need for additional training on specific strategies or the addition or removal of literacy strategies based on content teacher usage. The evaluation type described is outcome based, in that teachers are using the supports put in place to address the concerns discovered through the data collection and analysis process. All supports are based on an examination of the research and should yield positive responses from the teachers and in turn, benefit the student body. As students become comfortable with the use of consistent literacy strategies for vocabulary and comprehension, students could become more adept at using the strategies to improve

comprehension in content area classes. Additionally, because of the ongoing support, content area teachers should become more comfortable with integrating literacy within disciplinary curriculums, which will in turn support the school reform desired by the administrators. Teacher support would be indicated by positive and insightful comments posted on the blog site and in the suggestion box. Teachers would also show support during the faculty meetings through the sharing of ideas and a decrease in the number of complaints.

Implications Including Social Change

This study may contribute to positive social change by helping school leaders identify barriers to school reform and raise teacher awareness of the importance of literacy in the future endeavors of their students. Through my research, I have identified teacher unpreparedness and unwillingness to teach literacy strategies as barriers to the implementation of new school initiatives and school reform. In light of the recently adopted CCSS, all teachers are now required to teach literacy to ensure that students learn to participate in the specialized uses of literacy in each of the content areas. Teachers need to be aware of their strengths and weaknesses concerning literacy practices as outlined by the CCSS (International Reading Association Common Core State Standards Committee, 2012; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012). It thus behooves researchers to examine the impact of teacher perspectives on teaching literacy and to raising teacher self-efficacy for effective literacy instruction. Teachers are on the front line in the delivery of school initiatives, and should be aware of how educators' perspectives impact the role taken in the implementation process. It is equally important that teachers have an awareness of the

impact their beliefs about literacy have on their instruction (Routman, 2012). The overarching problem that guided this study was that teachers and administrators were not aware of content teacher perspectives towards teaching literacy or the extent that teacher beliefs and attitudes affected the learning environment teachers created. An awareness of this information will create social change and support literacy learning in secondary schools.

Local Community

This project addresses the needs of the learners at XYZ Middle School by directly responding to the teachers' needs to have relevant articles that relate to the curriculum readily available for close reading. Hereafter, teachers will be able to choose from a database of articles complete with high-level questions as needed. Teachers will also have the flexibility to edit, update, and add to the database. This feature allows teachers to be responsible and take ownership for their learning. In addition, the professional development opportunities described in this project, consider the andragogy theory as they allow teachers to manage their own learning, use their experiences, and immediately apply what they learn. This in turn should positively affect the learning environment created by the teachers, which will then benefit students' academic learning.

Far-Reaching

Although this study addresses concerns within the XYZ School District's middle school, the results and implications are consistent with creating a literacy culture and assisting educators in integrating literacy across the curriculum as recommended by the CCSS. Therefore the findings and recommendations of this project study can be shared

with the educational community world-wide. The study results can apply to similar secondary schools and settings where it would benefit educational leaders to examine the perspectives of teachers in order to provide job-embedded ongoing professional development that considers the specific needs of adult learners. In addition, I intend to submit this project study for publication in peer-reviewed journals for distribution to a broad audience.

Conclusion

In Section 3, I presented details about the project study, a PowerPoint presentation that included the concerns and ideas the participants shared and a comprehensive three-day training program. Section 3 also included recommendations to address the concerns of the participants as well as potential barriers that must be considered. Additionally, I included an exhaustive literature review which supported the job-embedded professional development components outlined in the project. Also contained in Section 3 were the rationale for the project, a proposal for implementation, and plans to evaluate the project. Then, I described the implications for promoting social change through the consideration of teachers' perspectives. In the next section, I will present the strengths and limitations of the project. I will also provide reflections on myself as a scholar, a practitioner, and as a project developer.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

The purpose for the study was to examine secondary content area teachers' perspectives to teaching reading through the integration of literacy strategies within disciplinary curricula. The content teachers' perspectives on their strengths and weaknesses in this area, as well as insight into what supports would be desired in order for them to feel successful, led to an awareness of how to proceed with professional development going forward. I learned much about the beliefs and values of disciplinary teachers and the need to consider the nuances of adult learners when asking educators to take on new roles. These data can be valuable to school administrators who desire successful implementation of ever-evolving school initiatives that require teacher endorsement. In the conclusive section of this study, I evaluate the major features of the project, including an examination of the strengths and limitations of the study. I also provide recommendations for continuing research.

Project Strengths

The strengths of the project are contained in the project design, alignment with the up to date research, and rich data collected from the content area teachers who have been tasked with integrating literacy into the curriculum. The use of a qualitative design allowed the in-depth collection of strong, contextualized data from the viewpoint of each of the participants. Additionally, the data were grounded in the literature review contained in Section 3. Each part of the project has been designed to address the teachers' concerns brought to light through the examination of teacher perspectives. While, all

content area teachers are expected to include vocabulary instruction, many expressed uncertainty about how to introduce vocabulary and make it meaningful and interesting for students. The project provides research-based strategies to meet this need as well as on-time support from reading specialists and the opportunity to voice concerns and solicit support through the online blog. This project addresses the need to reduce the time and effort spent searching for close reading articles and composing questions by providing time for teachers to work together upfront to compile a database of resources to be used throughout the year. Teachers will have the flexibility to add to this resource as they feel led. Reading specialists will be able to collaborate across the disciplines to provide support to content area teachers to alleviate feelings of incompetence and isolation. Consequently, the project will not be a "once and done" professional development offering. Instead, it will occur each month during faculty meetings, team meetings, and blogs, as well as on a daily basis through increased teacher collaboration. Overall, the strengths of this project are that it gives administrators insight to the values and beliefs of the teachers to teaching reading, and the project directly supports the district's RRR literacy initiative.

Recommendations for Alternate Approaches

The main limitation to this study was the small sample size that limited my ability to make broad statements regarding all secondary content area teachers in the district. In addition, the sample size only included the perspectives of one math teacher. When examining the findings of this study, administrators of other districts are encouraged to draw their own conclusions about the appropriateness and application of these findings to

fit the needs of their districts. One recommendation to address this limitation would be for educational leaders to instruct disciplinary department chairpersons to lead literacy-focused discussions during monthly department meetings. Another recommendation would be to allow reading specialists time to attend team meetings and disciplinary meetings to share expertise and address concerns. Future research might address other methods of facilitating collaboration across the disciplines in the secondary school environment.

I focused on teacher perspectives in this study; however, it is just as important to consider the perspectives and feelings of today's students about their literacy needs in content areas. In addition to student perspectives, it could also be beneficial to know whether principals realize the importance of the role that building administrators play in facilitating collaboration among faculty and nurturing a school-wide culture where literacy is valued. While I used a qualitative case study method to conduct research, the problem could be approached from a mixed-methods perspective, adding further insight.

Scholarship

I discovered that there are many steps to the research process, which must all be followed in an orderly manner, as each builds upon the other. I found myself maneuvering through identifying a research problem, crafting specific research questions, and selecting an appropriate theoretical framework to drive the data collection process. I then had to decide on the data collection methods that would provide access to data to answer the research questions. Hence, I found conducting research to be a systematic, multi-faceted, time-consuming, and tedious process that required extensive investigation

to find the answers to research questions. In addition, I learned that even though the research questions were carefully crafted, those questions often led to more questions, causing me to engage in a deep discussion of the phenomenon. I also experienced the need to contain emotions as I listened to participant responses and to be careful not to respond in a positive or negative manner during interviews. This was done in an attempt to reduce bias. I also learned that a key element of the scholarly process was to pay close attention to time-frames and to follow proper procedures. Finally, as I compiled and managed the mountain of research articles and resource materials, I learned the value of organization and orderly documentation systems.

Project Development and Evaluation

The development of the project required specific components for completion. First, I clearly described the project and set realistic goals. I then decided on an appropriate genre and provided scholarly rationale as to why that particular genre was selected. Then I related the project to the findings discovered through the data collection and analysis process. The next step of project development involved using scholarly rationale to tie the project to the problem I identified. I then conducted an exhaustive literature review to gather current research to support the content of the project as well as guide any recommendations. I found there was much research to be found on the topic of collaboration methods and resources to integrate literacy in the content areas. I found project development to be an enlightening experience as I considered the resources needed, supports already in place, and identified potential barriers. I was conscious of the current school schedule and feasibility to make changes that may need to be replicated

across all of the district's middle schools. I was also aware of challenges in developing this project as I considered the implementation process and time table involved for all components of the project. Then I designed an outcomes-based evaluation plan as appropriate for this project. I found this process to require much thought and consideration of the existing culture and structure of the school while I considered the realistic implementation of this project and its benefit to local stakeholders.

Leadership and Change

I have developed a passion for scholarly leadership and change and have taken steps to put myself in position as a literacy leader in the middle school. I have held several leadership roles where I was responsible for children or young people but never on the job with colleagues. I willingly volunteered to facilitate professional development training this past school year. I found that I enjoyed being in the position of imparting learning to adult learners. I kept in mind what I learned about adult learners as I helped prepare the training materials and facilitate the training. As a leader, I see it as a major component of the position to lead with the intent of making a difference, thus promoting change.

Analysis of Self as Scholar

I learned much about myself as a scholar. One thing I confirmed was that I am very passionate about promoting the value of reading as the foundation of learning. Once I believe in something, I want to know all I can about it, and I want to share it with everyone. I found that I was attuned to any conversation pertaining to literacy and I shared this project study with anyone who would listen. I also confirmed that I am a

visual and hands-on learner. Therefore, I was compelled to print off every article I read and every doctoral resource paper in order to highlight and annotate each one and have the process in plain sight. I read over 175 peer-reviewed journal articles and more than 15 dissertations on the topics of literacy across the content areas and adult learning. I then found that I had to learn how to become organized to avoid getting lost in the paperwork. I generally work in a state of organized chaos. I see myself as constantly learning or finding ways to teach myself what I need to know to meet each goal I set. I found that to avoid frustration and writer's block, I needed to step away from this study when I was tired or feeling anxious. I then discovered that my mind would once again be more alert and the instructions I needed to follow would become clear. I take pride in using my time wisely, and I spent the summer months, during which I could not collect data, to take a course on Atlas.ti, a software designed to organize and analyze qualitative data. As a student, I follow directions well, which helped as I journeyed through the revision process by saving a great deal of time. I also know that I am not a patient person, which proved to be one of the most frustrating aspects of this doctoral process. I was fortunate to have wonderful Walden faculty for guidance and encouragement as I was taught patience through the turnaround process with each draft.

Analysis of Self as Practitioner

As a practitioner, I have become more outspoken and assertive than in the past. This characteristic was realized as I advocated for what I needed from the study participants. Additionally, I have stayed in close contact with the building principal to keep him apprised of my progress and communicate my needs in delivering this project

to the teachers. I have also become more skilled as a listener, learning how to remain quiet and listen to others when they speak. I feel confident about teaching or facilitating training in front of students or adults, because I know how to prepare in advance. I have found that preparation is the key component I need to feel confident and competent in what I do. I am also not afraid to seek help from colleagues or provide help to anyone. Lastly, as a lifelong learner, I am observant and take advantage of opportunities on a regular basis in order to expand my knowledge and learn all I can to enhance my professional practice.

Analysis of Self as Project Developer

As I developed the project, I found that I was very concerned about how the project would be received by the administration and the teachers. While I knew that the research supported each area of the project and the intent was to support the teachers in integrating literacy to enhance student comprehension, I was concerned about how the project would be received. Although I was concerned, I continued to develop a project to meet the needs of the teachers and address the overall problem of unpreparedness to teach reading in the content areas. Because this project was designed to support the school's RRR initiative, I paid close attention to communications about the ongoing RRR process. I spoke with teachers participating in the upcoming Cohort to ensure this project remained cohesive with the current school reform initiative. I found that the day to day workings of the school impacted the project development process as much as the supporting research.

The Project's Potential Impact on Social Change

Teachers are on the front-lines of school reform and are the primary facilitators of new school initiatives. School districts would be wise to extend opportunities for teachers to collaborate with colleagues and share what they know about teaching literacy. Therefore, this project has the potential to impact social change at the local level by creating a school-wide literacy culture at the study school. In addition, the project affords teachers opportunities for collaborating and sharing ideas across the curriculum, another positive change at the local level. Moreover, at the local level and beyond, this study may positively effect social change by helping school leaders recognize barriers to school reform. Also, the project has the potential to raise teacher consciousness of the significance of literacy to support the future endeavors of students. What is more, this project may promote social change as it contains recommendations to equip teachers to provide quality literacy instruction across the curriculum to ensure student success. Lastly, the project would be appropriate for similar secondary schools and settings where it would benefit educational leaders provide job-embedded ongoing professional development that considers the specific needs of adult learners

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

The work contained in this study has importance and relevance for today's students as they prepare for college and a world that is relying more on literacy and technology every day. One constant is the need for students to be able to read and comprehend what they are reading, whether in print, navigating the Internet, or communicating on social media. Another constant is teacher responsibility for student

learning. The current school reform initiatives make it clear that all teachers are responsible for student literacy learning thus impacting the need for continued research in this area. I learned that many content area teachers love to read and value reading as an important skill for students to master. I was also surprised to hear several teachers willingly admit that they did not feel qualified to teach reading to their students. I have observed that many teachers at the middle-school work in isolation, yet through this work, I found that these same teachers desire to collaborate with colleagues across the curriculum. Subsequently, research is needed in the area of removing barriers to teacher collaborative learning through the use of various methods including technology. Additionally, further examination in the area of collaborative professional development models would be beneficial.

Conclusion

In this section, I have reflected on my experiences as a researcher and as a practitioner after identifying a problem in my local school setting and designing a research study to address this problem. Additionally, I have learned much from the analysis of the participants' interviews, classroom observations, and lesson plans. I used the data to develop a project in the form of a PowerPoint presentation to disseminate my findings to the building administrators, and a three-day training program for the seventh and eighth-grade content area teachers. That being said, I have reflected on the strengths and limitations of the project I designed to address the problem. Finally, I performed analyses of myself as a scholar, practitioner, and project developer and have gained insight as to my abilities as a literacy leader for social change. In closing I would like to

add that I have appreciated the support and guidance received from Walden faculty throughout this journey.

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Appendix A: The Project

Content Area Teacher Perspectives on Integrating Literacy Strategies

Professional Development Training Plan
Fall 2017

"You need to be aware of what others are doing, applaud their efforts, acknowledge their successes, and encourage them in their pursuits. When we all help one another, everybody wins." – Jim Stovall

Table of Contents

- Break-out for Small Group work
- Review and edit strategy instructions
- Strategy Modeling-Hands on
- Evaluation Form

Follow-up Email Communication

- Notification of Shared Google Docs Readiness
- Distribution of Literacy Strategy Manual
- Google Groups Posting Schedule

The Project PowerPoint

Introduction

The project of this study was a Professional Development/Training Curriculum and materials. This project is designed to support teachers in integrating literacy into disciplinary curriculum, and provide for ongoing professional development and collaboration by teacher participation in a professional learning community. The project consists of three modules with the primary focus on collaboration and job-embedded ongoing professional development. The first module involved the creation of an online database for the collection of non-fiction articles for close reading. The goal is for teachers to help in the creation of the database and work together to prepare close reading resources. The second module allows for the collection and clarification of select literacy strategies to be used by all teachers. This selection of specific strategies and clear guidelines identifying when they ought to be used, should alleviate teacher confusion and ensure teachers do not become overwhelmed in making decisions as to which strategies to use for each purpose. The goal is to facilitate consistent use of strategies and expectations across the core content areas to promote continuity, a sense of community among teachers, and reinforce literacy expectations for students. The final module of this project is an online educator blog designed to provide ongoing job-embedded professional development to address teachers' feelings of isolation and provide a vehicle to communicate with Reading Specialists, Administrators, and Colleagues.

Purpose

This professional development project was developed to provide ongoing job-embedded professional development to address teachers' feelings of isolation and provide

a vehicle to communicate with Reading Specialists, Administrators, and Colleagues. Moreillon and Ballard (2012) said that the optimum type of professional development is job-embedded training, which allows teachers to hasten professional growth through collaboration with other adults. Furthermore, this professional development project is guided by research-based online tools, strategies and websites to support teacher literacy development. Finally, the efforts of this professional development plan will result in the formation of a PLC beginning with the school's seventh and eighth-grade teachers. DuFour (2004) believed that creating a PLC within a collaborative community is a question of will and that educators who make up their minds to collaborate will find the means to do so. This belief will be evident in the success of this project.

Intended Audience

This professional development project has two intended audiences. The initial audience will be the building administrators, reading specialists, and technology facilitator. I will present a PowerPoint outlining the research study findings and recommendations for approval. Then, the seventh and eighth-grade math, science, social studies, and English teachers will be the intended audience to participate in the professional development sessions. This project is relevant because it has been developed based on the interview data and current research. In addition, this project is important because it supports the district's RRR program by equipping the content teachers with the tools needed to effectively teach reading and initiate a culture of literacy within the school.

Teachers' Professional Development Training

Course of Study	Activities	Resources	Timeline
Day 1 Online Collaboration	• Overview of the Research Study • Participation in hands-on activities to sign in and navigate Google Groups and Shared Google Docs. • Submission of post and comment to two colleagues' posts. • Sharing of the folder with all participants	• School Library • Teacher's lap tops • Digital Projector • Printer • Sign in sheet • Agenda • Evaluation form	October 6 hours Ongoing
Day 2 Close Reading Resources	• Exploration of several websites that contain informational articles Explore the following websites: • ReadWorks.org	• School Library • Teacher's lap tops • Digital Projector	November 6 hours

	• Eyewitnesstohistory.com • Izzit.org/events/index/php • Newsela.org • kellygallagher.org/article-of-the-week/ • davestuartjr.com/resources/article-of-the-week-aow • Selection of one article, collaboration with a partner to write two questions, and then posting of the article to the Google Close Reading Folder.	• Printer • Sign in sheet • Agenda • Evaluation form	Ongoing
Day 3 Literacy Strategies Across the Curriculum	• Open Discussion of strategies used • Share Literacy Strategy Shared Google Doc • Small Group Breakout • Select strategies • Review and edit strategy instructions • Strategy Modeling	• School Library • Teacher's lap tops • Digital Projector • Printer • Sign in sheet	December 6 hours Ongoing

		• Agenda • Evaluation form	

Literacy across the Curriculum

Professional Development Plan

Day 1: Online Collaboration

Time: 6 hours

Objectives

By the end of the day, teachers will be able to:

- Sign on to Google Groups
- Post a blog and respond to a blog
- Sign on to the Shared Google Doc for Close Reading and access the folder for their grade and subject
- Sign on to the Shared Google Doc for Literacy Strategies
- Understand the purpose for the professional development training

Literacy across the Curriculum

Professional Development Plan

Day 2: Close Reading Resources

Time: 6 hours

Objectives

By the end of the day, teachers will be able to:

- Access the following websites
    - ReadWorks.org
    - Eyewitnesstohistory.com
    - Izzit.org/events/index/php
    - Newsela.org
    - kellygallagher.org/article-of-the-week/
    - davestuartjr.com/resources/article-of-the-week-aow
- Sign up to receive articles by email
- Find articles relevant to discipline
- Write high-order questions
- Upload article into appropriate folder

Literacy across the Curriculum

Professional Development Plan

Day 3: Literacy Strategies across the Curriculum

Time: 6 hours

Objectives

By the end of the day, teachers will be able to:

- Identify strategies that work within their discipline
- Collaborate to identify instructions to teach identified strategies
- Model selected strategies

Literacy across the Curriculum Sign in sheet		
Topic: Online Collaboration (6 hours)		Date:
Facilitator: Lynette Smith		Location: Library
Last Name (Print)	First Name (Print)	Signature

Literacy across the Curriculum Sign in sheet		
Topic: Close Reading Resources (6 hours)		Date:
Facilitator: Lynette Smith		Location: Library
Last Name (Print)	First Name (Print)	Signature

Literacy across the Curriculum Sign in sheet		
Topic: Literacy Strategies across the Curriculum (6 hours)		Date:
Facilitator: Lynette Smith		Location: Library
Last Name (Print)	First Name (Print)	Signature

Course Evaluation Form

Course Title_____

Date of Training_____

Course Facilitator_____

The purpose of this form is to provide you with an opportunity to provide feedback on the training you have attended. This information is important because it give information to improve the training.

Check the appropriate box and provide comments about the training

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Comments
Quality of instruction					
Relevance of material					
Participation					
Interest of material					
Facility conditions					
Overall evaluation					

Please answer the following questions:

Would you recommend this course to others in your profession? ( )Yes ( ) No

Why?_____

What do you feel you still need to be able to effectively teach literacy?

_____

_____

_____

Literacy Initiative Professional Development Training

by Osha Lynette Smith

"You need to be aware of what others are doing, applaud their efforts, acknowledge their successes, and encourage them in their pursuits. When we all help one another, everybody wins." – Jim Stovall

Project study

- Purpose of study- To understand teacher perspectives to teaching reading in their classes
- Findings –
  - Teacher reluctance and teacher unpreparedness to teach literacy
  - Few opportunities for collaboration across departments
- Recommendations-
  - Job-embedded, ongoing professional development
  - Collaboration within and across content areas and grade levels

Purpose

- Based on the interview data and current research
  - To support the district's RRR program
  - To equip content teachers with tools to effectively teach reading
  - To promote collaboration
  - To initiate a culture of literacy within the school

Goals and Objectives

- Create an online database to store informational articles
- Compile an assortment of articles for close reading
- Select cross-curricular literacy strategies
- Compile a literacy strategy manual
- Ensure teachers' ability to effectively teach strategies
- Create an Educator Blog

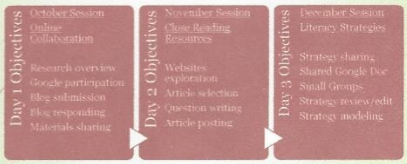
Andragogy Framework- Adult learning process

- Adult learners have different needs than the students they teach.
- Consider professional development you have attended
  - What did you find helpful?
  - What did you find to be a waste of time?
  - What aspects of the sessions did you find most helpful?

Participants and Facilitators

- Participants
  - All seventh and eighth-grade content area teachers
- Facilitators
  - Seventh and eighth-grade Reading Specialists
  - Building Technology Facilitator

Time Line



Day 1: Online Collaboration

6 hour session

Desired outcomes

By the end of the day, participants will be familiar with Google Docs and know how to post and respond to the Educator Blog located in Google Groups

Materials needed

- School Library
- Training handouts-Internal Profile Word Cluster Assessment
- Teachers' lap tops
- Digital projector
- Printer
- Sign in sheet
- Agenda
- Training Evaluation Form

Day 1 Schedule

- 8:00-8:15 Teacher Sign in
- 8:15-9:15 Team building activity-Internal Profile Word Cluster Assessment
- 9:15-10:00 Overview of Research and Training Modules
- 10:00-10:15 *Morning break*
- 10:15-11:15 Google Docs Instruction and exploration
- 11:15-12:00 Educator Blog Instruction-Join Google Groups
- 12:00-1:00 *Lunch*
- 1:00-1:30 Respond to Facilitator blog – read posted responses
- 1:30-1:45 Post a question about teaching literacy- Read and respond
- 1:45-2:00 *Afternoon Break*
- 2:00-2:45 Group discussion –Literacy topics to explore within the blog forum
- 2:45-3:00 Wrap up and Evaluation form completion
- 3:00 Dismiss participants

Day 2 Handout: Internal Profile Word Cluster Assessment

Directions and Profile to be distributed to participants

Scoring Key to be distributed after completion

Group discussion to follow

Day 2: Close Reading Resources

6 hour session

Desired outcomes

By the end of the day, participants will become familiar with 6 websites containing non-fiction articles, become proficient with question writing strategies, and have 3 articles ready for close reading lessons.

Materials needed

- School Library
- Training Handouts #1 and #2
- Teachers' lap tops and Curriculum Maps
- Digital projector
- Printer
- Sign in sheet
- Agenda
- Training Evaluation Form

Day 2: Schedule

- 8:00-8:15 Teacher Sign in
- 8:15-8:30 Training overview
- 8:30-9:00 Completion of Handout #1- Group share
- 9:00-10:00 Walk through each website listed on Handout #2
- 10:00-10:15 *Morning break*
- 10:15-11:15 Independent time to explore websites-select articles
- 11:15-12:00 Department groups select 3 articles relating to 3 units of study
- 12:00-1:00 *Lunch*
- 1:00-1:30 Question writing instruction
- 1:30-1:45 Share Close Reading Folder and posting procedures
- 1:45-2:00 *Afternoon Break*
- 2:00-2:45 Department groups write 3 questions for each article and post
- 2:45-3:00 Wrap up and Evaluation form completion
- 3:00 Dismiss participants

Handout #1 Close Reading Resources

Respond to the following questions:

Where do you find the articles you use for close reading?

Do you use the Q-Matrix or other question stem resource to write questions?

List 3 curriculum units that would benefit from informational reading.

1.
2.
3.

Handout #2 Close Reading Resources

- ReadWorks.org
- Eyewitnesstohistory.com
- Izzit.org/events/index/php
- Newsela.org
- Kellygallagher.org/article-of-the-week/
- Davestuartjr.com/resources/article-of-the-week-aow

Day 3: Literacy Strategies Across the Curriculum

6 hour session

Desired outcomes

By the end of the day, participants will become proficient with a number of before, during, and after reading strategies, notetaking, and vocabulary strategies.

Materials needed

- School Library
- Training Handouts
- Teachers' lap tops
- Digital projector
- Printer
- Sign in sheet
- Agenda
- Training Evaluation Form

Day 3 Schedule

- 8:00-8:15 Teacher Sign in
- 8:15-8:30 Training overview
- 8:30-9:00 Generate a list of strategies currently used by participants
- 9:00-10:00 Instruction on select research-based strategies-Distribute Handouts
- 10:00-10:15 *Morning break*
- 10:15-11:15 Department groups meet to identify preferred strategies
- 11:15-12:00 Come together to compare and discuss selected strategies
- 12:00-1:00 *Lunch*
- 1:00-1:30 Identify strategies for cross-curricular use
- 1:30-1:45 Sort strategies-before, during, after reading, notetaking, vocabulary
- 1:45-2:45 Shared writing to create clear step-by-step strategy instructions (take break as needed)
- 2:45-3:00 Wrap up and Evaluation form completion
- 3:00 Dismiss participants

Day 3: Vocabulary Strategy-Ten Important Words Plus-Handout #1

Directions

- Teacher reads section of text to model the strategy
- During reading students select the 10 most important words in the article
- Students determine which words are important as they focus on the meaning of the text
- Students write each work on a sticky note
- Students post the words on a class bar graph to build columns of common words
- Discussion is held about the word choices
- Students write a sentence to summarize the passage
- Students receive colored cards with prompts to encourage them to think about the words to ensure deep word learning

Day 3: Vocabulary Strategy- 5 C's – Concepts, Content, Clarify, Cut, and Construct – Handout #2

- Concepts- teachers identify words essential to understanding the concept to be taught
- Content- teachers identify subject matter words to help students engage background knowledge
- Clarify- this step is for teachers to decide what to do with the words identified in the first two steps.
- Cut- Teachers select words from the first two steps to eliminate or substitute to reduce vocabulary difficulty
- Construct- Teachers decide which words from the first two steps to directly teach to students

Day 3: Effective Literacy Strategies- Handout #3

Participants will assist in writing instructions for these strategies

- Interactive Word Wall-(Vocabulary) Use class word wall to keep track of essential words. Students can practice word definitions by playing Jeopardy.
- Fishbowl discussion or Socratic Seminar (After-reading) class discussion of concepts
- Quick Writes- Used *before reading* to assess what students know about a topic. Used *after reading* to summarize or reflect on a passage read
- Jigsaw- (After reading) Students read different sections of the text, then share, as experts, what they learned with the class.
- SQ3R- Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review- a strategy used to preview text
- THIEVES-Title, Headings, Introduction, Every First Sentence, Visuals, End of Chapter Questions, Summary- a strategy used to preview text

Project Evaluation

- Course Evaluation Forms
- Google Group contains Blog posts and responses from each participant
- Each department has articles entered in shared Google Doc
- Three to five strategies have been prepared for each area of literacy
- Observable participation by participants on each day of training.

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Appendix B: Rigor, Relevance, Relationships

Rigor/Relevance/Relationships

Four characteristics are found in successfully increasing student achievement:

1. A **relationship** must exist between the teacher and student. Creating an appropriate environment for learning begins with establishing ground rules that include many of the aspects of quality teaching, such as respect, responsibility, honesty, civility and tolerance. Only after these values are established with students in the classroom can learning based on rigor and relevance begin to accelerate.

2. Students must be **actively engaged** in their own learning process. The student has to do the bulk of the work. Schools cannot improve the academic performance of students by doing something ***to*** them. Students must be actively engaged and take responsibility for their learning. Being actively engaged in the learning process gives purpose and direction to student aspirations.

3. The curriculum must have content that is both academically **rigorous and relevant** to students. If students are to be engaged in the learning process, they have to see the relevance of what they are learning. In effect, **relevance leads to rigor.**

4. Teachers need to have up-to-date skills and knowledge in the disciplines in which they teach, but they need to be **teachers first, experts second**. They also need to incorporate teaching practices that promote the relevancy of what they are teaching. The 21st century learner is fundamentally different than those of the past. The instructional strategies and practices used will vary based upon how these students learn best.

Defining Rigor: Academic rigor refers to learning in which students demonstrate **a thorough in-depth mastery** of challenging tasks to develop cognitive skills **through reflective thought, analysis, problem solving, evaluation, or creativity**. It is the *quality* of thinking, not the *quantity*, that defines academic rigor, and rigorous learning can occur at any school grade and in any subject.

Defining Relevance: Relevance refers to learning in which students apply core knowledge, concepts, or skills to solve real world problems. Relevant learning is interdisciplinary and contextual. Student work can range from routine to complex in any grade and any subject. Relevant learning is created, for example, through authentic problems or tasks, simulations, service learning, connecting concepts to current issues, and teaching others.

There are students who do extremely well academically, but who seem to be dysfunctional in the world beyond school. They lack the ability to apply their knowledge to real-life situations. Rigor without relevance can enable students to be successful in school, but result in failure once they no longer have that structure and guidance.

Rigor/Relevance Framework

Daggett's International Center for Leadership developed the Rigor/Relevance Framework to ensure the inclusion of both rigor and relevance. The Framework enables teachers to examine curriculum and plan instruction and assessment. The Framework consists of four quadrants that reflect these two dimensions of higher standards and student achievement.

First, there is the **Knowledge Taxonomy**," which describes the increasingly complex ways in which we think. It is based on the **six levels of Bloom's Taxonomy: knowledge/awareness, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.**

The second dimension is the **Application Model**, developed by the International Center that describes **five levels of relevant learning: knowledge in one discipline, apply knowledge in one discipline, apply across disciplines, apply to real-world predictable situations, and apply to real-world unpredictable situations.** Relevant learning is interdisciplinary and contextual. It requires students to apply core knowledge, concepts, or skills to solve real-world problems.

Daggett

Rigor/Relevance Framework

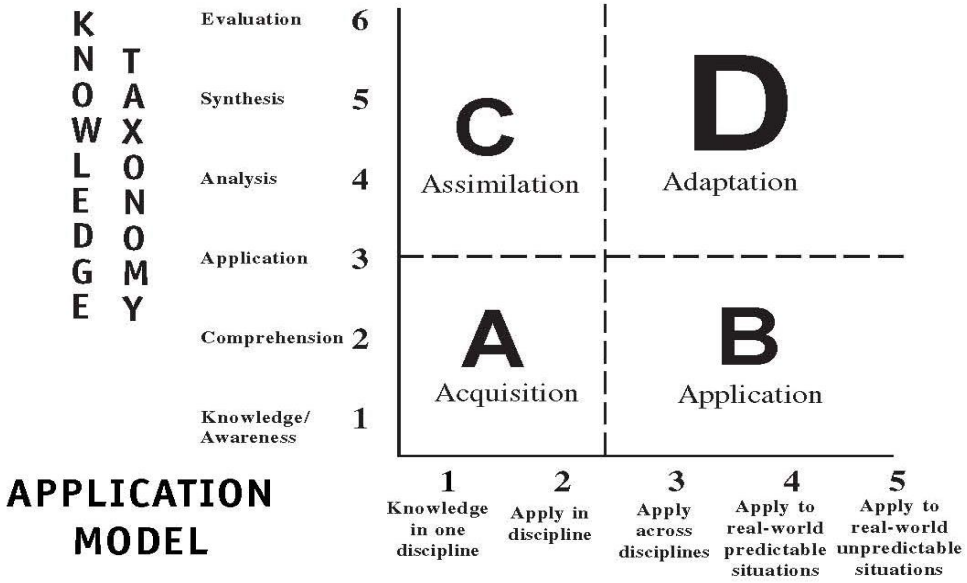
Quadrant A (Acquisition), students learn and store bits of knowledge and information. It represents simple recall and basic understanding of knowledge.

Quadrant B (Application) requires students to use their acquired knowledge to solve practical problems.

Quadrant C (Assimilation), students extend their acquired knowledge to use it automatically and routinely to analyze problems and create unique solutions.

Quadrants D (Adaptation), students have the competence to think in complex ways and apply their knowledge and skills when confronting perplexing unknowns and creating solutions.

One way to think about this framework in day-to-day instruction is in terms of the roles that teachers and students play in the quadrants below:



When instruction and expected student learning is in **Quadrant A,** the focus is on **"teacher work."** Teachers expend energy to transmit content through learning activities, worksheets, and other assignments. The student is often a passive learner.

When student expectation moves to Quadrant B, the emphasis is on the student doing real-world tasks. This student work is often more complicated than Quadrant A work and requires more time. Learning in **Quadrant B** is best described as **"student work"** because students are doing extensive real-world tasks.

Learning in **Quadrant C** is best described as **"student think."** In this quadrant, students are expected to think in complex ways — to analyze, compare, create and evaluate.

Quadrant D activity can be characterized as **"student think and work."** Learning in Quadrant D is demanding and requires students to apply their thinking and knowledge in complex ways to solve difficult problems.

Roles shift from **teacher-centered instruction in quadrants A and C to student-centered instruction in quadrants B and D.** In these quadrants, teachers still work hard, but their role is more as a coach or facilitator of learning.

Good instruction is not a choice of a single quadrant but a **balance.** It may not be necessary for all students to achieve mastery of content in Quadrant A before proceeding to Quadrant B, for example. Some students may learn a concept better in Quadrant B when they see its application in a real-world situation.

But no matter what the grade level, **students require Quadrant B and D skills if they are to become lifelong learners, problem solvers, and decision makers**. In essence, students need to *know what to do when they do not know what to do*. The Rigor/Relevance Framework provides a structure to enable schools to move all students toward that goal.

Technology is critical in teaching students

The new generation of youth is the first to be exposed to hyperlinks and global resources that allow them to make multiple connections in seconds. They are accustomed to computers, video games, digital music players, instant messaging, and cell phones. As a result of this globalized technological experience, their thinking patterns have changed in how they process information and solve problems.

On one level, they have become multi-taskers submerged in a sea of information. Today's youth can surf the Net, check their e-mail, chat with friends, listen to music, and do their homework at the same time. On another level, they have a highly developed sense of information space. That is, they can intuitively and swiftly navigate back and forth to retrieve the information they need or want. And, they want that information fast. They view textbooks almost as artifacts, with no patience to thumb through each page of a single-viewpoint source of information.

At some point, educators in today's classrooms will have to admit that, as a result of technology, students have more information and technology at their disposal. Educators also need to acknowledge that technology will not go away if they just close their eyes. Still, the older but wiser generations of teachers can play an integral role in helping students realize their futures by providing them with instruction that gives direction and allows them to hone their new cognitive and technological skills.

In their virtual world, **students** need to learn how to:

- access information efficiently and effectively
- evaluate information critically and competently
- apply information accurately
- understand the ethical, legal, and moral issues concerning the access and use of information

As imparters of wisdom, **educators** also need teach students how to:

- assess the validity and accuracy of information
- determine value of information
- identify bias or propaganda
- create meaning from data

Appendix C: 5 Cs of Planning for Instruction

Vocabulary: 5 Cs of Planning for Instruction

1. **Concepts:** What mathematics words are in this lesson?

probability, percent, adjacent, proportional, average
grid, conjecture, outcome

2. **Content:** What subject-matter words are in this lesson?

burn rate, destruction, wildfire, iteration, ignition
devastation, factor, forest fire, subdivision, manipulation
contained, out of control, density, moisture, vegetation
steepness, topology, fuel, material, topography
marshland, terrain, desert, drainage, intensity
decaying, raging, densely, aspect, environment
weaves, uninterrupted, rapidly, catastrophic, boundary
portion

3. **Clarify:** Which words should I mention or clarify?

proportional, outcome, adjacent, devastation, intensity
grid, contained, steepness, environment, forest fire
aspect, moisture, destruction, rapidly, boundary
factor, out of control, terrain, fuel, uninterrupted
raging

4. **Cut:** Which words should I rephrase or eliminate?

conjecture, iteration, marshland, material, desert
decaying, weaves, catastrophic, subdivision, drainage
portion, topography, ignition, manipulation, densely
topology, vegetation

5. **Construct:** Which words should I teach?

Word	Definition or Context	When to Teach
probability	"How can you reduce the probability of a fire spreading to your home?"	Before activity
wildfire	"If you live in an area where wildfires occur, what can you do to protect your family and property?"	Before activity
percent	"If the probability of the fire spreading to an adjacent tree is 25%, what percent of the forest do you think will burn?"	During activity
average	"What was the average number of squares that caught fire for each group?"	During activity
burn rate	Term on Fire Behavior worksheet, explained as "acres per hour"	After activity
density	"If the trees are spread out, there is less chance of the fire 'jumping' from one tree to another."	After activity

Figure 2. Example of a completed template for the 5 Cs of planning for content-area vocabulary instruction, using words from the mathematics lesson Illuminations: On Fire.

the specific meaning of this word in the context of wildfires. Clarifying this word during the lesson would help students connect the new meaning of the word to the everyday meaning they already know. Some other subject-matter words are closely related to one another and could be identified as (relative) synonyms; examples of these words include *raging/out of control* and *devastation/destruction*. A few of the mathematical content words, such as *grid* and *outcome*, may have been learned previously in class and would simply need clarification before or after the lesson.

Vocabulary: 5 Cs of Planning for Instruction

1. **C**oncepts: What mathematics words are in this lesson?

2. **C**ontent: What subject-matter words are in this lesson?

3. **C**larify: Which words should I mention or clarify?

4. **C**ut: Which words should I rephrase or eliminate?

5. **C**onstruct: Which words should I teach?

Word	Definition or Context	When to Teach

Figure 1. Blank template for the 5 Cs of planning for content-area vocabulary instruction

students make sense of the context in which the math concepts of the lesson are presented and explored.

Clarify: Which Words Should I Mention or Clarify?

The remaining three Cs help teachers decide what to do with the lists of words from the first two steps in the process. *Clarify* asks teachers to select words from the first two Cs that might cause confusion but are not crucial to the main ideas or concepts in the lesson. These words may simply be mentioned or clarified in class, without spending additional time on them. For example, young adolescents may be familiar with an everyday meaning of the word *fuel* but not understand

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Antony Smith** <smithant@uw.edu>
Date: Mon, Apr 17, 2017 at 10:44 AM
Subject: Re: Permission to reference 5 C;s tool
To: Osha Smith <osha.smith@waldenu.edu>
Lynnette,

You would need to contact the Voices from the Middle journal publisher, I believe, to ask about permissions since they published the piece.
I myself have no objections. Please send me the full title of your dissertation for my reference. Thank you.

Tony

Antony T. Smith
Associate Professor, Associate Dean
School of Educational Studies
University of Washington Bothell
(425) 352-5416 smithant@uw.edu

Good afternoon, I contacted the author of a resource I used in my dissertation titled, "Content Area Teacher Perspectives on Integrating Literacy" to obtain permission to use the 5 C's tool he mentioned. This tool was described in "Why are There so Many Words in Math"" published in Voices From the Middle, 20(1), 43-51. Mr. Smith has given his permission and I would appreciate your permission to include this document in my dissertation. Your prompt response would be appreciated. Thank you very much.

Austin, Kurt <KAustin@ncte.org> Apr 18 (3 days ago)

to me

Dear Lynnette Smith,

Thanks for contacting NCTE. Yes, you have permission to use the material originally published in "'Why Are There So Many Words in Math?': Planning for Content-Area Vocabulary Instruction" by Antony T. Smith and Robin L. Angotti, from *Voices from the Middle,* 20(1), pp. 43-51 (2012), in your dissertation.
Please credit the original authors, article, and publication and include the words "Copyright 2012 by the National Council of Teachers of English. Used with permission."
Congratulations on completing your doctorate!
Best,
Kurt
Kurt Austin | *Publications Director*
National Council of Teachers of English
217-278-3619
kaustin@ncte.org
www.ncte.org

Appendix D: Twenty Aspects of Digital Literacy

Aspect	**Definitions**
1. Information Research and Retrieval	Access needed information effectively and efficiently using library, Internet, and professional organization databases and search engines.
2. Information Validation	Making judgments about the quality, relevance, timeliness, completeness, truthfulness, independence, usefulness, and efficiency of digital information sources.
3. Learning Resources	Using digital resources provided by University administrators (e.g., Blackboard, Spartan Web), academic vendors, and textbook publishers to enhance learning.
4. Using Applications	Employing application and utility software, and Internet technology to calculate, store, update, retrieve, and display data.
5. Data Transmission	Delivering digital data across distances in an acceptable format useable by the intended receiver.
6. Information Communication	Presenting digital information in a useful and understandable format using commercially available packages, such as, word processors, spreadsheets, statistical packages, briefing presentation software, publishing software, and graphic and animation presentation software.
7. Social Responsibility	Understanding the ethical and social consequences of actions, and using digital technology and information in a responsible and ethical manner.
8. Legal Aspects of Digital Information	Ensuring that the access to, use of, and distribution of digital information complies with relevant laws and regulations.
9. Computer Hardware and Software Selection	Determining the computer needs of a user and selecting the appropriate

	computer hardware and software configuration from an inventory of alternatives.
10. Systems Analysis	Soliciting, interpreting and documenting user digital needs sufficient to design systems to meet those user needs.
11. Systems Design	Designing or selecting data formats, application programs, communication systems, and hardware devices necessary to fulfill those user needs.
12. Application Development	Developing, testing and maintaining application programs for use by others.
13. System Programming	Installing and maintaining the operating system and utility software that allows users to employ the computer hardware.
14. System, Data, and Information Security	Protecting data and information systems from threats such as unauthorized access, destruction, unauthorized alteration of data, or fictitious creation. Detecting and recovering from those threats.
15. Personal, Financial, and Identity Security	Protecting oneself against fraud conducted through digital means, such as, identity theft, impersonation, online predators, and protecting personal and financial information during e-commerce transactions.
16. Database Administration	Installing, updating, documenting, and tuning the performance of database management systems (DBMS). Instructing users in the proper use of the DBMS.
17. Media Library Functions	Preparing, inventorying, storing, backing-up, and making available physical storage devices for digital programs and files.
18. Networking Technology	Possessing technical competence regarding the configuration, management, and security of internal (e.g., local area networks) and external data networks.
19. Computer Technology	Possessing technical competence regarding the physical and logical

	operation of hardware, software, and data characteristics of information systems, e.g., at the bit and byte level.
20. Digital Video & Photography	Selecting and using the appropriate digital photographic devices, formats, and features to meet user needs.

Appendix E: Interview Questions

Interview Questions:

1. How long have you been teaching?
2. What is your area of certification? Do you hold any other degrees?
3. What formal literacy training have you experienced?
4. What do you currently believe and/or value about reading and reading instruction?
5. How would you describe the impact of the expectation for all teachers to teach literacy strategies, specifically close reading and reflective writing?
6. What are your thoughts about the expectation to integrate literacy strategies within your content instruction?
7. What literacy strategies do you use in your classroom?
8. How do you approach planning and preparing to teach close reading lessons?
9. How do you approach planning and preparing to teach reflective writing lessons?
10. Describe the types of literacy training you have experienced.
11. What do you see as your strengths in the area of teaching reading?
12. What do you see as your areas of weakness in the teaching reading?
13. How prepared do you feel you are to teach the expected literacy strategies to your students.
14. How often do you use literacy strategies in your classroom?
15. How effective do you feel you are at teaching close reading lessons?
16. How effective do you feel you are at teaching reflective writing lessons?
17. How likely are you to seek the help of a colleague in preparing a literacy lesson?
18. How likely are you to seek the help of a reading specialist in preparing a literacy lesson?
19. How much time would you say it takes you to prepare a close reading lesson?
20. How much time would you say it takes you to prepare a reflective writing lesson?
21. How much time would you say it takes you to prepare a literacy performance task?
22. Have you changed your perspective about teaching literacy since the RRR initiative began?
23. What challenges or concerns do you have about teaching literacy? How do you think these can be resolved?
24. Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

Appendix F: Classroom Observation Form

Classroom Observations: Taking Notes

Instructor:	Course:	Length of Visit:
Focus:	Observer:	Observation Date:

Basic notetaking during classroom observation
(review topics on next page prior to observation)

Time	What happened: what the instructor is doing, and content	Student questions,

Appendix G: Research Permission Letter

August 14, 2015

Dear Osha Lynette Smith,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled Teacher Perspectives on Integrating Literacy Strategies and Professional Development within the Central Dauphin School District. As part of this study, I authorize you to communicate with individual teachers and building principals for the purposes of scheduling classroom observations, obtaining copies of lesson plans and scheduling individual interviews. You may use teacher mailboxes for distribution and return of survey forms. In addition, you will facilitate member-checking of data to ensure the representation of valid and reliable data. At the conclusion of the study, all participants including interested parties within the Central Dauphin School District will participate in results dissemination activities, which may take place during faculty or departmental meetings. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include: permission to communicate with sixth, seventh, and eighth-grade teachers and building principals at the Central Dauphin Middle School, the use of teacher classrooms at the conclusion of the school day so as not to disrupt student learning, and access to WE survey data for the purposes of obtaining teacher perspectives during the initial, stages of the Rigor,

Relevance, and Relationship initiative. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the organization's policies.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,

Appendix H: Permission Letter for Rigor/Relevance Framework®

December 1, 2015

Lynette Smith

Dear Lynette:

Thank you for contacting the International Center for Leadership in Education regarding your dissertation, in which you'd like to include the Rigor/Relevance Framework®.

As we discussed, we are happy to grant you this permission. We do ask that you please ensure that we are given proper attribution in both your citations and also under the graphic in the following form:

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Appendix I: Interview Responses

Interview Responses			
RQ1 **What are teachers' Perspectives?**	**RQ2** **How capable do teachers feel?**	**RQ3** **Does current literacy PD engage teachers?**	**RQ4** **Do teachers show evidence of adopting literacy strategies?**
It is easier if I'm interested in the article. 8:23	I do believe it has made me a better teacher. 62:15	My go to's are all things used in RRR. I use graphic organizers, KWL charts, read alouds. 62:10	I use literacy strategies four or five days out of the week in some way.
I expect kids to come to my classroom knowing how to read. 10:26	I am not a reading teacher. I'm not a literacy coach and I am not trained in that regard. So I don't think I am overly prepared. 60:33	I go through that form that they make you go through. 63:21	I have a ton of stuff to get through, I start rushing and close reading goes by the wayside a little bit.
It is great to teach literacy in all content areas, but reading in science is different than reading in history. 12:26	It is just learning how to learn. I don't separate my literacy strategies. You have to read science to learn science. 12:70	I don't consider the RRR stuff to be literacy strategies. I don't find them to be super useful.	I don't like close reading, I think it is too prescribed. I would never use close reading strategies to read an article.
If the expectation is that the same strategies are used in all classes that is good for students. 12:27	Sometimes I think I'm doing a good job and sometimes I don't think so.	It was other teachers teaching us, I think it was a half day, it went very quick. I don't remember it and I could not tell you who did it.	I use a lot of different strategies because different strategies can be helpful for different types of learners.
It is important to reinforce literacy across the content areas so kids see the value in it and are not confused. 13:13	No, I am absolutely not confident. I mean the reflective writing, yes, but not the reading part.	I would like to see an expert come in, it is like the blind leading the blind.	I don't have my kids reading articles every day but we read through articles if we are doing research, but it is not an everyday thing.

			(table continues)
Teachers feel negatively because it is one more thing to do and they are not prepared. 13:14	I struggle with actually teaching reading, but I am good with teaching literature. I can do a lot of things to reinforce it but reading is just such a hard thing.	What was really helpful was the six strategies they put in the RRR binder along with the templates you could pick and choose.	The close reading is forced, there are 25 steps and it takes five days to get through an article, rather than read the article, reflect on it, talk about it, and then compare it with what you are doing. This would be more effective.
If we are to do literacy across the content areas, then everyone should be at team meetings. 13:44	I am ok with reflective writing as long as I stick with the format and guidelines. For close reading, as long as I fill out the form we were given. I do not feel comfortable going outside of the guidelines.	Being a part of Cohort 3 kinda got me on the bus. I understand it better. It is just good teaching.	The reflective writing is fantastic! Good teachers naturally do it anyway.
I don't think I am prepared to act as a surrogate reading teacher. 60.33	I think with all the literacy strategies, they need to summarize them in plainer words, because I am not a literature major, and I think I would do a better job with it.	It is more important to get that literacy than covering content, I would rather give them skills and I have done a 180 turn around.	I like to do the GRASP model for performance tasks, articles are good, and I like to read aloud and then write a reflection to see the comprehension and discussion.
I think that all teachers no matter their discipline should try to be a reading teacher. 62.4	The biggest thing is finding an article. It is monotonous, frustrating, and I don't like bouncing around websites.	I don't think I have changed much since RRR other than they have made me have to be accountable.	I use annotation, marking the text.

I don’t see an issue with teaching literacy strategies with content.	I don’t know how to help struggling readers understand the content.	I don’t think we were trained right to do close reading. It was ineffective.	I use THIEVES and SQ3R previewing strategies and annotation.

Appendix J: Classroom Observation Field Notes

Classroom Observation Field Notes			
RQ1 **What are teachers' Perspectives?**	**RQ2** **How capable do teachers feel?**	**RQ3** **Does current literacy PD engage teachers?**	**RQ4** **Do teachers show evidence of adopting literacy strategies?**
Teacher showed knowledge of this literacy strategy and how to teach it. Teacher appeared calm and comfortable	While drawing, teacher is talking about the task with students at table where teacher is sitting. Teacher is modeling what students should be doing	Teacher says that the white paper will be their graphic organizer.	The room was inviting with examples of student writing on the wall. Questions were projected on the screen in the front of the room.
Teacher gives expectations to students. I was surprised when teacher told students theirs may not be of the same quality as teachers.	Student asks question about the vocabulary, teacher tells him he has to look through the PowerPoint for the vocab words.	Teacher told students to look in the article and find the purpose. Teacher said they could highlight it or underline it in the article and write it on their graphic organizer	Frayer models are displayed on the wall from previous vocabulary lessons.
Teacher seems comfortable and relaxed. Teacher gives students time to work but moves them along by letting them know how much time they have.	Teacher conferences with student pair to look at past/present government. Student verbalized understanding with detailed response	Teacher encouraged students to put the definition in their own words. Students need to have the word, a picture, the definition and use it in a sentence or give an example	Math and motivational sayings on the walls. I did not notice anything pertaining to literacy on the walls.
I saw collaboration when students shared devices and voiced help with vocabulary definitions	Teacher points out that students got answers wrong because they did not read the entire question. If they did read it, they did not	Teacher has 3 high level questions listed on the screen in front of the room.	Teaching environment is set up for the purposes of teaching English. I do see information from a reading strategy standpoint on Using Text Evidence.

	read it carefully or did not answer all parts of the question.		
This teacher stressed the importance of reading carefully and going back into the text to look at the data before answering the question. Teacher supported re-reading and answering all parts of each question	Teacher sits on stool in front of classroom and reads the story. Teacher pauses periodically to ask questions and monitor student understanding. Teacher offers several opportunities for students to "turn and talk" about the story and respond to questions.	Teacher underlines 1st sentence in the directions- re-reads the directions and asks students what does it mean? Teacher then walks students through the process using "think aloud" strategy to graph prime numbers.	Writing wall with student work. Posters- Putrid Prose, Paragraph, Using Text Evidence, and The Writing Process.
Teacher talks fast and moves fast through this class period. The students for the most part are with the teacher. Teacher seems comfortable teaching the content.	Teacher models giving students a visual of how to do the task.	Teacher asks students to "turn and talk" about what they think will happen when they chart the prime coordinates and subtract 3.	Back wall of classroom is filled with examples of student writing.
Teacher seems at ease assisting with the activity. Teacher knows the story and appears to know the value of using the text to support the students' activity.	Teacher passes out the rubric for the essay. Teacher hands me a copy and explains that he is trying to mimic what other teachers use so students have continuity.	Exit slip 3-2-1. 3 moods that you can see in the story "turn and talk". 2 parts of the definition of setting, time and place. Class ended, time ran out before finishing this wrap-up activity.	On the walls-12 powerful words, large American flag, writing process chart, vocabulary/word wall
Teacher tells students, on the day	Teacher refers to discussion held in	Definitions provided in the	

before the test, they will read and annotate a story they have not read before, mark it for conflict, identify the narrator, tell how literacy techniques discussed apply to the story.	Reading and English classes on types of narrators, goes on to review Point of View.	form of questions and the student selects the correct vocabulary word (science terms) by using Sentieo device.	
		Teacher asks, "what is the first step in writing an essay?" Step 1-Pre-writing. Teacher says, "For History class, what is pre-writing?" Teacher says, "that's right, the answer is Research"	

Appendix K: RRR Data Analysis

RRR Data Analysis

	Marking Period 1	Performance Tasks	Close Reading	Writing
Participant 1		2	1	33
Participant 3		5	2	34
Participant 4		2	1	17
Participant 5		2	1	32
Participant 6		3	1	37
Participant 7		2	1	32
Participant 8		5	1	26
Participant 9		4	1	32
Participant 11		5	1	31
Participant 15		3	1	30
Participant 16		2	1	28
Totals		35	12	332
Required		22	11	330

	Marking Period 2	Performance Tasks	Close Reading	Writing
Participant 1		2	1	29
Participant 3		4	1	36
Participant 4		4	1	27
Participant 5		3	1	33
Participant 6		2	1	32
Participant 7		2	1	30
Participant 8		3	1	26
Participant 9		2	1	32
Participant 11		5	2	33
Participant 15		3	1	30
Participant 16		2	1	30
Totals		32	12	338
Required		22	11	330

	Marking Period 3	Performance Tasks	Close Reading	Writing
Participant 1		2	1	26
Participant 3		3	1	30
Participant 4		2	1	29
Participant 5		2	2	32
Participant 6		3	3	30
Participant 7		2	1	31
Participant 8		3	1	30
Participant 9		3	1	32
Participant 11		2	2	32
Participant 15		4	1	30
Participant 16		2	1	30
Totals		28	15	332
Required		22	11	330

	Marking Period 4	Performance Tasks	Close Reading	Writing
Participant 1		2	1	24
Participant 3		5	2	27
Participant 4		3	1	27
Participant 5		2	1	26
Participant 6		2	2	29
Participant 7		2	1	27
Participant 8		4	2	27
Participant 9		3	1	27
Participant 11		3	2	27
Participant 15		4	1	27
Participant 16		2	1	27
Totals		32	15	295
Required		22	11	297

Appendix L: Key Comprehension Routine

The Key Comprehension Routine

The Key Comprehension instructional routine teaches students a foundational set of research based comprehension strategies that support listening and reading comprehension in any subject area. Teachers learn how to teach strategies using existing content reading and instructional materials. When used across multiple grade levels, students benefit from a consistent approach to comprehension instruction as they move from grade to grade and subject to subject.

Instructional practices in *The Key Comprehension Routine* address these topics, strategies and skills:

- **Critical thinking**: for close, analytic reading of both narrative and expository text
- **Main idea skills**: categorizing information and vocabulary, identifying main ideas at the paragraph level, and identifying central ideas in lengthier text
- **Text structure knowledge**: at the sentence, paragraph, and longer text levels
- **Top-down topic webs**: a graphic organizer that represents the major topics and big ideas of any content that is read, said, or done
- **Two-column notes**: a note taking format that supports active reading and listening
- **Summarizing**: students comprehend and synthesize the main ideas from any content that is read, said, or done
- **Generating questions**: students create and answer questions along a continuum of thinking using Bloom's Taxonomy based on content that is read, said, or done
- **I, We, You instruction:** strategies are taught explicitly through modeling and think aloud, guided practice is provided, and scaffolds are gradually released as students become independent users of the strategies
- **Cooperative learning**: students learn and practice comprehension strategies by working in cooperative pairs or small groups

These strategies and instructional practices have been identified consistently in the research literature as most effective for improving student comprehension, and are highly aligned with Common Core literacy standards.

Who Should Participate: Grades 4-5 elementary teachers, grades 6-12 content classroom teachers, educators who provide support to struggling readers, literacy specialists and coaches, and grades 4-12 administrators.

Versions:

- The Key Comprehension Routine: Primary Grades
- Keys to Comprehension for SEI and English as a Second Language
- Keys to Comprehension for Students with Learning Disabilities

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