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# Creating An Engaging, Reading Curriculum For Fifth Grade

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CREATION OF ADOLESCENT LITERACY CURRICULUM FOR EFFECTIVE  
INSTRUCTION AND ENGAGEMENT

by

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A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters  
of Arts in Education

Hamline University

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Research Rationale and Context

#### Introduction

Throughout the following chapter, I will be explaining my rationale for deciding to create a literacy curriculum paired with novels for my capstone project. Also included will be reasons why I am so passionate about reading. The research question I will be exploring is: *What is the most effective literacy curriculum for developing adolescents?* The literacy curriculum at my current school district is a plethora of materials without logical order. It has been challenging for me to utilize the recommended curriculum the past two years of teaching fifth grade. I have found myself changing and adding materials to develop lessons I felt was effective and engaging for students. I have a strong passion for independent reading and I would like to foster that same passion with my students each year. Due to this, my study's purpose is to create an engaging literacy curriculum that develops lifelong readers and therefore, lifelong learners.

In chapter one, I will begin by exploring my own experiences with literacy and how they have impacted my life to create the life long reader that I am. Then I will discuss my first year of teaching and how I developed a coherent literacy curriculum to utilize each day. Finally, I will discuss how my second year of teaching literacy changed my curriculum as I became increasingly comfortable in my classroom.

## Early Literacy Experiences

When I think about some of my most treasured memories as a child, I had a book in my hands. I would read any fiction book I could get my hands on. *Ramona*, *Boxcar Children*, and *Little House on the Prairie* were some of my favorites. My imagination was completely opened through reading and it would take me many places I could only dream of going. I would spend countless hours outside playing house, pretending like I was living back in the days of *Little House on the Prairie*. I would make mud pies to feed my imaginary family or try to make molasses syrup drizzled on snow to simulate what Laura did on *Little House on the Prairie*. Another instance I remember is solving mysteries as if I was Violet in the *Boxcar Children* books. In each of these instances an idea was fostered from a specific book or novel.

Without some of these previous memories in my mind, I am not sure I would remember much throughout my beginning years as a reader. If asked about my memories about literacy teaching throughout elementary school, what stands out the most were the read alouds during story time in my younger primary grades and my 5th grade year of school. This particular year I had a teacher who was passionate about reading and through books would take us all over the world. My fifth-grade literacy curriculum was completely based on novels. We read *Walk Two Moons* by Sharon Creech, *Hatchet* by Gary Paulson, *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens, and *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson. I find it interesting that I have such vivid memories of my fifth-grade literacy curriculum and very few memories after that point. I do know I had an engaging teacher that seemed to make everything exciting and fun. However, can it be just that? Why else do I remember this year so clearly? I believe fifth grade is the year I fell in love

with reading due to the engagement my teacher facilitated through reading interesting books and intriguing discussions on novels. Is it a coincidence that I currently teach 5th grade and want to create a similar love for reading in my own students?

### **Later Literacy Experiences**

Throughout middle school and high school much of my memorable literacy learning times centered around novels. I know I completed other writing pieces and short stories but the ones that still are engrained in my memory center around the novels we read. One novel that especially stuck out to me was *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini. This novel was of particular interest to me because of the passionate discussion and interesting projects we had paired with the novel. One specific assignment we completed asked us to bring in an object to symbolize something from the book and write about the symbolism it represented. This assignment was so much more beneficial than a quick worksheet and is something I remember to this day. It is this interaction revolving around novels that I hope to instill in my classroom.

### **Summary of Personal Literacy Experiences**

As I began my career in education, I knew I wanted to develop meaningful lessons that my students would remember. The place where it became unclear for me was how to go about successfully designing meaningful lessons. I knew it was expected that I follow district requirements and Minnesota State Standards. However, being able to take the district materials given and develop enhanced lessons is my continuous goal. Along with my students I want to make sure that teaching remains stimulating and interesting because I want to make it my lifelong career. This led me to my first year of teaching.

## **First Year of Teaching**

**Guided reading.** I began my first year of teaching during the 2015-2016 school year. The summer before my first year of teaching I was busy creating reading logs, reading book projects, and honestly looking through reading curriculum products that would be difficult to utilize. However, during that summer we were asked to attend a training on Guided Reading created by Jan Richardson. This program is a specific form of small group instruction that focuses on close reading strategies. This reading philosophy was to be adopted in my school district throughout the next school year in every classroom. I personally feel that small group instruction is a necessary tool for teaching and Guided Reading is a great tool to utilize for effective instruction. However at the fifth grade level, I found my readers were too advanced to silently read a short passage, then discuss the reading, and finally end with a written response. The readers in my classroom were looking to dive into novels and other independent texts. My previous major in my undergraduate program was child psychology. This is where I learned how important autonomy is for kids in this age range. Students want to be given choices to determine their learning path and be given as much social interaction time as possible. Without some of these key developmental principles, students will struggle with the literacy curriculum.

**Adopted literacy curriculum.** Along with Guided Reading training we attended the district also adopted a brand-new literacy curriculum. This literacy curriculum was based on an anthology textbook with short passages each week that was paired with short stories for Guided Reading groups. The stories were based on longer novels text, such as *Old Yeller*. Depending on the story, students were engaged. However, when asked to



close read a short snippet of text in the anthology in a whole group lesson and Guided Reading groups, students dreaded their reading block each day. I believe the curriculum's purpose for having short snippets of text is to guide students in the right direction for independent chapter books. I found this had the exact opposite effect. Students would become so frustrated they couldn't finish the entire book and didn't appreciate having to read the same passage repeatedly throughout the week. They became very disengaged from the text.

**Introduction to novels.** After the first three months of school and a valid period of implementation for this new curriculum, my grade level team decided to start using novels in our curriculum to engage students. We already had a few sets of novels that were purchased in previous years. This included *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson, *Maniac Magee* by Jerry Spinelli, and *Indian in the Cupboard* by Lynne Reid Banks. With the novels, I was constantly scouring for resources all over the Internet. Teachers Pay Teachers and Pinterest had become some of the few websites I would visit several times throughout the day. As a new teacher, I struggled with identifying paired nonfiction texts and standards-aligned activities to ensure each standard was being addressed.

**Guided reading PLC.** Through the PLC (Professional Learning Communities) in our district during the school year we began deeply diving into the Guided Reading curriculum book. Our conclusions from this professional study were that Guided Reading is very beneficial for young readers. However, closely reading a whole group text for a week was not as beneficial to our independent readers. We felt Guided Reading seemed best suited for nonfiction text and paired text with our novel study. We felt the

curriculum our district had purchased and the Guided Reading series were not beneficial when paired together.

### **Second Year of Teaching**

Throughout my second year of teaching, I began feeling a little more confident in my endeavors. I was no longer spending time focusing on the previous year's anthology textbook and devoted my time to the current novels we have purchased for our grade level. Our administration supported the purchasing of two new sets of novels to improve our curriculum. This once again led me to Teachers Pay Teachers and Pinterest to develop curriculum guides for the new novels that were purchased.

Our reading blocks this school year consisted of a whole group lesson, small group lesson, and a writing lesson. For the whole group, I focused on six novel studies, a unit on nonfiction text in the anthology, a unit on fiction short stories, a poetry unit, and a short unit on plays or performance. For each novel study, I would try to remember what I had completed the previous year while also asking for assistance from fellow fifth grade staff on supplemental materials. For small group instruction, I focused on Guided Reading strategies and small group activities. A new reading technique I added to my classroom this school year was book clubs. The book clubs paired with the novel studies really changed students' perspectives this past school year. While in book club discussions, students would dive deeply into the text and many students would ask if it was okay for them to take home their books to finish over the weekend. I saw a complete shift in student's engagement with reading. Students would ask me to read an additional chapter during that class period or I would catch students reading ahead during breaks in

the curriculum. I also saw a change in independent reading in and outside the classroom. Students would constantly be asking what other books are written by authors we have studied during whole group units and in book clubs. Not only the increase in engagement, our Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment for this grade level went from a 52.1% passing their reading MCA in 4<sup>th</sup> grade to 67.1% passing their reading MCA in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Something had changed as a grade level for these students and we wanted to harness our success into a developed curriculum we could follow from year to year.

## **Conclusion**

After my first two years of teaching, I am hoping to refine what I am passionate about by writing a literacy curriculum. This will include a focus on novels with the implementation of Guided Reading in small groups. Our current reading block period is ninety minutes. This includes a thirty-minute whole group lesson, thirty minutes of small group work, and depending on the day another thirty minutes is allocated to flex group time with all of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade groups split up based on ability. The flex group allows us to work with groups with similar abilities on specific skills and strategies where they need further instruction. My hope for the curriculum is to streamline my whole group lessons, small group lessons, flex group lessons, and writing into a cohesive unit. This will help to reduce my stress level on a day to day basis and improve my standards-based instruction. In chapter two, I will be deep diving into the current literature on specific needs for prosocial development in adolescents, the foundation to literacy development, adolescent literacy curriculum needs, and the literacy needs of both students below and above grade level.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Literature Review

#### Introduction

The following literature review seeks to answer the question: *What is the most effective literacy curriculum for developing adolescents?* The first section starts with exploring what adolescents need to establish their own prosocial development to thrive in their environment. Adolescence is a unique transitional age group that has specific characteristics. This exploration will lead into the foundational literacy skills children need to be successful in the adolescent classroom. Foundational literacy begins even before students enter the school system and students need to develop these specific skills to be successful in the future. Next, there will be a closer look at what specific middle school literacy models have the most positive impact on adolescents. Finally, the literature review will discuss various differentiation strategies that need to be in place to reach students who are below and above their grade level.

#### Adolescent Development

Adolescence is a distinct transitional period from childhood to adulthood. Adolescents change and develop immensely over the second decade of their lives. Specifically, they develop their personality, find their prosocial identities, learn about adult relationships, and learn to cope with difficult behaviors (Meeus, 2016). As a result it is important to identify specific characteristics of adolescent development and to

identify what educators can do to benefit adolescents during this difficult time of life changes.

**Characteristics of adolescences.** Adolescent development can be identified by a few primary characteristics. One of the most significant characteristics is the regulation of behavior changes from the responsibility of the caregiver to the responsibility of the individual (Schuck, Chemers, Johnson, & Bonnie, 2013). As adolescents develop their sense of self-concept and identity, they are likely participating in experimentation and novelty-seeking behaviors. This development results in a mature identity in early adulthood (Schuck et al., 2013). Adolescents also increase in the personality trait of agreeableness and become increasingly emotionally stable as they find self-concept clarity in adulthood (Meeus, 2016).

Another characteristic that adolescents lack is their capacity for self-regulation in emotional situations. This is demonstrated by impulsivity and the inability to control behaviors. Self-regulation steadily increases throughout adolescence and tapers off into young adulthood (Schuck et al., 2013).

Adolescents also have a heightened influence from peer pressure and are influenced by immediate incentives or extrinsic motivation. This emphasizes the previously discussed regulation of behavior from the parents to the individual. Adolescent's decisions are impacted by the presence of peers (Schuck et al., 2013). Immediate incentives provide external motivation for adolescents. This is opposed to intrinsic motivation or the motivation within oneself. A study conducted by Ernst and colleagues found that adolescents had improved cognitive ability if there was an

immediate reward after the task (Schuck et al., 2013). As shown in this study, adolescents have an increased sensitivity to rewards, in a negative and positive light. Adolescents also show less ability to make judgements and decisions that require future thinking. They lack an ability to think about the long-term consequences and lack the experience to make appropriate decisions (Schuck et al., 2013). In conclusion, adolescents can be described as a time of experimentation, impulsiveness, lack of self-regulation, and they are influenced by incentives.

**Parents and adolescents.** As discussed, a young child depends primarily on parental units to guide social development. For example, a child spends most of their waking hours at home or in a childcare setting. They have limited choice in who they can spend time with because their parents make this decision. Parents are the central role for practical and emotional support in childhood. As an adolescent develops, there is an increase in autonomy from parents (van Rijsewijk, Dijkstra, Pattiselanno, Steglich, & Veenstra, 2016). However, a study conducted on family structure found that a strong parental coalition is important for adolescents to successfully create a stable identity (Faber, Edwards, Bauer, & Wetchler, 2003).

Another study identified parental involvement as one of the three conditions needed for a successful transition into adolescence. Parental involvement is defined as a strong presence of a parent or parental figure to show authoritative parenting throughout this period. Authoritative parenting includes parental nurturance, active interest and involvement in the child's life, reasonable expectations, explicit rules and consequences, and effective supervision of activities (Shuck et al., 2013). As a child develops into an

adolescent parental control decreases (Meeus, 2016). Parents that encourage autonomy throughout childhood usually have children with advanced identities (Jones, Vaterlaus, Jackson, & Morrill, 2014). As parental control decreases, the importance of friendships increases.

**Peers and adolescents.** Adolescents spend a significant amount of time each day at school and in the presence of peers. Eighty-five percent of adolescents report being a part of a friend group (Schuck et al., 2013). This is specifically important because of the changes throughout the world in the previous decades. Erikson, a psychologist who studied psychosocial development, discovered eight stages of development that corresponds with social, psychological, and biological events. A specific stage that is met in adolescents is the fifth stage or identity achievement versus role confusion (Jones et al., 2014). This is especially important because stages one through four are influenced by parents and family unit members. This development has changed in the past few decades because of the increase in child-care, blended families, and time spent outside of the home. The education system has also evolved with increase in student services and extracurricular activities. An additional change that has occurred since Erikson's study is how parents communicate with their children, with the emergence of technology. The modes that parents utilize to communicate include cell phones, emails, and texting. A study completed by Larson and Richards determined fifth grade students spend approximately 47.8 percent of their waking hours with family and ninth grade students spend approximately 27 percent of waking hours with family (Jones et al., 2014). This demonstrates the impact peers have on adolescents as they grow and develop. This

research shows that it is not just parental and family influence that impacts trust, autonomy, and initiative development, but also influenced by peers.

Peers can have a positive or a negative impact on adolescents. Positively, peers can provide encouragement to achieve academic and social goals. Negatively, peers can influence initial sexual behavior, cigarette smoking, negative body image, binge drinking, and delinquency (Jones et al., 2014). A second condition needed for successful transition into adolescence is inclusion in a peer group that shows prosocial behaviors and academic success (Schuck et al., 2013). Peers provide normative regulation of appropriate behavior, an ability to practice social behaviors, and feedback for trial behaviors. A study conducted by Akers, Jones, and Coyl found that friends are similar in terms of identity development continuum. Another similar study found the importance of a similar gender in creation of friendships in young adolescents. As adolescents age, other selection criteria becomes more important as cross-gender peers become more appealing (van Rijsewijk et al., 2016). It is important to recognize the influence peers have on adolescent development.

**Adolescents in schools.** As discussed, adolescents have an increase in the amount of pressure that is placed among them. This is ever present at school because of the immense amount of time adolescents spend there as they develop. Students begin to encounter material that is too difficult for them and have an increased amount of homework and activities. Adolescents typically rank school and the work required by school as one of the top three stressors in their lives (Skinner, Pitzer, & Steele, 2009). As



a result, it is a goal of the school system and the classroom teacher to reduce this stress students feel in the most productive ways possible.

Studies have found that engagement at the end of elementary and the beginning of middle school may be especially important transitioning into upper grade levels. In particular, studies predominantly predict middle school academic success when students are engaged (Skinner, Pitzer, & Steele, 2009). The third condition needed for successful transition into adolescence is activities that provide autonomous decision making and critical thinking to contribute to healthy development (Schuck et al., 2013). This condition can be provided through social clubs and extracurricular activities. The school system needs to provide adolescence with vocational skills, social skills, ability to set goals, and make responsible choices (Schuck et al., 2013).

A study conducted by Skinner, Pitzer, & Steele examined whether engagement in the classroom can serve as a resource for students in early middle school. This is because the engagement provides energy, momentum, and stamina to guide students when they reach academic struggles and need to use adaptive coping. The study found that adaptive ways of coping may contribute to persistence throughout the school year and protect students against giving up when faced with challenges. Adaptive ways of coping can be opposed to maladaptive ways of dealing with problems that predict giving up as the school year progresses (Skinner, Pitzer, & Steele, 2016). It is important to provide the necessary resources to create a seamless transition through adolescence.

## **Foundational Literacy**

As Fuchs, Fuchs, Hosp, and Jenkins (2001) have stated, “Reading is a complex performance that requires simultaneous coordination across many tasks” (p. 239). Many different components need to work together to create a proficient reader. There are a few main precursor skills to promote the foundation of literacy. These skills include phonemic awareness, alphabetic principle, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (Vesay & Gischlar, 2013). Each component is needed to successfully develop fluent reading skills, such as skills in listening, speaking, and writing. Another approach to conceptualize reading foundational skills includes the outside-in skills and the inside-out skills. The outside-in skills include everything associated with reading comprehension. This includes language, vocabulary content, and narrative understanding. The inside-out skills include skills that are focused on the symbol and sound correspondence. This includes word decoding, alphabetic principles, and phonemic awareness (Tichnor-Wagner, Garwood, Bratsch-Hines, & Vernon-Feagans, 2016). As stated, reading requires many different components to be successful. There are a few key pieces of literacy development that will be discussed: balanced literacy, oral reading fluency, importance of at home literacy, interactive read alouds, and upper elementary literacy.

**Balanced literacy approach.** A balanced approach is usually taken for emergent and emerging literacy instruction. This approach involves basic skills and other more advanced literacy skills. In particular, the basic skills include decoding principles such as learning the alphabet, phonological sounds, and sound letter correspondence. The more advanced skills include comprehension, vocabulary, and semantic syntactic skills (Vesay

& Gischlar, 2013). To practice these balanced approach skills there are many different literacy workstations that can be used for primary grades. These literacy work stations include personal book boxes for independent reading, buddy or partner reading, writing workshops, readers theater performances, poems and songs, word studies, word walls, read the room or word hunts, oral retellings, listening to stories, computer software to practice skills, big books, library time, and extensions of literacy to geography or science (Richardson, 2009). Each of these different activities can be done independently for a set amount of time as the educator is working with other students on literacy skills.

**Oral reading fluency.** The goal of the young reader is to have oral reading fluency. This goal is achieved when the reader is able to read at an increased pace, effortlessly, autonomously, and without much consciousness or awareness (Fuchs et al., 2001). These abilities develop gradually over time and are measured based on words read per minute. The reason behind the goal of oral reading fluency is the hypothesis that oral reading fluency may be the indicator of overall reading ability (Fuchs et al., 2001). A study conducted by Fuchs and colleagues compared oral reading fluency versus a direct measure of reading comprehension. The direct measure of reading comprehension consists of answering questions that occur by the assessor in classrooms. Students were required to read two 400-word passages. After each passage students were asked to provide oral answers to ten questions. The questions focused on basic recall of information in the text. Along with question answering, the study measured oral reading fluency. The results revealed that oral reading fluency had the strongest correlation (.91) with reading comprehension when compared to question answering (.82). Both of these variables correlated strongly but it is important to note that oral reading fluency had a

greater correlation (Fuchs et al., 2001). This result emphasizes the importance of reading aloud, reading to self, and reading with a partner in the primary grades.

There is also a discrepancy of reading comprehension performance for silent reading fluency versus oral reading fluency. Another study completed by Fuchs, Fuchs, Eaton, and Hamlett assessed 4<sup>th</sup> grade students by asking them to read two separate passages for two minutes and answer eight questions assessing recall and inferential context. One of the passages was required to be read orally and the other passage was required to be read silently. The strongest correlation for comprehension was with the oral reading passage. For oral reading with reading comprehension the correlation was .84 and for the silent reading with reading comprehension the correlation was .38. These results demonstrate the importance of oral reading on fluency and comprehension in the primary grade levels. This relation is especially important because oral reading fluency has not traditionally been a strong focus for assessing the effects of treatments in the reading research literatures (Fuchs et al., 2001).

The studies previously discussed related to oral reading fluency demonstrate the importance of oral reading fluency on reading expertise and development. As a result the recommendation for educators is to monitor students oral reading fluency. One of the most familiar forms of assessment is to count the number of correct words while the student reads aloud from a text. This is known as curriculum-based measurement (CBM) and is used in many school districts as a form of progress monitoring (Fuchs et al., 2001). CBM data can be used to gather specific information on a particular student's fluencies. These fluencies include decoding errors, miscues, semantics, syntactics, self-corrections,

pacing, and intonation. For struggling readers, oral reading fluency is difficult because these students read slowly with hesitations and avoid reading at all costs. One way for educators to improve fluency as a child progresses is to use the strategy of repeated readings. This strategy is defined as reading a passage at least three times repeatedly out loud. Repeated readings lead to gains in fluency and comprehension (Palumbo & Sanacore, 2009). This can also be promoted with readers theater in the classroom. This strategy is defined as presenting a script from a work of literature to an audience.

**Home literacy.** As educators, it is expected to have the adequate skills to instruct young learners of early literacy concepts. As a result, educators need to understand that speech consists of phonemes and these are represented by the alphabet (Vesay & Gischlar, 2013). Educators also need to provide explicit instruction on phonological and print structures to young readers. Early literacy instruction in the classroom is vital for young readers. However, this is just as vital in the home setting. Home literacy environments have been associated with emergent literacy skills and advanced future reading achievement (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2016). This result is especially prevalent for children who are living in poverty. There is a strong correlation between the literacy activities that occur in a child's home environment and the development of foundational reading skills such as vocabulary, phonological awareness, and reading comprehension (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2016). Literacy activities that benefit students at home include how often the child is read to at home, teaching of alphabetic letters, trips to the library, and the number of books at home. One of the most important activities discussed in the literature is at-home reading. Reading at home has been shown to correlate with reading orientation skills, language development, vocabulary, and reading comprehension

(Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2016). As a result, it is important to develop a school-to-home relationship to promote early reading in the home environment.

**Interactive read alouds.** Interactive read alouds are important for young literacy learners because a young child's language development is a vital factor for literacy and academic achievement (Lennox, 2013). Language is an important skill for young children to develop because of its relationship to literacy and everyday activities. As stated by Lennox (2013), "There is little doubt about value of well-planned, engaging interactive read-alouds as one of the key avenues for supporting young children's language for thinking and understanding" (p. 387). Interactive read alouds provide students with a broader conceptual knowledge and an increase in challenging discussions, in addition to language development.

**Upper elementary literacy.** In upper elementary (third through fifth grade), students are transitioning from the learning to read stage and foundational literacy to the reading to learn stage (Toste & Ciullo, 2017). Student literacy demands continue to increase in this transition to middle school stage. A recent statistic has found the current literacy demands are not being met for a majority of the student population. "Recent data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (2015) revealed that only 36% of fourth graders are reading at or above a proficient level, and this number decreases in the eighth grade (i.e. 34%)" (Toste and Ciullo, 2017, p. 259). It is the educator's responsibility to help students find a book to read that they have an interest in and is also tailored to their ability. This will assist the student in their desire to read and yet help alleviate frustration.

Similar to the primary literacy stations, there are many different ideas for intermediate literacy stations. These ideas include independent reading, book teasers, buddy reading, word study, vocabulary study, writer's workshop, reader's theater, and research (Richardson, 2009). Each of these independent stations can occur as students and teachers work on small group reading. These intermediate literacy stations lead to the progression of students into middle school literacy.

### **Middle School Literacy**

Adolescents are unique students that require engagement for motivation to learn as well as the necessary autonomy to explore different modalities. Students are in a unique transition from childhood to adulthood that requires independence from elementary processes yet they lack the self-direction high school students thrive on (Stevens, 2006). Research on the middle school level education in the United States has found that middle school classrooms spend a majority of their time in didactic instruction with a focus on factual learning (Stevens, 2006). One specific model created by Stevens for adolescent learning is entitled the "Target Model" for adolescent learners. Each letter of target stands for a specific motivational characteristic of learning. T stands for tasks, A for autonomy, R for resources, R for recognition, G for grouping, E for evaluation, and T for time. As discussed previously in the needs of adolescents, this specific model can be applied to middle school literacy classrooms to provide support for learning (Stevens, 2006).

One foundational teaching framework for complex literary texts consists of three divided parts. This framework was created by Laura Robb and is described in the text

*Unlocking Complex Texts* (2013). The framework consists of teacher modeling, student collaborative practice, and independent student work. This allows the release of responsibility and direction that adolescents need to be successful in the middle school classroom. The first part of the framework is the teacher models of the skills and develops strategies that meet the standards. This framework allows students to deepen their understanding of the specific reading skills. The second part of the framework is student collaborative practice and partnership. This part allows students to gain self-confidence and the peer interactions students need to thrive. The third part of the framework involves independent student work. Students have the confidence to successfully complete work on their own (Robb, 2013). This framework allows adolescents to be given the structure they need to be successful and also allows for autonomy and peer interactions.

There are many different outlooks how the literacy time frame should be organized to support adolescents. A few of these different theories include whole novel instruction, middle school literacy centers, and project-based learning (PBL). One common theme between all the different theories is the fact that students need to have the opportunity to access to high quality reading materials. As stated by Risko, Walker-Dalhouse, Bridges, & Wilson (2011), “teachers are purposely integrating multiple forms of texts- such as information texts paired with narratives, newspapers, and brochures- to address students’ interests and life experiences, and personal questions, all the while building knowledge, skills, and strategies” (p. 376). As a result, there are many different methods to create this environment for students and teachers need to explore what methods work for their specific classroom.



**Whole novel approach.** Whole novels in the classroom provide students with the opportunity to live vicariously through characters. To be more specific, human beings love to tell stories. They provide a narrative of how we think and provide a way to relate to everyday life. As Sacks states in her text entitled *Whole Novels for the Whole Class* (2014), “Whole novels is built on the idea that students must first read and experience a work of literature wholly and authentically” (p. 3). Stories help our brain learn and remember. Students need to read entire texts to analyze the work to develop a deeper understanding. As students read specific instructor selected novels they recognize themes and elements as they appear in a text. This slowly builds literacy confidence and understanding of literary elements. Novels also provide students with the opportunity to become motivated as they read high quality materials. Students become acquainted with high quality authors that can be read more extensively on their own time (Stevens, 2006). Not only do novels present the opportunity to read, but reading novels of interest creates lifelong reading habits.

Within each specific novel unit, there are other forms of literacy that create a well rounded curriculum. These forms include nonfiction texts, poetry, films, and theatrical performances to enhance each novel unit (Sacks, 2014). Each of these various text structures provide an opportunity for students to create interests, engagements, and develop comprehension (Risko et al.,2011). The wide reading of various texts provides students with a chance to internalize the organization of genres and text structures and to explore the rich vocabulary and comprehension skills the texts provide (Palumbo & Sanacore, 2009). One of the most unique aspects of the novel study is that it allows interpretation by the educator. Educators can make their own adaptations and extensions

based on their students' interests. The goal is to find a cohesive balance between the novel, other forms of literary text, and specific ELA or writing standards. Novels provide high quality literature to use as models for writing instruction. Novels also provides cohesiveness between subject areas to solidify and deepen understanding.

When whole novel reading is paired with independent reading novels and lessons they may not explicitly pair with the intended novel. As Laura Robb (2013) has stated,

To move forward and close reading gaps with their peers, students need to read 30 to 50 books a year at their independent reading level. Research has shown that students' reading achievement is directly linked to the amount of independent reading they complete (p. 35).

Students need as much experience with novel text as they can possibly experience at school. These experiences need to consist of whole group reading, small group reading, and independent reading.

Novels can be used for a curriculum as opposed to a textbook or anthology scripted curriculum. Textbooks lack specific depth and perspective students need to enrich their experience with the text (Risko et al., 2011). Novels provide critical analysis skills that are needed for the specific Common Core State Standards. The skills novels provide correlate to the expectations given by Minnesota State Literacy Standards. A strategy for collaborative reading program is book clubs. Book clubs are an instructional framework for using children's literature in the classroom. This includes whole-group community share, time for reading, writing, and discussing in small groups (Brock &

Boyd, 2011). Book clubs provide adolescent students with the academic structure they need and the opportunity to collaborate with peers.

Novels also provide students will the opportunity to experience new forms of text, such as multimodal and graphic texts. Multimodal text provides readers with motivating words, images, sounds, and movements. Although this type of text has been shown to distract readers from comprehension (Risko et al., 2011). If this is the only text struggling readers are willing to read, it is an engaging option for teachers to use to promote novel reading. This form of text needs to be reiterated with graphic novels. An article on graphic novels by Karp (2013) states, “A young reader who sees panels and pages and entire stories of comics that they have successfully read piling up begins to build that all important new identity as an able and enthusiastic reader” (p. 16). Graphic novels provide students with the opportunity to use visuals with text to create connections to student experiences. This is especially motivating for students because graphic novels provide students with comprehension, language, vocabulary development, connections to student’s experiences, and the study of social, cultural, and historical issues in everyday life (Risko et al., 2011). A study completed by Linda Smentana found students who read graphic novels have a larger vocabulary and a better understanding of verb tenses than those that do not read graphic novels (Karp, 2013). As shown, multimodal texts and graphic novels are a great option for texts in the classroom for students who do not have an interest in reading.

**Literacy centers.** Middle school teachers struggle to advance students from the support in the elementary to the rigor of their secondary education. A framework that

provides engagement, motivation, excitement, and creativity in literacy centers. Literacy centers are “a framework of short, independently oriented activities conducted in small groups and focused on teaching specific literacy standards” (Hodges & Mctigue, 2014, p. 155). This framework focuses on the teacher being the classroom facilitator, peer interactions, exploring new concepts and technologies, and grappling with critical questions. As formerly focused in the elementary grade levels, middle school literacy centers provide dynamic instruction that gives nuance to specific literacy concepts using group orientated activities.

There are four specific advantages to using literacy centers in the middle school literacy block. The first advantage is differentiation because this is the specific literacy skill that is practiced at each center and can be altered for individuals or small group to enhance motivation (Hodges & Mctigue, 2014). The second advantage is the opportunity to reteach. Students are able to reinforce learning based on independent practice in the center. The third advantage is motivation and self-regulation. As discussed earlier, adolescents struggle to create intrinsic motivation, as opposed to extrinsic motivation. Literacy centers fosters intrinsic motivation and teaches students to create personal responsibility for their own learning. The fourth advantage to literacy centers is technology integration. Technology can increase student motivation for literacy and provides classroom management for teachers. Teachers have the ability to monitor student’s actions on devices as they work with each other in a small group (Hodges & Mctigue, 2014).

There are a few specific literacy centers that have been shown to be the most effective in the middle school classroom. These literacy centers include a gallery walk, interactive whiteboards, computers, iPads, individual classroom activities, and student accountability. Gallery walks are an interactive display of students' portfolios. Students create some form of work, depending on the guidance given by the teacher, and display their work for the class. From there, fellow classmates critique and comment on the examples, which allows for self-reflection. Interactive whiteboards can be used for a variety of purposes. In particular, students can annotate on-screen text, concept map, and complete vocabulary activities. This resource is of interest to students because it provides an opportunity for students to discuss novels with peers in a kinesthetic environment. Computers and iPads can be used in similar formats as the interactive whiteboard. Computers can be used to respond to teacher generated writing prompts and classroom blogs. Blogs are especially recommended because they provide peer motivation to edit and revise writing in a public forum (Hodges & Mictigue, 2014). iPads can be used by assigning specific applications for students to practice specific literacy skills or by designing activities they can complete on their own.

In specific classrooms there are many different literacy centers that can be assigned by the teacher. These literacy centers include independent reading, vocabulary races, word hunts, interactive games, and other various literacy skill activities which can be based on the specific skills that is being worked on and at the discretion of the teacher. Having a variety of activities for each literacy period allows students to experience a variety of learning models.

The final piece that is vital for literacy centers to be effective is student accountability. Specific expectations for each station need to be posted for students to review as they complete the activity. Students should also fill out a completion card as they complete various stations throughout the literacy block.

**Project based learning in the classroom.** Project based learning engages students in activities as they create projects to solve a problem or answer a lingering question. As defined by Scogin, Kruger, Jekkals, & Steinfeldt (2017):

Project based learning (PBL) to mean experiential activities involving the following: open-ended, driving questions or problems; authentic application of content and skills; student directed learning; and student creation of products, presentations, or performances to address the driving question or problem (p. 40).

Positives of the collaboration experience with PBL include that it provides students with a non-traditional environment, students are able to gain maturity, and students are able to recognize the importance of collaboration. This collaboration creates important life skills to be an effective member of society. Negatives of the collaboration experience with PBL includes the fact there will be off-task behavior because of the increased control given to students, frustration with group members, and the focus on grades. In particular, students were able to discover how various learners brought different skill sets and ideas to projects to benefit the team (Scogin et al., 2017). This prepares students to effectively work in the future. A study completed by Scogin and colleagues tested whether students national test scores would be impacted by the project based learning. This particular study found that project based learning provided engaging content that made students

excited about future endeavors in the work force, contributed to students' non-cognitive growth, and did not negatively affect students' standardized test scores (2017). These results demonstrates the autonomy and freedom adolescents need along with guiding from the educator.

### **Differentiation Methods**

**Students who struggle.** Adolescents who struggle with academics benefit from educators who understand the complexities of adolescent development. These particular students need educators to provide an enjoyable and motivating academic experience by improving their vocabulary and reading fluency. Students who struggle can benefit from extracurricular activities that promote academic achievements (Palumbo & Sanacore, 2009). These activities include a form of a homework club to accommodate unique learning styles and personalities. Key characteristics of the homework club stated by Palumbo and Sanacore include assigning homework that is interesting and challenging, providing a chance to read aloud, conducting individual conferences, easy access to instructional resources, encouraging choice of expression, assessing learners' progress, providing professional development for staff, and securing funding for the club (2009). This club will create an environment for struggling learners to catch up on deficiencies.

One of the intervention techniques used by schools is the Response to Intervention (RTI) model. This model has been used in elementary settings for many years and the purpose for implementation is clear. The model provides early identification for students at risk and analyzes the risk based on the tiered method of the magnitude of risk (Ciullo et al., 2016). However, application to the middle school model

has been particularly difficult. Predicted reasons for this struggle are the difficulty to find adequate screening and progress monitoring tools, an increase in the reading difficulties, and an emphasis on testing in the middle school (Ciullo et al., 2016). This difficulty is especially important to recognize because middle schools may be the final opportunity to remediate students who are struggling with literacy. Students with a learning disability in reading need effective literacy instruction. After reviewing many different studies, students with learning disabilities need direct and strategic instruction. It is also important for educators to provide students with content enhancement tools, such as graphic organizers (Ciullo et al., 2016). To conclude, it is important for educators to recognize students who are struggling and provide these students with the instructional methods that best suit their needs.

**Students who excel.** Gifted students or students who excel in the literacy classroom need to also have altered curriculum to ensure success. It is common for teachers to give students who excel in the classroom an “independent study” or research tasks as a means of extending curriculum (Taylor & Oakley, 2007). Other strategies to push students who excel include collaborative learning, peer tutoring, and giving choices for texts or activities that can engage them further. Another approach discussed by Taylor & Oakley is curriculum compacting. Taylor and Oakley (2007) describe this as: “Curriculum compacting is the system designed to meet the needs of gifted students by either eliminating work that has been previously mastered or by streamlining work that may be mastered at a pace commensurate with the students’ abilities” (p. 21-22). This strategy eliminates the unnecessary tasks and reduces the boredom gifted students face.



In a literacy classroom this can be applied to not just gifted students, but also to provide differentiation for all students.

### **Summary**

In this literature review, four main topics were explored, including adolescent development, foundational literacy, middle school literacy, and differentiation methods. Understanding these specific topics is important to be able to explore the research question: *What is the most effective literacy curriculum for developing adolescents?* Adolescents are in a dynamic developmental phase of life and need experiences to promote prosocial development. This developmental phase needs to be addressed in the middle school literacy classroom as well as when building upon the foundational literacy concepts taught in the elementary grade levels. It is important to meet the needs of meeting all students where they are at in the literacy development.

In chapter three, the method for exploring the literacy curriculum is investigated. The theory behind selecting the particular curriculum format and the specific projects audience will be discussed. Finally, a project description and timeline for completion will be included.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Methodology

#### Introduction

A literature review of my question: “*What is the most effective literacy curriculum for developing adolescents?*” has led me to design a well-rounded curriculum. This question is important because although there has been much research regarding literacy, adolescents are at a unique stage in their lives that needs to be adapted for in the classroom. The purpose of the literacy curriculum is to create engaging, relatable lessons that develop life-long readers. The curriculum will consist of whole group novels, small group lessons, and independent work. This chapter will outline the project setting and the focused participants of the curriculum. The rationale for the curricular framework, as well as the curriculum development process and theories, will also be explained. Finally, a timeline for the curriculum development will be proposed.

#### Setting

The setting of the literacy curriculum development is in a fifth-grade classroom. The district is a rural K-12 building divided into elementary, middle, and high school settings. The fifth grade is considered a part of the middle school model. Currently, there are four fifth grade teachers in the district. Each classroom has a single teacher for both literacy and mathematics. The remaining subjects are specialized based on teacher preference. These subjects include physical science, social studies, life science, and mathematic enrichment. The curriculum planning in the district revolves around the

theme “engaging all learners for a life-long path to success”. This theme is at the forefront for all activities in the classroom.

Middle school student demographics of the 340 students enrolled, 94.7% White-non Hispanic, 3.5% two or more Races, 0.9% Hispanic, 0.6% Asian, and 0.3% American Indian/Alaskan Natives. According to the Minnesota Department of Education’s research site, 55.6% of students received free/reduced lunches during the year of the study. The percentage of students in the district’s middle school who qualified for Special Education services was 17.1% of the population. The percentage of students who qualified for English Language Learner services was 0.9% of the population. These demographics have remained stable from year to year.

Student achievement in the fifth grade is measured through the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA). In 2016, 67.1% of the fifth grade’s students met or exceeded the standards on the Reading MCA assessment compared to 67.7% statewide. 61.9% of the fifth grade’s students met or exceeded the standards on the Math MCA assessment compared to 58.8% statewide. 54.8% of the fifth grade’s students met or exceeded the standards on the Science MCA assessment compared to 61.6% statewide. For this literacy curriculum the most relevant reading MCA assessment was similar to the state average.

### **Curriculum Participants**

Fifth grade students are typically ten or eleven years old. There was an average of twenty-two students in each classroom for the 2017-2018 school year. In my classroom,

15 of the students were female and seven of the students were male. Three students qualified for Special Education services during the 2017-2018 school year. Two students qualified for Specific Learning Disabilities and one student is vision impaired. Students participated in a literacy curriculum that is aligned with the Minnesota State Literacy Standards (grade 5). The curriculum was taught from 9:30 AM to 11:00 AM each day.

### **Technology**

An important factor to consider for this district is the access to technology. Google Chromebooks are provided one-to-one for each student in the fifth grade for the first time during the 2017-2018 school year. A Chromebook is a laptop that runs primarily on an Internet browser with separate applications. Previously, students had access to one-to-five iPads and have never had the opportunity for each student to have a device. This influences literacy activities and independent activities that are designed in the curriculum.

### **Curricular Theory**

The curricular theory behind the literacy curriculum best aligns with John Dewey's theory. Dewey's school of thought was known as pragmatism (Richards, 2017). This theory focused on a naturalistic approach that views knowledge as arising from human organism's interactions with its environment, which means humans need obstacles to human actions and active manipulations of the environment to test hypotheses (Richards, 2017). This theories focus is to ensure students can deal

effectively in the modern world. It also focuses on “project based learning” or providing students with the opportunity for choice and cross curriculum connections.

As a result, I chose this theory because I believe education’s purpose is to provide human beings with a well-rounded explanation about the world around them and to allow students the opportunity to make their own informed decisions. Students need the opportunity to take their own initiative to learn about topics that interest them. In particular, education needs to be relevant to reach all learners. This type of education closely aligns with the school district’s mission of engaging all learners for life-long success.

### **Curriculum Development Process**

The curriculum development process will be followed based on the Understanding by Design (UbD) model. The UbD model has a few important principles that are followed to ensure centrality of teaching and assessing for understanding. The primary goal of UbD is to develop and deepen student understanding or their ability to make meaning of their learning and being able to transfer the learning (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011). The curriculum is also planned backwards from the end result or long-term goal and is completed through a three-stage design process.

The three-stage design process includes desired results, evidence, and the learning plan. Identifies desired results focuses on long-term transfer goals, essential questions, and knowledge and skills students need to acquire by the end of a unit or school year. Determining acceptable evidence focuses on products and performances that reveal

evidence of knowledge. This process also focuses on the criteria for assessment of products and performances. Planning learning experiences and instruction accordingly focuses on the daily activities, experiences, and lessons that lead to the achievement of the long-term transfer goals (Wiggins & McTighe, 2011). The backwards model allows the educator to see the result of daily lessons.

### **Curriculum Elements**

The elements of the curriculum will focus on whole novels for the entire group curriculum. There will be three different units created. The novels include *Wonder* by R. J. Palacio, *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson, and a student choice novel unit. Each novel is paired with corresponding activities to promote small group activities, collaboration, writing, and independent work. There are also paired formative assessments to ensure understanding throughout the novel and a final summative assessment. At the end of each unit, a project is paired with the novel to demonstrate understanding of standards through unique modalities.

The literacy block is structured into a ninety-minute segment each day. Within this segment, whole group reading, small group reading, and a writing lesson will be taught. During the ninety-minute period, there is a thirty-minute segment that a paraprofessional is present to support struggling learners. Students with an Individualized Education Program or 504 Plan, may receive extra support with a special education teacher during this time in either sixty or a thirty-minute time increment depending on particular student needs.

## **Timeline**

The timeline for completing the literacy curriculum was during the spring 2018 semester at Hamline University. Throughout fall 2017 there was time to develop and begin the creation of a concrete curriculum based on the chosen novels. Each novel unit is completed in four to six week increments because of the necessity to dive deeply into the text to ensure comprehension. The project at the end of each novel unit is completed in a week.

## **Conclusion**

The methods for the literacy curriculum development described in this chapter were designed to answer the question *What is the most effective literacy curriculum for developing adolescents?* The setting has been identified as a rural K-12 community and the participants are fifth grade students. The curricular theory has been identified to ensure the mission of the district is followed. This mission is engaging all learners for life-long success. The curriculum consists of creating novel units to provide engagement for students. Novels are focused on because they provide a modality to allow adolescents the autonomy and peer relationships they need to be successful.

The following chapter will provide conclusion for the curriculum project. This will include the process of developing the curriculum, examples of the curriculum, and reflection of the curriculum development process.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Conclusions

#### Introduction

Throughout the entire capstone project, I have learned the complexities of designing a reading curriculum for adolescents. As I explained in Chapter Two, adolescence is a unique period of one's life where the development of autonomy and peer relationships is prevalent. It is vitally important to incorporate this fact into curriculums we utilize for these adolescents. This led me to the district where I currently am employed and the need to develop a curriculum conducive to adolescences as opposed to a curriculum that we were currently using that was based on the needs of younger students. The initial reaction as a brand new teacher was mixed. I was excited to be able to use craft in my teaching to design a curriculum that not only would my students enjoy, but I also enjoyed teaching. However, it was anxiety producing to be expected to create a curriculum from various materials successfully and cover all of the Minnesota State Literacy Standards. This is the reasoning behind my question: "*What is the most effective literacy curriculum for developing adolescents?*" Based on my research and experiences in the classroom, I have created a project that focuses in on three separate units based on novels. The first unit consists of the novel *Bridge to Terabithia* and is 20 days in length. The second unit consists of the novel *Wonder* and is 40 days in length. The final unit is based on an independent novel and is 15 days in length.

In chapter Four I will explain what I have learned about myself as a researcher, writer, and learner from the capstone project process. Next, I will discuss the connections



I was able to create between my capstone project and my literature review. I will also address implications and limitations of my project. Finally, I will explain possibilities for future research projects and recommendations I have based on my own findings.

### **Learning from the Capstone Process**

Throughout the entire capstone process I came to understand myself as an academic learner once again. At the beginning of the capstone process I struggled with understanding which topic I should venture into and explore. I had so many ideas and thoughts that were possible options floating through my head. However, after thinking immensely about various topics, I went with the most practical option. I looked at an everyday issue that I had in my classroom and decided to explore my classroom's literacy curriculum. This is especially beneficial because I know it will impact my daily life in the classroom and affect the students I work with each day.

I feel as far as research, the most difficult thing for me to overcome was just getting started. I was most worried there would be so much information that I would have a hard time deciphering the important material to include. To overcome this dilemma, I found just getting started was the most significant benefit. There was an immense amount of information on early literacy and I was able to find plenty of research to include in my project. I also felt extremely accomplished after completing the significant amount of writing that was required through the capstone project process. I have appreciated how Hamline has laid out GED8023 Capstone Practicum and GED8490 Capstone Project into manageable steps. Each assignment has provided me with the stepping stones to completing the entire capstone project. I have always enjoyed writing and found that

writing is one of my assets. However, to know that I have completed the entire capstone project after feeling very overwhelmed at the beginning of this journey, makes me feel accomplished.

In general, I have learned so much about myself and about adolescent literacy from the capstone process. I have come to know the importance of continuing my education and that learning is truly a lifelong endeavor.

### **Literature Review**

I found the literature review to be the most time-consuming but beneficial part of the entire capstone process. Some connections I was able to take from the literature review into my curriculum design included the importance of engagement and autonomy in the classroom and the whole novel approach to literacy. First, engagement in the classroom predicts middle school academic success (Skinner, Pitzer, & Steele, 2009). As a result, I used knowledge from my previous years of teaching and research about adolescents to develop engaging activities throughout the entire curriculum process. This includes peer discussions, relatable assignments, and the use of technology.

Second, autonomous decision making and critical thinking skills are a vital condition for healthy development into adolescences (Schuck et al., 2013). This importance was at the forefront of my curriculum design. I was sure to address difficult topics that are important to develop in adolescents, such as grief and peer relationships. Both *Wonder* and *Bridge to Terabithia* address difficult topics that need to be discussed in adolescents to develop critical thinking. My third unit is based on an independent novel and provides students with the opportunity to choose their own novel and apply all

of the reading strategies we have been working on throughout the entire school year. This provides students with the scaffolding and release of responsibility to create academic success.

Third, the whole novel approach to reading provides students with the opportunity to practice literacy skills in an everyday world context (Sacks, 2014). This approach develops life long readers through interest in novels. In my curriculum, I was able to develop each unit around specific novels, as well as provide other forms of literature to create a well-rounded curriculum. Students are able to read high quality materials and develop a deeper understanding of characters throughout the entire novel. Within the curriculum, there were various picture book read alouds as mentor texts, poetry, and nonfiction articles to pair with the novels. This provides students with the well rounded literacy curriculum they need to be successful. In conclusion, engagement, autonomy, and the whole novel approach were all contributing factors to my adolescent literacy curriculum.

### **The Final Project**

The final product of my capstone project consisted of three separate unit plans and 75 days of lessons. The three separate units are based on *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson, *Wonder* by R.J. Palacios, and an independent novel that students are able to choose based on student interest. Each lesson follows the outline discussed in Chapter Three and gives students the scaffolded autonomy they desire.

My project is a benefit to the teaching profession because the resources I created can be used by any teacher that wishes to teach these particular novels in their classroom.

Each lesson can be taken and used as it was created or be adapted to student's needs in specific classrooms. I have all the resources included in the curriculum with appropriate citations for ease of use and have included all the Minnesota State Standards. This means teachers do not need to go through the perpetual cycle I experienced the past three years of teaching. This will save teachers time and energy they can invest in other areas of their teaching.

### **Limitations**

Limitations from this capstone project include the availability of teachers to specific resources. Teachers may not have access to the same novels I have access to in my district. However, the curriculum and many of the activities can be adapted to a variety of novel genres. Another limitation is the time constraints on the curriculum creation. The literacy curriculum is 75 days in length. I would like to create a year long or 180 day curriculum for fifth grade that is aligned with the Minnesota State Standards for Literacy.

### **Future Research Projects**

After completing this capstone project, I feel a sense of urgency to continue with creating curriculums with the remaining literacy units. I feel comfortable with the lesson plan template I created for organization and find the everyday ease of use to be beneficial. The literacy units I would like to continue working on includes two more novel units, a nonfiction unit, and a poetry unit. I can also see myself creating similar engaging curriculums in other subject areas. This includes curriculums focused on writing standards and science standards. After experiencing the process of creating

curriculum with colleagues, I feel we are well equipped to continue creating as time goes on. I also know that I and my colleagues would find this valuable and time well spent.

The literacy curriculum that I created will be implemented with fidelity starting in the fall of 2018. My colleagues are ecstatic to have a document of engaging and standards based lessons to refer to throughout the entire 75-day long unit plans. We will continue to change and develop the curriculum over time to fit the needs of our students.

### **Conclusion**

Chapter Four focused on learnings about myself and my professional career throughout the entire capstone process. After reflecting on all I have learned from my curriculum design and capstone project, I realized how much I have benefited from the entire experience. I feel very accomplished in my literacy curriculum. I also have a new sense of confidence in myself and the profession I have chosen as a life long career. Without this experience, I feel I would still be struggling through lesson plans each day and would not have a renewed sense of making a difference inside the walls of my classroom. I am now excited knowing I have the opportunity to develop life-long readers, one adolescent at a time.

**Appendix A****Curriculum Template****Unit Plan****Time Length:****Focus Skills for Novel:**

Standards Throughout Whole Unit:

<b>Book/Pages</b>	<b>Focus/ Discussion points</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Standard</b>

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