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A CASE STUDY ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DISCIPLINARY LITERACY WITH MULTIMODAL DESIGN IN SOCIAL STUDIES

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LITERACY WITH MULTIMODAL DESIGN IN SOCIAL STUDIES

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ABSTRACT

A CASE STUDY ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DISCIPLINARY

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John J. Castaldo

Social studies education provides education researchers with a less common opportunity to discover multimodal instructional methods for disciplinary literacy. During a 12-week period in 2021, four social studies teachers with at least one history course in a large suburban Mercer County, New Jersey school district participated in a case study to showcase how disciplinary literacy can be implemented using multimodal design. Given the existing lack of research on instructional literacy design for secondary grades, this study provides researchers and practitioners with multiple perspectives on how to maximize teaching practices in underrepresented areas of education. Significantly, social studies teachers will thus be able to build a highly effective set of disciplinary literacy activities that incorporate multimodalities, whether in a remote, hybrid, or traditional setting. The main research question for this study is: *What are the experiences of teachers implementing disciplinary reading instruction using multimodality?* In turn, the research sub-questions consider: *How does the prior academic and/or professional background of participating social studies teachers influence the implementation of disciplinary literacy with multimodalities? To what extent are teachers reflecting on the effectiveness of the implementation of this practice?*

The instructional design for this study is based on Lave and Wenger's (1991) situated learning: within the series of mini lessons, learned literacy takes place for students through participation while the whole person acts in the world. Participants were selected through purposive sampling in conjunction with the district's central office administration. With the district looking to advance disciplinary literacy for all subjects over the next decade, the most collaborative-oriented social studies were selected, specifically either honors- or academic-level history courses. Through the case study, participant educators developed their understanding of how disciplinary literacy is attained for students, particularly through relationship-building and social practice. The overall findings highlight positive experiences from teachers after implementing a series of disciplinary literacy-focused mini-units with multimodalities. Since this study uses entirely qualitative methods, the data invites further analysis using different qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-method approaches to determine the best means to implement disciplinary literacy within history education, both during and after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Keywords: *social studies education, disciplinary literacy, multimodal design*

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with her in the future. Recognizing the importance of integrating highly effective,

culturally responsive pedagogy for social studies instruction is critical for

advancing disciplinary literacy.

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CHAPTER 1

Problem Statement

Carl Becker (1932) explains in *Everyman His Own Historian* that reducing history to its lowest terms is like reducing a fraction to the lowest possible number. Historically, Becker's poignant writing came at a time of grave uncertainty throughout the United States as a country in the throes of the Great Depression. It also points to an urgency to simplify history; once unraveled, more could be learned to inform the future. This elevates history content as an effective tool for promoting literacy development for secondary students. In secondary social studies classes, disciplinary literacy can foster essential literacy skills that simultaneously support a more comprehensive understanding of history and advance students' critical literacy development. Disciplinary literacy affords the reader opportunities to better analyze the side of history that is unchanged (Becker, 1932). Although written almost a century ago, Becker's work is still relevant, guiding readers to self-audit as a critical literacy skill and to conduct an interpretive analysis of the past. In pedagogical terms, secondary grade levels need to be more invested in implementing a social studies curriculum that promotes disciplinary literacy using a multimodal approach. The proposed study seeks to investigate this multimodal approach to literacy within social studies content areas.

A major focus of this study is to challenge how disciplinary literacy using multimodal designs for secondary social studies can be implemented. Essentially, disciplinary literacy refers to how reading, writing, and communication are built

and implemented across a discipline (and its sub-disciplines). Shanahan and Shanahan (2012) explain how disciplinary literacy is a form of instruction that focuses on various thought processes that question how problems are solved in different disciplines. As Gillis et al. (2017) state, it is a "line of research [that] explores how the epistemology and linguistics of the various influence the comprehension of text and these disciplines" (p.12.) As such, disciplinary literacy provides a convergence between content area knowledge, multimodalities, and general literacy capabilities.

It is necessary to challenge the process through which disciplinary literacy is implemented in social studies courses with a focus on history at the secondary level. Social studies educators have a unique opportunity to teach critical reading, that is, the practice of helping the reader identify various discourses and ideologies present in various multimodalities of literacy (Shreiner, 2016). Often, historians and social studies teachers conduct disciplinary literacy lessons using a Socratic design; this stems from situated learning to convey different levels of meaning when it comes to literacy since they help the learner develop a deeper understanding of primary texts and secondary sources (Shreiner, 2018). Social studies teachers have a deep knowledge of the world, language usage, and visual imagery, which together can foster distinct gains in student reading comprehension through differentiation. Additionally, the cultural knowledge mastered by social studies teachers can help students develop multiple literacy skills, such as decoding coupled with comprehension; this process warrants more thorough investigation (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Stewart, 2015).

Moje (2009) addresses how this blending of reading and writing is used within various disciplines to help students comprehend meaning. Gillis et al. (2017) underline differences across disciplines and subdisciplines regarding how literacy—and therefore comprehension—is built. Furthermore, the implementation of expository text and technical terms can be intertwined to provide an overview of how literacy is fostered within different areas (Moje, 2009). Moreover, in the 2020s, the implementation of disciplinary literacy in secondary grades is vital for addressing new global demands. Delving into literate behavior across various academic disciplines, including core and elective subjects at the secondary level, highlights greater demands for disciplinary literacy since the texts involved can have radically different interpretations (Draper et al., 2010). The proposed research study will examine social studies teachers' use of multimodal approaches to disciplinary literacy and the effect of instructional approaches on student outcomes as well as teacher aptitude.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this case study will be to examine the instructional implementation of disciplinary literacy in secondary history courses with the use of multimodal design for teachers in a large Mercer County, New Jersey public school district. Knowledge generated from this study is expected to inform the instructional design of disciplinary literacy within secondary social studies courses. Exposing the parallel areas of disciplinary literacy in social studies can advance formal research on how multimodalities can be a driving force for the need of disciplinary literacy. Ultimately, the research seeks to glean insights that

could be applied more widely across other secondary content areas at the district and state levels.

Significance of the Study

In many middle school and high school social studies classrooms, critical literacy through multimodalities takes place regularly. As a result, De La Paz et al. (2014) assert that students make gains in their literacy skills, specifically writing, when social studies teachers are invested in the process of improving disciplinary literacy within the curriculum.

Impact for Teachers

Durkin (1978) argued that instruction for reading comprehension in grades 3 to 6 was limited. Although this practice has certainly increased over the past 40 years for elementary grades, developing comprehensive literacy design for secondary teachers still lacks focus. Teaching reading comprehension and literacy is vital for pushing disciplinary literacy skills in social studies. Al Khaiyali (2013) argues that Durkin's findings have largely remained unchanged for teachers allotting instructional minutes devoted to reading within the content areas of secondary classroom teachers. Although secondary teachers have content expertise, translating it into highly effective disciplinary literacy instruction with multimodalities can be challenging (Shreiner, 2014). However, once content area teachers master implementing disciplinary literacy techniques, they are more able to collaborate positively with other school stakeholders such as literacy coaches, administrators, and students, leading to improved literacy outcomes (Neumerski, 2013; Stevens, 2010). While steadfast instructional literacy practices have gained

notoriety within the general to special education dynamic and/or elementary education, the literature remains vague on how secondary history teachers can advance critical literacy instruction for their students (Allington, 2002; Flynn, 2007; Kennedy, 2010).

In *Reading Comprehension Requires Knowledge—of Words and the World*, E.D. Hirsch (2003) proposes that the combination of student background knowledge and proper pronunciation of important content terms should be a focus when researching reading comprehension trends in secondary students. Since then, much has changed regarding the background knowledge and prior reading skills of US students entering high school, including a push for co-teaching in secondary as well as higher education when it comes to sharing literacy in content courses. Arguably, Howard and Gidry (2017) research study at the university level on this topic needs to be expanded for secondary education so that social studies teachers can be provided with a series of mini-units infused with disciplinary literacy instruction on pertinent curriculum topics. When such approaches are coupled with training, reflection, and observation, disciplinary literacy will be seen as an asset that advances student analysis of their content.

Impacts for Students

A social studies teacher can help students evolve from the ability to decode and achieve fluency from earlier grades to having mastery of discipline-specific vocabulary and the analytical ability to decipher relevant texts. At the middle-school level, social studies teaching advances students in developing critical literacy in the content area, using an array of multimodal techniques

within close readings to advance these skills (Spires et al., 2008). Most studies on disciplinary literacy have been qualitative; this research will follow this trend in the form of a case study. Social studies teachers will be used to substantiate the demands of critical literacy in multimodalities within disciplines, given the advanced nature of the language used'

From an apprenticeship perspective, learning is situated in—and knowledge is constructed from—a student's participation in a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Participation in specific communities requires members to understand the various repertoires, routines, tools, vocabularies, and ideas that are used and uniquely situated in different communities. In social studies, teachers can strategically position disciplinary literacy activities using situated learning that helps differentiate student access to various topics (McConachie & Petrosky, 2010; Moje & Lewis, 2007). McConachie and Petrosky (2010) describe this model as "learning on the diagonal," in which students actively and simultaneously display growth in their disciplinary habits of thinking and content area knowledge. (Spires et al., 2018, p. 1405).

The implementation of a connectionist model of reading can be furthered when social studies teachers implement critical literacy instruction through multimodalities. For historical interpretation during a critical reading piece, processing by teacher and students is divided among various subsystems, resulting in different clues to making analysis of various multimodalities in a lesson. Even though many connectionist models of reading theories focus more on elementary education, the initiatives of this approach call for the connection of a

context and meaning processor for students to develop vocabulary and content knowledge skills. Social studies teachers can be more mindful of using certain vocabulary and phonological awareness during instruction to help build upon student text knowledge (Seidenberg & McClelland, 1989; Adams, 1990). An example of building phonological awareness within social studies is showing how Latin is intertwined within legal as well as governmental terms. In this way, students can experience an increase in comprehension through a connectionist model of reading in social studies courses. Multimodalities in critical literacy often help social studies teachers convey ways for their students to improve their literal, inferential, and critical comprehension of texts.

Considering the increased focus on social injustices as well the impact of Covid-19 at the time of this study, developing social studies teachers to advance content with disciplinary literacy using multimodalities is critical to the perseverance of American students. To extend Shreiner (2018), more secondary teachers may pursue an advanced degree in a content area to maximize their abilities in integrating exceptional disciplinary literacy practices. In the event secondary teachers refrain from doing so, this study endeavors to serve as a resource for administrators to guide teachers in initiating disciplinary literacy.

Justification

Pearson and Johnson (1978) demonstrated how proposition level comprehension is a critical factor in reading comprehension, as it allows the learner to connect smaller or individual components into universal components for meaning. By preparing students for propositional level comprehension, their

reading skills gained in one subject area can be emulated within other domains. Historical analyses of multimodalities help aid the student's abilities to paraphrase, see associations, identify components of the main idea, be comparative, and interpret figurative language. For example, a teacher requiring students to study President Kennedy's Inaugural Address can have students read the text, discuss, and watch the address in various orders to facilitate their comprehension of links drawn between poverty, communism, racism, and other social injustices that were taking place at the time. Knowing that, for example, during the 1960 campaign, the then Senator Kennedy's witnessing of the poverty in rural West Virginia had shaped his policy ambitions, a social studies teacher who is better trained to advance this event by coupling disciplinary literacy with multimodalities can have lasting impacts on the way students analyze social studies.

The strategic placing of reading, discussions, and viewing in various orders are strong examples of the effective implementation of disciplinary literacy with multimodalities. Knowing where and how to present such methods as a social studies teacher can have a resounding impact on student motivation towards reading and content growth. Reflecting with teachers and guiding them based on such experiences is a critical element of this dissertation. As shown in the example above, studying the contexts as well as the causal and implicit references of a political speech can be enhanced through a social studies teacher's expertise and, ultimately, the student will improve their overall reading comprehension. In other instances, anaphora or substitute words can be used to

reflect changes in the way words are currently compared with different eras. English language arts, social studies, and humanities teachers have shared expertise in helping students connect terms where substitutes might be present, and this helps proposition and concept level comprehension, especially when analogies or ambiguous wording may be used. An example of multimodality advancing critical literacy is a social studies teacher asking students to read the text of President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and compare it to hearing Dr. Martin Luther King's "I Have A Dream" speech from 1963, which may help students connect words used in unfamiliar contexts.

Teaching critical literacy in social studies classrooms is problematized by major societal changes and the diverse academic abilities of the student body (Shreiner, 2016). Shreiner (2018) argues that social studies can be a vehicle for providing students with imperative knowledge for today's "globalized, technologically-advanced, information-saturated world (p.47)." Although social studies are viewed as both disciplinary and interdisciplinary, disciplinary literacy within the subjects may be prevented due to perceived time constraints and/or limited training for teachers. As social studies teachers hail from varied backgrounds, their perspectives on how their content areas ought to be expressed may also vary; this is especially true around disciplinary literacy because of the divergent lenses through which social studies teachers navigate their field. Furthermore, Shreiner contends that setbacks have prevented disciplinary literacy from taking over social studies education due to the lack of critical consensus as to whether social sciences are "disciplinary, interdisciplinary, inquiry-based,

teacher-centered, progressive, or traditional.' Schreiner also strongly asserts that social studies teachers may not have "disciplinary knowledge [and it may seem] a more daunting hurdle since most teachers take only a few classes in other social studies disciplines (pp. 47-49)."

As evidence of this complexity, the types of disciplinary literacy in social studies can be divided into four main areas: historical, political/civics, geographic, and economic. Even prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, secondary teachers have had to overcome unusual roadblocks due to bureaucratic demands bestowed upon them by federal, state, and local bureaucracy. Certain educators are also reluctant to adopt disciplinary literacy since it may seem to be just another policy initiative that, in practice, leads to roadblocks that are difficult to dismantle. Nevertheless, the availability of digital text, visual, graphic and audio sources such as the Veterans History Project (Library of Congress) provides a multimodal literacy that eases teacher apprehension.

Once students enter middle school, the ambiguity in content texts expands. As a result, teachers need to guide students in developing tactical abilities to attack the nuances present in disciplines through procedure. For example, a world geography and cultures course might require middle schoolers to learn about the complexities of globalism, capitalism, free trade, genocide, and other geographic terms that are new and unfamiliar to students in this age group. In response, a social studies teacher can create procedural mapping that helps guide students as the unfamiliarity of new texts confronts their learning. This procedure does not have to occur from a hierarchy; according to Rumelhart (1994), an array of

syntactic, semantic, orthographic, and lexical components influences student growth in literacy. Encouraging social studies teachers to create more disciplinary literacy practices should not be a forced endeavor, but rather a complementary practice (Spires et al., 2018). In this way, social studies teachers can work to bridge this gap through several multimodal designs, without any realization on the part of the students that a foundation for disciplinary literacy is already being constructed.

Spires et al. (2018) outlines that research on disciplinary literacy in social studies since the late 1980s can be categorized into three main phases: "(1) the situating of literacy in the context of disciplinary knowledge, (2) the emergence of a cognitive argument for disciplinary literacies, and (3) the rise of pedagogical scaffolds for supporting literacy teaching and learning" (p. 1409). The third point argues for scaffolding to support literacy with multimodal components that can be made more available for teachers, so that they become more confident and less overwhelmed when adjusting their teaching. Students also have a less rigid approach to receiving support when reading social studies literacy from a disciplinary standpoint.

The way in which historians and social studies teachers read a text requires a unique set of cognitive functions. Wineburg (1991) argues that the way historians decipher text is not just a means of constructing knowledge but of investigating that sometimes considers human motives; creating a scaffold for students to tackle social studies literacy is therefore a necessary 21st-century skill. However, Spires et al (2018) suggest most social studies teachers do not have an

advanced degree in the content area in which they teach, making it difficult for those teachers to provide students with the appropriate scaffolding to engage in investigative learning. The proposed research study aims to provide direction and support for those without advanced degrees, offering insight into how they can use multimodal disciplinary literacy to support student learning.

Narrowing down techniques for social studies teachers can be a challenge, especially with rapid changes throughout the country brought on by shifting demographics and new technologies. The primary mode of literacy instruction in secondary social studies, silent reading, is already antiquated and counterproductive. By contrast, the various multimodalities available for critical literacy can help eradicate any basic reading problems that an older student might have. When teachers present social studies topics with multimedia designs interwoven with the knowledge of the various intelligences (e.g., academic, emotional, cultural) various intelligences and preferred modes of learning, teachers can support and accelerate the learning of students who are struggling readers below grade level (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2010).

An area of concern for social studies in literacy has been improving analytical writing. Graham and Harris (2011) recommend various means to bolster student writing; one area they discuss the need to help students improve is using motivation to benefit writing performance. Secondary teachers may complain that the writing abilities of students have steadily declined since 2011 and it would be worth considering whether an increase in read-aloud activities in a school year can increase student reading and improve their writing.

Crucially, multimodal designs can be helpful in motivating students to improve their reading and writing skills. Gutherie and Humenick (2010) explain that motivating students to become readers does not just encompass interest, but also dedication and confidence. For example, the use of visual grammar (Walsh, 2006) during social studies instruction increases critical literacy and helps make social studies become more of a disciplinary literacy. The way social studies teachers use imagery, color, and shape within a presentation on various topics can help students construct meaning and provide textual analysis. Similarly, Hammer (2011) bemoans the lack of culturally critical literacy media courses, caused partly by the limits of technological supports. Nonetheless, with many students likely to participate in remote learning for the 2020–2021 school year, more hybrid opportunities could appear for social studies teachers to design critical literacy lessons that integrate this type of culturally critical literacy media. One of the reasons social studies educations can be used to close such gaps is that it affords students the opportunity to analyze different political and economic standpoints as well as complexities within social changes (Kim & Kang, 2020); America's current sociocultural juncture may serve as the motivation needed for students to take a more active societal role in seeking to ameliorate concerns around social justice.

In New Jersey, the Hamilton Township School District has seen a push for secondary teachers to better implement disciplinary literacy across social sciences subjects. On the one hand, Shreiner (2018) implies that teachers may be resilient to disciplinary literacy tactics due to their lack of advanced degrees in social

studies. On the other hand, Shreiner fails to consider the instructional usage of multimodal designs that can better aid teachers to utilize disciplinary literacy effectively. This research will therefore aim to uncover whether teachers have the content literacy, and not the content knowledge, to advance highly effective instruction using disciplinary literacy (Gillis et al., 2017).

This study incorporates elements of organizational leadership, especially the argument for openness and positive communication from Lewis and Grosser (2012). When pushing for a new initiative for social studies across a school district, given the regulations and procedures brought on by Covid-19, a lack of flexibility is perhaps understandable. In addition to the individual barriers to change mentioned above, strong social and organizational forces bar the path to changing disciplinary literacy practices in social studies (Lorsch, 1986). In response, Lewis and Grosser (2012) point to the need for an effective leader in such new initiatives who can help his or her charges overcome difficulties through positive communication techniques.

When examining multimodalities, it is important to trace the term itself back to the New London Group (NLG) in New Hampshire, which coined the phrase "multiliteracies" in 1994 to address how technology was changing and would further impact education. The NLG (1996) devised the following forms of expression as multiliteracies: written-linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, and spatial. More specifically, written-linguistic involves written as well as spoken linguistic tools utilized with grammar and vocabulary; audio involves how sounds as well as timing of volume and tone are used; visual involves not just imagery

but also how fonts and backgrounds may be used to convey certain points; gestural focuses on body language as well as the tenor of how a teacher or student uses speech to convey points; lastly, spatial focuses on how spacing is used within a lesson. Each multiliteracy serves as the foundation of literacy pedagogy, and as a result, will be observed within this research study. Over 25 years after NLG established their concept of multiliteracies, they remain at the forefront of multimodalities.

Since multiliteracies are the precursor to multimodality, it is important to see how the participants in this study utilize them to apply various elements of instruction to suit a wide range of student learning styles. Essentially, multimodality requires the creative blending of at least two multiliteracies for meaning making, or how the material makes sense to the individual (NLG, 1996). W. Cope and Kalantzis (2009) explain that a knowledge process is needed to advance the meaning-making within multimodalities, the elements of which include the following: experiencing known and new knowledge, conceptualizing it by naming or by theory; analyzing it functionally or critically; and applying it appropriately or creatively. Here, experiencing comes from authentic life events, the subjectiveness of which can be divided into known previous experiences and those that evoke novelty or uncertainty. Conceptualizing requires deep disciplinary knowledge that is constantly expanding over time; conceptualizing by name refers to drawing differences or similarities within a text, while conceptualizing by theory involves being able to access a deeper understanding of disciplinary schemas, lending itself to students thinking more from a concrete to

an abstract stage within Piaget's framework. Analyzing can involve anything that requires critical thought; the researchers distinguish between the functional (i.e., any process of deductive reasoning) and the critical (i.e., analysis that demands a person's evolving perspective on a subject or motivation). Lastly, applying the knowledge appropriately refers to the application of learning experiences to relevant practical situations, while applying creativity requires a person to apply what is learned innovatively and from their own creative genius. In the context of this study, each of these categories and sub-categories will be observed in the participating social studies teachers.

Although creating digital multimodal texts involves the use of communication technologies, multimodal texts can also be paper-based or live performances. In Australia, the Victoria State Government (2019) distinguishes multimodalities as being taught through paper-based, live texts, and digital texts. It is important here to realize that multimodality does not require electronic technologies, although this usually is the case; any of the three methods above fit this criterion. Paper-based multimodalities can even include a comic poster or textbook; live multimodalities can include forms of oral history and other combinations of multiliteracies; and digital multimodalities can be shown through an interactive PowerPoint presentation. According to Kress (2010), a multimodal text has a role that may utilize a combination of different multiliteracies as well as modalities to drive a connection. As a result, the way a learner processes and makes meaning out of the multimodality can vary, and this variance amongst learners can contribute to the overall experience of a classroom. An example of an

image contributing to the print within a reading could be seen within stained glass depicting an event from a Gospel reading being presented aloud by a priest; in art, the image of the same Gospel event provides a different context to hearing the scripture read orally or even silently. This is

an example of a multimodality because the meaning-making of the story may differ substantially between looking at the stained glass, reading the event in silence, or listening to it from a priest with relevant seminarian experience.

Guijarro and Sanz (2009) state that imagery—whether presented from a paper-based, live, or digital multimodality—can serve multiple functions for an individual, in some respects elaborating on a written piece, invoking an untold side of the story, or even disputing what is written. In turn, the ways in which social studies teachers in this study integrate various representations with disciplinary literacy activities may reveal different complexities in how their students relate to readings. Emphasis will be given to monitoring how social studies teachers guide their students using multimodalities with the various semiotic nuances available through explicit interactions (Kress, 2010). As Jewett (2009) argues, it is where disciplinary literacy that the teacher needs to show students how to select the appropriate tools to dissect points made in a reading activity. As a teacher, these steps take time to fine tune to the individual needs of each class in ways that create meaning and better allow students to navigate through various disciplinary literacy designs.

Positionality

When I graduated from La Salle University's competitive teacher education program in 2008, it seemed likely a history teaching position would become readily available. As the Great Recession engulfed our global community; however, full-time positions (and even part-time jobs) were scarce, and I faced a critical junction in my academic, personal, and professional lives. In the fall of 2008, I took the LSAT and was admitted into Seton Hall University; however, the debt I would incur coupled with an oversaturated legal market prompted my pursuit of a master's in history from my alma mater. Although earning the master's degree was academically and professionally advancing, my ultimate passion is to help people to analyze the narrative of history as told by historians. Even as a student pursuing doctoral work in literacy, which is related to history and a focus of this study, is to encourage greater collaboration between the two fields

My master's degree in history opened additional academic and professional opportunities in ways that I did not expect. While serving as a public-school teacher, in 2010 I began completing supplemental work in virtual education. Initially, my graduate coursework in history proved attractive to virtual education providers, and while developing my own disciplinary literacy skills, I became certified to teach and administrate in all 50 states. I gained certification to teach business, consumer science, and special education; rather than the content area coursework, it was my skills in disciplinary literacy that largely led to my examination success. Because of being widely certified in many states for many

subjects, I was required to learn the unique languages used by various school entities in many different capacities.

As an education professional and researcher, I have demonstrated strong versatility in my work. By serving as a public-school educator in the Hamilton Township Public Schools since 2009, I have taught a variety of social studies (Advanced Placement United States Government & Politics, US History 1900 to Present, and World Geography) and business (Personal Finance, Career Explorations, and Investments) across grades 6–12 with highly effective ratings. As a researcher, I can conduct historical writing using the Chicago Manual of Style; this ability is especially necessary for this study on disciplinary literacy because it allows me to guide various stakeholders. While completing my master's in educational leadership from Lehigh University and now my doctorate from St. John's University, my aptitude to apply APA format to business and social science have been maximized. As an entrepreneur, educator, and researcher, I point to the disciplinary literacy gained from the master's in history as a major reason for where I am today.

One area of bias that I may be complicit in exploring is that more secondary teachers should pursue an advanced degree in their content area. In a district with almost 125 social studies teachers, I am in the minority of teachers that has completed such graduate work. I happen to agree with aspects of Shreiner (2018): because social studies teachers lack an advanced degree in social studies, they are less equipped to advance disciplinary literacy. The aim of my study is to provide teachers with a necessary scaffold that best guides disciplinary literacy

through multimodalities. Also, as a former student and now employee of the district where my research is being conducted, I am grounded in and familiar with all the various idiosyncrasies in the community. In many ways, this is a blessing as it allows me to explain why out-of-the-ordinary events. On the other hand, being a product of the community can equally present biases. As a social studies teacher with two advanced degrees (one in administration, the other in history), my thinking is that more secondary teachers should have at least a master's degree in their content area. However, it is hoped that my personal sentiments and implicit biases on this issue represent only a small barrier to reflections on effective staff delivery of their mini-units.

My work looks to build several key relationships. These will improve historical research, literacy research, and organizational dynamics through the creation of a positive and collaborative study that advances disciplinary literacy in social studies education. It may also encourage more teachers outside the Hamilton Township School District in not only promoting disciplinary literacy in social studies, but also driving new academic initiatives during and after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Research Question

The purpose of this case study is to investigate the experiences of social studies teachers using multimodalities to implement disciplinary literacy. The following research question and sub-questions guide this study:

Research Question: What are the experiences of teachers implementing

disciplinary reading instruction using multimodality?

Sub-question 1: How does the prior academic and/or professional background of participating social studies teachers influence the implementation of disciplinary literacy with multimodalities?

Sub-question 2: To what extent are teachers reflecting on the effectiveness of the implementation of this practice?

Theory

The proposed study will leverage Lave and Wegner's (1991) situated learning theory as its theoretical framework. The design of the study requires what Lave and Wegner call "communities of practice and legitimate peripheral participation" (p. 91). Wilt and Horton (1995) expand on situated awareness, adding that this is a cognitive process that takes place in differing circumstances. This study requires teachers to collaborate in their instructional approaches to and participation in disciplinary literacy strategies throughout a 12-week period. In many respects, social sciences teachers may bestow situation awareness upon their students in terms of how to react when completing disciplinary literacy-focused classroom activities. A goal from this study is that the patterns invoked in disciplinary literacy lessons with multimodalities will enforce a schema into the long-term memories of both students and teachers, so that disciplinary literacy in social studies becomes ingrained into their respective practice.

Historical Trajectory

Situated learning was created by J. S. Brown et al. (1989) and later made famous by Lave and Wenger (1991). Essentially, it promotes the involvement of learning from real contexts (binti Pengiran, 2018). When people, whether children

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or adults, learn from participating authentic experiences, the driving forces for applying new information can yield success (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Motteram, 2013). A major impact of situated learning theory has been that mastery of learning often comes organically through sometimes less intentional ways.

A practical example is a social studies teacher who completes a lesson on Robert E. Lee's disastrous Pickett's Charge during the Battle of Gettysburg on July 3, 1863, using disciplinary literacy. Here, students read an array of primary sources about the fatal decision along with analysis of the Civil War from respected historians; the teacher then leads engaging discussion as well as dialogue on the topic and the group considers why poor decisions are made by seemingly intelligent individuals. The class then visits Gettysburg on a field trip at some point in the school year (or completes a virtual visit) to gain additional perspective on the location of Pickett's Charge and what it might have been like on that brutally hot day in 1863. Students may even tour the site on horseback to further enrich the physical experience of the calamity that took place during a critical battle of the Civil War.

In this way, by creating mini-units that require the implementation of disciplinary literacy with multimodalities, situated learning theory can be interwoven into the experiences of both the teacher and the student since dialogue on various topics can change based on the varying circumstances of who is in the classroom. In this case study, teachers will be asked to reflect on the implementation of their lessons and whether student learning is benefiting throughout the duration of the study. Given that Lave and Wenger (1991) argue

for community involvement to foster learning, the designed study also allows teachers to maximize their learning from students as well as collegial interactions. Ardley (2006) utilized situated learning as part of a marketing study: once the product of disciplinary literacy in social studies through multimodalities is strongly utilized by specific teachers in the school community, it can then be broadcasted and sold to other pockets of the school community over time. Ultimately, through its situated, cognitive, and problem-based learning design, teachers as well as students will learn to respond to new challenges, helping both parties to develop their analysis of the narrative of history.

Seminal Authors

J. S. Brown et al. (1989) argue that activities designed by teachers for students were formerly unrealistic; now, the fusion of disciplinary literacy with certain aspects of instructional design can provoke authentic interaction among the entire class. That said, although situated learning theory updates Vygostky's philosophies, using it by itself without creating lessons that require knowledge acquisition is problematic (binti Pengiran, 2018). At this point, it is important to remember that social studies education is learned through "situated opportunities for the improvisational development of a new practice or goal" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 93). Each mini unit for various topics of history are designed to integrate important historical facts to which the teacher can add improvisational development to enhance student learning through disciplinary literacy. Since each history teacher brings different life experiences, this improvisational development

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in their respective lessons will vary; consequently, their students' learning may vary as well.

Situated learning is most practical for teaching history, and this study requires rigorous planning to bolster student confidence in completing disciplinary literacy (Risku, 2016). Hod et al. (2018) ask three simple questions on this matter: "(1) Where are the learning and instructional sciences going? (2) Where is education going? (3) Where is the world going?" (p. 490). With the use of situated learning theory for a study on disciplinary literacy with multimodalities, social studies teachers will help lead the way for a new foundation on implementing history instruction for years to come.

binti Pengiran (2018) provides recent scholarship that promotes situated learning; however, in isolation, it is ineffective without proactive knowledge acquisition within instructional efforts. On the other hand, Contu and Willmott (2003) argue that academic learning should take place in normal practices; however, this form of learning has less of a cognitive requirement. Fenwick (2001) explains that the learning process is never static, so putting individuals in realistic situations where knowledge and information flows between those of similar as well as different walks of life can increase learning by engagement. A changing role for secondary social studies teachers has therefore been to serve more as a facilitator than a lecturer over the course of the past decade; consequently, situated learning requires teachers to guide students with their expertise in their quest to analyze the past (Herrington & Oliver, 1995; Gablinske, 2014).

The following tenets and key terms are outlined to bolster clarity and understanding throughout the study.

Tenet 1. Situated learning theory states that every idea and human action is a generalization, adapted to the ongoing environment; it is founded on the belief that what people learn, see, and do is situated in their role as a member of a community (Lave and Wenger, 1991). By creating multimodal elements within disciplinary literacy lessons, new student learning opportunities become available.

Tenet 2. Situated learning theory assumes that all instruction occurs in complex social environments, even when the learner is alone (Greeno, 1997). For example, a student reading an assigned disciplinary literacy piece may gain knowledge from their own reflection and understanding and without direct impact from a teacher or fellow student.

Tenet 3. Like energy, "knowledge" is an analytical abstraction, not a substance that can be held in hand. Researchers cannot inventory what someone knows; the community rather than the individual defines what it means to accomplish a given piece of work successfully (Suchman, 1987).

Content area reading: A literacy that emphasizes a general readability in subject matter classes (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012). Here, an individual has a layman's ability to read a particular topic but lacks complete fluency within the field.

Disciplinary literacy: A style of literacy instruction that focuses on specialized knowledge on studying and communicating within a specific discipline (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012).

Multimodal design: An instructional design method that furthers all senses; in the context of this dissertation, this includes disciplinary literacy.

Social constructivist: A sociological position that learning is situational.

Eight types of text structure: As listed in Gillis et al. (2017), these comprise simple listing, description, explanation of concepts, definition/example, sequence or time order, compare, cause and effect, and problem-solution.

Contemporary Scholars

Shreiner's research focuses on historical thinking coupled with literacy skills by multimodalities for secondary educators. Much of her work can be put to the test here as social studies teachers in this large central New Jersey school district implement a series of instructional designs with a similar mantra, guided by my expertise in history, literacy, and school leadership. Specifically, Shreiner's "Preparing Social Studies Teachers for the Challenges and Opportunities of Disciplinary Literacy Instruction in a Changing World" (2018) and her co-authored piece with Harris et al., "Examining the PCK and Planning Phases of an Ambitious World History Teacher (2017)" influence the design of this study. In line with Shreiner's advocacy for social studies teachers to earn advanced degrees in content areas, it is hoped that this study will spark further scholarship among educators. Additionally, her scholarship in helping social studies teachers to

strategically implement disciplinary literacy is incredibly influential on this case study.

Counter Arguments

One criticism of Lave and Wegner (1991) is that they focus less on memorization and more on schematic and perceptual learning. As a result, a disadvantage of situated learning theory and disciplinary literacy can be an ignoring of imperative historical facts, as well as commonalities expressed in historical reading with other content. In a marketing context, people learning ways to utilize marketing locally may learn how to think and enact marketing as a locally enacted phenomenon with historical reading; despite learners knowing the generalities of a given topic, important facts could be neglected (Ardley, 2006). For example, Hamilton is only a one-hour drive from New York City, and students learning about the September 11, 2011, terrorist attacks may have had perceptual learning of the events, but imperative facts of memory may be overlooked in this type of lesson, subsequently impeding student learning as a whole. The structure of this study, therefore, recognizes the importance of when social studies teachers may need to deviate slightly away from situated learning theory during the uncertainty of interactions that occur within a classroom lesson.

Clancey (1995) implies that situated learning theory is almost a form of abstract expressionism in that the scholarship lacks depth since knowledge cannot be indexed in a systematic procedure. Within various subjects as well as academic disciplines, the memorization of pertinent facts is vital; however, for many social studies disciplines (including history), the ongoing collaborative analysis of how

the past lives in the present falls directly under situated learning. Similarly, Fenwick (2001) has critiqued situated learning theorists for being dismissive of issues of race, gender, sexual orientation, income inequality, and religious persuasion. Outward communication on such pertinent topics is far more common in this progressively minded New Jersey school district compared with the early 1990s, when Lave and Wegner (1991) launched their study. By studying historical as well as societal practices within the social studies curriculum, critical demographic issues are frequently discussed and hold relevance to situated learning theory within modern instructional practices.

Application of this Work

Young (1995) argues that situated learning theory places perception before memory. Although his study focused on computer science, content area literacy will be intertwined with disciplinary literacy in the 12-week design of this research. One of the reasons my study focuses on the teaching of history—and no other contents in social studies such as psychology, economics, government, or geography—is because the learning of history balances the social sciences and the humanities. By contrast, content area literacy focuses more on reading across the subjects, which can render situated learning theory more difficult; however, with disciplinary literacy and studying the uniqueness of teaching students to read history, perceptual learning is more appropriate for this type of study. In this way, situated learning theory can provide a lens to better understand teachers' perceptions of disciplinary literacy as well as students' progress.

Synthesis

The educators in this study have a Standard Certification from the State of New Jersey in K-12 Social Studies. As a result, they can teach many contents that are often separated into different schools or at least departments at the university level. Social studies in New Jersey can include civics, economics, geography, psychology, sociology, and other electives as a district sees fit. Nonetheless, students in New Jersey are required to take two years of American history and one year of world history; other non-history courses within social studies curricula are taken by students as elective credits. Here, situated learning theory works well with historical analysis because cognitive perception of learned events varies with experiences. Teachers participating in the study will join a professional learning community (PLC); during bi-weekly meetings, they will discuss as a community their successes and challenges in conducting their week-long mini-units. Given that each social studies teacher brings a different academic, personal, and professional background to the mini-units, students will develop their analysis of disciplinary literacy in multimodalities using situated learning theory.

Qualitative Social Constructivist Case Study

Participants were selected through purposive sampling in conjunction with the district's central office administration. By using a purposive sample, participants discuss their needs and limitations when using disciplinary literacy and hold the capacity to learn a new skill set while maintaining old beliefs that are effective. Keeping a human resource frame in mind during the methods of this study helps to increase participation from different teachers after the study

commences (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Lewis & Grosser, 2012). With the research question asking *What are the experiences of teachers implementing disciplinary reading instruction using multimodality?* and sub-questions asking *How does the prior academic and/or professional background of participating social studies teachers influence the implementation of disciplinary literacy with multimodalities? To what extent are teachers reflecting on the effectiveness of the implementation of this practice?* teachers who were already eager to participate and try new approaches that suited the study.

By using qualitative social constructivist case study design methods, the phenomena of how social studies teachers implement and reflect upon their instructional methods on disciplinary literacy using multimodalities exposes authenticity for educators across the country (Hartley, 2004; Phelan, 2011). Yin (2014) argues for case study usage because it is flexible as far as implementation and data collection; it also allows for efficient methods to demonstrate across disciplines how a topic has been tested in realistic circumstances. Although Yin (2014) is one of academia's experts on the case study approach, deciding its appropriateness for examining a particular phenomenon needs to be evaluated honestly.

Yin (2017) argues that a case study ought to follow a clear methodological path. As the literature demonstrates, there is a demand to study how social studies reflect on the implementation of disciplinary literacy in the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, one of the benefits of this study will be its exposure of disciplinary literacy in secondary social studies education and a realistic view of how it plays

out. On the other hand, students are likely to be in a hybrid setting for this study since typical classroom dynamics are less prevalent. Although this study could be replicated into the same case study or other research designs, my opportunity to observe more class sessions within this remote setting are greater and less invasive than if a traditional class schedule were implemented. This case study thus has high expectations in that in-depth reflection from social studies teachers implementing disciplinary literacy instruction will present a case for holistic and practical discovery for researchers and educators.

Stakeholders

This research speaks to central office administrators, curriculum supervisors, secondary teachers, and literacy researchers. Additionally, this study may inform teacher preparation programs as well as aspiring administrators looking to incorporate critical reading into their own programs. As the study was conducted during Covid-19, the study can be replicated if or when normalcy of non-hybrid instruction returns in schools. Furthermore, researchers could focus this design on other social studies courses or other areas of secondary education that require attention on disciplinary literacy. Lastly, this study focuses on instructional methods of disciplinary literacy rather than measuring student populations; further study could shift to a quantitative approach (or maintain its qualitative standing if focused on student learning).

This study had several desired outcomes. Through its completion, schools may more easily implement disciplinary literacy instruction with the use of multimodal design. Also, literacy researchers need to increase their study of

secondary education and social studies education. Furthermore, having been conducted in a mostly hybrid/remote setting, this study offers districts and researchers useful data on handling official business in non-traditional times. Lastly, this study should be continued with different research goals and methods as the decade progresses.

By using situated learning theory through a qualitative case study on the use of disciplinary literacy with multimodal design in secondary social studies, the potential scholarly contributions available to various communities are numerous. Key stakeholders who look to emulate this study through research and/or practice will be able to understand the victories and difficulties when rolling out a new pedagogical initiative in a time of uncertainty. By having an understanding of the experiences faced by participants in this study, research can thus be narrowed to emphasize the needs of various school communities.

Covid-19 Impact

Since March 13, 2020, the participating school district has been providing instruction to students through a combination of remote, hybrid, and other atypical methods. As this study took place in 2021, the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic provoked an acute and ongoing sense of international uncertainty. Although administrators, teachers, parents, and students had experienced over a year of this type of instruction, new challenges presented by Covid-19, political instability, and other social unrests were considered as the research unfolded. In response to this changing environment, this study made use of virtual collaboration tools such as Google Meet to conduct classroom observations as

well as interviews. Participating teachers and their students have received in-depth training in this emerging instructional technology and are accustomed to its safety guidelines as well as appropriate online etiquette (Blannin, 2015; Alsolamy, 2017). Although staff and students have adapted sufficiently, the uncertainty of current events at the time of writing may have altered the level of in-person or face-to-face instruction, classroom observations, and interviews.

Definition of Terms

Disciplinary literacy: A type of literacy instruction that requires students to use all components of their intelligences within the practice of reading. The implementation of sourcing and contextualization, corroboration, and close reading are vital components for disciplinary literacy since these attributes are fused with reading, writing, listening, and speaking that are relevant within the framework of an academic discipline (Wineburg & Reisman, 2015; Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2012).

Multiliteracies: A term coined by the NLG (1996) to address how new technologies can make pedagogy more relevant to students, specifically using at least two of the following vehicles: written-linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, and spatial.

Multimodalities: Essentially, multimodalities are communication outputs through situated teaching while intertwining the pedagogical framework of multiliteracies. These inform how the learner makes meaning and how multiliteracies inform pedagogy by giving the educator which tools to use (Roswell & Walsh, 2011).

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Summary

This study will provide an in-depth review of the experiences of teachers when conducting disciplinary literacy instruction through a series of mini-units that utilized multimodal instruction. During this case study, social studies teachers with varying academic and professional experiences displayed their implementation of disciplinary literacy instruction over the course of early 2021. Additionally, this research will examine the implementation of disciplinary literacy with multimodalities in different social studies courses. For example, the ways in which a social studies course in psychology will convey disciplinary literacy will inevitably differ compared to a modern world history course.

Shreiner's (2018) research suggests that social studies education affords educators with the opportunity to create more socially just literacy instruction. This is important considering that the overall demographics of social studies teachers has remained mostly unchanged, whereas the student body has experienced sharp changes in diversity. By implementing a study where teachers are more formally using multimodal design while teaching critical literacy, more social studies teachers may progress their content within a disciplinary literacy framework. The remainder of this dissertation will therefore explore how the blending of disciplinary literacy with multimodalities can provide social studies teachers across various disciplines with greater mastery in advancing student analysis. This research will expose how social studies teachers react during and after their implementation of preconstructed week-long mini-units on their preferred topics within the curriculum. Depending on the subject area, the

research will also explore reactions to the implementation of disciplinary literacy during the spring of 2021.

   In the chapters that follow, Chapter 2 will provide an in-depth review of the literature on disciplinary literacy and multimodalities, with greater focus on disciplinary literacy, its strategies and global trajectories. The existing literature on multimodalities in literacy will also be addressed. Chapter 3 will address how this qualitative case study seeks to understand the experiences of 5 social studies teachers when implementing disciplinary literacy themed lessons in a remote setting. Chapter 4 will provide data analysis as well as results, and Chapter 5 will discuss the research implications of this study that can be applied in the future.

CHAPTER 2

Introduction

Although several areas of literacy research pertain to disciplinary literacy, multimodal instruction, social studies instruction, and situated learning, only limited studies have blended these concepts into a dynamic qualitative case study (particularly during Covid-19). This study aims to do so by focusing on the following questions regarding social studies teachers' experiences with a multimodal approach to disciplinary literacy:

1. *What are the experiences of teachers implementing disciplinary reading instruction using multimodality?*

   a. *How does the prior academic and/or professional background of participating social studies teachers influence the implementation of disciplinary literacy with multimodalities?*

   b. *To what extent are teachers reflecting on the effectiveness of the implementation of this practice?*

By studying the experiences of social studies teachers who implement highly effective disciplinary literacy instruction through multimodalities, it is hoped that educators nationally will be better equipped to address pressing concerns within education.

Gillis et al. (2017) are considered within literacy circles to have conducted some of the most academically respected studies on content area literacy, used by researchers and practitioners alike. An additional theme of this literature review will be how the advancement of cultural knowledge within social studies

instruction can be improved upon through effective internal social constructs that allow teachers to develop a mastery in utilizing multimodalities with disciplinary literacy (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Walsh, 2005; Stewart, 2015).

Disciplinary Literacy

Disciplinary Literacy is a style of literacy instruction that focuses on specialized knowledge studying and communicating within a specific discipline (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012). Within various academic disciplines and career clusters, certain idiosyncrasies are mentioned that may be common conversation in one field but may sound like an unheard foreign language in others. Ultimately, disciplinary literacy seeks to improve teachers' understanding of others given the growing demands on students to become more versatile as future contributors to an interconnected global economy.

Global Significance

At the start of the 2000s, several important reports (Snow & Biancarosa, 2003; International Reading Association & National Middle School Association, 2001) suggested that reading instruction should take place beyond elementary grades, as older students would need assistance when deciphering more complex texts in various content areas at the secondary level. Fang and Wei (2010) argued that guiding students to embrace inquiry in middle- and high-school science would be paramount to students comprehending and creating scientific literacy. Although this research focused on the integration of disciplinary literacy practices in

secondary science curricula, many of the same tenets can be applied to social studies as well as other non-ELA content areas.

The global significance of Fang and Wei's (2010) study is that it encourages serious focus on disciplinary literacy for grade-level teachers, which has often been overlooked in research designs. Although Fei and Wang (2010) conducted a quantitative study on about 900 middle schoolers, mostly white and black, their research indicates that inquiry-based science plus reading (ISR) significantly outperformed peers who only completed inquiry-based science (IS) curricula. Therefore, an ISR approach is a form of disciplinary literacy that shows promise if similar implementations are made in a qualitative case study.

There has been a global demand for positive and continued dialogue in the academic and K-12 realms to craft more effective literacy instruction. Zygouris-Coe (2012) argues that administrators often focus on students who fail to meet grade-level expectations for reading using data-driven formulas. Although educational change and implementing more concrete policy at the secondary level to integrate disciplinary literacy into non-ELA content areas does not take place overnight, the implementation of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in the early 2010s has left administrators and teachers in a state of uncertainty. Zygoruis-Coe (2012) also addresses the need for ongoing collaborative leadership in schools to promote the facilitation of strong disciplinary literacy instruction.

Certain students are late bloomers in that they may have struggled academically in earlier grades, only to gain a second wind during high school because they are able to resonate with specialized disciplines at the secondary level and subsequently throughout the various stages of their education (Lee, Grigg, & Donahue, 2007; Perle et al., 2005). Reading at the secondary level has key differences from primary grade reading, and there is often a lag in studying this dynamic. Zygouris-Coe (2012) further argues that CCSS and teaching disciplinary literacy allows for students to hone their individual literacy skills as highlighted within various content. The remnants of infusing disciplinary literacy via CCSS still remain in many districts across New Jersey and complementing both themes can be implemented in the future. Although school administrators and teachers may view CCSS with mixed feelings, several positive attributes remain from this initiative created by President Obama almost a decade later; Zygouris-Coe (2012) acknowledges the "possibilities of challenges associated with disciplinary literacy and CCSS implementation" (p. 37) when implementing highly effective instruction. As the demands on teachers intensify throughout the 2020s, it is vital to recognize how any disconnect between home and school for students impacts their literacy acquisition skills and subsequent advancement in grade-level (Mojre, 2002).

Over the last decade of CCSS implementation, content area teachers may have glossed over literacy instruction in the hope of appeasing the demands of policymakers. Indeed, many would agree that the launching of

such measures tends to be ineffective at addressing the glaring problem of older students being significantly behind in literacy (Phelps, 2005; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). Sometimes, social studies and other content area teachers view the integration of disciplinary literacy into their lessons as an attempt to usurp their craft; an improved initiative is needed to demonstrate to content area teachers that disciplinary literacy can bolster student performance in literacy (O'Brien, Stewart & Moje, 1995). Given that much of content area literacy instruction has focused on generic literacy skills (e.g., summarizing, predicting, questioning), and instruction sometimes does not extend beyond assigning the reading and writing of content-specific texts (McConachie & Petrosky, 2010; Snow, 2010), it is important to recognize that teachers simply having secondary students read content for the sake of it does not necessarily advance disciplinary literacy (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012). Hence, stricter guidance for content area teachers to improve general literacy skills such as decoding, fluency, and/or comprehension should not be the major point of focus when pushing disciplinary literacy instruction (Plaut, 2008; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008; Snow, 2010).

Historical Trajectory

Although the seeds of disciplinary literacy were sown across secondary instruction in the early 2010s, a need remains for schools to implement more complex and content-focused literacy (Snow & Moje, 2010). As implied by Zygouris-Coe (2012), social studies instruction needs to focus more on helping

students advance their abilities in learning how to complete literacy within the various sub-contents taught (Bulgren, Deshler, & Lenz, 2007; Guthrie et al., 2004; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008; Yore & Treagust, 2006). In history, the most commonly taught sub-field in social studies, students need to learn the nuances and discourses used within texts to better communicate the realities of historical analysis (O'Brien, Stewart & Moje, 1995). On the one hand, it is ineffective to tell content area teachers that (regardless of their contractual responsibilities) they have now simply become reading teachers; on the other hand, creating sound disciplinary literacy initiatives can be a vital element in advancing the narratives conveyed in social studies (Moje, 2009).

When disciplinary literacy is infused within social studies content, students gain a different set of skills when reading a fictional novel compared to a traditional primary source because there are clear differences in reading distinct contents (McConachie & Petrosky, 2010). CCSS is still impactful for disciplinary literacy, yet its implementation can be met with scrutiny by practicing educators (Zygouris-Coe, 2012). Zygouris-Coe (2012) implies that to remedy this apprehension, enlisting the right leaders within the school entity can alleviate concerns and promote more embracive practices for disciplinary literacy. As the 2020s unfolds, it is imperative to prepare students for career readiness, and advancing disciplinary literacy helps in this capacity. Zygouris-Coe (2012) continues to argue that by pushing disciplinary literacy in content areas, students may improve their ability to distinguish how reading texts in potential careers can be

accomplished, as effective communication between researchers and educators is open and continuous. Likewise, over ten years ago, Lee and Spratley (2010) requested for administrators, teachers, and politicians to advance initiatives for disciplinary literacy, and the time is right to perfect such initiatives.

Even during the early 1990s, the same runs true in the concept of prior knowledge being vital to advancing reading comprehension (Dole et al., 1991). Zygouris-Coe (2012) describes how disciplinary literacy is not only supported by the CCSS, but also, increases student ability in various disciplines. In response, a way to better activate students' prior knowledge is by utilizing student facilitation in peer-led discussions (Young & Mohr, 2016). Young and Mohr (2016) carried out a qualitative research study on 17 fourth graders in the southwestern United States and observed stronger student discussions because of their designed literature circles. Seemingly because of this approach, students were more confident as the study progressed at attempting unknown words. Indeed, peer-led literature circles on various topics within a curriculum's content had been used previously by Daniels (2002) to increase student interest. When Pearson (2004) pushed the reading wars, serious discussion was had on time spent on reading; by creating peer-led group literature group discussions, disciplinary literacy can be advanced without rigid time structures. Evans (2002) also discusses the use of smaller units to extend topics in the curriculum through organic discussion. This form of small group instruction for students can be updated

almost two decades later; the instructor's role in this case must be structured

to increase student analysis with a collection of works that maximize

disciplinary literacy (Zygouris-Coe, 2012).

D. Spencer and Bouwma-Gearhart (2014) argue that literacy

strategies "are the tools and techniques implemented by a teacher and used

by students to improve their language" (p. 2). In the past, literacy strategies

have always encouraged different tools to be used interchangeably during

the implementation of instructional design. More specifically, Gillis et al.

(2017) outline the eight organizational patterns commonly used in

disciplinary literacy: *simple listing, description, explanation of concepts,*

definition/example, sequence or time order, compare/contrast, cause and

effect, and *problem-solving.* Each of these organizational patterns are

common within social studies textbooks, yet the implementation of these

themes is certainly changing.

Delving into the history of literacy, the definition of the term has

certainly expanded beyond simply reading and writing. Since the

implementation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Common Core State

Standards (CCSS), literacy represents an embedded skill that encompasses a

broadening of social constructs as life expands (Street, 2003). For example,

Hirsch (2006) argues that developing vocabulary and content knowledge is

vital for reading comprehension and the advancement of disciplinary

literacy. Similarly, Fang and Wei (2010) observe in their study on high-

school science education that providing students with trade books rather

than textbooks increased student reading abilities more than traditional practices. In turn, via ANCOVA analysis (using the GMRT pretest and GMRT posttest as the dependent variable), the authors demonstrate significant outperformance of students in the ISR group compared with the IS group, thus showing an increase of student engagement in reading among the ISR group.

In the past, language and content instruction have been, and in some cases still are, taught separately. Bouwma-Gearhart (2014) point to studies from the past 20 years that promote the simultaneous teaching of science with literacy instruction (Carrejo & Reinhartz, 2014; Guthrie & Cox, 2001; Zohar & Barzilai, 2013). Likewise, in the mixed methods study of Carrejo and Reinhartz (2014), teachers using the 5E approach (engage, explore, explain, elaborate, and evaluate) saw their ELL students gain in language literacy when science was integrated with disciplinary literacy. Guthrie and Cox (2001) also identified that upper elementary students yielded statistically significant differences in gains when science content reading was incorporated into direct instruction. In their quasi-experiment, it was shown that student motivation in the Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI) class had positive effect sizes on intrinsic motivation of 2.35 and on involvement in reading of 1.61 compared with traditional classes. Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction is a form of disciplinary literacy that requires a more focused structure on reading through different motivation techniques.

According to Beck et al. (2013), word knowledge is mandatory for communication and comprehension, and vocabulary is the essence for building comprehension across all life stages for a learner. Beck et al. (2013) argue for literacy and content area teachers to collaborate in advancing disciplinary literacy by using an example of students learning sight words. According to B. Spencer and Guillaume (2006), a learning cycle is required that helps students build prior knowledge and introduces them to formal vocabulary terms, the combination of which ultimately enhances disciplinary literacy.

Approaches to implementing instruction for students on how to properly annotate historical texts can be confusing across various social studies contents, and the use of disciplinary literacy with multimodalities can help students overcome such difficulties (Castek & Beach, 2013; Zywica & Gomez, 2008). Fisher and Frey (2014) argue for the use of text-dependent questions to guide students through such annotation in close reading activities; their argument for text-based discussion and debate has bolstered reading gains for older students in recent years. Moreover, reading gains are often predicated on a student's prior knowledge and learning strategies (P. Alexander, 2005-2006), while social constructs also play a major role in advancing a child's learning (Gee, 1999). Content area reading goes further than mere mastery of subject areas; it involves knowing how to use newly presented information (Gillis et al., 2017). According to Goldman and Rakestraw (2000), reading comprehension takes place for several

cognitive reasons and accessing prior knowledge is critical to advancing new themes in literacy. For Wineburg and Reisman (2015), differences in disciplinary literacy are often regarded as norms within a particular field. As a result, they argue that developing students who think in terms of such nuances will expand their overall reading comprehension.

Moje et al., (2001) completed a one-year longitudinal study of seventh-grade science students in bilingual settings across the Midwest using a project-based curriculum guide. Moje et al. (2001) discovered that students were too accustomed to reading and writing with a fictional mindset. The authors contend that having students engage in literacy for science proves difficult for middle schoolers because discourse in the hard sciences as well as practices is foreign to them. Similarly, it can be said of history that helping secondary students apply previously learned basic literacy skills to disciplinary knowledge/literacy is critical to building academic success. As an example of what can happen when generic strategies are not adapted to disciplinary social practices, the researchers found that assignments often asked students to respond in the form of a narrative or scientific reading. Their qualitative data showed how many students missed out on oral and written discourse due to language concerns; they also found students had difficulty in integrating disciplinary literacy used in science with everyday language. In their semi-structured interviews, structured interviews, and informal observations, it became apparent how students rarely read or carried novels but instead enjoyed magazines, while

it subsequently became clear that finding methods that connect to students in literacy could have effective impacts.

In content-centered disciplinary literacy instruction, teachers may utilize a variety of multimodalities to simplify the reading involved. Since the turn of the 21st century, repeated, shared, paired, and other similar reading instruction was the prevailing guidance for oral reading (Gillis et al. 2017). Here, students read the same piece repeatedly until it is practically memorized. Conversely, the authors argue for a move away from such antiquated practices, instead creating smaller group instruction for orally completing close readings. At this point, it is important to distinguish between reading closely and close reading, which reflects changes from the New Literary Criticism between the 1930s and 1960s in the interpretation of texts. Here, Gillis et al. (2017) argue for a modern-day return to the goals presented in the New Literary Criticism as they pertain to advancing disciplinary literacy. Similarly, Hinchman and Moore (2013) offer up deconstructivism to help students decipher contradictory or confusing meanings within a text and how these approaches might pertain to secondary content. Shanahan & Shanahan (2012) also argue for shorter to moderate readings, in which students complete three readings of a given text: the first focusing on major points, second on text placement, and the third on building knowledge from the text.

Wineburg (1991) found that high-school students and actual historians read history very differently. Historians would often look first to see who the

author was before noting his or her point of view and the various sub-texts that were implied. They did not question whether the author was trying to promote a particular point of view or whether information was selectively included or excluded or whether the textbook was a trustworthy source of information. They tended to see history as a collection of facts and truths, not as something that could be interpreted either by authors or by readers; in doing so, they failed to see text as a social instrument masterfully crafted to achieve a social end (Wineburg, 1991, p. 502).

Contemporary Applications

As cited in Fang and Wei (2010), Hand et al. (2003) argue that "without text and without reading, the social practices that make science possible could not be followed" (p. 612). Similar to social studies educators, many important concepts felt by science educators have in recent years required the expansion of science literacy as the knowledge of big ideas within general readability. For example, Norris and Phillips (2003) demonstrate how disciplinary literacy in science requires strong fundamentals in literacy along with the ability to generalize texts based on contextual clues.

A push for vocabulary instruction in disciplinary literacy instruction at the secondary level is vital for advancing new concepts (Gillis et al., 2017). Equally, calls have been made for vocabulary to be more interwoven into student contextual understanding of content texts. Vocabulary instruction can vary tremendously across different content; direct conversations with students are needed on how such differences apply to the

respective discipline. Moreover, implementation can occur when the district and the individual school promote a widespread culture of word awareness and curiosity, thereby advancing student ownership in vocabulary learning (Lewis & Moorman, 2017).

Hirsch (2006) argues that increased time on reading instruction based on a specific strategy does not always create positive gains in student reading comprehension assessments. Several reading comprehension strategies are helpful; however, Hirsch (2006) argues that increasing disciplinary knowledge would improve student achievement in reading comprehension at secondary grades. It is worth noting here that student learning of science curricula meshes with higher-level thinking skills associated with the complex subject areas in various sub-fields (Halliday & Martin, 2013; Fang & Wei, 2010). Fang and Schleppegrell (2010) advocate for disciplinary literacy within secondary science courses; their research provides a framework for how reading instruction as a whole can be implemented in high-school environments, especially where such educators may be reluctant to push literacy. More specifically, Gaskins et al. (1994) call or the use of student interviews as well as other learning activities to measure student literacy gains; similar approaches can be grafted into social studies education. In turn, Fei and Wei (2010) argue that the infusion of reading books with instructional strategy advances science education, although more research on this approach in social studies education is needed to identify new opportunities. Ultimately, while commonalities can

be pinpointed between disciplinary reading approaches in various secondary content areas, a key course-level difference is in text structure. From both the humanities and social sciences perspective, a secondary social studies curriculum demands the use of prior research to create updated research questions as well as design implementation, so that students may develop mastery at reading within the specific disciplines (Lemke, 2004; Pearson, et al., 2010; D. Spencer & Bouwma-Gearhart, 2014).

D. Spencer and Bouwma-Gearhart (2014) use the example of research at the high-school level by Greenleaf et al. (2011) on the success of effective professional development opportunities specifically geared to biology teachers to use improved literacy instruction through active inquiry. This in-depth experimental design with randomized treatment showed statistical gains for students who had teachers who were participating in professional development, elements of which were designed to help them implement think-write-pair share, think-aloud activities to help students articulate disciplinary literacy strategies, and small group discussions. Greenleaf et al. (2011) created a 10-day intervention that focused on metacognitive practices in a randomized-group, experimental design with multiple measures on teacher implementation, student learning, and targeted groups. Overall, their study shows how students in the intervention outperformed control students on state standardized tests in ELA and biology.

D. Spencer and Bouwma-Gearhart (2014) elaborate on the three
types of literacy strategies—direct reading instruction, vocabulary builders,
and concept organizers—that are used in science classrooms but not to
consistent levels. Similar sentiments are applicable to social studies teachers
at similar grade levels. Here, the researchers argue that discipline-specific
vocabulary was often the norm for science teachers; however, full
disciplinary literacy instruction fell short. Their survey findings suggest that
direct reading instruction was more common for science teachers at the
middle school level compared to the high school level. Regarding
disciplinary literacy as students advance in secondary-grade levels, direct
reading instruction is generally reduced (Lee & Spartley, 2010).

Recent studies have indicated correlations between student vocabulary
knowledge, comprehension, overall academic success, and improvement of
disciplinary literacy skills for students (Kosanovich et al., 2010; Gillis et al.
2017). Lewis and Moorman (2007) explain that when vocabulary development
across content areas is instructed effectively, expansion of disciplinary literacy is
more likely. Although the emphasis placed on CCSS may have declined since the
early 2010s, their foundations (i.e., requiring teachers to develop vocabulary as
well as disciplinary literacy) still hold within secondary education (McLaughin,
2015). For students in social studies courses, integration of vocabulary is critical
to advancing the various content areas by supporting overall course load
(Kosanovich et al, 2010; Snow, 2003). Kosanovich et al. (2010) argue that
optimal vocabulary learning, and disciplinary literacy as a whole require highly

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effective teacher collaboration and cooperation between various stakeholders in a school community.

These types of cooperative effort among educators generally initiate diverse perspectives and stimulate shared knowledge and expertise (Shearer et al., 2019). However, collaborative efforts as part of a pedagogical approach are usually hindered by various issues, including the fact that many disciplinary teachers are reluctant to integrate reading strategies into their instructional strategy (Bayar, 2014). According to Shearer et al (2019), "Teachers, almost by nature, are autonomous beings and like having [their] own classroom, routines, approaches and kids" (p. 285). In addition, most content area teachers lack the relevant training (Shanahan, Shanahan, & Misischia, 2011). Nevertheless, collaborating with literacy teachers is key to optimal vocabulary learning in content areas, and schools and/or teachers can change existing policies and practices to ensure optimal vocabulary learning across content areas. Many strategies currently exist that assist teachers with planning vocabulary development. For example, most curricula expose students to a variety of texts (Botzakis et al., 2014). These texts are typically rich with diverse narrative and informational passages, with varying lengths and difficulties (Gilles et al., 2013).

However, merging literacy and content area instruction requires a more expansive pedagogical approach. In this case, reforms relating to policies and practices should reflect an emphasis on disciplinary literacy that require teachers to use literacy strategies (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2010; Gillis et al, 2017; Wendt, 2013). In addition, students should be provided the opportunity to read and write

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in content areas in response to both print and digital text. Graves (2006) argues that for vocabulary instruction to be beneficial to all students and at every level, it must include four elements: oral and print language experiences, instruction in individual words, instruction in word learning strategies, and fostering word consciousness. This pedagogical approach provides meaningful content area instruction, especially to secondary social studies students, as they move towards mastery in disciplinary literacy. Gilles et al (2017) also emphasize the benefits to this population of sheltered instruction across content areas. Discussions in content-area classrooms can provide an opportunity to elicit students' prior knowledge of concepts and words. This schema-theoretic view posits that the students will relate this knowledge to the new vocabulary words (Kamil & Hiebert, 2005). Other instructional strategies that content area teachers could use to optimize vocabulary revolve around presenting students with multiple exposures to individual words and central concepts, then guiding them to brainstorm related words (Kosanovich et al, 2010).

S. Brown and Kappes (2012) argue for a series of readings coupled with discussion, whereby the first reading occurs individually (or, for struggling readers, in partners), the second reading is a teacher- or student-led group read-aloud, and the discussion focuses on text-based questions that probe discrete elements within the text. After a final discussion among the students, they then write about the text. For disciplinary literacy in social studies courses, discussion is critical for students to attain mastery of the content. For example, Fang and Pace (2013) imply how the language used by teachers within content areas helps

students with repeated readings; in doing so, three questions are sought: (1) What are the important ideas in the text? (2) How are the ideas organized in the text? and (3) What is the author's perspective? Depending on the content area within a social studies course or topic, it may be less important to examine the author's perspective.

Determining how much proximity discussion questions should be given in relation to a reading is a skill where teachers may take time to develop perfection. Gillis et al. (2017) assert that teachers cannot embed questions in students' textbooks; however, with multimodal designs, this can be achieved for certain disciplinary reading activities. Nonetheless, the use of Question Answer Relationship (QtA) strategy can provide effective connections for disciplinary literacy because this format guides the teacher when students read an expository text. With QtA, social studies teachers can provide students with an instructional sequence that pairs effectively with reading assignments, whole class discussions, and small group designs. QtA's classification also reduces the difficulty for social studies teachers to position questions within disciplinary reading activities (Gillis et al., 2017).

When introducing a new learning design to secondary students (especially QtA), it is advisable to provide a lesson or longer introduction as to why the approach will be used. By providing students with a forecast of where they may encounter reading struggles within a content area, teachers can provide clarity, reduce anxiety, and initiate discussions more successfully as a result. For example, QtA procedures allow a social studies teacher to provide additional

expertise in an area of texts that may be limited and grants greater academic freedom so the teacher can eventually enable more student ownership in deciphering the text (Gillis et al., 2017).

In their quantitative study, Vaughn et al. (2012) demonstrated that a series of reading interventions can be effective. Here, 28 sixth- and seventh-grade students who failed their state assessment in reading were provided with 50 minutes of intensive reading instruction in small groups. The researchers found that the students gained in comprehension by a 1.20 effect size and in word identification by .49, even though most students were still behind on reading at grade-level. Similarly, Chambers Cantrell et al. (2010) reported on the effectiveness of a reading intervention effort focused on comprehension strategy instruction (the Learning Strategies Curriculum) in initiating disciplinary literacy practices. Fisher and Frey (2014) have added that the focus on developing disciplinary literacy through visualization and self-questioning techniques can also yield benefits in the classroom. As Ortlieb and Schatz (2020) argue, "If educators can utilize such a framework [that effectively promotes literacy inside and outside of the classroom] to positively contribute to students' sense of self-efficacy, significant potential for wide literacy improvement exists across the disciplines" (p. 736); implementing such strategies can positively impact teachers' facilitation of social studies instruction. Chamber-Cantrell et al.'s (2010) research further indicates the need for stronger instruction in reading comprehension for middle- and high-school students as a means towards disciplinary literacy by

improving on the weaknesses of low-performing students while also bolstering the strengths of the classroom's strongest readers.

While Hinchman and Moore (2013) heavily pushed close readings, Fisher and Frey (2014) focus on whether students should be taught to think critically about complex reading rather than watering down readings to meet their learning needs. They argue that short complex texts (three paragraphs to three pages) are ideal for advancing disciplinary literacy in secondary students. Reading the same text multiple times yet in different ways can lead to an increase of fluency within disciplinary reading. In turn, providing intensive close reading instruction in social studies can help struggling readers think about personal experiences rather than text-based evidence when it comes to inferences about a particular topic (Therrien, 2004). Finding teaching methods that help deepen student thought when deciphering primary or secondary sources is a critical component for reading comprehension in social studies. Slavin et al., (2008) argue that older students participate "in small groups to help one another master reading skills and in which the success of the team depends on the individual learning of each team member" (p. 310); in many cases, effective group strategies for secondary education can bolster instructional methods as the 2020s progress.

Key Scholars

Dr. Tammy Shreiner of Grand Valley State University in Michigan is one of the country's foremost experts on social studies education and disciplinary literacy for secondary social studies. Many of her publications have helped influence the design of this study as they focus on developing stronger

disciplinary literacy awareness and implementation for secondary teachers. Shreiner and Zwart (2020) argue that when disciplinary literacy is implemented effectively, teachers take the implementation of the topic to additional levels by focusing on how the complexities of world history engage students to think from "temporal, spatial, and thematic frameworks" (p. 442). The authors place great emphasis on the terminology of historical literacy as a literacy or ability to analyze and interpret historical texts through historical inquiry. This is where disciplinary literacy in social sciences encroaches on multimodalities, as an array of instructional technologies can be used to enhance the historical disciplinary literacy process.

Shreiner (2018) also asserts that disciplinary literacy in social studies can create more student awareness of contemporaneous social justice issues. In her mixed methods study interviewing nearly 30 students from fifth to 12th grades, she explains how data literacy—the ability to analyze, interpret, evaluate, and use data and data visualizations—forms part of the student's ability to not only analyze data but to apply it, thereby improving historical analysis. However, most students were not likely to read the necessary data visualizations without explicit instruction. Within secondary education, therefore, the debate continues on whether content area literacy should concentrate on general reading and writing at the expense of disciplinary literacy. Although this study seeks to increase educator awareness of disciplinary literacy implementation in social studies education, the main goal will be to increase critical literacy using multimodal design in the content area. Howard and Gidry (2017) argue for a more balanced approach when

teaching social studies to secondary students since it is important for them to gain

expertise in literacy within the subject matter and to improve general literacy.

Indeed, Wineberg, Martin, and MonteSano (2013) point out how inquiry in social

studies literacy improves literacy overall. Furthermore, they argue that three areas

are most needed when improving literacy in social studies (or history): sourcing,

contextualization, and corroboration. How social studies teachers may expand

disciplinary literacy within these domains will vary from class-to-class; however,

maintaining these points can boost student literacy gains (Howard & Gidry,

2017).

Providing school district personnel with qualitative data that allows

teachers latitude in implementing disciplinary literacy within multimodalities will

close gaps in reading research. Often, social studies instructors at the secondary

level dabble with instruction in teaching students to decipher primary or

secondary sources as well as author biases within texts. Here, the proposed study

provides both district leaders and teachers with necessary insights to develop

remarkable disciplinary literacy instruction that allows for all teachers to master

reading instruction within our ever-changing world. Social studies courses present

an ideal opportunity for students to develop their critical literacy analysis because

of the many multimodalities that affect the past to present-day. This study will

therefore require students to complete critical reading that questions societal

power and authority, social justice issues from the past and present, and how

understanding current events from a domestic and international perspective can

improve their status as global citizens (Wolk, 2003). As this study progresses,

students will gain disciplinary perspective in completing literacy in social studies; more importantly, they may also gain a more open-minded understanding for how texts are presented (MacPhee & Whitecotton, 2011).

Application to the Study

This case study was established with a situated learning design focusing on social studies education and the use of critical literacy through multimodalities. Elements within different courses in social studies will become better connected through the natural progressions that take place throughout this study. When social studies teachers effectively engage students in critical literacy, this can yield an academic freedom upon which social justice issues can be expanded. Depending on the specific curriculum, a unit may focus on how Eurocentrism has entrenched dichotomies of gender empowerment, classism, racism, and other pertinent practices by using disciplinary literacy through multimodalities. Of course, recent research on implicit bias has been growing, and this design will allow teachers opportunities at certain points in their curriculum to elaborate on these ideals. In some cases, teachers will look to media culture throughout the study as a way of breaking problematic ideologies (Kellner & Share, 2007), conveying to students a certain procedural framework when approaching critical literacy beyond their academic years. Cultivating lessons that help students pursue an honest evaluation of literacy social studies advances values that curtail marginalization in the American republic (Hammer, 2011).

With more K-12 students embarking on virtual education because of the pandemic, creating a study that focuses on these themes will be of the utmost

value as this decade continues. Through the combination of extant research, this dissertation will support teachers in their creation of technology environments as their students complete critical literacy themed social sciences lessons with multimodalities, ultimately creating a student body of motivated, independent readers. In times of social distancing and self-isolation, a great deal of uncertainty has been felt around student mental health and motivation, and this study may hopefully contribute to determining technological elements that teachers can call on to mitigate these concerns. The proposed research may also encourage greater student interest in critical literacy since its goals support a fostering of student motivation through strategic use, growth in conceptual knowledge, and social interaction (Alverman, 2003).

Social studies education at the secondary level encourages teachers to expand student literacy through multimodal designs. Student literacy skills have new meanings in the 2020s: for instance, students need to be able to consume and synthesize a variety of texts across various emerging technologies. Since social studies presents readers with texts that grow in complexity and shift from monomodal to multimodal within digital forms, students are faced with handling new demands in critical literacy (Serafini, 2012). Finally, the selected dissertation topic will advance recent findings in the (pre-pandemic) literature, offering new perspectives on this global phenomenon. Coupling disciplinary literacy with multimodal design utilizing several disciplinary literacy researchers can be used and will be explored in the second part of this literature review.

Multimodal Design in Literacy

New literacy studies (NLS) represent a new way to implement literacy instruction as a social practice rather than skill acquisition (Street, 1984). In essence, it becomes imperative to make new literacy skills as societally relevant as possible. Furthermore, the use of multimodal design becomes critical to implementing literacy instruction in the present day (Magnusson & Godhe, 2019). In the wake of Covid-19, the implementation of mini-units has become more commonplace, whereby these purposeful week-long approaches focus on a specific skill due to time constraints. Lastly, critical media literacy is of paramount importance to this study as it broadens literacy to include types of mass communication and popular culture, expanding the proximity between the various parties involved (Mirra et al., 2018).

Global Significance

Kress et al. (2010) exemplify how multimodal design can be implemented in K-12 STEM subjects and throughout science education. The authors argue that a mixture of designs (such as imagery, audio, video, and other illustrations) provides greater authenticity for students as they tackle the semiotics and rhetoric of learning. In their research, rhetoric argues for the semiotic ability of students to connect with lesson designs that impact their worldviews. Likewise, Kress et al. (2010) argue that with multimodal design in science, teachers can adapt instructional strategies based on new student data and different trends in education. Open semiotics for multimodalities can be transformative when using a variety of methods to help students navigate the more academically rigorous parts

of the curriculum. Although Kress et al. (2010) consider science education, their studies invite application to social studies or history courses since different models of communication are used to enhance student readability.

The new literacy studies (Gee, 1999; Street, 1995) had a significant impact on the implementation of multimodalities in literacy in the 2020s. With NLS, the focus is more on the organic components that contribute to literacy and less on student attainment of pertinent literacy skills. Similar to Lave and Wegner (1991), the proliferation of multiple literacies by NLS emphasizes the impact of socialization on the advancement of student literacy. Street (1995points to the many differences between literacy events and literacy practices. For example, literacy events may include a deep discussion in a content literacy lesson that happens spontaneously, whereas literacy practices refer to more explicit instructional design methods within a classroom. Street (2003) also argues that major research efforts in NLS signal how literacy varies from one context or culture to another; different literacies thus operate in this reflection piece on critical approaches to literacy in theory and practice. NLS research supports the use of multimodal literacy that increases readership among the masses and by teachers integrating diverse reading sources into a social studies classroom; as a result, there may be less imposition of western views that tend to subliminally dominate instruction.

Magnusson and Godhe (2019) analyze how a multimodal approach to literacy provides additional support in language learning. The authors highlight how such approaches are taken in Swedish public schools in an effort to help

students become multilingual. Given that communication as a global community has metastasized over the past decade due to digitalization, such multimodal designs are therefore needed to stay ahead of the new demands presented on students in the 2020s. The researchers also demonstrate how literacy is developed through a socio-semiotic as well as a multimodal approach, which provides deeper interpersonal connections for students. Through the study of signs or semiotics within media literacy, students can improve their differentiation skills (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). According to Shipka (2011), however, an expert in the field of multimodal design provides a mostly theoretical explanation of how students can access multiple modes of learning through semiotic remediation or meaning-making through organic and diverse methods; in practice, by creating literacy lessons that combine audio, visual, gestural, tactile, spatial, and written modes, students as well as teachers can draw upon different meanings from an interpersonal standpoint. Magnusson and Godhe (2019) go on to explain that the meaning potential from multimodal designs can be applicable when incorporating sound disciplinary literacy instruction.

Ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings can be intertwined within a student-led learning environment in a collaborative function (Magnusson & Godhe, 2019). Globally, the ideational component requires teacher and student expression of the outside world. For social studies education, ongoing reflection on the impact that historical events have on the present is vital. Additionally, it should be noted that 'interpersonal' here refers to relationship-building as well as communication; this is especially important in the time of Covid-19, which has

problematized the creation of healthy human connections. Lastly, textual function refers to how the ideational and interpersonal meta functions are implemented and structured. From a multimodal and globalist standpoint, the research by Magnusson and Godhe (2019) allows teachers to have greater instructional freedom within disciplinary units; as connections are made through many different types of communication, a deliberate lack of specific hierarchy is required.

The multimodal design allows for different returns instructionally. As a result, there should be no fixed approach for all types of disciplinary literacy designs (Bezemer & Kress, 2016). Multimodal efforts allow the social studies teacher to advance learning from pedagogical forms while allowing students to develop personal affiliation to the lesson (Magnusson & Godhe, 2019). Additionally, with education becoming increasingly distanced due to Covid-19, multimodal efforts offer fluid approaches by which student concepts of reading text acquisition can be bolstered. Developing student reading in paper-based formats remains key; however, as the modern world becomes increasingly digital, the integration of multimodal design within disciplinary literacy is ever more crucial. Students' abilities to make meaning from texts through multimodal designs after their own reflection are indicative of student learning through both implicit and explicit instruction.

Bullock (2016) explains how science education can be better implemented through multimodal design, specifically in helping students achieve strong metacognitive knowledge through various types of continuously improving

visual, printed, and interactive designs. Understanding that student mastery of paper-based texts is important and utilizing digital instructional techniques to master those as well as non-paper-based texts can be accomplished through multimodalities. By not replacing traditional methods with digital tools, but rather updating the techniques for completing disciplinary literacy, students can develop an array of instructional techniques within their own toolboxes to overcome learning challenges in their academic journey. For example, multimodalities allow for immersive experiences (Bullock, 2016) through virtual reality (VR) that may improve learning outcomes. Crucially, as the ability to travel has been restricted by Covid-19, VR has been used in science curricula to better connect students with worldwide phenomena without ever leaving their classroom or living room. Although VR and multimodal designs are separate issues, they can be considered connected issues within both the hard and social sciences.

Some researchers see multimodality as a tool that allows students to best create, design, and implement ways that help them learn through organic connections with semiotic tools. Bullock (2016) explains that the blending of multimodal designs with traditional learning environments refreshes teaching implementation techniques as well as student academic gains. Mirroring such techniques within social studies/history education can be vital to improving student reading motivation and comprehension. B. Cope and Kalantzis (2000) express the demand for multiliteracies as part of pedagogical as well as curricular integration to reflect the structuredness presented within texts.

As explained by Street (2009), Heath (1982) described 'literacy events' as situations where a written piece is critical to the entanglement of a learner's interpretation with regards to literacy. Street (1984) then refers to 'literacy practices,' showing how even decades ago, social practices were seen to have a major impact on literacy development for learners. Since the 1990s, implementation of multiple literacies into instruction for younger secondary students could influence the increasingly media-rich environment that is ever more prevalent in middle-school education (Alvermann, 2003). Just as Olson (1988) argued that literacy makes humans civilized, decades later, the infusion of multimodalities or the blending of print, visual, auditory, and digital texts broaden civility. Kress and van Leewan (2001) argue how imagery within literacy instruction needs to be reinforced, countering the notion that imagery is always the result of verbal text.

Reflecting on potential trajectories, the modern day demands quicker and more efficient communication through various digital methods (Muspratt et al., 1997; Snyder, 2003), and the infusion of imagery with text has certainly continued to expand societally. Beane (2003) implies how literacy with multimodalities exists not just on screens, but also within the households and greater communities of students as well as their families, encompassing textual image, subliminal imaging, and word integration. As a result, it is the role of the secondary teacher to enable this paradigm shift as textual readings increase in rigor. Beane (2003) explains that various spatial organizations within texts reflect a cohesion or connectedness between previously developed visual and spatial

awareness, resulting in the implicit acquisition of comprehension. Within the instruction of literacy, the explicit design of guiding students to predict the structure of cohesive features in texts via the activation of prior spatial intelligences is in the best interest of students present and future. Similarly, Castek and Beach (2013) articulate the need for secondary teachers to use the features of apps to encourage better literacy utilization; the opportunities presented by various technological apps can connect print and visual literacies within a contemporary function that makes sense for students in the digital age. Guiding teachers to maximize apps through cooperation and connections between various literacies can be used to help students understand organic learning through literacy. More broadly, Leu et al. (2017) argue that literacy is always changing; by sticking with NLS, new multimodal designs can be guided more effectively.

Contemporary Functions and Applications

Multimodalities within science instruction using social semiotics as proposed by Kress et al. (2001) can be implemented in social studies. Such approaches provide evidence for contemporary functions and applications for advancing multimodalities in disciplinary literacy. Traditional views on implementing literacy within not only science education but also similar secondary subjects, as argued by Yeo and Nielsen (2020), are flawed since meanings in science texts are seen as ongoing cultural tools. Jewitt (2006) explains that teaching and learning is always multimodal and technical in language (spoken as well as written), making it glaringly clear that educators use multiple forms of communication with students to convey instruction, regardless

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of the subject taught. For contemporary application, technology enables several modes of differentiation (such as blogging, podcasting, and video) to advance literacy skills within the content (Yeo & Nielsen, 2020). In hard as well as social sciences, videos can be presented through a variety of visual representations that integrate written literacy, including the use of graphs and maps (Gilbert, 2010). Cheng and Archer (2017) argue how multimodal approaches can help students gain a better understanding of thematic patterns when improving their literacy skills because learning sequencing methods can become better established. Furthermore, Yeo and Nielsen (2020) explain that social semiotic theory optimizes multimodal activities in the learning of formal language in science curricula, so that students may create practical connections with their learning.

In their quantitative study, Sutopo and Waldrip (2014) demonstrated how 24 college students in Indonesia saw significant improvement in their understanding of mechanics through a representational approach. By visualizing various manipulations of the demonstrations in the study, already high-performing students were mostly able to achieve a mastery level of knowledge within the area of study. This multimodal design for older students presents opportunities for representational approaches within social studies courses as well. However, teachers may encounter difficulties in implementing multimodal approaches (Yeo & Nielsen, 2020) since their use to demonstrate meanings in science may result in overly frequent methodological change, which runs counter to the need for continually efficient professional development among secondary education

teachers that guides instructional decision-making based on collaborative in-service programs.

Duhaylungsod, Snow, Selman, and Donovan (2015) argue that the use of high-interest material using the Social Studies Generation (SoGen) serves as a means to balance student engagement with the authentic work conducted by historians. The authors agree that a focus on disciplinary literacy raises serious concerns that the social studies teachers may have limited expertise in helping students think like economists, historians, politicians, and/or geographers since many do not hold advanced degrees in their respective fields. In response, the integration of multimodalities into such instruction may ease apprehension among these educators when considering changes to reading instruction for secondary students. Although many students lack access to teachers with deep disciplinary literacy knowledge as well as an advanced degree within a social studies discipline, one available recourse is the use of Word Generation Weekly, a program launched in 2005 that requires 15 minutes daily for vocabulary development. Eventually, the integration of SoGen into this vocabulary development successfully encouraged the incorporation of multimodal approaches to enhance student understanding of text literacy. In turn, a major goal from SoGen is to create a system of purposeful reading that contains scaffolding, teacher mediation, and engaging topics that can be supported by multimodal methods. Classroom discussion is the driving force behind the theory of change, and the blending of academic language along with complex reasoning

demonstrates how multimodalities can be implemented for disciplinary literacy now and in the future.

Previously, specialists have advanced multimedia approaches within disciplinary literacy design (Bruce, 2003; Reinking, Mckenna, Labbo, & Kieffer, 1998) in specific areas to challenge the acquisition of student reading. Moje (2009) subsequently advances multiple media and literacies in practical ways to advance multimodalities for students, theoretically separating literacies that are in or out of demand from new media and the reality that these dynamics can change frequently and unpredictability over the course of a disciplinary literacy research study. Moje (2009) explains that it may make sense to place only new literacies with new media; however, situations may arise where an older media (such as a newspaper article from the 1920s) can be enhanced using a new digital media (such as YouTube). Rather than dismissing an antiquated literacy that remains effective, literacies from previous times can help students better understand emerging digital technologies. Unlike Scribner and Cole (1981), who defined literacy as more cognitive, Moje (2009) sees literacy as a set of social practices that can be driven with technology. Just as acquiring historical analysis skills goes beyond the memorization of dates and names, literacy is not confined to a student's acquisition of reading but also extends to the application of the learning to specific instances in life.

Bearne (2003) exposes the shift from text to digital literacy and the establishment of multimodalities (Kress & VanLeeuwen, 2001). Gee (2003) contributed to the foundations for multimodalities that are critical to present-day

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instructional practices, while Moje (2009) has since argued that qualitative studies on multimodal literacy need to be more categorized based on the geographic regions and demographic data of participants so that future researchers can have a better understanding of how such practices could be adjusted to the needs of different communities Walsh (2010) explains that meaning-making when completing a text through multimodalities provides students with unique interactive opportunities to seal leaks in comprehension of cultural contexts. The author argues that affordance refers to what is possible when specific modes are implemented and determining which skills will most likely be yielded needs to be realized during the planning stages of disciplinary literacy lessons with multimodal design. For instance, showing students a visual about a historical topic informs the reader by preparing them for possible trends in a forthcoming lesson. Guiding students to find words and imagery that tell more of the story can interject more academic knowledge during a particular reading piece; in the case of history, reading can be more thematic rather than linear or chronological. With multimodal texts becoming more commonplace in secondary education (Walsh, 2010), informing, and updating pedagogy to meet student demands is essential.

Key Scholars

Oldakowski (2014) explains how student analysis of textual elements in reading can be expanded within disciplinary literacy. Multimodalities in various content areas can help enhance various domains within social studies classes, such as boosting map skills. The obligation for greater multimodal assignments enables students to be accountable for their academic thinking. Social studies teachers

therefore have an opportunity to implement lessons that require students to utilize multiple literary elements within texts. Bringing social modals to literacy instruction in ways that organically keep students engaged with meaning also impacts broader cultural understandings (Street, 2003). Conversely, Oldakowski (2014) raises the concern that the practice of multimodalities in literacy can be more common in elementary or middle-school grades but nonexistent in many high-school content areas.

Paek et al. (2016) contend that increasing multimodal design allows for students and teachers to become more thoughtful because different senses are heightened through these types of literacy designs. Their study focused on math skills in 173 first- and second-grade students and examined how students performed using different audio and bodily-kinesthetic modalities. In their MANOVA testing, the audio-related perceptual factor was found to be significant for the number of correct items. Their findings show that perceptual conspicuity (the ability of people to see similar objects) and thematic relevance (creating multimodal lessons that build on prior knowledge) are essential to creating a digital learning environment that promotes highly effective student learning. The study also highlights the importance of striking a balance between having the right amount of thematically relevant audio with which an efficient semantic relationship can be formed.

Roswell et al.'s (2013) advancement of NLS combines multiple social science and humanities disciplines such as anthropology, history, sociology, psychology, and linguistics to help further promote multimodal reading. Their

ideals hold that multimodal reading is a social practice that can develop the cognitive functions of students. Within Roswell et al. (2013), they explain how oral narratives expose different understandings of language and communication across cultural practices; moreover, such literacy practices should invoke further social practice and interaction compared to hardline psychological theory. Similarly, Holland et al. (1998) also point to cultural realities being at the forefront of literacy development. With modern-day textbooks increasingly showcasing multimodal design for literacy, generational gaps nonetheless exist between educators and literacy publishers and their students.

Roswell at al. (2013) voice the concern that the advancement of NLS along with multimodalities in disciplinary literacy can lead to power dynamics that curtail instructional efforts. As the world adapts to and eventually resets from Covid-19, it is imperative that educators recognize the right semiotics when distinguishing between textual organizations in literacy. Literacy takes place in all forms of human interaction because multimodal forms of communication transpire in various social contexts (Barton & Hamilton, 1998); as a result, the creation of artifactual literacy within academic settings may take on expanded significance (Pahl & Roswell, 2016). Gonzalez et al. (2005) encourages educators to provoke students to bring their varied life experiences into culturally relevant situations. Within a social studies course, for example, the integration of a student's demographics can empower other students and thereby improve their own overall literacy skills in unforeseen ways.

Counter Arguments

As alluded to above, the proliferation of multimodal literacy designs has its critics as well as its supporters. As an example, O'Halloran et al., (2010), themselves staunch advocates for multimodal design, outline the difficulties involved in updating software to meet the future demands of this type of instruction in the midst of a rapidly changing digital world. The researchers also imply that it can be difficult for school entities to help the school community adapt from single to multiple modes of communication. Furthermore, Machin (2007) argues that the lack of formality in multimodal designs can problematize the studying—and enacting—of the semiotics of language use.

Another challenge observed by O'Halloran et al. (2010) is the combination of a wide range of disciplines within the confines of traditional academic scholarship. Arranging for professionals from different academic areas to create an interactive multimodal design for educators can present organizational difficulties, especially around ensuring that all parties have the proper training to develop and implement a highly effective product. Most importantly, the individual wants and needs of educators and researchers will inevitably influence the extent to which multimodal design is implemented. Convincing researchers as well as educators who have spent much of their life's work on a specific discipline to cross over into new multifunctional realms—even in their interpretation of key terms—can be a challenging prospect (O'Halloran et al., 2010).

Although O'Halloran et al. (2010) focus on the implementation of software design, the use of multimodal design in social studies can vary tremendously based on numerous independent variables. Constantinou (2005) discusses how physical elements of multimodal design are the technical pieces of communication used within certain disciplines. For example, a business teacher espousing niche and subject-specific acronyms may run into confusion when collaborating on a multimodal lesson with a physics teacher. Constantinou (2005) argues for flexibility of terms and practices within multimodalities, yet this lack of congruence can be as much a curse as it is a blessing. Baldry and Thibault (2006) explain that the term 'mode' is used in various semiotic modalities, but differences in meaning for certain terms can arise depending on the method of media used to expand upon it, resulting in unintentional confusion. On the other hand, specific idiosyncratic language in various disciplines may be more easily comprehended; as Turner (1994) explains, certain universally accepted norms in music and imagery can be presented that help offset language confusion.

Synthesis of Literature

The conclusion of this portion of the literature review reflects the need for highly effective multimodal design when conducting disciplinary literacy instruction in secondary social studies courses. Indeed, Kellner and Share (2007) state that the fate of global democracy depends on students learning how literacy is applied within different modalities. Social studies education provides the perfect opportunity to address differentiated content areas that facilitate student

growth from a critical literacy perspective. The research that follows will reveal authentic analysis from social studies educators on the impacts that such mini-units of disciplinary literacy—infused with multimodalities—can have on the next generation of Americans.

The next chapter will provide an articulation of the selected methodology for this research project.

CHAPTER 3

The literature review demonstrates how secondary teachers can benefit from ongoing support in implementing disciplinary literacy instruction (Schreiner, 2018). This is the reality in central New Jersey, where diverse students bring a range of experiences, opportunities and challenges into the classroom. The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to learn how secondary social studies teachers maximize disciplinary literacy over a 12-week period. The researcher also sought to ascertain teachers' perceptions of implementing as well as providing support for a sustained literacy program with modern-day relevance. This inductive qualitative case study was aligned with guidelines to explore a new phenomenon through the lenses of participants (Creswell, 2007). As Baškarada (2014) argues, case study research can provide a deeper and more holistic view of the research problem; equally, it is vital that the proper purpose of the study and its implementation are precisely defined, as severe consequences may arise if missteps are taken.

The following section will discuss the background and pertinent information concerning the methods used within this qualitative exploratory case study and its application of situated learning theory (Lave and Wenger, 1991). As a result, this study aims to respond to the following questions:

1. What are the experiences of teachers implementing disciplinary reading instruction using multimodality?

a. How does the prior academic and/or professional background of participating social studies teachers influence the implementation of disciplinary literacy with multimodalities?

2. To what extent are teachers reflecting on the effectiveness of the implementation of this practice?

This study had several desired outcomes. Following completion, schools would have greater ease in implementing disciplinary literacy instruction with the use of multimodal design. Literacy researchers also needed to expand on their study of secondary education as well as social studies education. Furthermore, as it was conducted in a mostly hybrid/remote setting, school districts and literacy researchers would gain valuable qualitative data on handling official business in non-traditional times. Lastly, this study should be continued with updated research goals and methods as the decade progresses. At a microcosmic level, this study will directly encourage more secondary teachers to implement sound disciplinary literacy instruction through the use of multimodalities. In turn, perhaps district policy can shift towards a more rounded curriculum that infuses pedagogical practices with disciplinary literacy. By applying situated learning theory to a qualitative case study on the use of disciplinary literacy with multimodal design in secondary social studies, key stakeholders may look to emulate this study through research and/or practice to understand the victories and difficulties when rolling out a new initiative in a time of uncertainty. By understanding the experience's participants faced in this study, research can be pinpointed to focus on the needs of various school communities.

The study focused on the experiences of 5 social studies educators who taught middle and/or high school in a large suburban New Jersey school district during the 2020-21 school year. The school district in question has just over 10,000 students and nearly 1,200 teachers across more than 20 schools. The district is mostly suburban but has semi-urban and rural communities; it is one of the state's largest municipalities as well as school districts and has seen significant shifts in demography from both socio-economic and racial standpoints. The five participants in the study worked in the district's six secondary schools. Each school has variances in student demographics and geographic location, and the schools are ordered from newest to oldest. For the 2020–21 school year. High School 1 had a total of 1,258 students: 3.3% Asian, 17.7% Black, 44% Hispanic, and 34% White. High School 1 also had 45% of students receiving free or reduced lunch in this school year. High School 1 is mostly a semi-urban and suburban high school. High School 2 is the most populated of the secondary schools; students mostly come from suburban and rural parts of the school district. Of the 1,400 students attending High School 2, 63% were White, 4% were Asian, 11.5% were Black, and 20% were Hispanic. Of all the secondary schools, High School 2 had the lowest percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch (20.5%). Although High School 2 had no teachers participating in the study, Participant 1, Participant 4, and the researcher were all alumni. High School 3 had 1,006 students, the smallest of the three high schools in terms of student population, with 4% Asian students, 27% Black students, 38% Hispanic students, and 28%

White students. High School 3 had 52% of students receiving free or reduced lunch.

Middle School 1 had 936 students, the lowest of the three middle schools, with 3% Asian students, 16% Black students, 43% Hispanic students, and 33% White students. Middle School 1 is the feeder school for most of High School 1's students and has 44% of students receiving free or reduced lunch. Middle School 2 had 941 students, with 3% Asian students, 11% Black, 27% Asian, and 55.5% White. Around 29% of Middle School 2 students received free or reduced lunch, while 70% of students at Middle School 2 feed into High School 2, with the remaining 30% feeding into High School 3. Students attending Middle School 2 are mostly from suburban households; however, some come from rural and urban communities within the district. Middle School 3 had 825 students, but none of the participants in the study taught there. Of this population, 3% were Asian students, 23% Black, 42% Hispanic, and 26% White. Around 48% of students at Middle School 3 received free or reduced lunch. Middle School 3 feeds 70% of the High School 3 student intake and 30% of High School 2's incoming ninth-grade classes. As a result, Middle School 3 is mostly populated by students from semi-urban and suburban communities.

Frequent classroom observations and follow-up interviews occurred with each teacher throughout the duration of the study to expose how teachers felt after conducting a different approach within their lessons. Participants were interviewed for a maximum of 60 minutes during each session and observed twice per mini unit. My research provided more detail as to whether social studies

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teachers holding an advanced degree in a subject have an impact on the ease for conducting such lessons.

Research Paradigm

The research paradigm sought to explore the experiences of teachers when executing three multimodal mini-units with a focus on disciplinary literacy over five consecutive days that either extended an area of a previously taught unit or introduced an upcoming area with greater specificity. The researcher asked participants to create their own mini-units without intervention so that readers could see the organic triumphs and struggles endured by each social studies teacher throughout the study.

The project adopted an interpretive approach to explore the reactions of teachers when they presented disciplinary literacy instruction with multimodalities. This study draws on elements of positivism through the frequent conduction of interviews after classes and through empirical observations. Positivist methodology considers situations where variables have more potential to be controlled (Neuman, 1997). However, out of Lincoln and Guba's (1985) four paradigms of inquiry (positivist, post-positivist, critical theory, and constructivist), this study is most conducive to the constructivist paradigm. A constructivist approach coincides most with social learning theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991), as communication with participants adds different meanings to disciplinary literacy. Moreover, the constructivist paradigm is designed in such a way that future social studies teachers can be better guided when implementing disciplinary literacy with multimodalities because this is the worldview of the

research (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). In turn, a constructivist design informs the

case study that will be the basis for this study. Participants taught based on their

experiences and had multiple realities of the phenomenon in their respective

classrooms. This provided a greater contribution to understanding the varied

experiences of participants (Ponterotto, 2005). This paradigm allowed for a

transactional and subjective approach to research, whereby the researcher and the

participants understand and live a comparable experience that requires open

discourse, reflection, and meaning-making (Ponterotto, 2005).

Here, the qualitative research method is used to better understand how

social studies teachers in this large New Jersey school district experience the use

of disciplinary literacy with multimodal design at different points during the

second semester of the 2020–21 academic year. Creswell and Poth (2018) show

that qualitative research positions the researcher within the context of the study.

While observing participants in their natural setting, this also provides context for

the data. Qualitative research focuses upon the words, actions, and interactions of

participants, inductively connecting participants' responses to experiences and

allowing for a comprehensive understanding of social and human problems

(Creswell & Poth, 2018). The present study employed this theoretical framework

in implementing an exploratory case study on how certain social studies teachers

experience delivering predesigned disciplinary literacy mini-units with

multimodalities in a large New Jersey school district.

This qualitative exploratory case study-initiated themes of situated

learning theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991) to promote the natural flow of teachers'

intuition when initiating disciplinary literacy lessons with multimodal design. According to Burrell and Morgan (1979), the paradigm for a study should be designed in a way that reflects how the researcher views a certain issue. By allowing teachers to have academic freedom and focus on social studies lessons that embed disciplinary literacy components within this case study, students were best situated to analyze the important perspectives of their content. Burr (1995) explains that in a social constructivist paradigm, the experience of the participants (and their life experiences more generally) will shape the direction in which the mini-units move and define which areas of the social studies curriculum are most important to them. With all participants and the researcher having a unique perspective on their interpretation of social studies, universal learning was reflected based on the situation presented.

Research Method

The researcher selected a qualitative exploratory case study designed to develop deeper information on impacts of teaching disciplinary literacy using multimodalities on social studies education. A case study can be defined as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin 2009, p. 18). Case study research requires the researcher to investigate a bound system (case) or multiple bound systems (cases) over a fixed period and to use detailed data collection from several sources such as observation, interviews, audio/visual transcription, and other reports on topics related to the case (Creswell, 2009). Various combinations

of all data collection methods can be used in varying degrees for case study analysis (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 1998).

Farquhar (2012) explains that case study analysis focuses on studying a phenomenon in context as it may apply in each given situation. Although her study focuses on how case studies are applied to business research, themes of organizational leadership can be applied to how teachers in a district perform in the context of a specific phenomenon and across different departments, schools, and districts throughout the area. Case study research focuses on answering the how, who and why of present-day events and their impact on a certain aspect of life. By studying a small number of participants in great depth, the researcher has limited control over outside events and can most effectively focus on a present-day phenomenon. As a result, this approach fits well with the investigation of how social studies educators at various grade and subject levels react to the implementation of disciplinary literacy with multimodal design.

On the contrary, the potential disadvantages of case study research include a lack of objectivity, the absence of quantitative features, complex generalizability, and a lack of exploration of cause-and-effect scenarios (Farquahar, 2012). However, although this study is purely qualitative, a blueprint design could be replicated in traditional quantitative or mixed method format should student performance in assessments from the lessons be a factor in the research. By providing various stakeholders with an in-depth analysis of this phenomenon, the findings here represent a baseline for addressing the pertinence of disciplinary literacy instruction to social studies within other research interests.

Stake (2003) further defines three types of case study: instrumental, collective, and intrinsic. This study will focus on unique reflections on the various cases by exploring how the main issue of disciplinary literacy is applied through multimodalities. By analyzing the various results from these distinct case studies, different findings may be identified when various areas of social studies are instructed using disciplinary literacy (Margarella, 2016; Yin, 2017). This study will examine two to four bounded cases from the second semester of the 2020–21 academic year to ascertain how teachers from different subject areas experience the implementation of disciplinary literacy during the final semester. As a result, a collective case study approach is to be used since the themes that present themselves from different social studies teachers at various grade levels and subject areas could yield unpredicted outcomes.

A collective case study utilizes a similar approach for different cases that are to be compared (Yin, 2014; Lai et al., 2016). In this case study, each participating social studies teacher represents a case; as the data collected from each case, they will be disaggregated and analyzed through different data sources. When using multiple cases, unlike a holistic approach that focuses on one study (Baxter & Jack, 2010), examining how disciplinary literacy with multimodalities can be applied within different subjects and grade levels across the same school district. Yin (2003) explains that a collective case study either predicts similar results or contrasts results for likely reasons. Baxter and Jack (2010) argue that collective case studies can produce robust and reliable data, although they can be cumbersome to analyze.

Population and Recruitment

Participants were selected via purposive sampling in conjunction with the district's central office administration. By using a purposive sample, participants discussed their needs and limitations when using disciplinary literacy and balancing a new skill set with previously effective beliefs. Keeping a human resource frame in mind during the methods of this study helped increase participation from different teachers after the study commenced (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Lewis & Grosser, 2012).

The primary participants comprised five social studies teachers, four of whom stayed until the end of the study. Prior to launching the study, Participant 4 notified the researcher that full participation over the multi-week study might be paused due to family medical reasons; a fifth participant was then selected as a backup. In the end, Participant 4 was unable to complete the final round of observations and interviews. Nevertheless, their data from the first two rounds of the study were examined. The only participation from central office administration in this study came when they were asked to provide three potential female social studies teachers once the first four participants had agreed to take part. A female social studies teacher in her fourth year at High School 3 was selected after conversing with each prospect. Recruiting interested teachers was approved by the superintendent and Board of Education in September 2020. No children/students participated in the study; only interested district employees were askedt o participate. Staff were incentivized with a $25 gift card to a merchant of

their choice, exposure as to how an IRB study unfolds, and additional professional development hours for the 2020–21 school year.

The district employs roughly 100 full-time social studies teachers across six schools (three high schools and three middle schools). The study enlisted participation from three high-school teachers (Participants 1, 2, and 5) and two middle-school teachers (Participants 3 and 4). Each participant taught different curricula within High Schools 1 and 3 and Middle Schools 1 and 2; the researcher currently teaches at High School 2 and involving colleagues. Throughout the researcher's teaching career in the school district, he had served as colleagues with Participants 1 and 4. Participant 3 was taught by the researcher in Advanced Placement United States Government & Politics in the 2012–13 school year. During 2019–20, the researcher conducted a series of virtual professional development sessions, one of which was attended by Participant 2. Participant 5 attended High School 3 while the researcher taught there; however, neither had met until the study began. Additional details on the participants are outlined in the Participant Profile in Chapter 4.

To generate interest in the study, selected staff (predetermined by the researcher) received the Participation for Interview of Dissertation (Appendix A) and Protocol Questions for Selecting Participants (Appendix B) by email. All interested staff were invited to respond by completing the Protocol Questions for Selecting Participants in writing or by phone call, after which a final selection of participants was made. All staff were required to acknowledge and sign the Participation Consent Form (Appendix C).

Selected participants were asked to conduct three separate five-day mini-units using disciplinary literacy with multimodal design on topics of their choice. The researcher examined how participants were able to conduct these lessons with limited involvement of their expertise. Disciplinary literacy practices with multimodal design presented over the timespan emulated previous teacher knowledge and were reflected on the district supported document-based question (DBQ) or Mini-Q based topic. A DBQ is the type of essay structure required in Advanced Placement History exams and focuses on analytical writing based on student disciplinary reading of a specific primary source or mixture of primary and secondary sources. Mini-Qs are typically created for students in middle school; they are much shorter than a DBQ and are practical for a condensed mini-unit as used in this case study. Selected staff had received district-implemented professional development on both the DBQ and Mini-Q; the subsequent analysis will examine the extent to which these practices manifest or can be used to maximize disciplinary literacy through multimodalities. During the research, Participants 3 and 5 were the only participants to have utilized the Mini-Q and DBQ in depth.

The mini-unit began on any weekday, ideally starting on a Monday and finishing on a Friday; however, with the school district implementing half-day schedules on Mondays, most participants began their mini-units on Tuesdays and used Mondays as workshop-type days. Flexibility for participants starting this mini-unit was permissible; as a result, the timing of certain lessons was unique. Each observation was scheduled to take place for 20–40 minutes; almost all

sessions lasted the full 40 minutes. Structure and transition between disciplinary literacy activities with multimodalities was observed and reflected upon using the Observation Note Chart (Appendix D). In the school district, staff are required to follow the procedure described in the Observation Note Chart by doing the following: the Do Now or Anticipatory Set, Activity 1, Activity 2 (usually more common for middle school), and a Closure or Exit Ticket.

The disciplinary literacy portion of the Observation Note Chart is grounded in research from the Carnegie Report (2010) and policy from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (2012). Here, the activities performed by participants were matched to the following areas: building prior knowledge, building specialized vocabulary, learning to deconstruct complex sentences, using knowledge of text structure and genres to predict and main and subordinate ideas, mapping graphics with explanations in the text, posing discipline relevant questions, comparing claims and proposition across texts, and using norms for reasoning within the discipline. As participants implemented their lessons, the researcher identified the specific activities by using initials to code which discipline-specific reading strategies were being met. Each criterion referenced in this category supports the demands for disciplinary literacy within abstract and differentiated methods that focus on several areas needed for reflection in the study.

The three categories for multimodalities in the Observation Note Chart were as follows: Types of Multiliteracies (New London Group, 1996), Knowledge Process (W. Cope & Kalatanzis, 2009), and Type of Multimodal Text (Victoria

State Government, 2019). These categories were grounded in research, and the Type of Multimodal Text has been enshrined in policy by the Australian state of Victoria. Using the same categorization process as the discipline-specific reading strategies, the appropriate initial was provided when staff were observed to perform an activity that met the criteria for any combination of the three named multimodalities. For Types of Multiliteracies (New London Group, 1996), the categories were as follows: written-linguistic, audio, visual, spatial, and gestural. In the case of hybrid or remote learning settings, the gestural component may be the most difficult to observe. For Knowledge Process (W. Cope & Kalatanzis, 2009), the following areas were observed: experiencing (the known or the new), analyzing (functionally or critically), and applying (appropriately or creatively). For Type of Multimodal Text (Victoria State Government, 2019), the researcher considered paper-based, live texts, and digital texts.

During the observations, the participants' preplanned activities had unique features from previous lessons, while some lessons were continuation pieces based on previously covered topics. As building-level administrators handle lesson plan checks in the district, each of the six secondary principals takes different approaches to checking teacher lessons. As a result, participants in this study were inconsistent in the submission of lesson plans. Participant 5 was the most consistent in sharing lesson plans from the mini-unit and gave interview responses that most closely adhered to expectations around disciplinary literacy with multimodalities. Additionally, for those participants who were extending content previously taught, the researcher was provided with a frame of reference

by being added to their courses as a fellow instructor in Google Classroom. As in McDowell (2018), analytic memos along with in vivo coding were used to provide context for the varied experiences shared by participants. These analytic memos and field notes were then used throughout the observations and interviews for all participants to ensure transparency and to garner the maximum possible details from the shared experiences.

Ethical Considerations

Protection of human subjects, confidentiality, informed consent, and plans for obtaining IRB approval were met with the utmost integrity as per the guidelines from St. John's University. All participants were not to be named in this study, nor were the specific geographic locations and names of the schools and district involved. The names of participants were kept confidential throughout. All recruitment materials and IRB consent forms are provided as appendices. Materials will be stored for seven years following publication of the study and then destroyed.

Sampling Strategies and Criteria

Benoot et al. (2016) argue for the use of maximum variation sampling as an imperative form of purposive sampling, as it requires permanent dialogue while the data are gathered. In a district with around 100 contracted social studies faculty members, five individuals were selected for participation, four of whom completed all required phases of the study. Efforts were made to first email potential participants; staff who responded received follow-ups by telephone.

The invited participants were determined based on recommendations from central office administration as well as those who the researcher already knew had reputations for being cooperative, eager to implement new approaches, and who were widely reputable. Only one participant in the study had a master's degree in educational administration, and although all participants held the same Standard Social Studies Certification from the State of New Jersey, each had slightly different undergraduate majors. Such distinctions are reflected in the interviews along within the Participant Profile. Each participant had between two and seven years of teaching experience. Completing the study with four social studies teachers participating was ideal because three is generally seen as the minimum number for an effective case study (Yin, 2009).

All staff selected to participate were eager to complete this groundbreaking study and demonstrated various experiences in these types of lessons for their social sciences courses. Protocol questions were provided to shortlisted candidates to narrow down the best possible candidates for the study. During this time, the researcher explained procedures of the study along with more detail on project expectations. By creating this form of case study, the researcher listened unbiasedly to how participants collaborate on the impacts of their instructional techniques using disciplinary literacy. Some potential staff, especially those from High School 2 (the institution with the highest socio-economic and lowest poverty rate among students), were most resistant to trying this new initiative (Lewis & Grosser, 2012); as a result, the application of purposive sampling in this study recruited teachers who were more willing to step

outside of their comfort zones and embrace new directives. Notably, staff from the district schools with the highest student poverty rate were most eager to participate in this design. In addition, certain participants were reluctant to have the researcher observe their lowest academic performing sections, and all participants preferred their highest performing sections to be observed. It was inferred from this that the participants felt their lower academic achieving students would struggle the most with interdisciplinary literacy practices.

Having launched their mini-units, participants sometimes made adjustments as the lessons unfolded. With this being an exploratory case study, it was imperative to allow the organic flowing ideas of staff to be seen in their academic freedom. A common reflection from participants during the interviews was that lessons were adjusted due to the hybrid/remote predicament. Each participant taught similar lessons previously, and some expressed difficulty in utilizing written texts within their units. When this happened, staff were asked to explain their reasons for making changes during their follow-up interviews. For the most part, staff stuck to their predetermined plans. In turn, the results have improved the researcher's leadership and ability to inform future decision-making on disciplinary literacy in social studies courses.

That said, the researcher's involvement was limited so as not to reflect professional biases on how the participants ought to convey their mini-units. Although participants occasionally asked for feedback off the record, the researcher tried to the best of his ability not to coach or guide. Although this proved challenging, a major goal of the study was to gather the raw and unfiltered

experiences of those teachers who were most willing to implement new approaches with the highest level of instruction to encourage and onboard those who were somewhat resistant to this multimodal approach to disciplinary literacy. Lastly, analytic memos proved a useful way to reflect areas where the researcher perceived any biases.

Data Collection

Data were collected during the second semester of the 2020–21 school year (February to April 2021) following IRB approval. Given the uncertainty due to the advent of Covid-19, all observations took place remotely, with the mini-units viewed on Google Meet. Although completing observations through Google Meet rather than traditional in-person classroom visitations was less than ideal, in practice, the researcher was better able to camouflage his presence, allowing the participants to conduct synchronous online instruction without students noticing an outside observer in the classroom. Using assistance in transcribing interviews from Rev.com, the process of collecting and coding the data was streamlined and effective within various analytic memos (McDowell, 2018).

Observations took place several times for participating teachers and were non-evaluative. To maintain continuity, Participants 1 and 3 were observed during Days 1 and 3; Participants 2 and 4 were observed during Days 2 and 4. Each participant was randomly observed on Day 5 (unannounced). Participants were observed using the Observation Note Chart, which specifies all mitigating details of the observation and highlights the extent to which disciplinary literacy with multimodalities were implemented. Data transcribed in the Observation Note

Chart would then be used to guide the semi-structured interviews, which took place either during or after each mini-unit.

As adapted from Margarella (2016), the date, class period, time in Eastern Standard Time, and lesson observed were written within the notes. Observed activities were specifically stated within the specified frames. Follow-up questions based on the observations as well as the researcher's own opinions on how the lessons were conducted are reflected. Each observation was recorded within this chart and streamlined across other participants when they reach different mini-units. The observation chart reflected how teachers may have readjusted their predetermined lesson plans based on changing class demands or flow. This also included areas where I questioned the teacher's rationale for pivoting away from a given discussion topic.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted for each participant on three separate occasions, each for a maximum of 60 minutes. As both the interviews and the observations were non-evaluative by a colleague conducting academic research, it was hoped that the conversations would be more relaxed and open. Staff were provided with the same interview questions from the Questions for Follow-Up Interviews (Appendix B) throughout the study. Participants were engaged in friendly dialogue about all components of the mini-unit taught as well as what would come next.

At the beginning of the study, there was interest in creating a focus group, but with time constraints and inconsistent scheduling demands caused by the pandemic, this was not possible. Luntz (2007) argues that in focus groups, the

researcher can gain better insight into what people hear rather than what is being said. Although a focus group was not created, similar and varied themes were echoed in the follow-up interviews (see Chapters 4 and 5). Given that the school district had recently attempted initiatives to facilitate deeper collaboration between business and social studies teachers on lesson plan designs with mixed success, the research provided can provide new data for district administrators to improve dialogue between all curriculum stakeholders.

As cited by Kvale (1996) and Guion et al. (2007), the seven stages of conducting in-depth interviews are as follows: thematizing, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analyzing, verifying, and reporting. During the semi-structured in-depth interviews, there were several instances of thematizing that guided the conversations on components of the lesson; this was supported by a robust post-interview comment sheet where paraphrasing and appropriate reflections could be made. Rubin and Rubin (2012) imply that qualitative interviews should be conversational pieces that naturally allow the participant to expand on thoughts and reflections. As a result, interviews were all under 60 minutes in length.

During the qualitative interviews, the questions were curtailed as the participants advanced more deeply into reflections on their experiences. By strictly using Rev software, the ability to transcribe interviews streamlined the process. Crucially, Patton (2002) explains that open-ended interview questions are intended to prompt the interviewee to divulge their points of view. Interview questions were adjusted as the research progressed. Patton (2002) also points to

informal conversational interviews, which take place organically in normal conversation with participants. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 restrictions, these kinds of conversations were no longer available. Although it was unfortunate that the researcher could not meet with participants in person, noise pollution was reduced during the interviews because both parties were able to converse in extremely quiet settings.

Reflexivity Journal and Field Notes

Alongside my PhD in literacy from St. John's University, I have been a full-time teacher in the district in which this qualitative study was conducted for nearly fifteen years, serving in different roles within various institutions throughout the district. Also, by completing graduate coursework in separate areas of social studies education over the years, I possessed a unique level of reflexivity as a researcher. Generally, most secondary teachers in the district have taught or will teach the same subject in the same school for most of their careers, meaning that my perspective of the district was distinct from that of my colleagues.

When conversing with participants during the interviews (along with off the record discussions), I was cautious not to reveal my personal opinions on the value of completing graduate courses when seeking to improve disciplinary literacy instruction through multimodalities. Having completed a master's in history from La Salle University, a master's in educational leadership from Lehigh University, and as a doctoral candidate in literacy with St. John's University, these wide-ranging educational experiences are impactful in my teaching. By contrast, I found that most participants were dismissive of pursuing

graduate coursework to improve their abilities to teach disciplinary literacy with multimodalities; as a proponent of such endeavors, this posed a definite internal challenge for me.

While being reflexive as a researcher, my interview techniques were set up to encourage open reflection from the participants without influencing their views. In the field notes from the classroom observations, there were times when I privately wrote about areas where my own biases were present (these are documented in the appendices). This happened most with Participant 4 during both the observations and interviews: mainly because our teaching styles are radically different, which was especially apparent since I had taught the same course for three years. This will be considered to a greater extent in Chapters 4 and 5.

Frequent observation, interviews, and ongoing communication with participants were used throughout the research process to detail the evolution of understanding about the research topic. Engagement with the research included interactions with participants, along with reviewing and coding of transcripts that presented new understandings of how disciplinary literacy is implemented by social studies teachers completing hybrid/remote instruction. Importantly, interpretations of the data may evolve as the research develops; such additional data were gathered and analyzed. Equally, the inclusion of reflexivity journals and field notes was essential to this qualitative exploratory case study as I continued to engage with participants. All field notes were kept in a document file, especially during the interview process. The field notes (as well as the observation

charts) recorded participants' body language, pauses, and overall demeanor; these were viewed as valuable insights and coding prompts in the written transcripts. The observations were tracked and reviewed throughout the entirety of the research, and the results were presented to participants in the form of analytic memos.

Data Coding and Analysis Process

A major component for data coding and the analysis process involves transcribing (or writing out the verbatim text of) each interview with the help of audio and video recording (Guion et al., 2007). To help with this, the transcription of each interview with time stamps was purchased from Rev.com and each participant was given free access to my Rev account. Each transcription identified the date, time, and location of the respective interview. Once the interviews were transcribed, participants were contacted for a conference session during which verification of the observation took place. This session generally resembled what staff generally see in post-observation with an administrator; however, our sessions were non-evaluative, instead seeking to clarify or expand upon certain areas.

After the interviews were transcribed and verified by participants, further analysis of the answers provided (by re-reading the transcripts and re-listening to the interviews) was carried out to find common themes. With social distancing measures likely to remain throughout the second semester of the school year, all interviews took place by Google Meet. Participants completed the interviews from familiar locations due to social restrictions, mostly from home but

occasionally within school buildings. Lastly, triangulation or verifying credibility within the interviews took place as my first and second readers guided my editing as the research progressed. Ensuring transparency is vital before reporting the results to both internal and external stakeholders within this open coding (Guion et al., 2007).

Open coding comes from grounded theory design (Glaser, 1992), where a directly created, framework is used to determine meaning. As this dissertation focuses on various social studies classes, certain idioms will be used to describe terminology that is common in different subfields. For example, a commonly used acronym such as ROI (return on investment) in an economics lesson may be confusing to a social studies teacher who focuses on military history; likewise, the reverse may be true of an after-action report. According to Blair (2015), open coding was created to help generate theories from participant-generated dialogue, and this can be clarified through the purposefully developed framework to draw meaning out of the data. Open coding was thus identified as a method to generate a participant-generated 'theory' from the data and template coding.

Grounded theory methodology (GTM) is supported within open coding because it gives freedom for the researcher to find answers within the data analysis; here, the theory is sharpened from the research rather than the opposite (Blair, 2015). Strauss and Corbin (1990) list three stages for coding: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Open coding requires the use of emergent codes (i.e., terms coming from the research), meaning the participants can guide the research. Strauss and Corbin (1990) argue that researchers code similar

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occurrences within the various cases researched, while allowing for flexibility and

reflexivity on the part of the researcher. Axial coding may take shape in this study

because different codes may be interrelated under themes of disciplinary literacy

in social studies education. Although there may certainly be elements of axial

coding in this study as the research progresses, open coding will be the initial

driving force since unknowns may emerge from the findings that different

subjects expose. With selective coding, the last step for analyzing data here,

different core concepts may manifest within different categories and subcategories

(Mills et al., 2010).

     Blair (2015) argues that although researchers have advanced expertise,

their participants are likely to have even more specific knowledge of their

courses; as a result, with open coding it is important to wait for the data to come

in before coding since all researchers enter the study with a certain viewpoint.

Looking for keywords that may be echoed by the different participants needs to be

taken into consideration during open coding. Axial coding can then be

implemented: here, the frequency of codes used can be integrated and analyzed to

see which sub-themes may be emerging from the study. As Strauss and Corbin

(1990) explain, selective coding can then ensue because this helps make better

sense of raw data. At the minimum, open coding will take hold of the coding of

this study, and the remaining two coding methods may emerge as the research

commences.

     As Margarella (2016) describes, field observations proved to be a a critical

component of data collection and analysis within this research design. Merriam

(1998) argues for collecting participants' data in a natural setting; however, with COVID-19 what may have been normal in 2019 as far as a typical American classroom is concerned was subjected to a complete overhaul. As a result, observing participants while only a few were in the physical classroom, and most were accessing remotely allowed me to easily camouflage myself during the interviews. Students or participants only saw my name in Google Meet during the observations, and this allowed for a more natural flow of the lessons. Observations took place twice during a teacher's weekly mini-unit, and researcher notes were provided after each session. Participant 3 had longer periods of observations because their block class periods on full days were over 60 minutes (and 45 minutes during half-days). Also, Participant 3 was most eager to have observations take place throughout the day.

Merriam (1998) explains that observation is vital when there is a consistent and deliberate nature as to how the viewing of subjects takes place. Similarly, validity checks are a must for data collection. Although a coding sheet is helpful for transferring the data from observation to document specific behaviors, Merriam makes the distinction that no observer can see everything. This was especially true when completing student observations from a remote vantage point; there were inevitably specific areas of the lesson that could not be documented. For example, subtle factors or less obvious areas may have been harder for an outside observer to recognize. However, having been raised in and now employed by this very community, I was confident in my ability to analyze the symbolic connotations a social studies teacher might use in their mini-units on

disciplinary literacy, particularly those that would not have been apparent to a researcher with no prior experience of the district.

Nonverbal communication, which plays a major impact in addressing multimodalities, was noticeably different when conducting observations within the research design. Observations were analyzed after reviewing multiple forms of dissemination acquired through interviews, recording software, and informal conversations to create unbiased analysis. From my experiences as a lead teacher in the district, I have been on interview panels for teachers as well as administrators and although I sometimes interviewed friends, I separated my professional from personal life when providing authentic feedback. My professional background and personal integrity were the strongest testaments in leveraging an unbiased analysis.

As the data was coded and the findings were analyzed, I placed myself into what Adler and Adler (1998) describe as a peripheral membership role: the students and participants did not even notice me in the Google Meet observations. In some respects, being invisible within the classes allowed for a more organic flow of student participation than if an outside observer had been visibly present in a physical classroom. However, although this was the case throughout the 26 observations conducted, most participants felt that the hybrid/remote setting prevented their implementation of more cooperative learning activities. Participants also expressed their frustrations at not being able to use traditional printed copies of reading materials due to the hybrid/remote environment; they

argued that a certain kind of authenticity of literacy was missing from the subsequent instruction.

Margarella (2016) effectively utilized a T-Chart to distinguish what was observed from personal responses. As a product of the district myself, this data analysis provided reflexivity, transparency, and a clean display of my perspective. Completing field notes took place in the days immediately following the observations, and all observation notes were completed prior to a follow-up interview by open coding. The observations helped guide interview questions; upon completion of the interviews, observations notes were finalized, especially when more clarity from participants was needed. Once observations and follow-up interviews were completed, themes were categorized through axial coding. Once open coding and axial coding were completed from the observations and interviews, selective coding followed to better triangulate the data for maximum clarity (Lichtman, 2014).

While conducting non-evaluative observations of the participants, the analytic memos contained some discussion of interactions and body language displayed by participants. However, this was limited since participants were wearing face masks during lessons. Participants were asked to a lesser degree to reflect on these points within the analytic memos in comparison to in-person learning. As evidenced by McDowell (2018), the use of Rev provided an efficient and highly effective turnaround time in transcribing qualitative data from both the interviews and the observations. By using Rev software, there was an assurance of participant anonymity using pseudonyms. Once the service returned the

transcribed interviews, the researcher reviewed the data for accuracy. After data from all participants were transcribed after each stage in the interview process, the information was studied to see what common or distinct themes emerged from the reflective analysis. During the in vivo coding, analytic memos were added to see which themes emerged from the Observation Note Charts. Here, color-coding as well as specific qualitative data were recorded from participants across various steps of their mini-units.

Limitations

Merriam (1998) underlines the importance of observing participants in their natural settings. Although COVID-19 has forced remote and hybrid learning on schools across the country, district students and teachers have worked under these conditions for more than a year and the research setting, although hopefully temporary, was familiar in this new normal environment. Merriam (1998) also points to the importance of the researcher being almost covert when conducting observations; in this case, the hybrid setting facilitated this aspect. Recruiting the right participants for this study was another challenge based on the pandemic-related restrictions. However, having a supportive district-level supervisor and a collaborative university in St. John's helped me navigate these limitations.

Given my extensive knowledge of the district in question, certain biases could have limited the study. Although it was very difficult to hold back from coaching participants, I believe I avoided this misstep. Certain participant lessons made it difficult for me to provide insights because of personal passions. Also, having completed significantly more graduate coursework than the typical

secondary teacher, I passionately believe this dichotomy drastically improves

disciplinary literacy instruction with multimodalities. Several participants

disagreed with this sentiment, and not providing my opinion on their rationale

was withheld since this study seeks to expose general reflections on what

disciplinary literacy involves. Another area of concern was the transferability of

the study since purposive sampling was used; however, as this study is strictly

qualitative, this issue did not pose a threat. Nonetheless, the background of the

study could be adjusted into quantitative or mixed methods if more staff were to

begin implementing disciplinary literacy on a more regular basis.

Reciprocity

Drummond (2016) articulates how Giorgi (1997) outlines Moustaskas's

(1994) five steps for all qualitative studies: collection of verbal data, reading the

data, chunking the data, organizing the expression of data disciplinarily, and

synthesizing the data for scholarly communication. The reciprocity initiated from

this research can be used in other qualitative studies seeking more information

from teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders on the role disciplinary

literacy can have within a community. Furthermore, each of the five steps

provides participants with a different perspective on teaching literacy that could

be pursued as a PhD in the subject. The St. John's University program has been

academically rigorous and flexible as far as convenience, and by introducing my

own academic gains from this program to colleagues, it may lead to more social

studies teachers embarking on advanced graduate coursework within this field.

Not only would participants experience learning in new fields of literacy, the

program at St. John's University would itself also be exposed to the perspectives of subject area teachers at the secondary level, and this is a demographic that needs to be better represented in the program going forward. Some participants may use this opportunity to solidify themselves in school leadership positions, either as teachers or aspiring administrators.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness or reliability within qualitative research is vital for the procurement of this study (Golafshani, 2003). As per Lincoln and Guba (1985), this study aims to produce research that has credibility, is dependable, and can be confirmed as well as transferred across different research interests. Steps taken to ensure this include member checking by my team at St. John's University, prolonged engagement with my participants, clarification of research bias when appropriate, effective triangulation, and critical depth within all components of the research.

Potential threats to internal validity included familiarity with the environment and attitude of the participants, but these did not manifest in practice. From working with colleagues in the past who have completed doctoral research in the district, no instances of threats to internal validity were encountered. Staff attitudes were not problematic; the staff recruited can be considered "team players" over the course of the study. Nonetheless, these factors were taken into consideration during the research design to minimize any threats posed to the study and to maintain trustworthiness.

Protection of Human Subjects

Dillman et al. (2014) explain that from an ethical standpoint, it is critical to never release findings that can easily lead to the identification of study participants or other subjects. In this study, all ethical standards were met to the highest degree required by the School of Education at St. John's University to gain and maintain IRB approval. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), informed consent is another ethical demand within qualitative research that informs participants of specifically what they will be embarking on within a given study. Here, all participants were given an informed consent form that explained their role within the study and ensured that their participation and the collected data would be kept confidential. Staff participants were also informed that their participation in the study would have no punitive impact on their district-led evaluation.

The informed consent letter outlined to staff that their participation was completely voluntary and that they could drop out at any time or choose to refuse to answer certain interview questions. Participants were also free to alter their prewritten disciplinary literacy lessons with multimodalities, but only having notified me as the researcher. If a participant chose to end their involvement, no penalty or punitive measure was incurred from me or the district. Additionally, the names of all participants and the school district were obscured. For the sake of clarity, Central New Jersey comprises Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, and Somerset counties, or areas south of the Raritan River to Mercer and Monmouth counties' southern borders. It is important to distinguish this geographic region in

New Jersey given its unique cultural and demographic features, which bear some resemblance to northern and southern New Jersey. Furthermore, all participants were asked to maintain confidentiality at least until the study received IRB acceptance and approval.

Data Storage

All research data were stored on a flash drive that was locked in a file cabinet in my Churchville, Pennsylvania home office, to which only I have access. Exactly seven years after this study is published, the data will be permanently destroyed. Approval of the study was sought and granted by the superintendent and curriculum supervisor of social studies within the district, as well as the St. John's University Institutional Review Board.

CHAPTER 4

The main research questions for this study are: *What are the experiences of teachers implementing disciplinary reading instruction using multimodality?* and sub-questions asking *How does the prior academic and/or professional background of participating social studies teachers influence the implementation of disciplinary literacy with multimodalities? To what extent are teachers reflecting on the effectiveness of the implementation of this practice?* The goal for this case study was to expose how social studies teachers in this large Central New Jersey school district responded to implementing disciplinary literacy while using multimodalities during three separate week-long units during early 2021.

Five participants were selected for this case study. All had been teaching social studies in the district for over three years and were highly regarded by their shared supervisor. Each participant taught different grade levels across one of the six secondary schools in the district and had graduated from one of the district's three high schools. Although the school district is typically among the state's 10 most populated in terms of student enrollment, many administrators, faculty, and staff members return to work in one of the schools following college graduation.

Participant Profiles

This section discusses the profiles of each participant by describing their experiences as educators as well as their undergraduate and graduate backgrounds. Considering the different student demographic data presented in Chapter 3, identifying where the respective participants work was considered pertinent, given the differences in student socio-economic background in each

location. All participants completed the study except Participant 4, who had a family medical emergency two-thirds of the way through the study.

Participant 1 (Bob)

Participant 1 was given the pseudonym "Bob" for the duration of this study. Participant 1 has been teaching and coaching at High School 3 since 2011 and is now teaching sociology for the second consecutive year. Participant 1 completed a BA in Secondary Education with a focus on American Studies at Ramapo College of New Jersey, as well as a Master of Arts in Educational Leadership with principal certification from the College of New Jersey. I have been a friendly acquaintance with Participant 1 for over a decade; we were once baseball teammates while students at High School 2. Each interview took place at 2 p.m. EST via Google Meet while Participant 1 was still on-site at High School 3.

Participant 1 has the most teaching experience of all participants in this study and is the only one to have secured tenure status. Although Participant 1 has taught several social studies courses while working at High School 3, in recent years he has taught three sections of sociology, two sections of career exploration, and one section of a teacher preparation course for seniors. Participant 1's teaching style has long resembled that of a motivational speaker; this reflects his many years as a CrossFit coach alongside teaching. This personality trait is important to recognize when reflecting on his conveyance of disciplinary literacy with multimodalities. When interviewing Participant 1, several points were made about creating student connections to advance reading initiatives and seeking to

uplift students as part of the instruction. In line with his CrossFit coaching, Participant 1's motivational style is encouraging, positive, and welcoming. This ongoing theme was discussed in the interviews and will be considered in closer detail in Chapter 4.

Participant 2 (Kenny)

Participant 2 or "Kenny" has been teaching social studies in the school district for just under five years. Participant 2 teaches three classes (American Law I & II and U.S. History I) at High School 1 and three classes (American Law I & II, U.S. History II, and Career Exploration) at High School 3. He is a graduate of High School 3 and has a Bachelor of Science in Political Science from Pennsylvania State University. He completed his teaching certification through the alternative route program with one of New Jersey's state universities; this program waives the student requirement needed for most instructional certifications. Each interview took place in the early evening through Google Meet to align with Participant 2's schedule.

The researcher has only known Participant 2 for a year and has only met him in-person a few times. Participant 2 first interacted with the researcher during a remote professional development session on disciplinary literacy in social studies. Overall, Participant 2 displayed an eagerness to develop as a young educator within the school community.

Participant 3 (Rob)

Participant 3 ("Rob") has been a social studies teacher for over three years and teaches eighth-grade social studies (early American history) at Middle School

2. Participant 3 graduated from the College of New Jersey with a Bachelor of Arts in History and Education. Participant 3 is a graduate of High School 3 and was a student of mine in Advanced Placement United States Government & Politics. Each interview took place after 2 p.m. EST via Google Meet while Participant 3 was still on-site at Middle School 2.

Participant 3 was the only participant in the research study who jointly planned lessons with a colleague. All materials and assessments were co-produced with Participant 3's grade-level partner; it was mentioned in the interviews that they have a strong professional relationship. This partnership is unique to this study; when asked to expand on the reasons why, common political viewpoints and proximity of classrooms were named as major factors.

Participant 3 is in the final year of his teacher induction program with the district. This program was revamped at the time of Participant 3's hiring, and he spoke highly of the impact this program has had. As a result of this experience, Participant 3 expressed the importance of strong professional development as a vehicle to improve disciplinary literacy with multimodalities. From advocating for Participant 3's hiring in the district as well as admission into the College of New Jersey as a high school student, the researcher has known the participant in several different capacities.

Participant 4 (no pseudonym)

Participant 4 did not use a pseudonym and has been a social studies teacher for seven years at Middle School 1 (world cultures and geography) to seventh-grade students. Participant 4 graduated from Rider University with a

Bachelor of Arts in History and Education. Participant 4 was outgoing and communicative during the two interviews; however, the researcher found the observations to be more challenging because he had taught the course differently for several years. As a result, the researcher recognized his implicit bias and worked to remain neutral; the resulting interviews were cordial, professional, and engaging. Each interview took place at 2 p.m. EST on Mondays via Google Meet while Participant 4 was still on-site at Middle School 1. Due to a family medical emergency, Participant 4's participation ceased after Interview 2.

During the interviews, Participant 4 reflected on the benefits of working with an in-class support teacher (ICS) during his afternoon classes. His insights on sound collaboration with an ICS may encourage deeper research on this dynamic as it pertains to disciplinary literacy with multimodalities.

Participant 5 (Maggie)

Participant 5 ("Maggie") has been a social studies teacher for over three years at High School 3 and teaches academic and honors sections of world history to juniors. Participant 5 graduated from Monmouth University with a Bachelor of Arts in History and Education. Additionally, Participant 5 graduated from High School 3 while the researcher taught there, but the two had never met until this research study began. While all interviews were conducted via Google Meet, Interviews 1 and 2 took place while Participant 5 was at school whereas Interview 3 took place while she was home. Each interview took place after 3 p.m. EST. Participant 5 and the researcher shared a passion in the impact of travel experiences on teaching social studies, supporting research completed by Shreiner

(2014, 2016, 2018) on the area of disciplinary literacy in social studies. Participant 5's reflection on academic travel immersion may provide an additional vehicle for disciplinary literacy instruction with multimodalities.

During Interview 1, Participant 5 reflected on a study abroad experience as a junior in college and its subsequent impact on her teaching: "I had the unique opportunity to go and study in the place that I teach about. And I got lucky. I did when I was applying for the job kind of say like, 'Hey, this is my area of strength.'" In turn, there were several instances in Participant 5's observations where her interests in travel and fashion were reflected in the disciplinary literacy activities. During Observations 1 and 2, student work on the French Revolution/Napoleon Movie Project and on the Effects of Napoleon and the Congress of Vienna, which utilized Pear Deck and podcasting, tied in fashion, travel, and geographic themes to address disciplinary literacy with multimodalities. Notably, Participant 5 was the only teacher observed to integrate the podcast medium.

Findings on the Research Question

Follow-up interviews with participants were conducted after two non-evaluative observations. Although all participants acknowledged follow-up interviews could take 60 minutes, most conversations hovered around 45 minutes. After all interviews were transcribed, participants were provided with an opportunity (by email) to review the conversations and to clarify any areas of concern. In the same email, the researcher reiterated the last question from Interview 3: *If you could pick one—graduate courses, professional development,*

or travel—which is best for enhancing your ability to convey disciplinary literacy with multimodalities? Participants 1 and 5 both selected graduate school, whereas Participants 2 and 4 chose professional development. During the final interviews and in their follow-up email responses, Participants 2 and 4 were both emphatic about the need for strong professional development; by contrast, Participant 5 felt that professional development would be the least impactful in her own development as an educator.

The data gathered for this study represent a benchmark for future studies on how potential interventions can improve literacy instruction in social studies. The richness of qualitative data exposed by the participants is sufficient to create additional mixed methods or qualitative studies on the impacts that graduate school, professional development, and/or defined travel experiences can have on integrated disciplinary literacy design and instruction as the world reemerges from Covid-19.

Through the completion of analytic memos and field notes, the following Initial Codes and Themes were identified: Student Connections, Culture Within Pedagogy, and Participant Experiences and Their Influence on Disciplinary Literacy. Respective Sub-Themes were Interactive Technology, Remote v. In-person Learning, Collaboration, and Participants' Academic, Professional, and Personal Experiences.

The first theme discovered, Student Connections, involved conversation pieces to keep students engaged or make reading activities relatable. Culture Within Pedagogy was noted in the observations of participants and discussed

throughout the interviews. The third theme identified was Participant Experiences and Their Influence on Disciplinary Literacy, where interview questions were posed in general and specific reading activities were implemented by the participants.

Interactive Technology was the most pronounced sub-theme; this involved a two-way demonstration of some form of software technology that drove the multimodality side of the lesson. Another sub-theme addressed during the interviews was Remote v. In-person Learning; given that the study took place in the 2020–21 school year and at the height of the Covid-19 crisis, full in-person learning, and observation was not possible. Specifically, the school district had placed heavy restrictions on additional persons (administration, faculty, staff, and/or students) entering classrooms. Participants received anywhere from zero to six students attending class within the physical classroom, while all other students completed their lessons remotely. This presented challenges for the researcher as observations were not conducted in a typical school setting with 20 or more students in a classroom. On the other hand, a silver lining was that he was able to observe participants and students without them physically seeing another adult in their classroom. This dynamic created a more natural observation, although each participant voiced their despair at not having many students in close proximity. Participants reflected on how their approaches to disciplinary literacy with multimodalities improved through this unique learning environment, what would be changed or retained for the 2021–22 school year, and other pertinent details. The final sub-theme was Participants' Academic, Professional, and Personal

Experiences; here, participants reminisced over some impactful life events and how these had affected their instructional design.

Theme 1: Student Connections

Student connections to both content and literacy instruction was the most prevalent theme showcased by participants during the follow-up interviews. Across the district, each participant spent significant time discussing how engaging students through positive reinforcement techniques helped advance their instruction, given that most students were in a remote setting.

Participant 1 regularly received active participation from students from different demographics during each observation. Furthermore, there were students who struggled to read aloud yet still eagerly volunteered to read; from Participant 1's interviews and observations, it became clear that a positive culture was established. The first conversation in Interview 1 with Participant 1 revealed student connections when asked about his instructional approach to functional perspectives in sociology: "I think some of them recognized it from math, what a function is, but not applied in a sociology class." When asked about the use of humor and connection to other subjects, Participant 1 responded:

> Yeah. I really try my best, and it's always best practice to try to
> incorporate all different contents into social studies. Because not only can
> the kids make connections, but what I have found over the years is, a lot of
> my colleagues might come up to me and say, 'Hey, you were learning
> about this today in class?' Or 'So and so told me you were talking about

the Great Depression and reading *To Kill A Mockingbird*,' whatever. So,

it's always good interdisciplinary [instruction].

Participant 1 also explained student connections as follows: "The common one is getting that engagement. Getting them to engage in reading and the overall lesson, keeping them honest and getting them to think. It's so hard to dive into those deeper-level Bloom's taxonomy questions in this hybrid learning environment."

Participant 1's overall desire to help students buy into the textual readings by invoking friendly dialogue throughout the lesson was paramount to keeping students engaged. This was seen during Observations 3 and 4, where Participant 1 required students to complete a project on obscure sports in different countries. To begin, he asked students to reflect on the nuances of March Madness, the NCAA basketball tournament that was taking place at the time. Students discussed the cultural impacts of athletics in their own micro and macro communities, and this foundation for student engagement served as a springboard into the main goals of the lessons.

When asked about his key takeaways in Interview 1, Participant 1 reflected on student connections being vital for not only advancing literacy but instruction:

I thought throughout the unit that the level of student engagement was high. And I thought that varying the types of activities that we were doing and the multi-modalities I thought helped keep students on their toes. And they were more willing to participate because they didn't exactly know what was coming next.

Likewise, Participant 3 also explained that he would "try to give the students as much flexibility and choice with that as I can. And so that's something I would try to incorporate too if we were face-to-face." The sense of helping students to connect with the disciplinary literacy activities posed in class was most clearly apparent during Observation 2, where scenes from the musical *Hamilton* were played. When the video finished, a student with a learning disability showed strong engagement that persisted throughout the lesson.

Sub-Theme A: Interactive Technology

Interactive Technology was a critical sub-theme for this study and emerged directly from Theme 1: Student Connections. Here, participants discussed several examples of a two-way demonstration of software technology that drove the multimodality side of their instruction. The most cited examples of interactive technology were the use of Pear Deck and EdPuzzle.

Pear Deck is an interactive presentation software tool that syncs with Google Slides. It has been used by teachers throughout the school district during the 2020–21 academic year to bolster student engagement in remote learning. EdPuzzle is another interactive tool that has been used to evaluate formative assignments for students; the participants in this study employed EdPuzzle to check for comprehension on reading activities. For example, in Observation 4 with Participant 2, a Pear Deck was used for a Do Now Activity—a short disciplinary reading activity on New Jersey's new bail reform legislation. Students read the article silently and answers to the responses appeared in real time via Pear Deck. This then guided Participant 2's initial discussions in the

lesson as several students responded in the live text. On the contrary, Participant 1 and Participant 3 did not mention the use of Pear Deck or EdPuzzle to a great extent yet created in-depth multimodal activities that coincided with disciplinary literacy.

Participant 2 explained at length during Interview 1 how interactive technologies played a role in student connection:

> We've mentioned before about engagement and students. I think one of the hardest things right now being remote is not knowing if like, if their camera's off, I do not know if they are there or not. I use Pear Deck to try seeing, okay, how many students are answering and typing? But I think that the toughest thing with me is I would love to be able to say, here, let us read this, let us go over it together.

Participant 2 continued to speak highly of Pear Deck and how it provided "benefits [to] the students because I get to see what they are thinking and then I can show and discuss it that way, and they get to show me that way. Using Pear Deck and the case studies to go along with the lesson, there's different ways for students to show me that they know what they learned."

Pear Deck and EdPuzzle were not the only implementation devices for interactive technologies used during this study. For example, during Participant 5's second observation, six minutes of a 'History Shouldn't Be a Mystery' podcast on the Congress of Vienna were used to drive reading instruction during Activity 2. Students were asked to listen to the podcast without a transcript to follow-along. Participant 5 reflected on this technology use as follows:

I am a fan of listening to history podcasts myself. And I also understand

that people learn information differently. I am one of those people who

will listen to a random podcast as I am getting ready in the morning and

then be able to have a full discussion about it later that day. So being that

that is the way that I tend to learn, I figured, 'Well, let's see if this works

with my students.'

Participant 5 echoed her intention to keep listening to podcasts from various

historians, along with her pleasure in reading as part of her self-improvement

efforts as an educator.

It was frustrating that Participant 4 could only be involved in the study

until Interview 2 because many elements of his instruction could have contributed

to the goals of the study. During the observations, only Participants 4 and 5

implemented gestural skills as observed within the Types of Multiliteracies (NLG,

1996). Gestural skills fall under the umbrella of technical gestures and include

(but are not limited to) playing an instrument, dancing, or (as in the case of

Participant 4's class) drawing. When asked to reflect on where this was done in

Interview 1, Participant 4 explained:

Yeah, I mean, I think it definitely would be early on in my EdPuzzle

activity when we were discussing the beliefs of Islam and the Five Pillars

of Islam. I had a slide where they would go and, on their computer, they'd

draw the lines to match the pillar of Islam to the image that it corresponds

with in their opinion.

The Type of Multimodal Text (Victoria State Government, 2019) that seemed to be most missed by the participants was the absence of paper-based texts. As Participant 4 explains:

> Well, I think as far as the first part, that's a difficult question to answer in portions, right? So, if we break down this lesson into three parts, right? The early part was the Pear Deck. The middle part was when we looked at pictures and discussed the Hajj. And the last part was that close read, right? The close read probably would be the most different because the close read, I would have them have the papers in front of them. We would physically be highlighting in yellow and green. We would be potentially doing think, pair, share even. Sharing, partnering up and seeing what people highlight, things like that. So that would be quite a bit different. I think the part with the Pear Deck early on was benefited by the fact that now all students have computers. Everyone has this technology in front of them, quickly, easily accessed. So, I think that, even though I did not do it with a Pear Deck last year, I would even still do it again with a Pear Deck next year, except I would have a better understanding through the informal techniques, their expressions, and things like that, of what their thoughts were. But I think I would have kept that similar, even with our computers in front of them in a classroom setting because of the advances, the different techniques, the different ways of keeping them engaged that a computer allows them to do with Pear Deck.

Most participants used the text responses within the chat feature of Google Meet as well as the interactive features of Pear Deck. Both technologies thus provided participants with an additional tool to connect students with disciplinary literacy. Nonetheless, the absence of paper texts was significant for certain students. During Interview 1 with Participant 3, this became apparent in the discussion of an activity on the Constitution:

> Yeah, I would probably try to do a mix of both. There is a way to not have a one-to-one in our district. We can set up those stations that are laptop-based. And then some stations that are primarily project-based, paper materials. And I think that's a huge part of student choice. I think some of the students really do well with these digital texts. Others do much better with paper texts. And I think they prefer to have that hard copy. So, I try to give the students as much flexibility and choice with that as I can. And so that's something I would try to incorporate too if we were face-to-face.

Participant 3 also echoed the longing for a return to paper-texts as a missing piece that can drive literacy instruction while at the same time acknowledging the role of interactive technology in improving reading for a different group of students.

Theme 2: Culture Within Pedagogy

All participants discussed elements of culture within their pedagogy and these were prominent in several observations and interviews. The delivery of culture responsiveness within pedagogy was manifested differently in each participant, in part because they all taught different social studies content. In turn, given that the curriculum required certain topics to be taught at certain times, the

researcher also noted deeper, less pronounced areas of culture within the pedagogy of the participants.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, High School 3 has the highest percentage of students that live in low-income households. It also has the most noticeable balance of ethnic diversity, with black, Hispanic, and white populations split into thirds. Participants 1, 2, and 5 were the most explicit in their discussions of cultural responsiveness within their own pedagogy. Helfrick (2019) reflects on the scholarship of Villegas and Lucas (2002a) by stating that "that sociocultural consciousness supports educators in crossing sociocultural boundaries to allow for relationships built upon mutual respect, trust, and a sense of vulnerability in understanding that both students and teachers bring disparate experiences into the classroom" (p. 148). This description corresponds to the descriptions from Participants 1, 2, and 5 during the interviews as well as their non-evaluative observations. Overall, the major takeaway was the participants' attempt to build mutual respect and make themselves vulnerable to gain new understandings from students, thereby helping to drive instruction.

When Participant 1 was asked about his implementation of read-aloud activities in sociology at High School 3, he explained as follows (Interview 1):

I don't provide any additional extra credit or bonus points. I try to build in the classroom a culture of encouragement and support amongst the students. I also get a feel throughout the semester which students are more comfortable reading and expanding upon those thoughts and which students are still in their shell and not comfortable reading. And that is

fine, but everyone will have the opportunity and I encourage everyone. I do not care if it is a student visiting from another country or reaching out to a student that is going to Harvard. We are all encouraged to practice reading out loud and speaking out loud and listening to each other's opinions. And it is just, honestly, John, and reading organically. I do a lot of positive reinforcement with whatever effort or attempt to improve participation, and it just kind of goes from there. Last point, sometimes we can go through, and I might have a student that is really in their shell to start their course. But by the end, you can just hear the tone in their voice, the posture, their reading skills being more confident throughout because they know, 'Hey, I can read out loud here. I am not going to be laughed at. I am not going to be criticized by the teacher. I'm not going to face all of those anxieties because we're all doing it together.'

Evidently, a culture of encouragement can be vital to establishing a classroom that illustrates cultural responsiveness. Participant 1 exemplified in his observations and interviews the desire for mutual respect and recognition that each student's background, gifts, and talents provide different cultural experiences for each section of sociology taught. Participant 1 had been an all-state athlete in soccer and baseball during high school but had then only been sparingly involved in college baseball; he reflected that his college athletic years had impacted on cultural sensitivity in his instruction, specifically in recognizing the peaks and troughs that students face throughout a school year.

Sociology is a popular social studies elective in the district and is mainly taken by eleventh- and twelfth-grade students. The enrollment of students in sociology who are mainly at the honors or academic level varies between the district's three high schools. Participant 1 outlined the academic breakdown of his class: "I would say 60% B-level academic track and 40% makeup of the [students] A-[level] honors. If it were more 60% honors academic track, there would be more emphasis on the student reading as well as some more challenging texts, compared to the other sections." Here, Participant 1 was not arguing from a deficit perspective around student learning, specifically "B-level" students. Instead, his implication was that by knowing the culture of students in his section and through his years of professional teaching experience, the reading selections made were based on a position where Participant 1 felt his students were most likely to thrive. In short, Participant 1's goal with reading has been to increase the buy-in of students. His desire to avoid academic arrogance during textual reading comes from being a strong advocate for students and his belief in gradually increasing rigor when appropriate—like a CrossFit coach building up a client's strength. Participant 1 was also sensitive to the fact that many of his students hail from cultures distinct from his own throughout each observation.

When Participant 1 was asked during Interview 2 to reflect on his approaches to implementing literacy instruction within the cultural diversity at High School 3, he explained:

> I think as a rookie, I was doing a lot of multimodalities reading where I
> would put it on the students a lot more, and the type of reading, I don't

think that I was approaching the right attainable levels for the kind of students that I teach different disciplines. Now, I am more aware that [with] the kind of students that I teach, you need to really provide examples, provide explanations. I must provide a lot more deciphering of certain terms and in certain texts, because a lot of the students, and you can attest to this in my school culture, some of them are immigrants to the United States. Some of them are bilingual and trilingual. So, when it comes to understanding and reading some of the texts or verbiage, sometimes I must assist them or help them. And then I also have some students that are not on grade level, so I need to adjust and adapt to not only build the student's confidence in reading and want to read, but also make sure that I'm challenging them enough so that they're understanding the material.

Furthermore, each lesson begins with Participant 1 having a small and genuine conversation with each student entering the room. This recognition of unique student cultures is infused within Participant 1's instructional design for disciplinary literacy along with multimodalities.

While the school district is located within an hour of Manhattan, Olde City (Philadelphia), the Lehigh Valley, and various beach communities along the New Jersey Shore, many of Participant 1's students have never traveled outside Mercer and Burlington counties. Participant 1 explained during Interview 3 that having culturally sensitive pedagogy is paramount to building respect, but it also presents challenges. During Interview 2, Participant 1 was asked how he was able to get

students to read voluntarily, which prompted a loose definition of how he defines culture: "I try to build in the classroom a culture of encouragement and support amongst the students. I also get a feel throughout the semester which students are more comfortable reading and expanding upon those thoughts and which students are still in their shell and not comfortable reading." Participant 1 later voiced that teaching culture in his sociology classes is challenging because some students have never seen the ocean when Belmar, New Jersey is only a 35-minute drive from their town, or the fact that fewer students have taken the local New Jersey Transit train to the basement of Madison Square Garden in Penn Station, New York City. At the opposite end of the scale, several of his students are immigrants from Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East who have already experienced life in various corners of the world. Participant 1 was himself raised in a middle-class Italian-American household; during Interview 3, he revealed how it took a few years of teaching in High School 3 to be mindful of the various cultural extremes his students endured. As a result, implementing culturally sensitive pedagogy has been a major goal of Participant 1, especially while making student connections in his sociology teaching.

Participant 2 teaches American Law I & II at both High School 1 and High School 3; this research study focuses on his work within High School 1. As mentioned in Chapter 3, High School 1 has a white-majority population, with a higher population of Hispanic and a slightly smaller population of black students compared to High School 3. A large proportion (45%) of the High School 1 student population receives free and/or reduced lunch, although the rate is lower

than at High School 3 (52%). In these socially volatile times, Participant 2 explained how he walked a tightrope in implementing culture within pedagogy during lessons. For example, Participant 2 explained in Interview 1 how he required students working in groups to debate, read, and act on case studies from "different perspectives. With certain pieces, I will give them a perspective of this officer, this witness and someone else."

More subtly, the theme of Culture Within Pedagogy was more evident when students were in-person than remote because students were forced to check their biases on various perspectives within the criminal justice process. Participant 2 mentioned in Interview 2 that he has several family members who work in law enforcement. As a result, he mentioned the need to keep personal feelings at bay while designing lessons and selecting reading activities. During Interview 2, the researcher also asked Participant 2 to elaborate on lessons observed during the second round on bail reform. Then, in Interview 3, Participant 2 reflected on instances in his class at High School 3 where students had an organic discussion on systemic racism and its impact on their local communities. He explained:

> So, because of everything, they were looking [for it]. I was happy someone brought it [current racial issues] up. It was not in the period that you were observing, but it was [in] my other one. And they brought up the fact that they find it completely unfair because in certain neighborhoods, in certain situations, crime could be more prevalent. And again, this is also based on their perception of what they have been seeing and what has been going on. And I do not blame them, but they find systemic racism is

an issue. And that it is really hurting those types of communities more than any other community. And so, they didn't understand why.

This is an example of a scenario where Participant 2 allowed the student conversation to flow because of his intent to uphold a culturally responsive pedagogy. Participant 2 had sown the seeds for this discussion during Observations 3 and 4 by exposing students to issues of bail reform, the Innocence Project, and general law enforcement tactics. The observed lessons on bail reform and the Innocence Project allowed students to see how governmental policies were being challenged, thereby providing students with transparency on racism within the American criminal justice system while not revealing any personal opinion. Rather, Participant 2 simply revealed the data to students and allowed for them to develop their own analysis regarding systemic racism.

During the observations, Participant 4 was providing instruction on the tenets of Islam to a student population that contained few Muslim students (Middle School 1). An example of where Participant 4 utilized Culture Within Pedagogy arose last semester, when in-person learning was missed:

> Yeah, I mean, certainly not having that teachable moment. I did have that in one of my other classes. So, I have three blocks, right? I did put it out there. I think I did it by observation. I think there was a moment where I asked if anyone wanted to share. But in one of my other classes there was a student that was usually outspoken and was Muslim, and she did share. And it was a great teachable moment. She talked all about Ramadan and about fasting.

Participant 4 is a Christian and has worked to humanize Islam with students, since it is part of the curriculum. In this example, having a Muslim student present during class discussions on Islam, a major religion less familiar to the student body, provided a friendly and organic dialogue that addresses different cultural nuances in the social studies curriculum. Participant 4 kept his lessons on Islam focused on the main beliefs as well as its geographic spread in the Middle East within Observation 1. Some dialogue was observed regarding Farsi (Persian) being spoken in Iran, but there was no discussion of the various Christian or Islamic sects that originated in the region.

Participant 5 used border changes in 19th-century Europe to drive discussion on Culture Within Pedagogy. She explained her reasons for this during Interview 3:

> So, I used a similar idea where I pointed out maps. I also connected it with other lessons that I had about trying to trade and all this... you know what I am getting at. Like different visuals, different forms of language. I did use some primary resources when it came to the Latin American ones, and I also brought in examples of them themselves. So, for instance, we have a lot of kids here who come from diverse backgrounds, right?

Participant 5 acknowledged the multicultural makeup of her students in this honors world history course. During her lessons on independence movements in Latin America during the 19th century, for example, she asked a student who had lived at her family's hacienda in Guatemala to discuss the cultural and economic strife in the region. With a sizeable contingent of students from Latin America in

this course, the researcher sought out but could not receive a deeper response on the linguistic as well as cultural diversity within its Spanish speakers. More generally, High School 3's student population for the 2020–21 school year was just over 38% Hispanic, with large Dominican, Ecuadorian, Guatemalan, Mexican, and Puerto Rican sub-groups. Since High School 3 has significant Hispanic or Latino diversity, hearing about cultural similarities or differences in the follow-up of such lessons was desired.

During Observation 4, Participant 5 also expanded on how the integration of the potato crop essentially fed the continent of Europe for centuries and how this New World crop completely transformed European culture. In addition, Participant 5 also discussed at length how the infusion of crops from different areas of the world continue to transform the consumption and cultivation of cuisine through a small disciplinary literacy activity. Students entirely responded to questions in the live text, but not orally.

Sub-Theme A: Remote v. In-person Learning

The sub-theme of Remote v. In-person Learning emerged from the main theme of Culture Within Pedagogy because students were largely completing their lessons remotely. From a cultural standpoint, highly effective social studies instruction is best driven when students reflect and share upon their cultural underpinnings as they relate to different areas of a lesson (Kress, 2010). Participant 4 alluded to this missing element within the remote setting when describing experiences of Muslims during Ramadan. Also, Participant 1 explained

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during Interview 1 how the new learning environment has made establishing cultural connections with students more challenging:

> Oh yeah, it's [organic interaction] nonexistent. I try my best to interact with the kids and engage the kids in many ways. [I] try to get them to cross examine and, you know, connect each other. But in this environment, with the... I guess video cameras could play a role, maybe. Having them all on, but I don't really know. I have done breakout rooms to have them try to talk. I've tried a couple of different ways to get them to engage with each other. Just so they can hear the accents of someone reading out loud or trying to have students ask questions and hearing some of the thoughts that some people might have from different cultures. It is hard, though, to motivate and get them to even interact with each other. It's mostly themselves and me.

Similarly, an increase of student apathy prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic has been a major concern for the participants in this study. Sociology is a social studies discipline that partly seeks to expose students to different cultural groups across the global community; Participant 1's experiences here reflect a perceived barrier due to the remote setting.

> Conversely, Participant 3 explained how the remote setting has helped more introverted students take ownership of their public speaking and reading. He explains that:

> No, I think it aligned with them. I got a lot of information from the Pear Deck, which I love because it gives those shyer students an opportunity to

participate as well. It allows them the security to know that their answers

are not going to necessarily be displayed for everybody else to see.

Here, the invisible stage that some middle schoolers may feel was diminished for

Participant 3's students in this mostly remote setting. Participant 3 frequently

invoked discussion and called on minority students who expressed interest to read

aloud often. During Interview 2, Participant 3 was also asked to reflect on crafting

readability with multimodalities during this school year:

> Yeah, so I think with this semester what I've tried to do is give them a mix
>
> of asynchronous time to really get through the meat and bones of the
>
> content. So that's things like your lecture videos, your readings, your
>
> supplemental background knowledge, and then allowing them to add sort
>
> of their own speed to move into the deeper end of the pool, so to speak.
>
> And that allows me to hang out in that deeper end, where they are going to
>
> struggle a little bit, where they need some help with the analysis of
>
> primary sources or secondary sources. But I have reinvented my
>
> classroom space where I am not going to be delivering them information. I
>
> am not going to give a live lecture to the students. So, they are working
>
> through the content and kind of the bones of it on their own. And then
>
> when we get to do activities together at one time, like we used to on
>
> Friday with the simulation, they already have brought that background to
>
> the table, and they are able to participate in those activities and it is more
>
> meaningful. And it is not to say that they are out on their own when they
>
> are doing that background knowledge-building; I am still there to help and

support them as they need help along the way. If they are struggling with

the content, the basic memorization, and the comprehension of it, then I

have my processes and my ways to intervene there, but I am just allowing

them to kind of do the more independent work on their own. And then

rethinking how I use my class time to assist them more with the

assignments, as opposed to letting them do those on their own.

In this example, Participant 3's attempts to create a somewhat flipped model

increases the need for further research on how this approach to teaching early

American History to eighth-graders lies within the appropriate bounds of

culturally responsive pedagogy. Also, monitoring the applicability of these

approaches to in-person compared with virtual instruction needs to be examined

in greater depth.

As data were collected between March 1 and April 20, 2021, students

within the district could attend school depending on whether they were in three

separate cohorts. A consistent trend experienced by both the participants and the

researcher was that the same collection of students attended school regularly and

that their demographic makeup was mixed. When asked whether students

receiving in-person instruction displayed more gains in disciplinary literacy with

multimodalities than those taking classes only remotely, Participants 2 and 3 both

confirmed this trend.

Theme 3: Collaboration

The theme of Collaboration was the least seen of all the main themes and

sub-themes; however, Participants 3 and 5 spoke extensively on the impact that

healthy dialogue between social studies colleagues has had on their abilities to implement disciplinary literacy instruction. Moreover, Participant 4's experiences in collaborating with his in-class support teacher over the past decade reflect areas of collaboration when creating student dialogue within disciplinary literacy instruction. Even though Participant 4 only works with his in-class support teacher for one course block, elements of their collaboration are intertwined within all of Participant 4's course blocks. For example, during Interview 1, Participant 4 reflected on an activity known as 'wadi blasting':

> Wadi blasting, yes. Yeah, so I mean I of course have never been to North Africa. But I guess life events that might have influenced me politically, specific to the content, would have been having my discussions and talking with other teachers and students that have been to a lot of these areas. Really, the only ones you are going to get are Morocco and Egypt. And I have spoken to several students who are Egyptian. I had one last semester; he told me a little bit about what it was like there, what the climate was like, things like that. The heat to the area. My co-teacher in my inclusion class, he had visited Egypt for a while and went into the Sahara. So those, even though I did not personally experience [them], I guess you could say was my experience with another teacher. That impacted the way I was able to deliver this lesson. Specific to the climate portion that I talked about, before we started the reading, and then what happened within.

Again, during Interview 2, Participant 4 mentioned his co-teacher's extensive visits to Egypt and their contributions to points drawn within the reading activities. Should Participant 4 and his ICS work together post-pandemic, studying their partnership and collaboration in greater depth could be beneficial.

When the district brought in a new director of curriculum and instruction in 2017, he revamped the existing new teacher induction program, which begins with a five-day training phase before an extensive four-year growth monitoring program for non-tenured new hires who have no previous teaching experience. Once teachers receive their tenure after their fourth year, their contractually required participation is complete. The four-year program features specific professional development sessions, ongoing check-ins with administrators and experienced teachers, and a portfolio documenting their experiences. In this study, Participants 2, 3, and 5 are all in their fourth year of teaching, but this experience was only reflected upon by Participant 3. In the interviews, Participants 3 and 5 were the most elaborate on the role collaboration has had on their implementation of disciplinary literacy with multimodalities; however, their sentiments towards collegial collaboration were diametrically opposed. Participant 3 expressed high praise for the teacher induction program and how it led to healthy common planning with his grade-level partner. On the contrary, although Participant 5 strongly advocated for critical dialogue between social studies colleagues on instructional design efforts, she was adamantly opposed to potential district policies on conducting common lessons and assessments. Participant 4 had no mention of such collaboration in any of his three interviews.

During Interview 2 with Participant 3, it was revealed that his grade-level partner implemented identical lessons and assessments. In Observation 4, Participant 3's grade-level partner was absent, meaning that 25 additional students filtered into his class, totaling around 60 students in the day's lesson in a primarily remote setting. This type of collaboration between two teachers in the district is unusual, so when pressed on this dichotomy, Participant 3 revealed:

> I have a heavy emphasis on co-planning just to make sure we could have twins. The son is in his class and the daughter is in my class, and we want them to have the same experience. It is not even about covering our butt type of thing. It is just we want them to get the same thing. If I am doing something fun and that's working for my kids, then I share that with him and vice versa. We're a team and it helps us to, I think, be more refreshed because we're not killing ourselves with planning and trying to gather resources when we can just look at a week for the plans and split it up more [in] common. And I can't necessarily speak for the whole district, but I don't think at our school and I don't think within our department it's really emphasized as something that within our school that people do. I think it is good practice. I think it's something that should be done, like you said, but I don't know that it necessarily is, at least at our school.

However, when asked about how reading instruction was implemented, Participant 3 acknowledged a number of key differences:

> Yeah, we do it pretty similarly. I tend to model a lot more than he does. Whereas he kind of will just, not that he does not offer guidance and go

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over with them, but he's a little more of the belief that they're ready for it right off the bat and kind of let them run a little bit loose with it. And then pull them back in and reign them in. Whereas I kind of reversed that and I'm slow to release them.

Although their implementation approaches to reading are different, Participant 3 acknowledged that conversations about his participation in this study have been conveyed with his grade-level partner. Indeed, planting these sorts of seeds for increasing conversations among social studies teachers in the district around disciplinary literacy with multimodalities is certainly a long-term goal of this project.

Halfway through Interview 2, Participant 3 explained how his experiences of professional development in the district the foundation have been for what he has researched about multimodalities and literacy strategies:

"The research I've been doing mostly is just best practices in the mastery model instructional approach that I'm doing, the flipped approach. And those are things that I am exploring through the New Teacher program that we have now as a district. So, I'm kind of applying that into what I'm doing with my class."

At the end of Interview 2 with Participant 5, the researcher asked for commentary on the degree of common planning with other world history teachers throughout the district. She explained that although it would "be great to have a common plan [prep], it was not practical because we're different teachers. While I would love to tell you yes, there is a lot of different collaboration; we do not have the same

planning time and we tend to be on different pieces." Although she mentioned how she regularly communicates about different ideas with colleagues on world history, Participant 5 remained opposed to the idea of her colleagues teaching the same lessons because academic freedom among teachers was important to her. Also, given the variance from the academic-level world history teachers, it seemed impractical to create common lessons and assessments.

Theme 4: Participant Experiences and Their Influence on Disciplinary Literacy

Of all the themes found during the coding process, this loomed the largest for participants in their reflections on implementing disciplinary literacy with multimodalities. Each participant reflected on certain times in their lives that had impacted how they conveyed their lessons over the course of this study. When participants discussed specific courses from college or graduate school, they were coded accordingly. This included numerous examples of how each participant created and implemented disciplinary literacy instruction with multimodalities using their unique set of talents and abilities.

Participant 1 reflected heavily on his experiences in athletics. He reminisced about his experiences as a student-athlete while attending High School 2:

> Knowing our students and how motivated they are, many by the sports and the athletics, I know what it's like to be that all-star athlete, but I also know what it's like to sit on the bench and watch all the other players play. And I lived it and breathed it in high school and college. So, in my

classroom, thinking of that student that excels tremendously and crushes

every test and straight As, and thinking about that one student that has

been sitting on the bench, just not motivated, really struggles. So, I've

lived both worlds and I try to bridge that gap.

As a result, many of his experiences as a student-athlete inform the design of

certain literacy activities that require students to reflect on the ups and downs of

life. For example, Participant 1 invoked these sentiments in the lives of students

during Observation 5, where he created an interactive Pear Deck on cultural

relativism that prompted a group reading of Marvin Harris's *Cannibals and Kings*.

From there, Participant 1 engaged students in discussion on areas of American

society that are seen to be lacking. One student criticized America's fast-food

industry; at this point, Participant 1 discussed how high school athletics today

focuses more on nutrition than during his time. Humor was also used moments

later in the conversation when a basketball player in the classroom admitted to

eating Burger King prior to a game and being zero from six from the free throw

line.

Participant 2 was the most reflective on his disciplinary literacy instruction

based on direct student feedback. From his perspective, this feedback dynamic

enhances the personal experiences of both teacher and students since the direct

feedback helps him improve on clarity. During Interview 2, he further explored

how students were missing out on the use of written text when it came to

disciplinary literacy instruction as well as the question of how to balance

computer usage during the 2020–21 school year:

So honestly it would be, I think... I was talking to a student today, actually, about this, which I found very interesting. He came in; it was his first time in; it's been over a year since he's been in school. And he said, 'You know what I miss the most is actually writing down notes again.' I said, 'How come?' He goes, 'I feel I actually remembered it.' And I thought that was interesting. And it is a good point: we take for granted the writing aspect of remembering and everything and the skill of writing. So, I would still like to do those that way.

Participant 2 also reflected on student takeaways from their work on the Innocence Project. During Interview 3, he implied how the candid responses of students shifting their trust in America's criminal justice system informed his own experiences of the topic.

When Participant 3 was asked during Interview 3 to comment on approaches to teaching the Federalist Papers from Observation 5, he responded with:

Yeah, and I would include in that song lyrics or just songs in general too. They need to be able to pull information from any type of source. And that is what I think the main multimodality and disciplinary literacy means is being able to pull information from a source and being able to tell me the historical context, the point of view, the intended audience, and the purpose for it. So, it goes beyond just primary and secondary sources, absolutely.

Participant 3 integrated various multimodalities to drive literacy instruction during each non-evaluative observation. One example included the use of a five-minute video excerpt on Shays' Rebellion that coincided with a reading activity on the topic. When the researcher asked what personal familiarity Participant 3 had with this cultural divide from 1789 that was still present in 2021, he explained that there was limited familiarity with New England and the precise placement of instructional design during Observations 3 and 4 was based on collaboration with his grade-level teacher. Consequently, the researcher looked to the approaches taken by Participant 4:

> I think they are not as privy to the nuances of just how buried one small little area can be geographically, economically, socially, politically. Like we are talking about a small state, Massachusetts, and the geographic gap between Western and Eastern. I think they'd kind of just assume in a lump everything: 'Oh, Massachusetts. It's cold, it's bad for farming.' Like that's kind of a cursory introduction we got in unit one when we briefly discussed the economy and the geography of the region. So, when it gets a little more nuanced than that for them, I think that is why I spent so much time trying to just hammer home that point of quite different goings-on in Western Massachusetts as opposed to Eastern. Yeah, so after we got into the Articles [of Confederation], we did Shays' Rebellion. I just wanted them to kind of see an example as to why the articles were so bad, as opposed to me just telling them they were bad.

Here, it was evident during Participant 3's observations that a great deal of emphasis was placed on the small vs. large state and economic divide that occurred within the early American states.

Participant 4 described how teaching the same subject for several years in different schedules and settings has made him adapt to the subject. Also, during both interviews, Participant 4 adamantly opposed the implementation of read-aloud activities in class. During Interview 1, he justified this position as follows:

> I've read several studies about how, as tempting as it may be to take the less tedious way of having to do a popcorn reading or something like that, it just does not benefit the students' vocabulary to go and to have that and do that. Because you are going to get weak readers, you're going to get the same ones over again. To hear the flow of the sentences, to hear the correct pronunciations of conquered Persia and Mesopotamia, the correct pronunciations, and [to] be able to continue to go through it, that is something I would have done even if we were in school. Either I would have read it, or I would have played an audiobook to go along with it rather than have a student read. That's something I learned a while back.

Significantly, Participant 4 has taught the same course for almost a decade, whereas the other participants have taught different social studies courses throughout their careers. As a result, his in-depth experience with the world cultures and geography curriculum was a key factor in his approach to disciplinary literacy.

Sub-Theme A: Participants' Academic, Professional, and Personal Experiences

This was chosen as a sub-theme of Theme 4 (Participant Experiences and Their Influence on Disciplinary Literacy) because of the variances in life experiences and how these affected participants' development of their chosen literacy activities. While Theme 4 focused more on actual reflections when participants conducted their disciplinary literacy assignments, the sub-theme looked for understanding on the impact of various lifepaths on a social studies teacher implementing disciplinary literacy activities.

For example, Participant 1 was a double major in secondary education and American studies, whereas more social studies education majors choose to focus on history. One distinction concerning American studies was revealed by Participant 1 during Interview 2:

> There was a history bachelor's and an American studies [major]. The American studies route gave me multidisciplinary courses to study, so it ranged from American philosophy to women in contemporary society to social issues, US history. You name it. American studies covered sociology."

This academic experience was noted during the observations and remarks made in class about shifts in societal norms. For instance, Participant 1's reading activity of Horace Miner's *Body Ritual Among the Nacirema* from 1956 in Observation 3 was used as a case study to help describe common American cultural norms that may seem extreme and to draw out commonalities as well as differences with present-day norms. Clearly, Participant 1's undergraduate coursework in

sociology as well as diversity courses taken in pursuit of a graduate degree had fueled these insights.

Participant 2 attended Penn State as a political science major, and a key distinction between political science and history is the amount of quantitative study. During Interview 2, Participant 2 reflected on this experience: "I remember my one law class that had to deal with data gathering and everything in statistics." In practice, during Observation 5, Participant 2 had noticeably integrated more statistical data into his presentation on the death penalty. Participant 2 did not reveal whether this conversation in Interview 2 influenced the disciplinary literacy instruction during Interview 3; however, he did state that:

> I actually had a few different articles for them to read. I know the one website that gave them more statistics and they could go through was a little bit more interactive. So, if they wanted to find a particular state that has the death penalty, they can find the numbers compared to states like New Jersey and everything else. And I had an exit ticket for them that, again, it was more statistical work.

Here, the researcher believes there may have been a correlation between the conversation in Interview 2 and Participant 2's subsequent lessons; however, this cannot be completely verified.

Participant 3 echoed how his upbringing among several history educators has impacted his own reading choices. All but one of his immediate family were or are professional educators, and this inevitably influenced his instructional approaches:

I think growing up in my mom's classroom probably really influences a lot

of what I do day-to-day in terms of not even just the lesson itself or

anything with the materials and the resources, just the delivery of the

lesson and seeing her always when I was a kid teaching, how she was so

energetic with the students, how from the first bell to the last bell it was

like on, and it was on the ball all the time, high energy, move around. Even

on days she did not feel good, high energy, get the kids involved, get them

excited, because the kids truly mirror the energy that you give off. It is

funny because my younger brother's now a senior at TCNJ going for

history and education like me. And so, it sometimes turns into something

that is contentious, but we all are very high energy and excited about it,

passionate about it.

As shown above, Participant 3's upbringing in a family of social studies teachers

has strongly influenced his delivery of disciplinary literacy instruction with

multimodalities.

Lastly, Participant 5's divulgence of travelling and living in Europe while

studying abroad as an undergraduate has clearly impacted how she implements

disciplinary literacy with multimodalities. The discussion of her eagerness to

travel locally as well as globally once the pandemic ends adds a new finding to

the research. Specifically, she reflected on travel experiences that interconnect

with her disciplinary literacy instruction using multimodalities:

I have a couple that immediately popped into my mind. I think the first

one being, so my home base when I went and studied abroad was London

and I have always been super fascinated by English history. Later, coming

to find out that somewhere in the ancestry I have a relation to Henry VII,

which is kind of cool. But I think the biggest one for me was the Anne

Frank house. Stepping inside there and I think I might have talked about

this last time, but the sirens that the police have are remarkably like the

ones that they had back in World War II. And I remember I had gone up

there; it was kind of an emotional experience just being there.

Participant 5 revealed how being on the ground in Europe and Israel provided a

different experience to a historical reading or lecture. Her experiences hence need

to be considered as a possible replacement for how graduate coursework in social

studies can better drive disciplinary literacy instruction.

Synthesis of Themes

The most salient points from the non-evaluative observations and

interviews with participants included the impact that student connectivity with

teacher delivery had on disciplinary literacy activities with multimodalities. Each

participant reflected a convincing degree of confidence and provided in-depth

commentary on how technology drove reading instruction within their various

lessons. In sum, the participants provided many common experiences and rich

insights when addressing the first research question: *What are the experiences of*

teachers implementing disciplinary reading instruction using multimodality?

All participants provided elaborate responses on how their own college

coursework has been impactful on their implementation of literacy instruction.

Each participant also provided context on their various academic and professional

experiences and how these continue to influence their implementation of disciplinary literacy with multimodalities, as asked in the first sub-question of this study. Although only Participant 1 has a graduate degree, each participant discussed specific courses as well as professors that still make a difference in how they implement literacy instruction. Although travel experiences were not included as an original focus of the study, Participant 5's discussions of her varied travel experiences add another layer to the field of study and to those previous studies completed by Shreiner (2014, 2016, 2018), which argued that social studies teachers need an advanced degree in their content area to best convey disciplinary literacy. By contrast, Participant 5's overseas experiences provide a unique perspective on her implementation of cultural reading activities.

In addressing the final sub-research question of the study (*To what extent are teachers reflecting on the effectiveness of the implementation of this practice?)* participants were not as specific when it came to reflecting on how they conveyed disciplinary literacy with multimodalities. Towards the end of every interview, the researcher asked participants to reflect on their key takeaways from their approaches; however, the responses reflected more on the lessons as a whole and less so on reading instruction. As this study concluded, it seemed clear that a future study where participants would receive interventions in the form of professional development or graduate coursework may have yielded deeper responses to the final sub-research question.

Reflexivity

As the study unfolded, I agreed with Shreiner (2014, 2016, 2018) that graduate coursework in content areas is a critical step in ensuring social studies teachers can implement highly effective disciplinary literacy instruction. However, experiences gained from travelling with a historian's mindset, domestically and internationally, has molded my advancement of designing various reading activities to bolster student gains. I had to work diligently to withhold these sentiments during the interviews and the non-evaluative observations.

As each participant brought their upbringing and teaching careers to bear in the school district, I encountered shifts of reflexivity in the study as a student, researcher, practitioner, and change agent. From being a fellow member of the school community, the participants understood that there were shared networks and that this may have impacted reflexivity in the study. As an employee of the school district as well as a researcher with St. John's University, participants understood from the outset that data published from the study would expand future research on social studies education. Since this study used a purposive sample, the researcher worked with the district's social studies supervisor to generate lists of the most cooperative staff. That said, a difficult area of reflexivity was not providing feedback to participants on how to improve on their lessons on disciplinary literacy with multimodalities.

During the third interviews, I asked participants if they could rank graduate coursework (no specific discipline), travel experiences, and professional

development based on what they felt would most benefit them in their quest to improve disciplinary literacy with multimodalities. Two participants sided strongly with graduate coursework, whereas two chose professional development. Only Participant 5 ranked graduate coursework and travel experiences as close in importance; she found professional development to be the most trivial. My own position sided with Participant 5, and it was difficult to maintain reflexivity on participants' views while advancing the research topics at hand.

The most salient factors that elucidated the purpose and significance of the research emerged as participants reflected on the cultural sensitivity of their reading selections and how this helped maintain student interest throughout the study. A collective experience from participants was showing genuine care for the lives of their students; during their observations, each addressed their students with Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943) in mind when trying to build confidence in reading. All participants missed the day-to-day interactions they had with students prior to March 13, 2020 and were looking forward to a return to relative normality in the 2021–22 school year. On the other hand, most discussed the silver lining of remote learning in their enhanced ability to use new instructional technologies. Nonetheless, when the study began in early March, compared with where it ended after spring break in April, Participants 1 and 5 reflected on how the level of student apathy had increased greatly due to fatigue from being in this hybrid-remote learning environment. An area for further consideration would be implementing these types of activities at more strategic times throughout the school year to mitigate apathy and increase student motivation.

Overall, the general sentiment of participants on disciplinary literacy in social studies was that they felt confident in their approaches and were looking for more resources with which to improve. Participants selected for the study were known to be ambitious, dedicated, intelligent, passionate, and technologically savvy social studies teachers who are in the prime of their careers. By the time the study was concluded, it was not surprising that the participants had sought growth in their own implementation of disciplinary literacy and were interested in seeing how the researcher conducted graduate-level research.

As an unexpected addition, Participant 5's reflections on how her living and travelling in Europe impacted her disciplinary literacy instruction has to be highlighted. Encouraging social studies teachers to embark on travels to new places and to experience different cultural backgrounds (domestically or internationally) can play a pivotal role in how literacy instruction is conducted through learning design. Looking ahead, Participant 5's priorities can extend the research topics studied in this dissertation into new areas.

Conclusion

Chapter 4 sought to gain greater clarity on the research question *What are the experiences of teachers implementing disciplinary reading instruction using multimodality?* and sub-questions asking *How does the prior academic and/or professional background of participating social studies teachers influence the implementation of disciplinary literacy with multimodalities?* and *To what extent are teachers reflecting on the effectiveness of the implementation of this practice?* Evidence from the observations and interviews revealed unique experiences that

participants continue to have as educators and how they influence disciplinary literacy instruction with multimodalities in their various social studies courses. As the study progressed, participants revealed new metacognitive thinking skills around implementing literacy instruction throughout the study.

The participant dialogue laid the groundwork for future research on advancing literacy instruction for secondary social studies teachers in the years to come. From careful reflection in the form of field notes during observations, interview questions were adapted based on the instructional output of participants. Interviews were then transcribed in Rev and reviewed by both the researcher and the participants. Finally, the analytic memos and coding identified four major themes in the study: (a) Student Connections; (b) Culture Within Pedagogy; (c) Collaboration; and (d) Participant Experiences and Their Influence on Disciplinary Literacy. Within these main themes, three additional sub-themes were developed to add greater depth to the findings. Chapter 5 will provide further discussions of the themes from Chapter 4 as well as suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 5

When this exploratory case study began, it was hoped that disciplinary literacy with multimodalities could become the norm for social studies education. Social studies educators have a unique opportunity in the 2020s to drive multi-disciplinary literacy instruction with multimodalities while being culturally responsive and transformative amid ever-changing American demographics. All participants exhibited signs of culturally responsive teaching, are advocates for equity in education, and can be considered change agents within their large New Jersey school district (Helfrick, 2019). As the non-evaluative observations and interviews progressed, all participants showed commitment to providing reading activities for students that embodied a culturally responsive pedagogy. From having culturally responsive teachers as participants, clear attempts were made to shatter factors that still prevent secondary social studies educators from normalizing disciplinary literacy (Shreiner, 2018).

Through the examination of cultural dynamics within each participating school, a common theme of Culture Within Pedagogy stood out as critical in connecting with students. Participants asserted that a mutual respect between educators and students is essential for successful instruction; by creating a class culture within their pedagogy, different multimodalities can be used to connect students with the disciplinary literacy activities. In turn, this theme can be used as a baseline for cultural responsiveness and how multimodalities can be harnessed to demonstrate a sociocultural consciousness in reading selections that renders

these activities more approachable to students (Helfrick, 2019; Villegas & Lucas, 2002b).

All participants were selected through a purposive sampling. As stated in Ames et al., (2019), this selection method has both benefits and drawbacks. Over 50 social studies teachers in the school district were contacted by email about being a participant in the case study, 15 of whom were actively recruited. The teachers who were most sought after for this study were enthusiastic, well-regarded by administration and colleagues, and relatively young. To uncover experiences of emotionally aware teachers in the relative early stages of their careers, purposive sampling was deemed most reasonable. Should future projects examine disciplinary literacy in secondary social studies education, a different sampling method should be implemented so that more extensive data can provide a more complete representation of as many social studies teachers as possible. Additional steps in sampling could have been taken if this had been a longer-term study.

Benefits and drawbacks were also observed in my relationships with the participants and the educational community that served as the basis for the study. The district may be peculiar to study for an outside observer because of its complex history, varied demographics, and relative size. Perhaps more significantly, as a colleague with advanced expertise on the implementation of disciplinary literacy in social studies, participants privately asked the researcher for guidance on their individual practices. Although it proved difficult to refrain

from helping, I maintained professionalism as a researcher by saying that we could discuss related ideas once the study was finalized.

As a pioneer of social studies education, Shreiner (2018, 2021) calls for more in-depth research on the specific sentiments of social sciences teachers on the frontlines. In response, this exploratory case study provides raw data on the experiences of secondary social studies educators in a large New Jersey school district during the Covid-19 pandemic. It also encourages future research on the implementation of disciplinary literacy with multimodalities in social sciences education. As the world continues to battle the pandemic, along with political volatility, economic unrest, climate change, racism, and other forms of inequity, supporting social studies teachers in their implementation of meaningful literacy instruction should be a priority for pedagogy throughout the 2020s.

The purpose of this study was to answer the following:

What are the experiences of teachers implementing disciplinary reading instruction using multimodality?

How does the prior academic and/or professional background of participating social studies teachers influence the implementation of disciplinary literacy with multimodalities?

To what extent are teachers reflecting on the effectiveness of the implementation of this practice?

As the study progressed, participants provided plentiful dialogue on how their life experiences have influenced their implementation of disciplinary literacy with multimodalities. Four themes and three sub-themes emerged from the study:

Student Connections (sub-theme of Interactive Technology); Culture Within Pedagogy (sub-theme of Remote vs. In-person Learning); Collaboration, and Participant Experiences and Their Influence on Disciplinary Literacy (sub-theme of Participants' Academic, Professional, and Personal experiences). Themes of culturally responsive pedagogy were noted during the observations and interviews and addressed through the lens of the following researchers: Lennon (1970), Fierre (1977), Ladson-Billings (1995), Lucas and Villegas (2013), Hammond and Jackson (2015), Gay (2018), and Helfrick (2019). Shreiner (2018, 2020, 2021) also proved to be a central reference point due to her scholarship having similar goals to this exploratory case study.

Overview of Findings

This exploratory case study has produced several key developments in the field of multimodalities driving disciplinary literacy in social studies education:

1. The academic, professional, and personal life experiences of each participant was most impactful on their conveyance of multimodalities in disciplinary literacy in social studies. Each participant taught in their hometown and had graduated from one of the district's high schools, while their undergraduate coursework was completed through different universities. Each participant pointed to specific courses during their undergraduate and graduate (only Participant 1) degrees that had impacted their subsequent delivery of disciplinary literacy with multimodalities as social sciences educators.

2. Although each participant instructed in distinct social studies content areas at different grade-levels and schools, commonalities were observed in how multimodalities were utilized when driving disciplinary literacy in social studies. All participants felt their multimodality selection was decided to maintain student engagement with the content. Conversely, each participant adopted different approaches in their use of interactive technology to drive disciplinary literacy instruction.

3. Most participants reflected during interviews on the individual gifts, talents, and experiences their students brought to class and how these influenced their own learning experiences. Participants were mindful of their students' cultural diversity and socio-economic constraints, which had a clear impact on their dialogues within disciplinary literacy activities. Several instances were noted where participants encouraged students to share their personal experiences around when a sense of connection to the lesson first surfaced.

4. Participant 5's academic and leisure travel experiences provided a strong influence on her conveyance of disciplinary literacy instruction with multimodalities. Additional research on the impact of travel on social studies teachers may add another element to this analysis. Furthermore, Participant 5 articulated during the interviews that she grew up in a similar working-class household as her students in High School 3 and subsequently made a point of expressing to her students how such travel can be economically possible for them. Participant 5's mindset that a

passport and a high-quality education can take students to more places was evident throughout each observation and interview.

5. All participants mentioned the need for a pipeline of support for their efforts in advancing disciplinary literacy in social studies with multimodalities. However, they were divided on whether this should come in the form of graduate coursework or professional development. It was clear during the last round of interviews that additional support for social studies teachers is needed if disciplinary literacy instruction with multimodalities is to reach a consistently high level.

Research Findings in Relation to the Theoretical Framework

The main theoretical framework for this exploratory case study was crafted from Shreiner's (2014, 2016, 2018) mixed methods studies in secondary social studies education. This study sought to present data on the experiences of five social studies teachers in forwarding disciplinary literacy with multimodalities in their social studies courses. As the study progressed, the participants echoed a connection between cultural responsiveness and student engagement at the core of disciplinary literacy instruction in their classrooms. In the corresponding literature, Shreiner (2018) argues that social studies teachers need a clear framework for implementing disciplinary literacy. On the contrary, the participants in this study were not provided with any intervention or specific guidelines on how this could appear in their classes; participants seemed more focused on connecting reading with students by maximizing their talents and experiences. These are important elements for driving disciplinary literacy in

social studies through multimodalities, especially given the unprecedented challenges facing our global community (Shreiner & Dykes, 2021).

The overarching purpose of this study was to showcase how five social studies teachers in the prime of their careers drive reading instruction in social studies content. Participants were able to reflect on some of the general nuances of disciplinary literacy with multimodalities; however, responses on the reasons behind these choices were not as in-depth. Ultimately, participants felt that the creation of a welcoming classroom followed by the right interactive technology was the combination needed to convey literacy instruction. With social studies education only having limited research studies, this exploratory case study provides raw details as to how participants found ways to engage students with reading during the Covid-19 pandemic. This study has found that canons from Fierre (1977), Ladson-Billings (2005), Lucas and Villegas (2013), Hammond and Jackson (2015), Gay (2018), and Helfrick (2019) emerged as critical factors within three different components, as explored below.

Cultural and Socioeconomic Caring

Gay (2018) explains that teacher empathy for students does not go far enough in reaching their needs. Rather, culturally responsive caring for the student as a human being should be prioritized over the academic success of diverse students. Here, each participant provided their diverse body of students with an authentic sense of culturally responsive caring, even when teaching them at a distance.

Communicating to students through multiple means, as seen in this study, echoed culturally responsive teaching that advances the socio-emotional well-being of students. This was seen during interactions of participants with students, and their sensitivity in conveying social studies content that can sometimes be construed as controversial. For example, Participant 2's disciplinary literacy instruction with multimodalities in American Law II showed sensitivity to differing views over criminal justice and law enforcement reform as well as the diverse demographics of his classroom.

One challenge that some participants addressed was the creation of inclusivity by garnering opinions from ELL students or first-generation students in class discussions. This was apparent in Participant 1's sociology class, where several disciplinary literacy activities with multimodalities were used to highlight cultural commonalities and distinctions between native speakers of English and Spanish. Participant 1 also reflected on how increasing equity and mutual understanding of student differences has been challenging in the remote learning environment; however, an active dialogue was maintained throughout all six lessons observed.

Some participants also mentioned that knowing their students outside of class—either on the stage during school musicals or as student-athletes—has helped make their instruction more culturally and socioeconomically caring. This kind of outreach outside of the classroom has guided participants to grasp different cultural or socioeconomic backgrounds of students; likewise, these

relationships allow for students and their families to see another side of their teacher.

Reducing the Struggle for Humanization

As Freire (1970) mentions in *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, dehumanization essentially programs the oppressed to think in ways that prevent them from being free to who they are. Furthermore, dialogue is crucial to making authentic revolutionary change around disciplinary literacy instruction in social studies. Disciplinary literacy in social studies helps guide students to decipher manipulations and biases that occur within various forms and to challenge the status quo, thereby forging additional critical awareness of their role as students (Freire, 1970).

Unfortunately, economic and class divides remain major areas of concern within the school district being studied. Although attempts have been made to better address these school district divides, many of these ongoing challenges were expressed by participants. In many respects, John Lennon's (1970) sentiments in "Working Class Hero"— "A working class hero is something to be / They hurt you at home and they hit you at school / They hate you if you're clever and they despise a fool" (Side 1, Track 4)—held relevance based on the data gathered from participants. For example, Participant 1 displayed cultural and socioeconomic caring by not overly discussing culinary trends when several families of students had food insecurity. Participant 5 noted during the interviews that she was raised in a working-class household and had used these experiences to relate to students that international travel could be possible. In turn, a common

element addressed by participants was their belief that critical understanding of social studies content could be attained through students using their own personal stories as an asset. Notably, participants' awareness of economic inequality had increased or remained the same since they began teaching in the district. Having a grounded knowledge of the economic consequences their students must endure seemed to be a motivator for participants to deliver engaging and unassuming disciplinary literacy instruction with multimodalities.

Each participant demonstrated approachability to their students and families by encouraging students to share how their life experiences may relate to a topic, thereby potentially increasing connectivity to their reading activities. Freire (1970) encourages teachers to present reading materials such as contrasting newspaper editorials on the same topic and to require students to self-implement new investigative themes. Participants maintained neutrality in their conveyance of disciplinary literacy activities while attempting to critically challenge their thought processes.

Perseverant Educators

Each participant in this study utilized a multitude of their academic, personal, and professional life experiences, along with their passion for the social studies content area, to connect the designed reading activities with their students. Hammond and Jackson (2015) argue that intention is critical in implementing culturally responsive instruction and design. Despite the difficulties stacked up against participants this year (especially due to Covid-19), all made themselves available to help their students persevere when the going got tough. Students

seemed to trust their participant-teachers within observations, as genuine banter and friendly conversation took place regularly. Hammond and Jackson (2015) reference Cammorta and Romero's (2006) *A Critically Compassionate Intellectualism for Latino/a Students: Raising Voices Above the Silencing in Our Schools* as an important theoretical framework for avoiding disconnection with students, especially at times when implicit bias may be a hindrance. At the outset of lessons, each participant spent 5–10 minutes checking attendance and having a brief conversation with their students. In allowing students to be more personally connected to their remote learning environment, the participants were eager to build healthy rapport and trust with their students.

Hammond and Jackson (2015) also speak to how a partnership of learning between teachers and students is reflective in many instances of the emotional intelligence of participants. Perseverance was certainly a factor in trying to maintain student interest in their subjects as remote learning progressed. Participant 5 demonstrated a mutual respect for her students and the belief that her socially marginalized students could achieve great things in her honors world history class. As an example, during Observation 5, which occurred right after spring break, most of her students were writing considerably less and turning in assignments late compared with earlier in the school year. Realizing the need to maintain a sense of mutual respect, she simply reminded her students in a friendly tone to break any current regressions; she knew all her students were capable of success, and this cognitive insight prompted laughter during the session.

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Finally, all participants conveyed a passion for their social studies content areas and a commitment despite the sizeable challenges faced. Each created lessons that sought to provide relevance to their students while remaining academically appropriate. Ongoing dialogue with the participants on improving student literacy gains was possible thanks to a persevering attitude.

Discussion of Research Findings in Relation to the Literature

Given the paucity of research on social studies education in the 2000s, much of Shreiner's research over the past decade has become the bedrock for this exploratory case study's development. Almost all of Shreiner's work focuses on mixed methods studies, and the data presented from this exploratory case study adds to the depth of her scholarship. Indeed, this may explain why participants sometimes lacked depth in reflecting on why certain disciplinary literacy activities and multimodalities were or were not chosen. Nonetheless, a major goal for this study was to provide raw data from social studies teachers on disciplinary literacy with multimodalities as a means of guiding additional research.

Shreiner and Dykes (2021) point to data literacy as a vital way to communicate complex reading pieces. Data visualization is a theme of data literacy and can be considered a multimodality. Shreiner and Dykes (2021) categorize six different types of data visualization: simple text, tables, charts, graphs, network graphs, and geospatial maps. Simple text visualization can refer to a numerical figure that is given a variation of color, font size, or another distinguishable feature. Tables can use different coloration in columns, as can pie charts, bar graphs, quantitative graphs, and scatter plots. Lastly, geospatial maps

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were the most common style of data visualization demonstrated by participants, where physical and political markings were shown to provide context for students.

Data visualizations can further be grouped into larger taxonomic categories based on the types of questions they address. Temporal data visualizations answer 'when' questions; geospatial data visualizations answer 'where' questions; topical data visualizations answer 'what' questions; and network data visualizations answer 'with whom' questions. In addition, spatiotemporal data visualizations combine geospatial and temporal data (i.e., answering both 'where' and 'when' questions). All participants utilized some form of data visualization in every observed lesson, including in their Pear Deck presentations as a way of making maps, graphs, videos, and other imagery more connected to their students. Indeed, during the early stages of Covid-19, data visualizations were commonplace when describing ways to 'flatten the curve'; as a result, using such familiar imagery to drive literacy instruction can be an effective tool for social studies teachers. Participants in this study provided mostly explicit instruction on visualizations to better complement reading activities.

Although Shreiner and Dykes (2021) explore when and how social studies teachers utilize these data visualizations, frequency of use varied in this study. One possible reason for limited time or depth spent on data visualizations could be time constraints since high school teachers only have 40 minutes to complete their lessons. By contrast, the two middle school educators who taught an 80-

minute block proved to be much more in-depth and varied in the data visualizations used.

 With data visualizations being increasingly more common, social studies teachers need to facilitate a guidance analysis of such presentations to foster student learning and support gradual student independence with these learning tools. Shreiner and Dykes (2021) explain that "understanding of common graphical conventions, understanding the conventions of the specific representation with which they are working, and understanding the context or content related to the data in representation" (p. 267) are critical to guiding students in breaking down written and visual presentations. However, in a study of high school students completing a think-aloud activity on graphing information, Shreiner (2009) observes that students did not utilize evaluative strategies to dissect the presentation. Similar tendencies were inconsistently demonstrated throughout the duration of this study. Nonetheless, participants were especially adept at articulating graphical conventions in areas they were passionate about. For example, Participant 5 enjoys studying fashion trends; as a result, she provided students with in-depth visualizations of western Europeans in the 19th century to provide greater context to this sub-area. More broadly, for those participants who taught history- or geography-themed courses (Participants 3, 4, and 5), although maps and charts were commonly used to add contextual depth, they were not used to complement or expand reading activities.

 The data from this study somewhat contradicts elements of prior studies (Coleman, 2010; McTigue & Flowers, 2011) as cited by Shreiner and Dykes

(2021) because visual displays by all participants were used and addressed; however, their reflections as to why these elements were intertwined were limited during the interviews. Shreiner and Dykes (2021) explain that other than the scholarship of Brugar and Roberts (2017a), research has been lacking on data literacy in social studies, let alone data visualizations. Data from this research study indicates that time constraints, teacher interest in specific topics, degree of knowledge on the content taught, and lack of explicit professional guidance on creating appropriate data visualizations may be contributing factors. Shreiner and Dykes (2021) also argue that social studies teachers with high curricular knowledge know when and the extent to which data literacy is valuable in their social studies content area standards and how to implement available instructional materials to instruct data literacy. Here, all participants exhibited curricular knowledge (Shreiner & Dykes, 2021) and were able to use explicit training in data literacy to master the facilitation of visualizations and other multimodalities in their lessons.

Educators face several hidden challenges when implementing disciplinary literacy in social studies courses as the 2020s unfold. Shreiner and Dykes's (2021) mixed methods study indicates that social studies teachers with more than five years of experience felt data visualizations enhanced literacy instruction. By contrast, this exploratory case study focused on the experiences of teachers with 3–10 years of experience because it is in this demographic that I have witnessed the most widespread use of multimodalities in conjunction with literacy. The issue is that most social studies teachers are not fully aware of the intricacies of

multimodalities being used to drive disciplinary literacy. Shreiner and Dykes (2021) hypothesize that a social studies teacher's decision to use certain visual literacy approaches can be made based on whether they find it worth teaching. Here, decisions on which content areas in the curriculum to spend additional or less time on seemed to vary based on the participants' personal interests. Similar to Shreiner and Dykes (2021), mastery experiences throughout a teacher's life appear to play a role in literacy visualization. This was evident during the non-evaluative observations, where participants sought to combine their own passions as social studies educators when selecting imagery to encourage student engagement with disciplinary literacy activities.

A long-term goal for this study was to make disciplinary literacy driven by multimodalities a norm in social studies classrooms, even though external realities have stunted this ambition (Shreiner, 2018; Moje, 2009). During recruitment for this study, teachers with under 10 years of experience were most interested in being involved. As the selection process for participants proceeded, teachers who were more recent graduates from college were most interested in creating interdisciplinary, inquiry-based, and student-centered instruction for literacy. Looking to the future, this mindset is needed to better advance disciplinary literacy in social studies. Shreiner (2018) points to Nokes (2010a) in signaling the pressure social studies teachers face regarding standardized testing, which may dissuade them that the required time is not available to integrate disciplinary literacy instruction into their instruction. Historically, as CCSS assessments began to be used for districts across the country in the mid-2010s, disciplinary literacy in

social studies education was promoted by district leadership to improve student reading of nonfiction texts. Although such initiatives were met with pushback from mostly senior social studies teachers in the district, those less removed from college have been eager to jump at this opportunity.

Shreiner (2018) points out that correctly teaching disciplinary literacy may be difficult for teachers if they had not themselves undertaken the coursework that required such thinking. Participants in this study were able to make these connections specifically when prior undergraduate and graduate (only Participant 1) coursework connected to the sub-fields of social studies taught. For instance, having majored in political science as an undergraduate, Participant 2 introduced quantitative data to students as part of his disciplinary literacy instruction. In turn, a final hidden challenge social studies teachers face (Shreiner, 2018) is that most take few non-history social studies courses as undergraduates. With secondary social studies courses encompassing anthropology, economics, geography, political science, psychology, and sociology, historians may encounter difficulties in conveying disciplinary literacy outside of their academic domain.

Shreiner and Zwart (2020) have shown how world history curricula tend to have a Eurocentric tilt towards Western heritage. This trend persisted within Participant 1's sociology course and most blatantly in Participant 5's honors world history course. Although sociology is a social science whereas history has components of being both a humanity and social science discipline, the curriculum focuses on a pattern of showcasing different regions or cultures in isolation compared with other parts of the world. For example, during the

anthropology section of the course, there is a focus on how communities in different parts of the world live; however, comparative instruction is limited. Interestingly, Participant 4's world geography course mostly avoids European involvement and focuses instead on Africa, Asia, and Australia (if time permits). The world history curriculum, which serves as a stand-alone course for 11th-graders in the district, offers various academic experiences for students. Although the district writes the curriculum, its implementation and the depth of what is covered in the course varies between teachers. Subsequently, as Shreiner and Zwart (2020) note, literacy practices for teachers of a modern world history course can fail to provide specific intricacies and complexities of reading. The world history curriculum uses social studies themes in broad generalizations and history content only channels ambiguous themes about change over time.

Although the world history course explores regions of the world outside Europe, there is often a return to European powers. For example, in Participant 5's lesson on Latin American revolutions during the 19th century, a major topic of discussion was the impact on trade routes to Europe. Ultimately, during the two months working with Participant 5, less than three weeks were spent on Latin America; the remainder was dedicated to European culture, geography, and history. In response, Shreiner and Zwart (2020) call for a world history curriculum that focuses more on complex intricacies that require students to move between regions over time, with no single area being used as a benchmark (i.e., western European culture). Overall, Shreiner and Zwart (2020) list seven components that

world-historically literate people need to include in their disciplinary literacy instruction:

1. Navigation of competing world historical narrative frameworks

2. Recognize and appropriate multiple periodization schemes

3. Shift and connect multiple levels of space and time

4. Possess fluency with complex concepts that connect global events

5. Reimagine spatial constructs and regularly employ maps to visualize and analyze complex global processes and changes

6. Use a variety of data visualizations like tables, charts, and maps to compress and analyze broad, otherwise invisible patterns

7. Exercise a high degree of cross-cultural historical empathy in order to understand multiple worldviews throughout time. (p. 446)

Participants 1 and 5 adhered to each of these components and were consistent in conveying the seventh by using cross-cultural historical empathy to help students develop a world view. For example, Participant 1 required students to complete a multimodality project on the culture of athletics in Asia, where students had to present their findings in an open-minded approach. During Participant 5's lesson on Latin American revolutions, students of Guatemalan ancestry voluntarily offered information on what they knew of Central American regime change; Participant 5 then encouraged and welcomed further discussion on these topics. Given widespread confusion over curricula, social studies teachers need a clear narrative framework on how to construction disciplinary literacy instruction while exercising their own academic freedom. This requires constant

student analysis of literacy activities. Although Shreiner and Zwart (2020) call for these trends in world history courses, they are applicable to social studies curricula.

This study was underpinned by the theoretical framework presented by Lave and Wenger (1991). Although there was peripheral participation between students and educators in the observations, these elements would have expanded had teaching been fully in-person. Wilt and Horton (1995) expanded on Lave and Wenger (1991) by focusing on how situated awareness expands the cognitive process. In early 2021, participants here reflected on how situation awareness expanded their cognitive process when driving disciplinary literacy instruction with multimodalities: they explained that they felt students developed their understanding after reflecting on lessons as well as how things would look once students returned to in-person learning.

Recommendations for Practice

Participants in the study operationalized a culturally responsive pedagogy that aligns with the secondary education lens. This is needed to increase the likelihood of secondary students being motivated to complete disciplinary activities, and the data gathered in this study are critical to improving future practice. Ultimately, successful disciplinary literacy instruction first requires a culturally responsive classroom and an environment of mutual respect. All participants were mindful of advocating for social justice and equity within their observations, which is a core tenet of culturally responsive pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Since the participants are social studies teachers, their coursework

and life experiences often focus on historical and current inequities across various societies. They not only need to be aware of marginalization occurring in society but must also be able to convey these realities to students between the ages of 10 and 18 in an honest and authentic way. As a result, participants maintain knowledge of societal transgressions from both micro and macro perspectives, a process which must be continued throughout their career. This ongoing knowledge can be developed through coaching, completing professional development, serving as homebound instructors, attending graduate school, and simply by entering into dialogue with students and their families.

To provide social studies teachers with a more grounded framework for what drives disciplinary literacy with multimodalities, a support system featuring various experts in the field needs to be established. In the context of this study, each participant looked for guidance in their respective quests to navigate the nuances of disciplinary literacy with multimodalities. All pointed to how specific academic experiences had influenced how they convey literacy instruction, and in many cases this was observed throughout the study. Shreiner (2018) provides distinct areas of social studies courses that require different expertise. In the end, creating specific pipelines through which social studies teachers can advance current trends studied by historians, geographers, economists, and political scientists, as well as literacy specialists, can facilitate improved results in integrating disciplinary literacy with multimodalities into recommended classroom practices.

Implications for Future Research

Guiding social studies teachers to create purposeful disciplinary literacy instruction driven by multimodalities needs to be accomplished through interventions. Participants in this study provided valuable raw data on what they felt disciplinary literacy with multimodalities looked like to them without expert guidance. Each participant had positive attitudes and welcomed coaching on ways to better conduct disciplinary literacy within their social studies courses. From the observations as well as the interviews, it became clear that participants were addressing pertinent elements of disciplinary literacy instruction with multimodalities but could have benefited from an explicit model to refine their craft. This need is epitomized in the responses to the final question in the final round of interviews, which were split over whether graduate school or professional development was the preferred avenue for practical improvement in teaching disciplinary literacy through multimodalities.

Furthermore, participants did not elaborate on whether graduate coursework should be pursued in literacy or in pure social studies content, or how an ideal professional development program could be designed. Future studies may seek to reselect these participants or create a more random sample in a longitudinal study in which teachers complete graduate coursework (in either a content area or literacy) or several professional development sessions, in the hope of ascertaining the more effective method of embedding disciplinary literacy with multimodalities in social studies.

A third, unexpected factor should also be considered in this mix. While Participant 5 argued for graduate coursework, she also felt strongly that academic and leisure travel experiences may be as valuable. Although this is an area of bias (since travel is my favorite hobby), like Participant 5 I have found travel experiences to invigorate literacy instruction for my own students. Completing a mixed methods study on experiences of an experimental group of social studies teachers who travel internationally or domestically with expert guidance (compared with a control group of social studies teachers with no interventions) could yield fascinating results. In the meantime, the data from Participant 5's experiences here can inform new dynamics on how travelling to the areas of the world they teach can impact their delivery as well as student learning.

An influence for the start of this study was my participation in the East Asian Studies Program at nearby Princeton University. This program was open to social studies teachers across New Jersey and eastern Pennsylvania who were looking to expand their knowledge of East Asia. Over two years, I was fortunate enough to hear lectures from various esteemed professors on different humanities and social sciences concerning East Asia. Upon completing several workshops at Princeton, I was then eligible to visit the relevant countries in East Asia along with professors, local historians, and fellow social studies teachers from across the United States. Although Covid-19 ultimately halted my planned visit to East Asia, the experiences of the program enhanced my conveyance of disciplinary literacy instruction by creating networking opportunities with experts in the field

as well as colleagues from across the region. Expanding such programs is a clear means of addressing further research opportunities for social studies education.

Future researchers should also consider selecting a wider population of social studies, as it cannot be assumed that all social studies teachers have the same level of cultural empathy as the participants involved here. The educators selected in this study all had up to 10 years of teaching experience and were highly respected by their shared supervisor. Shreiner and Dykes (2021) found staff with more seniority to have better findings on data visualizations. As a result, a future research question is to consider how data would be visualized differently if applying the identical framework from this study to social sciences teachers with 10 or more years of experience. Lastly, the data provided from this study were strictly from the perspective of teachers; an additional design on student learning from children, families, administrators, and/or university-level professors could provide unique research opportunities for social studies education.

Reciprocity with Participants

By entrusting several teachers as participants in this exploratory case study, all were genuinely interested in expanding the topic of disciplinary literacy with multimodalities. As a researcher and colleague with each participant, there was a certain degree of personal familiarity but not a great deal with their teaching styles or abilities to convey disciplinary literacy instruction. Helfrick (2019) mentions the importance of creating a qualitative study that involves the experiences of educators as the main source of data; as a result, the participant data from this exploratory case study provide a raw account of the triumphs and

struggles endured during Covid-19. Here, the key objectives presented by teachers during spring 2021 were establishing authentic mutual respect followed by appropriate multimodality usage; these two factors were pivotal to the chances of success of disciplinary literacy instruction. Together, the contributions provided by the participants provide in-depth data to spark future research in social studies education throughout the 2020s.

Direct Applications for the Research

The data from this exploratory case study reveal several important themes in the areas of culturally responsive pedagogy as well as the directions needed to normalize disciplinary literacy in secondary social studies. Each participant provided honest feedback on their experiences during the study; although they may have been interested in being coached, they understood my role as observer. As my study concludes, there are several professors who I have known to advance the interests of this research study. Also, involving secondary students in future research design in social studies literacy practices will also be desirable in the years to come. Upon this study being finalized, I will be discussing goals for the district to make disciplinary literacy with multimodalities in social studies attainable for more teachers by laying out the impact it can have on their students and families.

Conclusion

This exploratory case study was founded on the blueprints of situated learning theory from Lave and Wenger (1991), with disciplinary literacy and multimodality in social studies education being the driving force. As the study

unfolded, it became clear that Ardley's (2006) connection with situated learning was relevant to exposing the impacts of disciplinary literacy for social studies teachers. Participants in this study used culturally responsive pedagogy along with interactive technology to draw students towards what they deemed to be disciplinary literacy instruction.

Culturally responsive pedagogy was the driving force for participants in maintaining student interest in their content areas as well as reading instruction. As social studies teachers need to have a historical knowledge of oppressed communities throughout the globe, they are in the best position as teachers to advance culturally responsive pedagogy. This study featured many situations when educating social sciences students on how to be aware and react to specific injustices (micro and macro) may not naturally occur in other core subjects. As a result, multiple literacy skills can be mastered in a social studies classroom, including decoding and comprehension (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Walsh, 2005; Stewart, 2015).

It can be concluded from the data found in this study that teachers can be strategic with disciplinary literacy activities to advance student learning through various contexts of situated learning (McConachie & Petrosky, 2010; Moje & Lewis, 2007). The implementation of disciplinary literacy in social studies education through a connectionist model of reading must be furthered throughout the 2020s.

APPENDIX A – PARTICIPATION FOR INTERVIEW OF

DISCUSSION

This research study is guided by the following overarching question: **What are the experiences of teachers implementing disciplinary reading instruction using multimodality?**

Protocol Questions for Selecting Participants

Hope you're doing well during our current pandemic. I appreciate your initial interest in helping me conduct a research study for my doctorate with St. John's University. Before I make a final decision on who will be a participant in this study there are some questions we need to clarify. You will be hearing from me either way on final selection, thank you greatly for your time.

The following is a list of questions from the first interview, this is the interview for potential participants.

1. As a social studies teacher, how do you define disciplinary literacy?
2. As a social studies teacher, how do you utilize multimodalities in your classroom?
3. Can you tell me how remote learning impacts student literacy acquisition?
4. Are you willing and able to allow me to see your lesson plans and observe you for non-evaluative purposes on 6 separate occasions during a 12-week span?
5. Are you willing and able to engage with me in 3 separate 1-hour interviews over a 12-week span?

APPENDIX B – INTERVIEW PROTOCAL EXAMPLE

This interview protocol was based on the following Research Question: **What are the experiences of teachers implementing disciplinary reading instruction using multimodality?**

This research study is guided by the following overarching question**: How does the prior academic and/or professional background of participating social studies teachers influence the implementation of disciplinary literacy with multimodalities? and To what extent are teachers reflecting on the effectiveness of the implementation of this practice?**

The prior academic and professional experiences of social studies teachers will be the basis for what shapes the interview questions as well as on-going protocol. These interview questions will be asked by participants after their mini units. Each interview will take a maximum of 60 minutes and will be conducted on 3 separate occasions. Additional interviews will be granted to participants upon their own request. Below is a list of initial questions used for participants.

1. When you agreed to participate in this study, what prior knowledge did you have on disciplinary literacy, multimodalities, reading strategies?

2. What kind of academic coursework (undergraduate as well as graduate) did you previously take that most incorporated the components of disciplinary literacy and multimodalities?
   a. How long removed are you from these courses, if applicable?

3. Can you point to specific as well general life events that influenced your delivery of this week's lessons? If so, how?

4. After teaching this week's lesson, do you find this topic in the curriculum to be among your most or least favorite? Please explain why.

5. Which reading activities did you decide to utilize for the lessons this week?

      a. Can you elaborate as to why you placed them where you did in the lessons?

6. Which multimodal activities did you utilize to coincide with your reading activities this week?
      a. Can you elaborate as to why you placed them where you did in the lessons?

7. What was your favorite social studies course taken while in college and/or graduate school?
      a. To what extent have these experiences influenced the crafting of this week's lessons?

8. How have you used reading instruction during the 2020-2021 school year?
      a. What about these instructional methods are more similar or different from years past or in different subjects taught?

9. Since our last meeting, have you completed follow-up research on disciplinary literacy, multimodalities, reading strategies?
      a. If so, what did you gather from them?

10. Have you had the opportunity to travel to or physically piece of the topics taught in this week's mini unit?
      a. If so, where, and when?
      b. Additionally, how did it impact your instructional methods for the lessons I observed and for those I did not see?

11. What do you think were your strongest takeaways from this week's mini unit?

12. How did you overcome possible teaching struggles when implementing disciplinary literacy design in this week's lessons?

13. How did the students receive the lessons this week?

14. Describe the evidence of student learning from the mini unit. How does this evidence align with your expectations of student outcomes?

15. How would your approach have changed if this unit were conducted from a remote, hybrid, or normal setting?

16. How do you think students' responses on your literacy instruction changed as a result of this lesson?

17. Have you taught lessons within this mini unit in previous years?

    a. What adjustments, if any, did you make to incorporate disciplinary literacy with multimodalities?

18. After conducting this mini unit, what supports would have been most helpful in conducting the lessons?

19. From looking at your observation, where did you feel your approaches with disciplinary literacy integrated with multimodalities benefited the students?
    a. Specific follow-up questions from the Observation Note Chart will be pulled from to gain greater clarity.

20. Do you have additional questions to ask me about your participation in the project or other general questions regarding the study or other pertinent topics related to the district?

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APPENDIX C – PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

This interview protocol was based on the following Research Question: **What are the experiences of teachers implementing disciplinary reading instruction using multimodality?**

Researcher's Name: John Castaldo

Project Title: A CASE STUDY ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DISCIPLINARY LITERACY WITH MULTIMODAL DESIGN IN SOCIAL STUDIES

INTRODUCTION

Should this consent form have words or phrases you are unsure of, ask the researcher immediately for clarity.

After careful consideration, you are being asked to serve as a participant for my dissertation research study. During this study you will be asked to provide reflective insights regarding your experiences implementing disciplinary literacy mini-units that are infused with a multimodal design. With being invited to participate in the research study, you are to be informed of the procedures and protocol. Consequently, you have the right to leave the study at any time since your participation is voluntary and may drop from the study at any time without penalty.

WHAT ARE THE REASONS FOR THIS STUDY TAKING PLACE?

This study is taking place to inform researchers and educators alike on the reflections social studies teachers have when conducting disciplinary literacy lessons.

Multimodalities encourage situated teaching approaches that invoke various student intelligences that make literacy practices within social studies more practical for the individual student based on their life experiences. Disciplinary literacy seeks to invoke student reading, writing, and speaking to be situated in

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the context of the academic discipline being studied. Below are definitions to provide clarification on the meaning and application of disciplinary literacy, multiliteracy, and multimodality.

Disciplinary literacy: is a type of literacy instruction that requires students to use all components of their intelligences within the practice of reading. The implementation of sourcing and contextualization, corroboration, and close reading are vital components for disciplinary literacy since these attributes are fused with reading, writing, listening, speaking that is relevant within the framework of an academic discipline (Winebuerg and Resiman, 2015; Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2012).

Multiliteracies: formed by the New London Group (1996) to address how new technologies could make pedagogy more relevant to students using at least two of the following vehicles, written-linguistic, visual, audio, gestural, and spatial.

Multimodalities: this informs how the learner makes meaning and the multiliteracies informs as a pedagogy by giving the educator which tools to use. Essentially, multimodalities are communication outputs through situated teaching while intertwining the pedagogical framework of multiliteracies (Roswell & Walsh, 2011).

HOW MANY OTHER SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS WILL

PARTICIPATE?

There will be at least 4 social studies teachers participating in this study, all are employed as full-time teachers within the same school district.

WHAT IS BEING REQUIRED OF ME?

You are being asked to teach a series of 3 disciplinary literacy mini units with multimodalities of 5 days to the best of your ability, be willing to have me observe your class, and complete weekly interviews. Each mini unit can be completed after a larger unit was completed to expand a specific area (these may include biographies, interdisciplinary topics, current events, historical sources, geographic themes, economic topics, or others) that could use greater attention or before a larger unit that will begin in the future to provide students with additional context before wider themes emerge in the course. During a 12-week span, you will spend a total of 15 classes that focus on 3 separate themes that you find students will be most enriched from a literacy and social studies perspective. While conducting disciplinary literacy themed activities, your integration of various multimodalities in unique contexts of the lessons will be observed. Most importantly, your reflection on these approaches will be paramount to this study.

Observations are non-evaluative and will take place on at least 2 separate occasions for a duration of 20 minutes (minimum) to 40 minutes (maximum).

At least 3 semi-structured interviews will take place for a maximum of 60 minutes, the format can take place by phone, Zoom/GoogleMeet, or in-person at the participants' choice.
Staff must share lesson plans from the mini unit being taught at least 24 hours before beginning. Additionally, if participants are extending content previously taught, the researcher must have previous lesson plans from a prior week for a frame of reference. Likewise, should participants use the mini-unit to introduce a topic that will be covered later, providing the researcher with a future lesson plan that coincides with the mini-unit will be required.

HOW LONG WILL THE STUDY LAST?

The study will take place throughout 15 classes that are divided into 3-mini units (each are 5-days) over a 12-week time frame. The idea is that you can plan disciplinary literacy mini units in a way that is conducive to your normal pacing of the course. You can stop participating without penalty at any point.

WHAT ARE SOME POSITIVE IMPACTS OF THE STUDY?

Your participation will provide you different insights as to how literacy practices can be implemented in a practical manner for years to come. Also, the district will benefit in improving how reading methods are taught to students.

WHAT ARE SOME DRAWBACKS OF THE STUDY?

There are no physical drawbacks of the study, the only drawback to this study is your time commitment.

HOW MUCH DO I HAVE TO SPEND ON THE STUDY?

No monetary costs on your behalf are required, only time commitment.

CONFIDENTIALITY

You will complete 3 mini units extending a topic previously taught or introducing a topic that will be taught in a future unit. The information uncovered by this study will be stored in a flash drive that will be locked in a filing cabinet in my Churchville, Pennsylvania home. It will be destroyed 7 years after the study commences. Additionally, you will be recorded in audio and/or video throughout the study, as a result, any source that could produce your identity will be asked for with special written permission.

WILL I BE PAID THE STUDY?

You will receive a $25 gift card to the vendor of your choice for participation in this study throughout the duration of the study. Your payment will be received once your last interview is completed. You may document your participation in this study for your Professional Development Plan for the 2020-2021 school year as well.

WHAT RIGHTS DO I HAVE AS A PARTICIPANT?

Participating in this study from start to finish is voluntary. All information that might impact your welfare or willingness to continue will be transparent, direct, and open.

WHERE SHOULD I TURN TO FOR QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?

Please contact me, John Castaldo at 215-933-8713 for any questions or concerns. You may also reach out to the Institutional Review Board with St. John's University at 718-990-1440 or irbstjohns@stjohns.edu.

This Informed Consent document will be provided for your records prior to participation in the research.

SIGNATURE_____

I have read and understand all components of the consent form with all relevant questions or concerns being answered. My signature acknowledges my agreement to participate in the study and know I can depart from the study at any time.

Name of Subject   _____

Date   _____

Class Covered   _____

APPENDIX D – OBSERVATIONAL NOTE CHART

Date:

Participant: (1,2,3,4)

Observation Start Time:

Observation End Time:

Format: (Hybrid, Remote, Traditional)

Mini Unit: (1, 2, 3)

Day: (1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

Social Studies Subject and Grade Level:

Note: During observations, the researcher will identify activities occurring in the specific procedure. Within the Discipline-Specific Reading Strategies: (Carnegie Report, 2010 from Wisconsin DPI, 2012), Types of Multiliteracies (New London Group, 1996), Knowledge Process (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009), and Type of Multimodal Text (Victoria State Government, 2019) the researcher will initial which lesson procedure falls into the specific categories.

The initials for each category are as follows: AS-Anticipatory Set/Do Now, A1-Activity 1, Activity 2-A2,CET-Closure/Exit Ticket.

Specific Activity in Lesson and Procedure (Anticipatory Set/Do Now, Activity, 1, Activity 2, Closure/Exit Ticket)	Discipline-Specific Reading Strategies: (Carnegie Report, 2010 from Wisconsin DPI, 2012)	Types of Multiliteracies (New London Group, 1996)	Knowledge Process (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009)	Type of Multimodal Text (Victoria State Government, 2019)
Anticipatory Set/Do Now:	Building Prior Language	Written-linguistic	Experiencing: the Known the New	Paper-based
Activity 1:	Building specialized vocabulary	Audio	Conceptualizing by Naming with Theory	Live texts
Activity 2:	Learning to deconstruct complex sentences	Visual	Analyzing: Functionally Critically	Digital texts
Closure/Exit Ticket	Using knowledge of text structures and genres to predict main and subordinate ideas	Spatial	Applying Appropriately Creatively	
	Mapping graphics with explanations in the text	Gestural		

	Pose discipline relevant questions			
	Comparing claims and proposition s across texts			
	Using norms for reasoning within the discipline (i.e. what counts as evidence) to evaluate claims			
Analytic Notes				

Rationale

Social studies teachers may already use elements of disciplinary literacy with multiliteracies in conjunction with multimodalities; however, may not be utilizing these pedagogical approaches in an organized and deliberate practice. This Observation Note Chart seeks to triangulate such themes which monitor instances social studies teachers create disciplinary literacy using multimodalities that display levels of organization throughout lessons. From the Carnegie Report (2010) the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (2012), headed at the time

by the state's current governor and former superintendent, Dr. Tony Evers categorize disciplinary literacy within various themes that connect with multiliteracies discussed by the New London Group (1996). The way in which social studies teachers implement disciplinary literacy with different multiliteracies can come through the knowledge process (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009) and can be elicited differently depending on the activity being taught. Lastly, the Victoria State Government (2019) in Australia asks for different formats on how multimodalities as well as literacy practices can be taught. Each of the corresponding scholars and policies referenced for observations in this research study look to expose that social studies teacher may utilize the areas; however, gaining an understanding for the degree to which will be greater explored. While at the halfway point of my program at St. John's University I conferred with several social studies colleagues that we regularly conducted such practices but within less defined constructs. As my program continued, I began teaching disciplinary literacy within the constructs. The Observation Note Chart constructed provides context as to when and how themes of disciplinary literacy with the use of multimodalities are or are not being addressed within 5 consecutive classes during 3 separate mini units.

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Other Degrees	*Master of Arts, La Salle University, Philadelphia, Major: History*
Date Graduated	*August 2012*
Other Degrees	*Master of Education, Lehigh University, Bethlehem, Major: Educational Leadership*
Date Graduated	*August 2015*