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An Evaluation of Educator Preparedness in Content Area and Disciplinary Literacies in the High School Classroom

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An Evaluation of Educator Preparedness in Content Area and
Disciplinary Literacies in the High School Classroom

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Educational Leadership Doctoral Program

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March 29, 2022
Date Approved

An Evaluation of Educator Preparedness in Content Area and
Disciplinary Literacies in the High School Classroom

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Educational Leadership Doctoral Program

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of
Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

National College of Education

National Louis University

March 2022

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ABSTRACT

A secondary education debate that currently exists between the content area and disciplinary literacy is how content area and disciplinary literacy strategies and educator preparedness to teach those components to fit together to further student achievement. The purpose of my study was to evaluate if educators are prepared to teach content area and disciplinary literacy in high school content area classrooms. The context of this evaluation was to seek information from teachers and administrators about how literacy is integrated within high school classrooms in various communities across the United States. My study demonstrated both quantitative and qualitative data that reflect varied levels of teacher and administrator awareness. I recommended processes to put in place to raise awareness and integrate literacy skills within a high school classroom.

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I would also like to express my great appreciation to my dissertation chair, Dr. Stefanie Shames, and my dissertation committee member, Dr. Sarah Lukas, for their wisdom and guidance in helping me complete a dissertation that is useful and of which I am proud.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge Dr. Carla Sparks for her many hours of guidance, energy, and experiences that have helped me become a better person within my collegiate community.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my mother. My mother demonstrated that pursuing your dream can happen at any age for my sister and me. Watching her dedication helped influence me to strive for my successes. It has been a long journey, but I appreciate all of the encouragement. This is for you!

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 created a new wave of accountability measures for schools across the United States, centering on mathematics and literacy proficiency. Schools implemented compulsory benchmark and end-of-year testing to provide evidence of students' ability to master core standards. Instead, the test scores showed the achievement gap that existed for minority and economically disadvantaged students (Franzak, 2006, p. 230-231). Curriculum advancements over the years integrated literacy and numeracy in all classes, along with regularly scheduled testing.

Schools needed to prioritize literacy instead of other content areas, and students were forced into intensive reading classes if their scores were below the standard set by the state for the end-of-year exams. Generally, standards for the literacy skills developed before a student leaves Grade 5, include phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and reading comprehension. Therefore, students who are in secondary education and are lacking these skills "need to understand more than surface meanings, and context gives major insight to understanding language" (Hirsch Jr, Kett, & Trefil, 1987, p. 6).

This is where the concepts of disciplinary and content-area literacy begin. E.D. Hirsch (1988) described a concept of cultural literacy where students are "not simply [learning] reading and writing, but also the effective use of the standard literate language" (Hirsch Jr, Kett, & Trefil, 1987, p. 3). For example, imagine an auto mechanics teacher viewed literacy as reading a technical manual to fix a car. That differs from a science teacher and understanding lab reports. These concepts could demonstrate a link between background knowledge and the nature of literacy development (Hirsch Jr, Kett, & Trefil, 1987, p. 8).

Utilizing literacy-building strategies in content areas other than English Language

Arts is useful. For instance, on a mathematics exam, students may be required to answer a real-world word problem, where they will need to know how to read a word and decipher the crucial pieces of information within it. Students can continue to learn in content areas that interest them and develop skills necessary for decoding, comprehension, and inferential understanding of complex texts (Brozo, Moorman, Meyer, & Stewart, 2013, p. 354). For this to happen, educators must be willing to learn how to teach these methods, and administrators must know what to look for upon entering a classroom. Some states have prepared programs and resources, whereas others are still trying to figure out the best practices for secondary literacy learning; either way, it is time to develop our students into critical readers and writers.

Problem Background

A common phrase heard from high school content-area teachers is they are not “reading teachers,” but literacy within their classes exists (Ash, 2003, p. 20). The secondary education debate between the content area and disciplinary literacy determines which one provides the richest skills for literacy development. Content area literacy strategies are common in secondary classrooms and allow for all content teachers to offer similar activities for students to complete (i.e., Cornell Notes or reading journals). In contrast, disciplinary literacy’s difference lies in the approach to the text, as each discipline focuses its attention on different aspects of the text (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012). So, if either, which of these strategies is the most effective for students to learn basic literacy development skills? Teaching literacy strategies and basic comprehension skills (phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and reading comprehension) within the context of the students’ enrolled courses may provide a result where students build proficiency.

The next sequential thought may be how we prepare teachers to integrate two literacy styles within their content area lessons. Effective professional development should provide teachers with the tools necessary to fulfill the need for student literacy development in the content area. According to research, professional development should come from the instructional leaders in the building. Still, administrators are typically trained in one content area and may not be familiar or comfortable with teaching literacy development (Reeves, 2008).

Common Core State Standards (CCSS) became the baseline for literacy and numeracy development across the nation in 2010 (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2021). As a person who served on the district committee for CCSS, I went to the training provided to the district representatives by the state committee. We learned information about how to “unpack” the new standards and descriptions regarding how the content “spirals” from one grade to the next (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2021). However, we did not receive training to integrate these new literacy standards into our content areas effectively. Therefore, as we brought the information back to our districts and schools, we determined the best course of action to prepare the personnel and not overwhelm them with so much new information.

CCSS brought a new style of testing to the state where I was employed, which meant the development of teachers and administrators to determine the qualities of effective literacy development in secondary schools. As a content area curriculum supervisor in my district, I attended conferences, joined committees, and met with counterparts from around the state to determine what “best practices” in literacy development looked like for various disciplines and content areas. The state and district where I worked offered content area reading

professional development and the course progression needed for the reading endorsement certification, but not all teachers completed those training. Again, the adage of “I don’t teach reading” came to mind and required a new way of thinking to give educators the tools necessary for students to meet literacy proficiency standards.

Disciplinary literacy and new strategies engage students with complex texts in such a way that students decipher the code of reading like a historian or a scientist while using the contextual clues in the resource to understand the content and create inferences based on those clues (Brozo, Moorman, Meyer, & Stewart, 2013). Saimi Zaidi (2016) explained that disciplinary literacy in the content area creates an environment where students use reading to learn rather than read (p. 33). Disciplinary literacy provides students the ability to defend their ideas using textual evidence while teachers are teaching them to practice reading and writing (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012). We are faced with a challenge to ensure content area teachers can integrate disciplinary literacy within their lessons and maintain validity to the disciplinary literacy concept. We need to look at how content area and disciplinary literacy strategies and educator preparedness to teach those components fit together to further student achievement.

Purpose of the Study

My study aims to evaluate how prepared educators are to teach content area and disciplinary literacy in high school content area classrooms. Content area classrooms include core (English, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies) and elective (Art, Career and Technical Education, Music, Physical Education, etc.) courses. Through a review of the literature and in my professional career, I have found that much of the recent data for literacy development focused on elementary school (K-5) student achievement levels; however, some

students are still learning fundamental reading skills at the secondary level.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Questions

The goal of my evaluation was to seek awareness from stakeholders in a variety of communities across the United States of the diversity of teacher and administrator preparedness with regard to the integration of literacy development within the high school content area classrooms and recommend further research. Additionally, I evaluated how teachers applied their preparation in content area and disciplinary literacy strategies into their classrooms. For my study, I implemented a mixed-methods design, which is defined as using both quantitative and qualitative measures to compare diverse sources of data pertaining to a specific problem (Patton, 2014). The nature of this study was best represented by both teachers and administrators participating through digital surveys and follow-up interviews. Each subgroup provided insight into what happens at the district/school level and what happens in the classroom.

Research Questions. My research questions were as follows:

- How are teachers prepared to teach content area and disciplinary literacy through the content areas?
- How are administrators prepared to support content area and disciplinary literacy in the content areas?
- What are the strategies that teachers report, which are most likely to have the greatest impact with increasing literacy proficiency?

Definitions

The following is a list of defined terms for clarity of use within the study and

subsequent paper:

- *Accountability* measures are defined as a set of policies and practices that a state uses to measure and hold schools and districts responsible for raising student achievement for all students, and to prompt and support improvement where necessary (The Education Trust, 2022)
- *Balanced literacy* is a combination of explicit instruction, guided practice, and independent reading and writing (Will, 2020).
- *Benchmark* is a concise, written description of student expectations to know and be able to do at a specific stage of their education (Great Schools Partnership, 2014).
- *Common Core State Standards* focus on core concepts and procedures starting in the early grades, giving the teachers the time needed to teach them and giving students the time necessary to master them (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2021).
- *Content area* is a synonym for subject or subject area among educators. It refers to a domain of knowledge and skill in an academic program (Great Schools Partnership, 2014).
- *Content area literacy* emphasizes the techniques a novice might use to make sense of disciplinary text; focusing on the study skills that help students learn from a subject matter text (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012, p.8).
- *Disciplinary literacy* is an emphasis on the knowledge and abilities possessed by those who create, communicate, and use knowledge within the discipline; emphasizes the unique tools the experts in a discipline use to engage in the work of the discipline (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012, p.8).
- *High Stakes testing* is defined as any test used to make important decisions about

students, educators, schools, or districts, most commonly for the purpose of accountability (Great Schools Partnership, 2014).

- *Merit Pay* is a raise in pay based on a set of criteria set by the employer; pay-for-performance (US Department of Labor, n.d.).
- *Proficiency* are levels, scales, and cut-off scores on standardized tests and other forms of assessment (Great Schools Partnership, 2014).
- *Secondary level school* is a school intermediate between elementary school and college (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).
- *Spiraling content or curriculum* is content where ideas and concepts are introduced and taught in multiple grade levels in developmentally appropriate ways (Doyle & Draper, 2021).
- *Learning standards* are concise, written descriptions of what students are expected to know and be able to do at a specific stage of their education; they describe educational objectives, but do not describe a particular teaching practice (Great Schools Partnership, 2014).
- *Title I Schools* are schools in which children from low-income families make up at least 40 percent of enrollment. Schools are eligible to use Title I funds to operate schoolwide programs that serve all children in the school in order to raise the achievement of the lowest-achieving students (U.S. Department of Education, 2018).
- *Unpacking a standard* is a technique teachers can use to make sense of standards and then create focused learning targets to make them actionable (Mastery Connect, 2016).

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study was to evaluate the current state of educator preparedness to incorporate content area and disciplinary literacy into their lessons and assess the readiness of administrators to determine if their school used both forms of literacy to further student growth. Ultimately, I hoped to see some trends and to develop and make sound recommendations to better help our educators develop literacy strategies for their students.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

As the pressure toward high-stakes testing gains strength in education, schools' personnel wanted to increase student achievement. The most common subjects tested were reading and mathematics, with reading, also inserted into "real world" math problems, requiring literacy skills in all grade levels and content areas. With the adoption of the Common Core State Standards (2021) by most states, gone are the days when reading and writing were left solely to the English teachers. Instead, the content area included reading, writing, speaking, and listening standards, resulting in all teachers sharing the responsibility for teaching literacy (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2021). In states such as Texas, Florida, and New York, there are mandated testing requirements where students must pass compulsory testing to complete their graduation requirements (Gewertz, 2017). Other states required students to demonstrate their high school knowledge on the College Board's Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or the American College Testing (ACT) (Education Commission of the States, 2021).

Most students can develop the basic tenets of literacy during their primary education years, which would constitute grades prekindergarten through Grade 3. There is a significant amount of literature regarding early education literacy development. The main argument reported that students who do not master the five competencies of literacy development: vocabulary, phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, and reading comprehension, by Grade 4 struggle to catch up to their peers for the rest of their K-12 educational careers (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2011). Often tested through a battery of tests of varying styles, and assigning students' reading levels at a young age, intervention measures are determined. By the time a student reaches high school, test scores dictate the scheduling of a student's

courses and often place students in remedial reading and mathematics courses, which should help them gain the literacy and numeracy skills necessary to be successful with their high school credits and eventual postsecondary plans (Franzak, 2006).

However, there was a rift in the way literacy was taught in the primary years. Teacher preparation programs focus development on traditional reading training or balanced literacy programs (Loewus, 2019). Educators at the secondary level typically teach one content area and have training from general education pedagogy courses and content knowledge from courses within the content of their choice. Research says that preservice teachers, who are required to take reading pedagogy courses, receive mixed messages about which type of literacy training is best for students (Will, 2020). Will (2020) reviewed the top-cited researchers and found that some accentuate the need for phonics training, while others feel a “balanced” form of literacy development is more effective.

The balanced form of literacy development applied content area texts with explicit instruction, guided practice, and independent reading and writing but left traditional phonics instruction for teachers to use (Will, 2020). Loewus (2019) used a survey form to determine teacher practices and also included data regarding how teachers received their training, with five percent reporting through teacher preparation programs and thirty-three percent reporting through professional development/coaches within their district. Therefore, extensive training in the basic literacy development competencies may not occur in preservice programs, leaving content area teachers to seek additional training to become proficient with literacy skills and effectively integrate the competencies within their daily lessons.

Content area teachers could show how literacy and content learning are integrated for

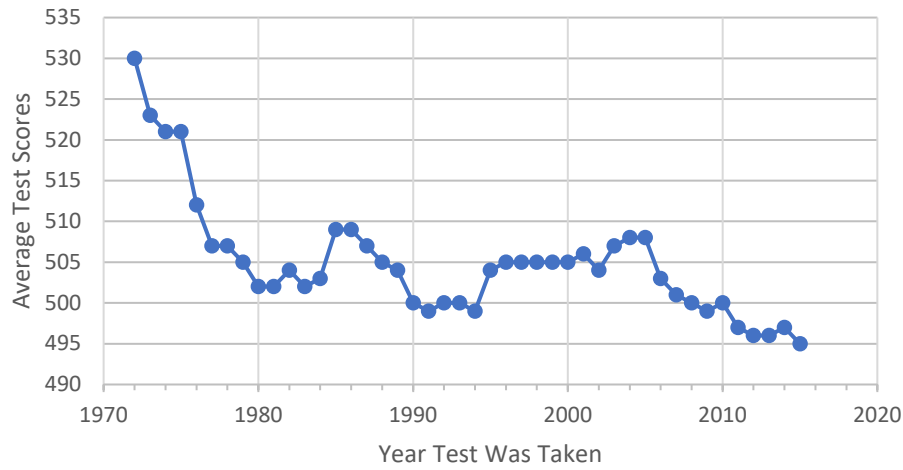
the development of successful skills. If students used similar prereading, during reading, and post-reading activities in each content area, the thought would be they would gain the skills necessary to decode and glean information from complex texts. Those skills would then translate to the high-stakes testing environment and a rise in students' achievement scores (Kennedy, 2010, pp. 384-385). If this is an easy solution for the literacy problem plaguing the nation's schools, why has this not become commonplace for all high schools?

A Nation At Risk (1983) stated, "The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future, a nation, and a people" (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, p. 1).

Recommendations in the report, given by the United States Department of Education (USDOE), included sweeping changes across American schools, including graduation requirements, "rigorous and measurable" standards, longer school days and calendars, and higher standards for teacher requirements (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, April 1983). When written, the report cited falling scores on SAT from the 1960s through the 1980s (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, April 1983). Figures 1 and 2 below show the changes in SAT literacy scores.

Figure 1

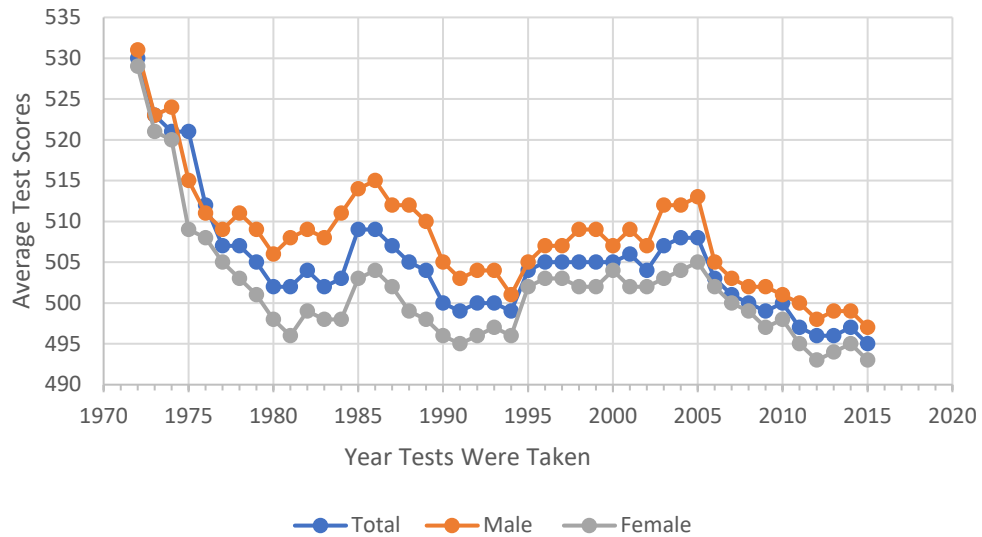
SAT Score Trend Data Years 1972-2015



(National Center for Education Statistics, 2021)

Figure 2

SAT Scores Broken Down by Gender 1972-2015



(National Center for Education Statistics, 2021)

There continue to be arguments over whether high-stakes testing can reflect the academic abilities of all learners and demonstrate their highest level of proficiency. We find in the disaggregated data an achievement gap between the subgroups of students. If we look at the scores broken down by gender, race, or socioeconomic status, proficiency varies (Park, 2004). The achievement gap represented in the data is not a new challenge to surmount. Lyndon B. Johnson recognized the inequities amongst the learners from differing ethnic and impoverished backgrounds and worked to establish the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). The Act allocated federal funds to schools that met specific government guidelines and qualified by data from the census determining where the poverty line sets. The ESEA worked to improve the achievement gap by creating the Head Start program for prekindergarten-aged students, providing supplemental materials to K-12 schools for reading and mathematics, and adult-level programs to increase parent involvement (USDOE, 2018).

In 2001, the George W. Bush government replaced the ESEA and put increasing pressure on the states for accountability measures in the form of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Each state was required to determine the high-stakes testing of their choice, determining their students' proficiency within varying grade levels in K-12 schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). States like New York and Texas had their own tests developed, the Regents and STARR exams, respectively, which assessed knowledge in all content areas which a student would experience throughout their high school career *and* served as a requirement for students to earn their diplomas (Gewertz, Which States Require an Exam to Graduate? An Interactive Breakdown of States' 2016-2017 Testing Plans, 2017). NCLB set a precedent for legislation in future presidencies, meant to increase rigor and student achievement, but placed a significant demand on students' success on high-stakes

testing.

In 2010, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were introduced for a new national *norm* for literacy and numeracy proficiency by developing performance standards for each content area and grade band. Since reading and mathematics were the predominant subjects assessed, the CCSS spread many of the performance tasks across all content areas, with the hope of taking some of the high-stakes accountability pressure off of just English/Language (ELA) and math teachers and placed it in the hands of all teachers responsible for creating lesson plans (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2021). The additional support of the content areas helped to close the achievement gap and provide added practice in literacy and numeracy. Still, if the teachers did not know how to create these experiences for their students, the additional support was not enough to improve student scores.

Sometimes professional development is prescribed by the district leaders and may not meet the needs at the school level. This means that school leaders will need to create a professional development program that fits the students' needs in the school. Largely it will be a decision between a prepackaged program or one developed independently by the school/district (Reeves, 2008, p. 92). According to Douglas Reeves (2008), the three main challenges a school leader faces to increase literacy rates amongst their students are consistency in reading instruction, defining what good teaching means, and balancing consistency with differentiation based on student needs (p. 92). Once leaders answer these challenge questions for their school, they must work to translate the answers into meaningful professional learning opportunities for their teachers and present their implementation expectations clearly and decisively (Reeves, 2008, p. 92).

Once the determination for the type of program is made, the implementation expectations and timeline are next. To create objectively derived implementations and expectations for reading programs, leadership should complete the teachers' training and better understand how to assess teachers' fidelity to the program (Gewertz, *States to Schools: Teach Reading the Right Way*, 2020). Lastly, the method of delivery for the teachers should be determined, but with so many styles of research-based professional development, deciding which works best can be difficult.

The most common types of professional development are building blocks, cognitively guided, and professional learning communities. Building Block professional development pertains to a style where teachers create “whole tasks,” or blocks, which help to focus student learning as task-based modules (Dam & Janssen, 2021). Dam and Janssen (2021) use modularity in the building block method of professional development to guide the teachers through categorizing their work tasks and the students learning tasks. This method requires the students to elicit their learning from the assigned task.

Cognitively guided professional development pertains to styles of mathematical instruction aimed at increasing students' intuitive mathematical sense (Carpenter et al. 2000). This is a method primarily used with mathematics teachers where a group of educators discuss student strategies for solving problems and formulate new ways to present information that promote student discovery (Glennan et al., 2004, pp. 53-55). It is often paired with the development of mathematical vocabulary for use with real world problems. Using this form of professional development is similar to the format of professional learning communities, where teachers utilize reflection on their practice and allow for student discovery with new concepts.

Professional learning communities work to “harness an ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve” (Miller, 2020). This collaboration is a great opportunity for new teachers and more experienced teachers to share ideas and approaches to content within their subjects and cross-curriculum (DuFour, 2004). This cohesive approach to curriculum allows teachers and students to see the connection of ideas across contents that they otherwise may not have made. These connections create a big picture approach within a school that can increase teacher effectiveness, thereby increasing student engagement (DuFour, 2004). While there are not many studies available that correlate styles of professional development and student achievement growth for high school students, good professional development takes place when teachers can engage in the material they are learning and with the expectations leadership has for classroom implementation (Dam & Janssen, 202; Brozo et al. 2013; Franzak, 2006).

To model reading proficiency for secondary students, Judith Franzak (2006) says that “reader response, strategic reading, and critical literacy are major paradigms that surface in the literature on reading” (p. 212). This means that how students interact and connect with the texts/writing required of them can determine whether the students adopt the skill (Franzak, 2006, p. 212). She also suggests students who do not perform well in the categorical paradigms of reader response, strategic reading, and critical literacy are marginalized and classified as “struggling readers,” which often will follow the student throughout their school career (Franzak, 2006, p. 214). Ideas such as these allowed for the disciplinary literacy existence between what is known as content area literacy and a new style for students to gain literal discourse.

The normal content area literacy development is content area reading. Tim Shanahan (2012) states that “Content area reading focuses on imparting reading and study skills that may help students to understand better and remember whatever they read” (p. 2). Content area reading tends to focus on general skills, which can promote comprehension and allow students to come to conclusions regarding topics such as the main idea of an article or the author’s purpose in writing it (Brozo, Moorman, Meyer, & Stewart, 2013, p. 354). Shanahan (2012) also suggests this style of skill development is challenging to perform in *all* content areas and focuses development on the struggling readers (pp. 2-3). This leaves students who have mastered these skills at a disadvantage because developing more advanced critical reading skills may not evolve further in this type of setting.

There is a belief “that general reading and writing strategies can find expression in various content classrooms.” Still, engagement in the content does not exist and therefore has to evolve (Shanahan, *Disciplinary Literacy is NOT The Same As Content Area Literacy*, 2012). Disciplinary literacy is a way to engage students with complex texts in the content area they are studying (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012, p. 7). As stated in chapter one, Zaidi (2016) distinguishes the difference like the process of learning to read (content area reading) versus reading to learn (disciplinary literacy) (p. 33). Utilizing literary texts in the fashion of a historian, scientist, or mathematician might allow students to identify the distinctions in each discipline and complete tasks. These tasks would reflect the demands within the discipline (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012).

Dr. Sharon Vaughn (2012) explains the importance of content areas teachers to vocabulary development by saying,

So if you take a word like equal in the area of social studies, equal has a very

important meaning in terms of how we establish rights and responsibilities across various cultures, but the word equal has a very different meaning in the mathematics area. (The Iris Center, p. 1)

An example of vocabulary development within the context of a content area could include a few steps:

Step 1. The students define a series of words about the unit;

Step 2. The teacher utilizes the vocabulary words within the context of the lesson,

Step 3. The students work on an activity utilizing the vocabulary again in context with the lesson, and

Step 4. The students complete a summative assessment on the vocabulary.

Creating a hybrid fashion of literacy curriculum can have students think and read like a historian *and* learn to read and comprehend complex texts.

(Brozo et al., 2013, pp. 354-355)

However, teachers can still use content area reading skills within their lessons and teach effectively. A combination of the two literacy practices can meet the needs of all levels of students (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012). For instance, using a series of historical documents and having the students read through them as a historian might; looking for clues regarding bias or comparing and contrasting between events, could create a connection to the content and deepen the meaning of the lesson (Zaidi, 2016, p. 33).

Summary

Few studies linked professional development in the content area or disciplinary literacy and how the product translates to student achievement at the secondary level. While this study focuses on how prepared administrators and teachers are to teach disciplinary

literacy in the content area, it could formulate more studies that may include classroom observations and student data over a multi-year longitudinal study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

I determined that a mixed-methods study would best help me learn how administrators and teachers receive preparation to teach literacy in the content area. This study's classification falls into a constructivist or transformative study since I worked toward seeking an understanding of the environment around the educators and students where the learning occurred.

Research Design

This program evaluation considered the impact a teacher's literacy preparatory program had on how likely teachers were to integrate disciplinary literacy into their content-area classroom. I distributed surveys over various social media websites for both teachers and administrators, and a spreadsheet with the answers compiled for ease of interpretation. I used a variety of questions to gather evidence of a literacy preparation program and the use of content-area-focused literacy structures within the school and classroom environments.

I implemented a mixed-methods design to analyze the quantitative and qualitative data collected. Mixed method research uses quantitative and qualitative measures to compare diverse data sources about a specific problem. I used quantitative data in survey questions and SAT data for my program evaluation. My qualitative data included open-ended survey questions and interviews for clarifying questions. According to Patton (2014), "Evaluative research, quite broadly, can include any effort to judge or enhance human effectiveness through data-based inquiry...qualitative findings in evaluation illuminate the people behind the numbers and put faces on the statistics to deepen understanding and inform decision making. (p.18). Qualitative data was important to this study because the open-ended questions provided a larger quantity of information that I may not have asked in the surveys.

As a result, the respondents' answers expanded my knowledge base and allowed for a more accurate conclusion.

The COVID-19 pandemic changed my ability to perform classroom observations in multiple classrooms and potentially numerous schools. Unfortunately, those things could not occur in person because administrators limited access to the buildings following the Center for Disease Control (CDC) school safety protocols. The advantage of completing observation and the survey would be to compare the survey results to the actual practices that happened within the classroom. Having both classification and open-ended questions, allowed for both quantitative and qualitative data to be taken from the participants in the surveys. Participants were able to take part in an additional survey virtually, either through the computer, or on the phone. The nature of this study was best represented by both teachers and administrators participating. Each subgroup provided insight into what happens at the district/school level and what was happening in the classroom.

Subjects

There were two stakeholder groups in this program evaluation. The first group of participants in this study included current teachers who were members of various social media platforms. Participants in this group had 17 teachers at the high school level, both male and female, with people over 21. The second group of participants in this study included administrators who were members of various social media platforms. Participants in this group included four administrators who had high school experience, both male and female, with people over 21.

I used Facebook and LinkedIn social media platforms to recruit teachers and administrators. The digital survey was anonymous and required the submission of a consent

agreement to participate, which prevented potential conflict of interest and coercion for completion. The social media groups were not bound by geographic region, type of school, or district; therefore, there was representation from a broad range of teachers and administrators.

Instrumentation

There were not any interactions with students for this study. I conducted surveys via confidential participation by teachers and administrators. I recruited teachers via social media platforms Facebook and LinkedIn using a flyer that gave them the Google Form survey link (see Appendix E). I recruited administrators using a flyer, which gave them the link to the Google Form survey via social media platforms Facebook and LinkedIn (see Appendix F). Teachers and administrators decided whether to respond to the recruitment flyers. There were no offered incentives for participation. There was no consequence for electing not to participate.

Surveys. Once the teacher participants were recruited via social media (see Appendix E), they used the link provided in the digital flyer to select completion of the survey. When the teacher participants clicked the link, the online survey informed consent form populated. If they agreed to the terms of the informed consent form, the form automatically directed them to the survey questions (see Appendix A). Once teacher participants completed the questions, there was a submit button. When the teachers clicked the submit button, they received a message thanking them for their participation and recording their response. If a teacher participant chose not to agree to the consent agreement, the survey automatically directed the participant to the submit button and thanked them for their time.

Once the administrator participants were recruited via social media (see Appendix F),

they used the link provided in the digital flyer to select completion of the survey. When the administrator clicked the link, the online survey consent form populated on the screen. If they agreed to the terms of the informed consent form, the form automatically directed them to the survey questions (see Appendix B). Once the respondents completed the questions, there was a submit button. When the subject clicked the submit button, the administrator participant received a message thanking them for their participation and recording their response. If an administrator participant chose not to agree to the consent agreement, the survey automatically directed the participant to the submit button and thanked them for their time.

Interviews. The last question on the teacher and administrator surveys allowed the participants to volunteer to participate in a follow-up interview. If they answered “yes” to the survey (see Appendices A and B), the researcher contacted the participant via email to set up a time for either a phone or virtual face-to-face meeting. I asked teachers a series of interview questions (see Appendix C) designed to gather additional qualitative information. I asked administrators a series of interview questions (see Appendix D) designed to collect additional qualitative information. The interview was video recorded. The recordings were stored in an encrypted file system on the researcher’s Google Drive until the data compilation occurred. I compiled data into a spreadsheet, where further coding occurred.

Methodological Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

The methodological approach for this work had some challenges to work through. Many of the limitations stemmed from the COVID-19 pandemic, which plagued the world. Other limitations came from lack of district support to conduct the study.

Methodological Assumptions. The applicability of this study to the field of education is important because of the cross-referenced findings to multiple content areas and

demographic populations. The climate and culture within the school or classroom of the respondents participating in the study will determine how administrator and teacher development increases effectiveness in the school and leads to increased student achievement.

Limitations. Validity of this study is subject to the population of the school districts and the representation of the administrators and teachers. However, the content validity for the surveys and interviews provided an accurate depiction of the focus of the study. Replication of the results with the same group of participants is possible, but it may not garner exact results if the respondent variables are different.

Triangulation of this study occurred through other content areas and school demographic profiles by working with the precept on how administrators and teachers are prepared to teach literacy in the content area. Using programs to collect survey data, keeping digital copies of the respondent results, and recording and handwritten notes will convey the integrity of data collection and analysis. Transparency with the research process created an atmosphere of trustworthiness, and the study was deemed reliable.

Delimitations. COVID-19 created an inherent limitation. I used social media platforms for recruitment and digital surveys rather than in-person interviews with colleagues. It prevented the ability for further clarification for the open-ended qualitative survey questions. Using classroom observations would have provided an additional lens to the data and deepened the meaning of the implications for further research but were unable to occur due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Procedures

The process for this work began with thoughts and ideas related to literacy and

secondary student achievement. Next, I worked with my dissertation chair to narrow down a focus and determine how to complete the research during a pandemic. Once we decided on social media platforms that would garner various survey results from different regions in the country, I began to complete the Institutional Review Board (IRB) application. Using the template given for the application, I narrowed my research questions and explained how I would conduct my research. We determined that both administrators and teachers would complete a digital survey and the opportunity to volunteer for a virtual post-survey interview. I included several appendices in my application that listed the survey questions, post-survey interview questions, consent agreements, and the digital flyers for the social media pages. I attained IRB approval on the first submission and began to formulate the digital surveys.

I used the Google Forms platform to create the surveys. The first screen was the informed consent; if the person consented to the terms, they completed the survey; otherwise, a message which thanked them for their time displayed. I formatted the questions in the platform, so the quantitative choice selection questions appeared first, and the open-ended qualitative questions appeared second. The last question on both surveys allowed participants to provide their name and email address for a voluntary virtual follow-up interview.

Once the survey forms were ready for distribution, I used the Canva program to create a digital flyer (see Appendices E and F). I posted flyers to several social media platforms and the link to the survey for willing participants to complete. The first posted survey links occurred within two weeks of receiving IRB approval and were reshared two more times, after month one and month two, on the social media websites. By the end of month three, my dissertation chair and I determined no additional participants were recruited, and respondents took part in the online survey to move forward with disaggregating the data.

The Google Form data was converted to a Google Sheets document and then again converted to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, where I could break down the data and begin to analyze trends. Three months later, the voluntary virtual interviews took place using the Zoom virtual meeting platform. I then transcribed the questions and answers into another Microsoft Excel spreadsheet for analysis. Finally, I assigned each teacher and administrator respondent a nickname to further anonymize the data, ensuring I coded the virtual interview responses with the matching nickname for the digital surveys. I then worked through all the data to find trends and relations.

Data Collection and Analysis

I collected both quantitative and qualitative data in this study. The first method of data collection occurred through an online survey. The distributed link to the survey, through social media outlets, and the responses were collected using the Google Forms survey tool. There were both classification questions and open-ended questions. Once the survey closed, the compilation of the results into an Excel spreadsheet enabled me to begin to code and disaggregate the responses. The coding process began with assigning the participants nicknames to achieve confidentiality and anonymity throughout the study. Next, I examined the responses for similarities and formed a coding system for further analysis. Then, I created a chronology of how the coding themes fit together and further analyzed the data for the relations between the quantitative and qualitative responses.

The second method of study was through virtual interviews. Using the Zoom virtual meeting program, I performed and recorded video of the discussions. After the completed interviews, I transcribed the conversation into an Excel spreadsheet. Each interview respondent retained their nicknames from the online survey data to provide continuity with

analyzing the responses and comparing them to the online surveys for internal validity. Using similar codifying methods to the online surveys, I employed thematic codes to order the data and show how the survey and interviews were interrelated.

Summary

I adjusted the methodology for this study with the onset of COVID-19, by recruiting subjects via social media platforms, interviewing subjects via virtual media, and all data collected through virtual surveys and computer-based classification programs. Utilizing these methods created a larger prospective pool for candidates (the whole US, rather than a region) and gave the potential to find more widespread data trends.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Restatement of the Purpose

The purpose of my study was to evaluate the preparedness of teachers and administrators in the content area and disciplinary literacies. In addition, I wanted to ascertain whether teachers used activities from either literacy development strategies in the secondary content area classrooms. Through a review of the literature and in my professional career, I found that much of the recent data for literacy development was focused on elementary school (K-5) student achievement levels. However, some students were still learning fundamental reading skills at the secondary level. Therefore, I wanted to find out if the educators at the secondary level knew how to implement literacy-related strategies in their schools.

I am presenting the information for analysis by research question. The digital survey questions are listed first, and any corresponding virtual interview questions immediately follow. The interpretation of the data is listed below the figure or table it represents.

Research Question Results By Question

The first group of questions analyzed for both the digital surveys and the virtual interviews. The quantitative data qualified and classified the respondents.

Administrator Responses

Three (75%) of the administrators who replied to the survey were working at the high school level, which is a secondary school, according to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary (2021). Both administrators interviewed held assistant principal roles within a high school. The target group for respondents to this survey was high school administrators; therefore, they met the study's qualifications.

All the administrators who replied to the survey worked in a high school and had experience in one other level of education. Three of the four employed administrators (75%) were in middle school, considered as secondary, whereas one worked at the elementary level.

Teacher Responses

Table 1

Teacher Online Survey Results Question 4: Check All of the Grade Levels You Have Taught

Respondent	Response
Teacher 1	8, 9, 10, 11, 12
Teacher 2	8, 9, 10, 11, 12
Teacher 3	Kindergarten, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
Teacher 4	8, 9, 10, 12
Teacher 5	6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
Teacher 6	Kindergarten, 1, 3, 4, 5
Teacher 7	7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
Teacher 8	9, 10, 11, 12
Teacher 9	6, 7, 8, 9
Teacher 10	6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
Teacher 11	7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
Teacher 12	9, 10, 11, 12
Teacher 13	9, 10, 11, 12
Teacher 14	6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
Teacher 15	9, 10, 11, 12, Post-secondary
Teacher 16	9, 10, 11, 12, Post-secondary
Teacher 17	9, 10, 11, 12

Out of the 17 teachers surveyed, there were various grade levels taught, ranging from kindergarten through postsecondary education. Sixteen (94%) of the teachers taught at the secondary level. As defined by Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, secondary level education includes grades six through twelve. The target group for respondents to this survey were high school teachers; therefore, 16 (94%) met the qualifications of participating in the study.

Table 2

Teacher Online Survey Results Question 1: Do You Teach at the High School Level?

Respondent	Response
Teacher 1	Yes
Teacher 2	Yes
Teacher 3	Yes
Teacher 4	Yes
Teacher 5	Yes
Teacher 6	No
Teacher 7	Yes
Teacher 8	Yes
Teacher 9	No
Teacher 10	Yes
Teacher 11	Yes
Teacher 12	Yes
Teacher 13	Yes
Teacher 14	Yes
Teacher 15	Yes
Teacher 16	Yes
Teacher 17	Yes

Out of the 17 respondents, 15 (88%) were teaching at the high school level. The target group for respondents to this survey was high school teachers; therefore, 16 (94%) met the study's qualifications. Respondent Teacher 5, who did not teach at the secondary level, was not included in the teacher responses or numerical data moving forward.

Table 3

Teacher Online Survey Results Question 5: Check Any Accelerated Levels Taught

Respondent	Responses
Teacher 1	International Baccalaureate
Teacher 2	Honors, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate
Teacher 3	Honors
Teacher 4	Advanced Placement
Teacher 5	No Response
Teacher 6	No Response
Teacher 7	Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate
Teacher 8	No Response
Teacher 9	Honors
Teacher 10	Honors
Teacher 11	Honors, Advanced Placement
Teacher 12	Honors, Advanced Placement
Teacher 13	Advanced Placement
Teacher 14	Honors, Advanced Placement
Teacher 15	Honors, Advanced Placement, College Dual-Enrollment
Teacher 16	Honors
Teacher 17	No Response

Of the 17 teachers surveyed, 12 (71%) taught at an accelerated level. This means most prepared students should be reading at or above their current grade level. Of the four teachers who did not respond to this question, one (25%) worked in an elementary school. The other three (75%) who did not respond either did not have any classification listed or did not think the question pertained to them.

Research Question One Results - Teachers

My first research question was how are teachers prepared to teach disciplinary literacy through the content areas? The following digital and virtual survey responses refer to the teacher survey and interview questions.

Table 4

Teacher Online Survey Results Question 2. Do you have a reading endorsement?

Respondent	Responses
Teacher 1	No
Teacher 2	Yes
Teacher 3	Yes
Teacher 4	No
Teacher 5	Yes
Teacher 6	No
Teacher 7	No
Teacher 8	No
Teacher 9	No
Teacher 10	No
Teacher 11	No
Teacher 12	No
Teacher 13	No
Teacher 14	No
Teacher 15	Yes
Teacher 16	No
Teacher 17	No

Out of the 17 teachers surveyed, four (24%) qualified for the reading endorsement.

The four teachers who qualified for the endorsement were high school teachers. The competencies are as follows: foundations of reading instruction, application of research-based instructional practices, foundations of assessment, foundations and applications of differentiated instruction, and demonstration of accomplishment (Florida Department of Education, 2011). The 300 hours required to complete this endorsement is the same for both teachers and administrators, as it involves course completion from a university or state-acceptable program. Florida's program is used as an example, as it was a state represented by respondents in the study and the guideline information was easily accessible on the Department of Education website. After researching other states that respondents in this study represented, four offer reciprocity for the endorsement if the educator can produce the

transcripts of course completion.

Table 5

Teacher Online Survey Results Question 6: Have You Been Trained in Content-Area Literacy?

Respondent	Responses
Teacher 1	Yes
Teacher 2	No
Teacher 3	No
Teacher 4	Yes
Teacher 5	No
Teacher 6	Yes
Teacher 7	Yes
Teacher 8	Yes
Teacher 9	No
Teacher 10	No
Teacher 11	Yes
Teacher 12	Yes
Teacher 13	No
Teacher 14	Yes
Teacher 15	Yes
Teacher 16	Yes
Teacher 17	Yes

Table 6

Teacher Interview Results Question 6: Have You Been Trained in Content-Area Literacy?

Respondent	Responses
Teacher 8	No, because it was not through professional development. My mentor teacher taught me some things, but nothing formal.
Teacher 11	Yes, whatever the district has rolled out over the last 15 years. We have been trained on all of the things that students need to look for on the FSA testing, like key ideas and detail. I can't think of the others. We have done some reading in the content area training. Probably NG-CARPD. I have gone to a lot of content area reading training through AVID and have done some through my ESE hours. I went to a training in a neighboring district for arts integration and it had literacy in it as well.

Out of the 17 teachers surveyed, eleven (65%) had content area literacy training. Out of those 11, ten (91 %) were high school teachers. Out of the five teachers who qualified for the reading endorsement, only one (20%) was formally trained in content area reading. The respondents did not specify the training within the online survey. Still, when interviewed for further clarification, Teacher 11 stated it was a program called “Next Generation Content-Area Reading Professional Development (NGCAR-PD)”. Teacher 11 had attended other training but could not recall the details of the literacy style presented.

Table 7

Teacher Online Survey Results Question 11: What Type of Educator Program Did You Complete

Respondent	Responses
Teacher 1	State alternative certification program
Teacher 2	Traditional educator undergraduate program
Teacher 3	Traditional educator undergraduate program
Teacher 4	Traditional educator undergraduate program
Teacher 5	Traditional educator undergraduate program
Teacher 6	Teacher assistant program
Teacher 7	Graduate degree leading to certification
Teacher 8	State alternative certification program
Teacher 9	Traditional educator undergraduate program
Teacher 10	Traditional educator undergraduate program
Teacher 11	Graduate degree leading to certification
Teacher 12	Traditional educator undergraduate program
Teacher 13	Traditional educator undergraduate program
Teacher 14	University training after graduating with degree (non-education)
Teacher 15	State alternative certification program
Teacher 16	Traditional educator undergraduate program
Teacher 17	State alternative certification program

Out of the 17 teachers surveyed, nine (53%) participated in a traditional educator undergraduate program. Four (24%) of the teachers participated in a state alternative certification program. Two (12%) of the teachers participated in a graduate degree which led

to their teacher certification. One (6%) of the teachers participated in a university training program, which did not lead to a degree. One (6%) of the teachers participated in a teacher assistant program which led to certification at the end. Out of the four teachers who reported having a reading endorsement, one (25%) of that group participated in an alternative route to certification. An alternative way to teaching enables people who may not have a background in education to become teachers with the degree they currently hold. Most states and districts offer pathways for those interested in becoming an educator through mentoring, professional development courses, and partnerships with local colleges (Teaching Certification.com, 2022). Three (75%) of the reading-endorsed teachers attained their certification through the traditional undergraduate program route.

Table 8

Teacher Online Survey Results Question 6: At the Beginning of a Typical School Year, What Percentage of Your Students were Reading on Grade Level?

Respondent	Response
Teacher 1	76-100%
Teacher 2	No Response
Teacher 3	No Response
Teacher 4	51-75%
Teacher 5	0-25%
Teacher 6	51-75%
Teacher 7	76-100%
Teacher 8	0-25%
Teacher 9	51-75%
Teacher 10	76-100%
Teacher 11	51-75%
Teacher 12	26-50%
Teacher 13	51-75%
Teacher 14	76-100%
Teacher 15	76-100%
Teacher 16	26-50%
Teacher 17	51-75%

Out of the 17 teachers surveyed, two (11%) did not respond to this question and reported they were teaching high school students. This tells me they were neither provided this information nor researched the students before the school year. Two (13%) reported their students began the year in the 0-25% quartile. Two (13%) reported their students began the year in the 26-50% quartile. Six (40%) reported their students began the year in the 51-75% quartile. Five (33%) reported their students began the school year in the 76-100% quartile.

Table 9

Teacher Online Survey Results Question 8: At the End of a Typical School Year, What Percentage of Students were Reading on Grade Level?

Respondent	Response
Teacher 1	76-100%
Teacher 2	No Response
Teacher 3	No Response
Teacher 4	51-75%
Teacher 5	No Response
Teacher 6	76-100%
Teacher 7	76-100%
Teacher 8	0-25%
Teacher 9	51-75%
Teacher 10	76-100%
Teacher 11	51-75%
Teacher 12	51-75%
Teacher 13	51-75%
Teacher 14	76-100%
Teacher 15	76-100%
Teacher 16	51-75%
Teacher 17	51-75%

Three (18%) teachers did not respond to this question, therefore not providing an end of the year result. Six (35%) reported their students ended the school year in the 76-100% quartile range. Seven (41%) reported their students ended the school year in the 51-75% quartile range. One (6%) reported their students ended the school year in the 0-25% quartile.

This teacher said their students began the school year in the same percentile. This teacher reported low numbers of students learning English as a second language and students with disabilities from their school. However, this teacher did report that the content area they instruct is specifically for students with disabilities, so the learning impediment could be related to a specified learning disability (not surveyed).

Table 10

Teacher Online Survey Results Question 9: What Percentage of Students in Your School Receive Free or Reduced-Price Lunch?

Respondent	Responses
Teacher 1	76-100%
Teacher 2	51-75%
Teacher 3	26-50%
Teacher 4	0-25%
Teacher 5	51-75%
Teacher 6	76-100%
Teacher 7	26-50%
Teacher 8	26-50%
Teacher 9	0-25%
Teacher 10	0-25%
Teacher 11	26-50%
Teacher 12	26-50%
Teacher 13	26-50%
Teacher 14	76-100%
Teacher 15	0-25%
Teacher 16	51-75%
Teacher 17	76-100%

Four (24%) teachers reported 76-100% of students received free or reduced-price lunches at their school. Three (18%) teachers said 51-75% of students at their school received free or reduced-price lunches. Six (35%) teachers reported 26-50% of the students at their school received free or reduced-price lunches. Four (24%) teachers reported 0-25% of the students at their school received free or reduced-price lunches.

Table 11

Teacher Online Survey Results Question 10: What Percentage of Students in Your School are Classified as English Language Learners?

Respondent	Response
Teacher 1	0-25%
Teacher 2	0-25%
Teacher 3	0-25%
Teacher 4	0-25%
Teacher 5	26-50%
Teacher 6	0-25%
Teacher 7	0-25%
Teacher 8	0-25%
Teacher 9	0-25%
Teacher 10	0-25%
Teacher 11	0-25%
Teacher 12	0-25%
Teacher 13	0-25%
Teacher 14	26-50%
Teacher 15	0-25%
Teacher 16	0-25%
Teacher 17	26-50%

Fourteen (82%) teachers classified 0-25% of their students as English Language Learners. Three (18%) teachers classified 26-50% of their students as English Language Learners. Students who are English Language Learners are typically not proficient in reading in their second language. Their proficiency may depend on their literacy rate in their first language and the amount of time the student has spent in the United States. This tells me the teachers who responded may not interact with many students who are learning English as a new language.

Table 12

Teacher Online Survey Results Question 11: What Percentage of Students in Your School are Classified as Students with Disabilities?

Respondent	Response
Teacher 1	No response
Teacher 2	0-25%
Teacher 3	0-25%
Teacher 4	0-25%
Teacher 5	26-50%
Teacher 6	0-25%
Teacher 7	0-25%
Teacher 8	0-25%
Teacher 9	26-50%
Teacher 10	26-50%
Teacher 11	26-50%
Teacher 12	0-25%
Teacher 13	0-25%
Teacher 14	26-50%
Teacher 15	0-25%
Teacher 16	0-25%
Teacher 17	0-25%

One (6%) teacher did not identify the percentage of students in their school with disabilities. Eleven (64%) teachers classified 0-25% of the students in their school with disabilities. Five (29%) teachers classified 25-50% of the students in their school with disabilities. Schools with high numbers of students with disabilities could affect their schools' overall reading proficiency.

Table 13

Teacher Online Survey Results Question 12: How Many Years Have You Been an Educator?

Respondent	Response
Teacher 1	3
Teacher 2	14
Teacher 3	20
Teacher 4	8
Teacher 5	32
Teacher 6	8
Teacher 7	30 years
Teacher 8	17
Teacher 9	23
Teacher 10	22
Teacher 11	15
Teacher 12	22
Teacher 13	5
Teacher 14	18
Teacher 15	30
Teacher 16	16
Teacher 17	4

Out of the 17 teachers surveyed, five (29%) of the teachers reported being educators between zero and ten years. Five (29%) teachers reported being educators within the 10-to-20-year mark. Seven (41%) teachers reported being an educator for 20 or more years. All of the four teachers endorsed in reading reported being an educator for more than ten years. One (6%) of the teachers reported teaching at the Grade 5 level, which would not constitute secondary education. This tells me the participants wrote an array of years of experience.

Table 14

Teacher Online Survey Results Question 13: What Subject Do You Teach?

Respondent	Response
Teacher 1	Science
Teacher 2	Social Studies
Teacher 3	Art
Teacher 4	English
Teacher 5	Biology and Environmental Resource Science
Teacher 6	ELA 5th grade
Teacher 7	Spanish
Teacher 8	Exceptional Student Education Math and Reading
Teacher 9	Math
Teacher 10	US History
Teacher 11	Science
Teacher 12	English
Teacher 13	Science
Teacher 14	AP Biology, AP Research, PreAP Biology
Teacher 15	Social studies and journalism
Teacher 16	English and Intensive Reading
Teacher 17	Graphic Design and Commercial Art

Table 15

Teacher Interview Results Question 3: What Subject Do You Teach?

Respondent	Response
Teacher 8	I was in a secondary (9-12) ESE class. Self-contained teacher where I co-taught Social Studies, Math, and Life Skills
Teacher 11	Life science and biology

Out of the 17 teachers surveyed, 5 (29%) reported teaching in the English Language Arts content area. 13 (71%) reported a content area outside of the English Language Arts content. In that group, 5 (38%) represented the content field of science, 3 (23%) represented social studies, 2 (16%) represented math, and 3 (23%) represented an elective outside of the core content area. If we look at the five teachers who reported a reading endorsement, 100% of them teach in content other than English Language Arts.

Table 16

Teacher Online Survey Results Question 14: Which State are You Currently Employed?

Respondent	Response
Teacher 1	Michigan
Teacher 2	Michigan
Teacher 3	Michigan
Teacher 4	Texas
Teacher 5	New Jersey
Teacher 6	Mississippi
Teacher 7	Michigan
Teacher 8	Florida
Teacher 9	New York
Teacher 10	Florida
Teacher 11	Florida
Teacher 12	Florida
Teacher 13	Illinois
Teacher 14	Texas
Teacher 15	Florida
Teacher 16	Florida
Teacher 17	New Jersey

The seven states represented by the teacher respondents comprise 14% of the 50 total United States. Four significant regions were represented, mainly in the eastern half of the United States. Five (29%) of the teachers reported working in the Midwest region, three (18%) reported working in the northeast region, seven (41%) reported working in the southeast area, and two (12%) reported working in the south-central region. Out of the four teachers who said they were reading endorsed, two (50%) of them worked in the Midwest region, one (25%) worked in the northeast region, and one (25%) worked in the southeast region. The number of represented states and parts accounted for a large portion of the country and embodied a robust sampling of respondents.

Table 17

Teacher Online Survey Results Question 15: How Do You Define Content Area Literacy?

Respondent	Response
Teacher 1	Being able to consistently, precisely, and clearly use/read vocab in content based discussions.
Teacher 2	being able to read and understand texts regarding social studies, both past and current events
Teacher 3	For art, we learn about lines, contour drawing, shadows and highlights and scales of values. We learn about perspective drawing, color wheel/ color theory, proportions of the human face, and cartoons. I do not test on the vocab, but I use it in class and expect students to understand what I am talking about.
Teacher 4	Anything that you read or write involving the content area in which you teach/are teaching.
Teacher 5	Comprehending , analyzing, forming connections and evaluating information.
Teacher 6	Reading and writing within your specific subject
Teacher 7	Using reading and writing activities to Teach and/or learn content in any discipline.
Teacher 8	The ability to use writing and reading to learn
Teacher 9	Being able to read for understanding in a non-fiction academic setting.
Teacher 10	Literary works that deal with subject /History.
Teacher 11	Ability to understand and process text in the subject area, for my students Science text, informational text.
Teacher 12	Being able to make sense of what you are reading and being able to engage in it
Teacher 13	Being able to read, analyze, and evaluate text related to a subject area
Teacher 14	How to comprehend discipline or subject specific matter
Teacher 15	The ability to evaluate source material in appropriate academic context...to analyze tone and point of view
Teacher 16	Knowing how to engage with the curriculum I teach using literacy supports and strategies for my students to promote independent understanding and comprehension.
Teacher 17	Content literacy is the ability to read, write, create, interpret and present a range of media, in subjects such as science, social studies and mathematics. It includes the use of informational text, that is, print and electronic media that present factual and conceptual content.

Out of the 17 teachers surveyed, 4 (24%) of the teachers gave a definition related to disciplinary literacy. Disciplinary literacy is an emphasis on the knowledge and abilities

possessed by those who create, communicate, and use knowledge within the discipline; emphasizes the unique tools the experts in a discipline use to engage in the work of the discipline (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012, p. 8). At the same time, 13 (76%) of the teachers reported a definition with content area literacy. Content area literacy emphasizes the techniques a novice might use to make sense of disciplinary text; focusing on the study skills which helps students learn from a subject matter text (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012, p. 8). Out of the 35% of teachers reporting no formal training in content area literacy (Question 2), 67% responded to this question with a definition that reflected disciplinary literacy over content area literacy.

Research Question Two Results - Administrators

My second research question was how are administrators prepared to support content area and disciplinary literacy in the content areas? The following digital and virtual survey responses refer to the administrator survey and interview questions.

Administrator Survey

Table 18

Administrative Online Survey Results Question 2: Do You Have a Reading Endorsement?

Admin 1	Admin 2	Admin 3	Admin 4
No	No	No	No

None of the administrators who replied to the survey met the requirements for a reading endorsement. However, an educator could meet the needs for this endorsement by completing 60 credit hours for each competency to demonstrate mastery. The competencies are as follows: foundations of reading instruction, application of research-based instructional practices, foundations of assessment, foundations and applications of differentiated

instruction, and demonstration of accomplishment (FLDOE, 2011). The 300 hours required to complete this endorsement is the same for both teachers and administrators, as it involves course completion from a university or state-acceptable program. Florida’s program was used an example, as it was a state represented by respondents in the study and the guideline information was easily accessible on the Department of Education website. After researching other states that respondents in this study represented, four offered reciprocity for the endorsement, as long as the educator can produce the transcripts of course completion.

Table 19

Administrative Online Survey Results Question 3: Have You Been Trained in Content-Area Literacy?

Admin 1	Admin 2	Admin 3	Admin 4
Yes	No	Yes	Yes

Out of the four administrators surveyed, three (75%) school-based administrators trained in content-area literacy. The respondents did not specify the training within the online survey, but when interviewed for further clarification, Admin 3 stated it was a program called, “Next Generation Content-Area Reading Professional Development (NGCAR-PD)”.

Administrator Interview

Table 20

Administrative Interview Results Question 4: Do You Have a Reading Endorsement?

Respondent	Response
Admin 3	Not an endorsement; holds NG-CARPD
Admin 2	No

Out of the four administrators interviewed, all (100%) offered at least one honors level advanced class in their school. In addition, 75% reported having more rigorous college

level courses at their schools. Students who registered for advanced courses needed to have a reading level that was at grade level or higher. Disciplinary literacy in courses that are content areas based outside of English Language Arts should be a significant part of the coursework, rather than content area literacy strategies.

Table 21

Administrative Online Survey Results-Question 6: What Type of Educator Program Did You Complete?

Admin 1	Admin 2	Admin 3	Admin 4
Traditional educator undergraduate program	No certification program	Traditional educator undergraduate program	Graduate degree leading to certification

Out of the four administrators who responded to the survey, only two trained as educators through a traditional educator undergraduate program. One (25%) respondent received their graduate degree leading to teacher certification, and another respondent (25%) had not participated in any certification program. In the states studied, there were various ways for teachers to attain their certification: in a traditional undergraduate program in education, a graduate degree program in education that leads to certification, and an alternative certification route. Some states do not require administrators to be certified teachers, explaining the one administrator who did not receive an educator certificate.

Table 22

Administrative Online Survey Results Question 7: What Type of Administrative Program Did You Complete?

Admin 1	Admin 2	Admin 3	Admin 4
Graduate degree leading to certification	Graduate degree leading to certification	Graduate degree leading to certification	Graduate degree leading to certification

All of the administrators received their administration certificate by completing a graduate degree which led to their certification. This is the standard in the states represented by the respondents. However, at least one state did not require administrators to have prior teaching certification. This means that one administrator would not necessarily have training in teaching.

Table 23

Administrative Online Survey Results-Question 8: At The Beginning of a Typical School Year, What Percentage of Students Were Reading on Grade Level?

Admin 1	Admin 2	Admin 3	Admin 4
26-50%	0-25%	26-50%	51-75%

Out of the four surveyed administrators, none reported their students reading on grade level in the upper quartile of the analyzed categories. Two administrators said 26% to 50% of students were reading on grade level. One administrator (25%) reported 0 to 25% of students were reading on grade level. One administrator (25%) said 51% to 75% of students were reading on grade level. This tells me there were circumstances which could have affected these scores, such as three (75%) of the administrators reporting high levels of Title I qualifiers and one with a low Title I group had a higher percentage of students starting the year reading on grade level.

Table 24

Administrative Online Survey Results-Question 9: What Percentage of Students in Your School Receive Free or Reduced-Price Lunch?

Admin 1	Admin 2	Admin 3	Admin 4
76-100%	76-100%	76-100%	26-50%

Out of the four surveyed administrators, three (75%) reported 76-100% of their students qualified for free or reduced-price lunches. One (25%) administrator said in the second lowest quartile for their students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunches. As stated in the previous question, there is a commonality between students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch and the percentage of students who are able to read on grade level.

The three administrators who responded between 0 and 50% of students reading on grade level also reported 76% to 100% of their students received free or reduced-price lunches. The only respondent who wrote more than 50% of their students reading above grade level also stated that 26% to 50% receive free or reduced-price lunches. This survey did not include more profound questions to derive a correlation between the two, but it is reasonable to consider further research.

Table 25

Administrative Online Survey Results Question 10: What Percentage of Students in Your School are Classified as English Language Learners?

Admin 1	Admin 2	Admin 3	Admin 4
0-25%	0-25%	26-50%	0-25%

Out of the four administrators surveyed, 100% reported less than 50% of their students classified as English Language Learners. Students who are English Language

Learners are typically not proficient in reading in their second language. Their proficiency may depend on their literacy rate in their first language and the amount of time a student has spent in the United States. Admin 4s response of 0-25% of English Language Learners population in their school may explain how 51-75% of their students were reading on grade level.

Table 26

Administrative Online Survey Results Question 11: What Percentage of Students in Your School are Classified as Students with Disabilities?

Admin 1	Admin 2	Admin 3	Admin 4
26-50%	0-25%	0-25%	0-25%

Out of the four administrators surveyed, 100% reported less than 50% of the students in their schools were classified as students with disabilities. Three of the administrators reported in the 0-25% range, which could have affected the school's overall reading level.

Table 27

Administrative Online Survey Results Question 12: How Many Years Have You Been an Educator?

Admin 1	Admin 2	Admin 3	Admin 4
19	7	13	30

Out of the four administrators surveyed, three (75%) had over ten years of experience. When looking at responses to question three, "Have you been trained in content area literacy?" only Admin 2 did not receive training. Admin 2 was also the respondent who was not certified as an educator. The other three administrators were certified as educators and trained in content area literacy.

Table 28

Administrative Online Survey Results Question 13: Which State are You Currently Employed?

Admin 1	Admin 2	Admin 3	Admin 4
Georgia	Michigan	New Jersey	Florida

Each of the administrators were employed in a different state. The 4 represented states reported by the administrators comprised 8% of the 50 total United States. Three major regions were represented, mainly in the eastern half of the United States. The number of designated states and regions embodied a diverse sampling of respondents.

Table 29

Administrative Online Survey Results Question 14: How Do You Define Content Area Literacy?

Admin 1	Admin 2	Admin 3	Admin 4
Reading and writing in the context of the content	I'm unclear on what it is	Teaching literacy skills within the context of the subject area; i.e. math, science, history. This exposes students to literacy skills beyond the ELA classroom	Then ability to use reading to learn the subject matter of a particular class.

Table 30

Administrative Interview Results-Question 5: How Do You Define Content Area Literacy?

Respondent	Response
Admin 3	I would define it as bringing in the traditional literacy strategies but interweaving them into the content you're teaching. So, gone are the days that we think literacy is just taught in the English courses or the reading courses actually when I got certified, I was a CTE teacher in agriscience, and I was able to bring the skill sets that go along with literacy to my students through the content I was teaching and had a different level of engagement. They may be enjoyed it better because they liked the content area and were able to learn the literacy piece.
Admin 2	I guess content literacy; I don't know. Yeah, I still don't know what the definition is.

Table 31

Administrative Interview Results-Question 6: Do You Know the Definition of Disciplinary Literacy?

Respondent	Response
Admin 3	I feel like I do, but I would probably equate it to content area literacy and now I feel like I don't.
Admin 2	No

Out of the four administrators who replied, Admin 3 clearly stated the technical definition, whereas Admins 1 and 4 responded with a basic definition of content area literacy. Content area literacy emphasizes techniques a novice might use to make sense of the disciplinary text, focusing on the study skills that help students learn from a subject matter text (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012, p. 8). Admin 2 was unclear about what constituted content area literacy. Admin 2 also reported they were not educator certified nor trained in content area literacy. When asked the question in a follow-up interview, Admin 2 still did not know the definition of content area literacy, nor did they know the definition of disciplinary literacy.

Table 32

Administrative Online Survey Results Question 15: Can You List Specific Examples that Would Constitute Content Area Literacy?

Admin 1	Admin 2	Admin 3	Admin 4
Historical writing, speech writing	No	Primary and secondary document analysis within a history class	General literacy skills, content specific literacy skills, vocabulary

Table 33

Administrative Interview Results Question 7: Can You List Specific Examples that Would Constitute Content Area Literacy?

Respondent	Response
Admin 3	So, I probably wrote about science: analyzing scientific text and labs. To pull out info and annotate the experiment; primary and secondary texts in social studies class and annotate to find the author's purpose.
Admin 2	So, I didn't have to do any evals pre-COVID. So I guess I would say if it relates to literacy, it would be any kind of differentiation, umm—student engagement.

Out of the four administrators surveyed, one could not list any skills that would constitute content area literacy; as stated above, this was the administrator who was not trained as an educator or received any specific literacy training. During the follow-up interview, this administrator was still unable to cite specific examples which would constitute content area literacy. Admin 4 provided general content area literacy skills, whereas Admins 1 and 3 offered disciplinary literacy examples. During the follow-up interview, Admin 3 provided specific science-related examples which could constitute both content area and disciplinary literacy examples.

Out of the four administrators surveyed, Admin 2 did not respond to this question. This administrator did not respond to the previous questions. During the follow-up interview, Admin 2 addressed the lack of content area literacy at their school. The other three administrators reported various ways in which content area is addressed in their school. Admin 1 had a formal literacy plan. Admin 3 stated that embedded literacy exists within all their content areas. Admin 4 said that they monitor comprehension and other aspects of literacy development in the classroom.

Table 34

Administrative Online Survey Results Question 16: How is Content-Area Literacy Addressed in Your School?

Admin 1	Admin 3	Admin 4
School-wide literacy plan	Literacy is embedded within all contents	Monitoring comprehension, prior knowledge, prereading strategies , predictions, summarizing

Table 35

Administrative Interview Results Question 8: How is Content Area Literacy Addressed in Your School?

Respondent	Response
Admin 2	It is not
Admin 3	Every summer we look at the instructional focus and we formulate the a short PD and, over 2 weeks roll out the literacy IF that will correspond for the year. Go more specific what it would look like for each of the different content classrooms and what the expectations are moving forward.

During the follow-up interview: Admin 3 stated content area literacy is addressed by the administration team, and professional development is determined based on the need for the following year.

Table 36

Administrative Online Survey Results Question 17: How Do You Check for Content Area Literacy Activities or Strategies When Evaluating?

Admin 1	Admin 3	Admin 4
We are still calibrating processes	It is attached to one of our observational standards which can be observed through lesson plans as well as in teaching practices used within an observation	Engagement in content, proven effective strategies being implemented, aligned to standards

Table 37

Administrative Interview Results Question 9: If You Do Observations, How Comfortable Are You With Evaluating Content Area Literacy?

Respondent	Response
Admin 3	Extremely comfortable. <i>Follow-up question: Does your district offer literacy training in development in the content areas, where you feel you can be more objective than feeling subjective?</i> No. I am encouraged to go to workshops, which I have attended. I work with my content supervisor who has had the training and I can't think of a training which the district made me go to. However, I do feel comfortable being objective and understanding what literacy looks like in the classroom.
Admin 2	I am not

Out of the four administrators surveyed, Admin 2 did not respond to this question. During the follow-up interview, Admin 2 stated they were not comfortable evaluating content area literacy strategies within the classroom. The administrator did not answer the previous questions and reported a lack of formal educator and literacy training. In both the digital survey and follow-up interview, Admin 3 stated they were comfortable with evaluating content area literacy. They have received training and are encouraged to seek

training outside the district if necessary.

Table 38

Administrative Online Survey Results Question 18: How Does Your District Prepare Administrators to Look for Content Area Literacy When Evaluating?

Admin 1	Admin 2	Admin 3	Admin 4
No preparation	I am unsure	Professional development on literacy strategies in general and then further discussions of content strategies. This is discussed at an administrator level and then rolled out to teachers	Professional development on content area literacy, PD on evaluation model using the instructional framework.

Table 39

Administrative Interview Results-Question 10: Does Your District Have a Policy for Content Area Literacy or Disciplinary Literacy Development?

Respondent	Response
Admin 3	Now, knowing the difference between the two, I would say that my district does both. We have curriculum supervisors, who work to feed in skills. The content supervisors and the administrative team work together to roll out the curriculum and PD pieces for teachers.
Admin 2	No

Table 40

Administrative Interview Results Question 11: Does Your School Have a Policy for Content Area Literacy Implementation?

Respondent	Response
Admin 3	There is not a strict policy that you can see online. We always do training every year. That is free for us to plan as an administrative team, and typically what our team does is differentiates it for veterans versus first year teachers. Opening days they have another one with the whole group. <i>How do they know there is an expectation?</i> PD provided by content supervisors (and building admin), but it is explicitly explained by them.
Admin 2	No

Out of the four surveyed administrators, Admin 2 was unsure how district administrators were prepared to evaluate teachers and whether they use content area or disciplinary literacy strategies in their classrooms. This administrator also could not provide answers to the previous survey questions. During the follow-up interview, they stated their district does not have a policy for literacy in the content areas and does not prepare administrators for it.

Admin 1 stated there was no formal preparation. However, Admins 3 and 4 received professional development from their district to effectively ascertain whether teachers utilized literacy strategies. Admin 3 discussed how their district encouraged their administrators to seek workshops outside of the district to learn about literacy in the administrator interviews. The administrators also worked with their curriculum supervisors to know the expectations for the evaluated teachers.

Table 41

Administrative Interview Results Question 12: Is There Anything Else You Would Like Me to Know?

Respondent	Response
Admin 3	I definitely think, personally, I feel that I don't see it from all lenses. I think there could be a great benefit to adding the other content areas into it. Since we are an academy structured school, we do get the cross-disciplinary structure. We do a great job rolling it out, but we can always be better.
Admin 2	We (district) just got a literacy grant from the state. The program will be here for the next 5 years. They filled a lot of the positions. I am not sure what the goals will be yet, but I know what we put out as far as what positions and what comes with the grant.

Research Question Three Results

My third research question is what strategies teachers report, which are most likely to have the greatest impact on increasing reading proficiency? The following digital and virtual survey responses refer to the teacher survey and interview questions.

Table 42

Teacher Online Survey Results Question 7: At the Beginning of a Typical School Year, What Percentage of Your Students were Reading on Grade Level?

Respondent	Response
Teacher 1	76-100%
Teacher 2	No Response
Teacher 3	No Response
Teacher 4	51-75%
Teacher 5	0-25%
Teacher 6	51-75%
Teacher 7	76-100%
Teacher 8	0-25%
Teacher 9	51-75%
Teacher 10	76-100%
Teacher 11	51-75%
Teacher 12	26-50%
Teacher 13	51-75%
Teacher 14	76-100%
Teacher 15	76-100%
Teacher 16	26-50%
Teacher 17	51-75%

Out of the 17 teachers surveyed, two (11%) did not respond to this question and reported they were teaching high school students. This tells me they were neither provided this information nor researched the students before the school year. Two (11%) reported their students began the year in the 0-25% quartile. Two (11%) reported their students began the year in the 26-50% quartile. Six (35%) reported their students began the year in the 51-75% quartile. Five (29%) reported their students began the school year in the 76-100% quartile.

Table 43

Teacher Online Survey Results Question 8: At the End of a Typical School Year, What Percentage of Students were Reading on Grade Level?

Respondent	Response
Teacher 1	76-100%
Teacher 2	No Response
Teacher 3	No Response
Teacher 4	51-75%
Teacher 5	No response
Teacher 6	76-100%
Teacher 7	76-100%
Teacher 8	0-25%
Teacher 9	51-75%
Teacher 10	76-100%
Teacher 11	51-75%
Teacher 12	51-75%
Teacher 13	51-75%
Teacher 14	76-100%
Teacher 15	76-100%
Teacher 16	51-75%
Teacher 17	51-75%

Three (18%) teachers did not respond to this question, therefore not providing an end-of-the-year result. Six (35%) reported their students ended the school year in the 76-100% quartile range. Seven (41%) reported their students ended the school year in the 51-75% quartile range. One (6%) reported their students ended the school year in the 0-25% quartile. This teacher said their students began the school year in the same percentile. This teacher reported low numbers of students learning English as a second language and students with disabilities from their school. However, this teacher did say that the content area they instructed was specifically for students with disabilities, so the learning impediment could be related to a specified learning disability (not surveyed).

Table 44

Teacher Online Survey Results Question 9: What Percentage of Students in Your School

Receive Free or Reduced-Price Lunch?

Respondent	Response
Teacher 1	76-100%
Teacher 2	51-75%
Teacher 3	26-50%
Teacher 4	0-25%
Teacher 5	51-75%
Teacher 6	76-100%
Teacher 7	26-50%
Teacher 8	26-50%
Teacher 9	0-25%
Teacher 10	0-25%
Teacher 11	26-50%
Teacher 12	26-50%
Teacher 13	26-50%
Teacher 14	76-100%
Teacher 15	0-25%
Teacher 16	51-75%
Teacher 17	76-100%

Four (24%) teachers reported 76-100% of students received free or reduced-price lunches at their school. Three (18%) teachers reported 51-75% of students at their school received free or reduced-price lunches. Six (35%) teachers reported 26-50% of the students at their school received free or reduced-price lunches. Four (24%) teachers reported 0-25% of the students at their school received free or reduced-price lunches. This means there could be a commonality between students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch and the percentage of students who were able to read on grade level.

Table 45

Teacher Online Survey Results Question 10: What Percentage of Students in Your School are Classified as English Language Learners?

Respondent	Response
Teacher 1	0-25%
Teacher 2	0-25%
Teacher 3	0-25%
Teacher 4	0-25%
Teacher 5	26-50%
Teacher 6	0-25%
Teacher 7	0-25%
Teacher 8	0-25%
Teacher 9	0-25%
Teacher 10	0-25%
Teacher 11	0-25%
Teacher 12	0-25%
Teacher 13	0-25%
Teacher 14	26-50%
Teacher 15	0-25%
Teacher 16	0-25%
Teacher 17	26-50%

Fourteen (82%) teachers classified 0-25% of their students as English Language Learners. Three (18%) teachers classified 26-50% of their students as English Language Learners. Students who are English Language Learners are typically not proficient in reading in their second language. Their proficiency may depend on their literacy rate in their first language and the amount of time the student has spent in the United States.

Table 46

Teacher Online Survey Results Question 11: What Percentage of Students in Your School are Classified as Students with Disabilities?

Respondent	Response
Teacher 1	No response
Teacher 2	0-25%
Teacher 3	0-25%
Teacher 4	0-25%
Teacher 5	26-50%
Teacher 6	0-25%
Teacher 7	0-25%
Teacher 8	0-25%
Teacher 9	26-50%
Teacher 10	26-50%
Teacher 11	26-50%
Teacher 12	0-25%
Teacher 13	0-25%
Teacher 14	26-50%
Teacher 15	0-25%
Teacher 16	0-25%
Teacher 17	0-25%

One (6%) teacher did not respond to the classification of students with disabilities in their school. Eleven (64%) teachers classified 0-25% of the students in their school as students with disabilities. Five (29%) teachers classified 25-50% of the students in their school as students with disabilities. The numbers reported are similar to that of the administrator survey reports. This means the results should reflect those of a typical school population.

Table 47

Teacher Online Survey Results Question 14: Which State are You Currently Employed?

Respondent	Response
Teacher 1	Michigan
Teacher 2	Michigan
Teacher 3	Michigan
Teacher 4	Texas
Teacher 5	New Jersey
Teacher 6	Mississippi
Teacher 7	Michigan
Teacher 8	Florida
Teacher 9	NY
Teacher 10	Florida
Teacher 11	FL
Teacher 12	Florida
Teacher 13	Illinois
Teacher 14	Texas
Teacher 15	Florida
Teacher 16	Florida
Teacher 17	New Jersey

The seven states represented by the teacher respondents comprise 14% of the 50 total United States. Four significant regions were represented, mainly in the eastern half of the United States. Five (29%) of the teachers reported working in the Midwest region, three (18%) reported working in the northeast region, seven (41%) reported working in the southeast area, and two (12%) reported working in the south-central region. Out of the four teachers who said being reading endorsed, two (50%) of them worked in the Midwest region, one (25%) worked in the northeast region, and one (25%) worked in the southeast region.

Table 48

Teacher Online Survey Results Question 15: How Do You Define Content Area Literacy?

Respondent	Response
Teacher 1	Being able to consistently, precisely, and clearly use/read vocab in content based discussions.
Teacher 2	being able to read and understand texts regarding social studies, both past and current events
Teacher 3	For art, we learn about lines, contour drawing, shadows and highlights and scales of values. We learn about perspective drawing, color wheel/ color theory, proportions of the human face, and cartoons. I do not test on the vocab, but I use it in class and expect students to understand what I am talking about.
Teacher 4	Anything that you read or write involving the content area in which you teach/are teaching.
Teacher 5	Comprehending , analyzing, forming connections and evaluating information.
Teacher 6	Reading and writing within your specific subject
Teacher 7	Using reading and writing activities to Teach and/or learn content in any discipline.
Teacher 8	The ability to use writing and reading to learn
Teacher 9	Being able to read for understanding in a non-fiction academic setting.
Teacher 10	Literary works that deal with subject /History.
Teacher 11	Ability to understand and process text in the subject area, for my students Science text, informational text.
Teacher 12	Being able to make sense of what you are reading and being able to engage in it
Teacher 13	Being able to read, analyze, and evaluate text related to a subject area
Teacher 14	How to comprehend discipline or subject specific matter
Teacher 15	The ability to evaluate source material in appropriate academic context...to analyze tone and point of view
Teacher 16	Knowing how to engage with the curriculum I teach using literacy supports and strategies for my students to promote independent understanding and comprehension.
Teacher 17	Content literacy is the ability to read, write, create, interpret and present a range of media, in subjects such as science, social studies and mathematics. It includes the use of informational text, that is, print and electronic media that present factual and conceptual content.

Table 49

Teacher Interview Results Question 13: How Do You Define Content Area Literacy?

Respondent	Response
Teacher 8	I guess it's the ability to read and write and...I guess it's the ability to read and write and learn the subject matter.
Teacher 11	I would define content area literacy as teaching reading within the content area using documents. If we are doing a lesson on cloning, maybe reading about cloning, then giving the students strategies so they can understand the science content. Using the text, so they can pick out the vocabulary, understand the ideas, and understand what they have read.

Table 50

Teacher Interview Results Question 14: Do You Know the Definition of Disciplinary Literacy?

Respondent	Response
Teacher 8	No.
Teacher 11	No, I don't think I've sat through that training yet.

Content area literacy is an emphasis on the techniques a novice might use to make sense of the disciplinary text, focusing on the helpful study skills students learn from a subject matter text (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012, p. 8). Disciplinary literacy is an emphasis on the knowledge and abilities possessed by those who create, communicate, and use knowledge within the discipline; it emphasizes the unique tools the experts in a discipline use to engage in the work of the discipline (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012, p. 8). Out of the 17 respondents' answers, the definition of content area literacy was referenced in all 17 responses. Out of the six (35%) teachers not formally trained in content area literacy, four (67%) defined disciplinary literacy over content area literacy. The respondents referenced the definition of disciplinary literacy seven (41%) times. This means at least seven (41%) of the

participants could identify how to teach literacy according to their discipline.

A disciplinary literacy definition example from Teacher 17 was “Content literacy is the ability to read, write, create, interpret, and present a range of media in science, social studies, and mathematics.”

During the follow-up interviews, Teacher 11 stated “if we are doing a lesson on cloning, maybe reading about cloning, then giving the students strategies to understand the science content. For example, using the text, so they can pick out the vocabulary, understand the ideas, and understand what they have read;” which demonstrates how both content area and disciplinary literacies exist in a definition. However, neither teacher interviewed could respond when asked how to define disciplinary literacy.

Table 51

Teacher Online Survey Results Question 16: Can You List Specific Examples That Would Constitute Content Area Literacy?

Respondent	Response
Teacher 1	Being able to read research about the morphological distinctions between different species in the genus Homo
Teacher 2	Knowing how to evaluate historical and current sources.
Teacher 3	During perspective drawing unit, if a student talks to me about what they are drawing and is able to use words like vanishing point, horizontal, vertical, and orthogonal, to describe the parts of their drawing.
Teacher 4	For me, it is getting student to read multiple different genres to cover content. It is also getting students to mimic this craft and incorporate these findings.
Teacher 5	After researching a topic being able to write a claim, support with evidence and make conclusions.
Teacher 6	Writing responses, research
Teacher 7	Skimming titles, subtitles, pictures/illustrations, and familiar words. Making predictions Activating prior knowledge Summarizing sections Making inferences Completing during reading and post reading activities comprehension questions, vocabulary questions, and open ended responses.

Teacher 8	I remember monitoring comprehension, pre-reading, setting goals and a purpose for reading, activation prior knowledge, making predictions, summarizing and making inferences
Teacher 9	Being able to figure out what a word problem is asking you to do in a math class, being able to communicate how to solve a problem using proper math vocabulary. Reading/understanding a science textbook. Reading/understanding documents in SS.
Teacher 10	Primary sources such as poems, journals, diaries, etc.
Teacher 11	Ability to explain verbally, written, modeling or drawing, then make connections to process the information for understanding.
Teacher 12	Listen, speak, read, write, apply
Teacher 13	Reading a scientific article and evaluating the claim, evidence, and reasoning
Teacher 14	Reading and comprehending peer-reviewed journal articles
Teacher 15	Analyzing written or graphic primary sources...reading news for bias
Teacher 16	Using vocabulary strategies such as word mapping in a Science class where prefixes and roots are abundant. Teaching this strategy helps students to acquire grade level content specific vocabulary with more independence.
Teacher 17	Graphic Design is communication. Students are taught to be literate in their craft (and by default, the world around them) by developing an industry vocabulary, learning to give verbal presentations as well as critiques.

Table 52

Teacher Interview Results Question 15: Can You List Specific Examples That Would Constitute Content Area Literacy?

Respondent	Response
Teacher 8	To be honest, probably not. Maybe, I guess I would start off with what you know and not know. There was an array of subject knowledge, then we would chart it, kind of like a KWL. In that chart they would identify what they knew and develop questions for what they didn't. At the end of the lesson, we would answer the questions.
Teacher 11	Read and mark the text. Drawing in the margins, summarizing ideas at the end of the paragraph. Popcorn reading (which is like torture), puzzling reading. Gallery walks and reading and summarizing making a poster. Reading and answering comprehension questions

Out of the 17 teachers surveyed 12 (76%) of the teachers provided examples which relate to content area literacy strategies. Out of the four teachers who reported a disciplinary literacy definition, two (50%) of them provided content area literacy strategies. Activities which increase reading comprehension and can be cross-curricular strategies would

constitute content area literacy strategies. Such examples provided were various vocabulary activities, KWL, and reading and marking the text. Nine (53%) of the teachers provided examples which reflected disciplinary literacy strategies. Teacher 13 stated, “Reading a scientific article and evaluating the claim, evidence, and reasoning.” This would be considered an example of disciplinary literacy.

Table 53

Teacher Interview Results Question 17: How Do You Integrate Literacy into Your Lessons?

Respondent	Response
Teacher 1	Assigning mini research papers, provided published papers to have in class discussions around, having students author stories revolving around specific scientific processes, emphasizing on use of analogies in the classroom.
Teacher 2	we do historiography. Looking at many different points of view about events in the past and analyzing and discussing them.
Teacher 3	I start units asking students to write down vocab, I show the vocab and definitions on the board or computer screen, as well as speaking them aloud. The vocab is then used in the descriptions and steps and rubrics for the projects in that unit.
Teacher 4	I teach literacy. I have students read and write every day.
Teacher 5	Cross content activities, research and incorporating articles related to topics in subjects taught.
Teacher 6	I teach reading and writing so that is all I do. I teach comprehension strategies and skills
Teacher 7	Students are encouraged to employ most or all of the above activities to all reading activities. We read frequently under normal circumstances.
Teacher 8	I didn't really know how to integrate literacy into my lessons at the time I first began teaching.
Teacher 9	Integrating word problems and real world applications into math lessons. Having students write journal entries explain math processes. Accountable talk with emphasis on math vocabulary.
Teacher 10	Nonfiction novels, primary sources
Teacher 11	Read & Mark the Text, concept maps, questioning, lab procedures, summarize & explain, creative output, student generated questioning, Socratic seminar, philosophical chairs
Teacher 12	Group and real-world activities
Teacher 13	Grade level scientific news
Teacher 14	Guided practice and then student searching for articles to write literature review for independent research
Teacher 15	Formal analysis of written and graphic primary sources

Teacher 16	As an ELA/ILA teacher, literacy comes in all formats: mixed media, data, charts, prose, verse, etc. A key part of my job is to ensure that my students have exposure to a variety of texts as well as formats to build their independent understanding. I use Socratic Seminars for students to engage and learn from each other when working with difficult pieces as to talk/write/think their way to learning.
Teacher 17	Do Nows, research and homework

Out of the 17 teachers surveyed, 14 (82%) of the teachers reported using strategies that related to content area literacy. Activities that increase reading comprehension and can be cross-curricular strategies would constitute content area literacy strategies. Such examples provided were various vocabulary activities and reading and marking the text. Six (35%) teachers provided examples that reflect disciplinary literacy strategies. For example, teacher 2 stated, “Integrating word problems and real-world applications into math lessons. Having students write journal entries explains math processes. Accountable talk with an emphasis on math vocabulary.” This would be considered an example of disciplinary literacy. Teacher 8 responded with not knowing how to incorporate literacy into their lessons when they were a new teacher. While I was unable to ask them for further clarification, this is information that could assist in answering the question of preparedness to teach literacy.

Table 54

Teacher Online Survey Results Question 18: Describe the Layout of Your Classroom to Promote Literacy Development

Respondent	Response
Teacher 1	No Response
Teacher 2	Pre-Covid I would have students seated in groups as my classroom allows. In my current school I'm not allowed outside furniture, so kids sit around uncomfortable tables. In the past I've had couches and other soft seating, high top tables - lots of options to keep them comfortable and discussing.

Teacher 3	This year it is set up because of covid and also other classes that happen in the same class during other parts of the day. Students are all in rows across the widest part of the room, facing towards the whiteboard. The teacher desk (and teacher) are in front of the white board for most of class.
Teacher 4	Typically, I have students in groups. They read and discuss in their groups. I also have different roles where students write for their groups. These interchanges. Students write, edit, and revise essays.
Teacher 5	Currently there are posters containing short biographies featuring African Americans noted in the fields of medicine and science as well as a word wall for each subject. There are famous quotes as well.
Teacher 6	Word wall, anchor charts, prefix/suffix posters, standards, essential questions and I can statements, KWL chart, reading habits
Teacher 7	Currently, I use breakout rooms on Zoom to have students complete pre-reading activities in small groups. We reconvene to read and answer guiding questions. Sometimes we do this as a large group. Sometimes students read individually. They complete guiding questions and we discuss comprehension strategies as they arise. We have been doing this work virtually over Zoom.
Teacher 8	I had classroom libraries, I encouraged small group read alouds and I always invited guest readers to my classroom. I also had a lot of posters promoting literacy.
Teacher 9	Currently in spaced rows due to Covid. Normally in groups of 3-5.
Teacher 10	No response
Teacher 11	Mixed ability grouping by reading & math level in a non-pandemic year. This year 6ft-socially distance (not ideal for collaborative learning)
Teacher 12	Non COVID days, my room is allot on two and faces each other
Teacher 13	Science magazines available for student reading. Claim, evidence, reasoning posters
Teacher 14	We have no layout this year other than spaced out desks due to COVID. Usually I would do small group and one teacher-led small group, aside from lab tables.
Teacher 15	27 computers in 3 rows
Teacher 16	My students sit in three groupings so quick breakouts for discussion can occur organically. I always have sticky notes and notecards at the ready for quick independent reflective writing/shared responses. I have highlighters and large chart paper accessible for collaboration as small groups.
Teacher 17	Six tables, joined lengthwise in three rows. Students sit on both sides of the tables, making six rows. They are seated perpendicular to my desk and screen. The walls are adorned in posters teaching the concepts of art and design, Color Theory and various art and design movements throughout history. The entire room is interactive and they are taught to use those posters as part of their learning.

Table 55

Teacher Interview Results Question 16: Describe the Layout of Your Classroom to Promote Literacy Development

Respondent	Response
Teacher 8	I had a sensory area, where they weren't necessarily reading. They could use that area to calm down, so they had books to read or listen to, or other manipulatives. There was also an area where they could make-up work independently. They were always grouped by level; we did mixed level groups. Always had motivational posters on the wall and what the quote of the day was. The students would read it on their own and write down what they thought it meant, using the people at their table group. This way they could decipher words or meanings of which they were unsure. Then it was whole group discussion.
Teacher 11	With interactive notebooks, when the kids are broaching a topic or a lab, I always have them pre-read for information, some articles. So every article we read we mark the text and give comprehension questions. There are sometimes we do cause and effect. Always reading and marking the text. Sometimes we are embedding comprehension questions. My partner and I have embedded some into the articles. Questioning, reading and marking the text, and annotating the text. Not this year, pre-COVID I did vocabulary.com, I would have a bunch of words that went with the texts and information we were learning about. Then at the end of every week, I would give out prizes (like full-size candy bars) for kids who participated the most. It pulled some of the kids who were already high-level, but the kids in the reading classes would use it in their intensive classes and they would get their points. I used mixed-ability grouping based on FSA reading scores. I put them in groups of three: a high, mid, and low. We don't use a textbook; it is all in their interactive notebook. No classroom library, but one year we did silent reading and they gave us books for it. No word walls, everything is just in their notebook. They have a terms list and they do a word sort about their comfort level prior to and after the test. In the rush for the EOC we just don't have time.

The responses to this question varied greatly due to the onset of COVID protocols set forth by the Center for Disease Control (CDC). The protocols included: “physical distancing within buses, classrooms, and other areas of the school, healthy hygiene habits, cleaning and disinfection, use of masks, staggering student schedules, and planning for staff and teacher absences” (Center for Disease Control, 2020). Another option with the arrival of the global pandemic and the CDC protocols, schools could choose to reopen in a virtual setting. The

responses from teachers varied, based on whether they were in a brick and mortar building or virtually providing instruction. Teacher 7 provided feedback regarding using Zoom and breakout room features within the program to provide small group instruction time. Seven (41%) of the teachers referenced how their physical classroom space differed due to COVID restrictions, reporting students' desks six feet apart, everyone facing the same direction, and no small grouping. Before COVID protocols, teacher responses included flexible seating, shareable classroom libraries, and students sitting in groups facing each other for more accessible discussion.

Table 56

Teacher Online Survey Results Question 19: How Does Your District Prepare Educators to Implement Content Area Literacy in the Classroom?

Respondent	Response
Teacher 1	Through self-paced PD sessions
Teacher 2	They don't. I collaborate with other teachers and sometimes the district provides time
Teacher 3	My district has never specifically addressed content literacy with me.
Teacher 4	There are so many PD opportunities. Our instructional coaches also build lessons to promote literacy.
Teacher 5	Workshops are featured temporarily in district online, but prior to covid, teachers were given the opportunity to attend workshops outside the district.
Teacher 6	PLCs and PD
Teacher 7	There have been a few Professional Development Classes over the years but they are never specific to my content area.
Teacher 8	I'm not currently teaching but there is quite a bit of training that help educators implement content area literacy.
Teacher 9	Staff development
Teacher 10	PD
Teacher 11	Professional Development, AVID training, Kagan in the past
Teacher 12	This lies with the department head to offer ideas and with our training days
Teacher 13	It does not focus on this for science classrooms
Teacher 14	They don't. I get this training on my own.
Teacher 15	Formal inservices
Teacher 16	We used to have a fantastic professional development department for our district that would offer many courses to support literacy but our former superintendent removed the

Teacher 17	department. Hoping our newly hired super brings it back. Through CPT and PD meetings.
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Table 57

Teacher Interview Results Question 17: Does Your School Have a Policy for Content Area Literacy Implementation?

Respondent	Response
Teacher 8	No, I don't.
Teacher 11	I think there is an expectation, I think they look for it in or evaluation. I don't think the expectation has been clarified. We didn't have a lot of turnover last year, so not really; this year, with the new school opening, we have a lot of new people. At the end of this year, the principal cut a lot of people who weren't getting things done. I don't think the expectation has been clarified though, as opposed to other schools. Maybe they haven't felt that we need anything defined, but the expectation is there.

Table 58

Teacher Interview Results Question 18: How is Content Area Literacy Addressed in Your School?

Respondent	Response
Teacher 8	Well, a lot of the students have a language barrier. So they are in ESOL (English as a Second Language) classes, usually accommodating the students level of reading and how to achieve better literacy.
Teacher 11	Gosh, I feel like it used to be really cohesive with the strategies. When we did have those common AVID trainings, but I do feel the last few years we have gotten away from it. We have had a lot of staff turnover and every time we have a hurricane day, they wipe out our professional learning days. They have already taken our time for next year, trying to make up for the school loss during COVID. Maybe we will go back to that, since the third grade scores came in and are lower.

Out of the 17 teachers surveyed, 10 (59%) reported having professional development opportunities to learn how to incorporate literacy. Four (24%) reported not having access to professional development for literacy. Three (17%) reported attending sessions independently, outside of their district. During the follow-up interviews, Teacher 11 said their school does not

have a policy or implementation expectations for literacy. They also reported not having specific literacy training for their content area, which could mean their district does not have a formal policy for literacy integration within the content areas.

Table 59

Teacher Online Survey Results Question 20: What Strategy Do You Think had the Most Impact on Increasing Student Proficiency in Reading?

Respondent	Response
Teacher 1	Having them create analogies about five specific processes
Teacher 2	Discussions both in small group and large class. It forces kids to do the reading and get involved.
Teacher 3	I do not work specifically on reading, but we talk about looking at information and then writing journals during class. I also read content-related children's books to the class a few times a year.
Teacher 4	Fluency checks had helped. Making students read aloud as well. Also, I have students read things multiple times.
Teacher 5	When teaching a learning-disabled population, single strategy approaches have limited success.
Teacher 6	Finding text evidence, understanding how to find the right evidence, and having a strategy for each comprehension skill.
Teacher 7	When students read in their second language. The most important strategy is to pre-read, predict, and access prior knowledge.
Teacher 8	The students I served benefitted from highlighting and underlining valuable information as they read. They also did well when I personalized the content and practiced problem-solving skills together—setting small reading goals and letting my students guide their reading. I believed it increased their proficiency.
Teacher 9	Highlighting/annotating
Teacher 10	Socratic seminars
Teacher 11	Read & Mark or Annotate the text, followed by student-led discussion, followed up with written reflections
Teacher 12	Build general knowledge and close read/annotate
Teacher 13	Finding interesting articles that are at or slightly above reading level. Guided questions and discussion of articles
Teacher 14	Annotating keywords while reading

Teacher 15	THINK-PAIR-SHARE using formal analytical instruments (such as those produced by national archives)
Teacher 16	Vocabulary Word Mapping and the use of Socratics
Teacher 17	Having them find something that they are interested in and can relate to

Out of the 17 teachers surveyed, 14 (82%) instances reported content area literacy strategies were most impactful for student learning. Four (24%) instances reported disciplinary literacy strategies were most impactful for student learning. Two (12%) instances reported the classroom environment was most impactful for student learning.

Summary

Seventeen teachers and four administrators participated in the online survey portion of the study. In addition, two administrators and two teachers were willing to participate in virtual follow-up interviews. The respondents provided representation from four major regions in the United States: Southeast, Northeast, Midwest, and West. These regions represented a wide range of areas and states in the United States and therefore deemed acceptable as a sample group by the researcher and chair. Sixteen (94%) of the teachers who participated in the digital survey taught at the secondary level. All administrators reported working at the secondary level.

Content Area and Disciplinary Literacy

When asked about the definition of content area literacy, seven (41%) teachers gave an explanation which included the definition of disciplinary literacy. Nine (53%) reported strategies that reflect disciplinary literacy. Out of the seven teachers who reported disciplinary literacy definitions, four (57%) reported strategies that reflect disciplinary literacy. Teachers 1, 3, 4, and 6 consistently offered disciplinary literacy examples to the questions, whereas some reported content area literacy for some and disciplinary literacy

examples for others. This tells me those teachers may not have had literacy training specific to their discipline, but instead training adapted for any content.

Training and Certification. The lack of widespread training for both administrators and teachers in literacy development in the content area contributes to the inability for teachers to effectively teach the skills necessary to decode complex texts. Not all districts/states represented by the respondents for teachers or administrators, provide training in the content area or disciplinary literacy. None of the administrators had reading endorsements, and only two (12%) of the teachers were reading endorsed.

Classroom Environment. One (25%) of the administrators, Admin 3, reported literacy as part of the evaluation rubric. This means there are states which require teaching literacy in areas outside of Language Arts, and teachers are held accountable for their evaluation. Out of the 17 teachers surveyed, 14 (82%) referenced a classroom environment to encourage literacy development. Out of those 14 respondents, 4 (29%) teachers referenced having disciplinary literacy objects (i.e., science journals, biographical data for content scholars) readily available in the classroom. However, the COVID pandemic affected classroom setup to promote literacy development because of the CDC's protocols. Teachers had to adapt their environment to keep the students safe.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

Literacy development begins during language acquisition in the early years of a child's life. Most literacy skills further develop during the elementary years of school, but development could occur at any stage of a students' educational career. There is minimal research about teacher and administrator preparation for teaching literacy in the high school, using content area or disciplinary literacy. My study aimed to evaluate the preparedness of teachers and administrators in high schools with content area and disciplinary literacies. A portion of the stated purpose was to determine how the teacher and administrator development opportunities occurred and whether the training included content area and disciplinary literacy development. Another part of the stated purpose was to determine whether the training led to instructional opportunities utilizing those literacy development strategies and observation and coaching. Through a review of the literature and in my professional career, I found that much of the recent data for literacy development was focused on elementary school (K-5) teaching strategies and classroom environments that were most successful for increased student achievement levels.

I used two methods to garner information from teachers and administrators at the secondary level during this study: online surveys and virtual interviews. Through this methodology, I determined that both administrators and teachers had some training during their teacher preparedness programs or through district-provided professional development in literacy but lacked a definitive widespread understanding of each literacy style and how they could impact student learning. Content area literacy is an emphasis the techniques a novice might use to make sense of disciplinary text focusing on the study skills which help students

learn from a subject matter text (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012, p. 8). Disciplinary literacy is an emphasis on the knowledge and abilities possessed by those who create, communicate, and use knowledge within the discipline; it emphasizes the unique tools the experts in a discipline use to engage in the work of the discipline (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2012, p. 8).

Interpretations of Research

Research Question One

How are teachers prepared to teach content area and disciplinary literacy through the content areas? Based on the answers from the respondents, teachers are not adequately prepared to teach both content area and disciplinary literacies through high school content areas. The respondents reported a lack of widespread training to incorporate literacy skills into their lesson plans. The strategies teachers reported that had the most significant impact with increasing literacy proficiency with students were predominantly content area literacy strategies. The activities respondents reported, such as guided reading, marking the text, and reading journals, are ways to increase literacy across any content area. However, few teachers reported using disciplinary literacy strategies, such as reading from scientific journals and analyzing historical documents, which can build literacy skills within the context of content.

Research Question Two

How are administrators prepared to support content area and disciplinary literacy in the content areas? Based on the answers from the respondents, administrators are not adequately prepared to support content areas and disciplinary literacy in the content areas. Administrators typically serve as the instructional leaders in their buildings and are charged with evaluating teachers. State mandates require administrators to evaluate teachers'

effectiveness with incorporating literacy into their lessons but do not give them specific training on how to meet the accountability measures. For example, Marzano's teacher evaluation rubric, criterion 2, deals with effective teaching practices; subsection 2.7 requires the "use of academic vocabulary aligned to learning targets" (Carbaugh, Marzano, & Toth, 2018). McRel's teacher evaluation rubric specifically states literacy skills in the Content criterion and gives examples of potential activities in the Understanding criterion (McREL International, 2022, pp. 6-12). Where some districts may offer informational sessions regarding the criterion within the evaluation rubric, professional development, which can provide implementation strategies around literacy in the content area, would be helpful to garner desired evaluation results.

Research Question Three

What are the strategies teachers report which are most likely to have the greatest impact on increasing literacy proficiency? Based on respondents' answers, the strategies that had the most impact on student learning are content area literacy strategies. The respondents mentioned literacy-building strategies, including vocabulary skill development, reading and marking the text, and using comprehension checks after reading. When respondents answered Questions 15-18, 5 (29%) teachers consistently offered disciplinary literacy strategies and examples focused on content-related journals and analyzing primary sources in a historical context. Reasons for this may be from lack of training within disciplinary literacy or literacy in general.

Implications for Practice

I began my dissertation before the COVID-19 pandemic, where I served as an administrator in an urban setting. I focused most of my training and development for teachers

on how to increase literacy skills with our students. I later reentered the classroom during the pandemic, where I found that the tools I previously taught teachers in traditional training were not as valuable for the virtual modality. In addition, the engagement of both students and teachers changed significantly during COVID times, with schools offering entirely virtual options and others providing hybrid models where students attended part-time in person and virtually the rest of the time. All these options required teachers to plan, learn new classroom management methods, and thrive in uncharted settings. I intended to include explicit recommendations for practice in this section. However, the shift in instructional delivery models changed how teachers deliver information, and practical models are still in progress.

Professional Development

Widespread professional development, which teaches the use of both content area and disciplinary literacy strategies for content area teachers, is necessary (Zaidi, 2016). Content area reading strategies used for pre, during, and post-reading understanding are helpful across all disciplines. Typically, activities such as anticipation guides or anchor charts allow students a chance to predict what will happen in the text before reading. An activity such as reading and marking the text challenges the student to engage with the content as they are reading. In my professional opinion, reading journals are good post-reading processing activities. They connect students to the reading either through guided or free written entries.

Teacher Expectations. Since state legislatures approve the content and literacy benchmarks within each course, it would be beneficial for the states to provide training for the outcomes they wish to see. In addition, clear expectations regarding the usage of both content area and disciplinary literacy is necessary for teachers to develop lessons adequately

and for school-based administrators to evaluate the effectiveness of the lessons. The idea of clear expectations would complement widespread training and create assurances for teacher accountability purposes. If teachers are assessed on their ability to integrate literacy components, both they and the person evaluating them need to have a clear understanding what the components are and best practices for implementation with their student population.

Virtual Learning. Now that we are operating in varying modalities of virtual learning, students and teachers engage differently. One of the COVID protocols included social distancing, which negated the ability of students to work in groups. Performing ability grouping in the same manner was not possible. This strategy allowed for students to work together to decipher the meanings behind texts, where teachers would group students together who tested at higher and lower levels. Programs like Zoom and Google Hangouts provided a virtual “breakout” room space, where teachers could place students in a separate chat room, where small group discussions happened. This strategy should stimulate students in a classroom to work in small groups; however, in my professional experience, it was difficult to monitor all groups simultaneously and ensure the topics discussed were those of the assignment.

For students in a hybrid model of class or quarantined at home, utilizing a learning management system to deliver curricular material is helpful. Learning management systems are software applications that provide an educator with a virtual framework to deliver and track their courses. A learning management system, like Canvas, could give the students an interactive way to read and answer questions. I informally speak with my students at the end of each semester. At the end of the previous semester, I asked them what they felt was the most helpful in developing their literacy skills during our social studies classes. Many of the

conversations provided feedback regarding taking a significant reading passage and breaking it into small passages for reading each day. When I provided students with a smaller chunk of reading and comprehension questions each day, the feedback gave them small successes toward completing a writing assignment addressing the overarching themes within the larger reading piece.

Another way to engage students virtually in reading could be using various forms of discussion boards. Most high school students are familiar with social media platforms and educational discussion boards could operate similarly so that students can engage with their classmates and the text. Another suggestion from my informal conversation with a group of students I teach, recommended utilizing open-ended questions related to the text, therefore providing students an opportunity to post an answer, utilizing evidence from the reading to support their position, and not fear being incorrect.

The last and perhaps most important way to engage students in reading and develop their literacy skills is by creating an educational environment where students feel they can ask questions and take risks. Most college education courses have a management component that discusses the importance of building rapport with the students in your classroom. Unfortunately, COVID created a barrier, through virtual learning, masks, and quarantining, to traditional team-building practices. Still, those who developed a positive relationship with their students should have pivoted and had participated in all modalities of modern learning.

Historical Context. The original intent of this study was to work through a local school district and train content area teachers and their evaluating administrators with literacy best practices. Based on the states' proficiency requirements, I wanted to utilize the organizational goals for student literacy rates. Unfortunately, the pandemic affected the study

by preventing access to the intended in-person participants and required me to look to a virtual method to recruit subjects. When virtual learning became a reality, strategies for engaging students also changed.

Social Context. This study was formulated before the onset of COVID-19 because I noticed a lack of available training in the district where I worked at the time. As a result, student achievement was low and organizational leaders were frustrated with the effectiveness of the coaching model for literacy. In addition, the pandemic changed the landscape of education. What was considered standard practices do not work as well in the new modern classroom. This study might be replicable as the pandemic eases and people return to in-person teaching, but time away from the school changes the way students learn and engage in their content.

Recommendations for Organizational Change

While this study is not focused on one district or organization, these recommendations for change can be implemented for any group. Since the onset of the pandemic and the subsequent need for virtual learning, many state legislatures changed their testing and accountability measures. Districts need to reevaluate their methods of coaching teachers and administrators regarding literacy. The professional development model that could provide a tailored approach for each school could be a school-based coaching model. Coaches offer group and one-on-one training at the school to complement district plans for literacy integration. A teacher is urged to use technology in classrooms, often without instructional technology expertise. It would be beneficial for districts to integrate their literacy and technology coaching, so they can develop strategies for teachers to use both in-person and online.

Recommendations for Research

Further research using content area and disciplinary literacy as the focus is needed. Teachers and administrators both reported a lack of definitive understanding between the two styles of literacy and how these styles can impact student learning, specifically for students in secondary classrooms. The emphasis on accountability used high-stakes testing to determine student achievement before the COVID epidemic. I collected my data before some states changed the high-stakes testing requirements. Still, case studies conducted in school districts where overall professional development was implemented would be helpful. Suppose the state no longer requires general testing. In that case, pre and posttests based on specific student learning objectives could replace a standardized test and provide targeted student achievement data. Research regarding the use of *both* content area and disciplinary literacy strategies on standardized testing and whether one is more effective than the other in determining a student's proficiency would be helpful.

Researching many concepts regarding the current virtual modalities used in schools is also helpful. Using the three modalities: online, hybrid, and in-person, a researcher could determine literacy strategies that help students learn best and ways to assess student learning outside of a traditional standardized test. A coaching model which included the method teachers and administrators use to create a positive environment for virtual learning, where students feel confident to take risks and tasks are meaningful enough for completion by students, paired with literacy strategies and the impact on student achievement, would also be beneficial.

Overall, I hope this research will serve as a beginning for more inquiries into ways high school students develop literacy skills. Students require various strategies to attain

knowledge, and training both teachers and administrators to support the ever-changing learning methods would be beneficial.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Survey Questions: Teacher Participant

APPENDIX B: Survey Questions: Administrator Participant

APPENDIX C: Interview Questions: Teacher Participant

APPENDIX D: Interview Questions: Administrator Participant

APPENDIX E: Recruitment Flyer for Social Media: Teacher Participant

APPENDIX F: Recruitment Flyer for Social Media: Administrator Participant

APPENDIX A

Survey Questions: Teacher Participant

Please select yes or no for the following questions:

1. Do you teach at the high school level?
2. Do you have a reading endorsement?
3. Have you been trained in content-area literacy?

Please select all that apply for the following questions:

4. Check all of the grade levels you have taught:
Grade K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, Post-Secondary
5. Check any accelerated levels you have taught:
Honors, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Cambridge Advanced International Certificate of Education, College Dual-Enrollment
6. At the beginning of a typical school year, what percentage of your students were reading on grade level?
0-25%, 26-50%, 51-75%, 76-100%
7. At the end of a typical school year, what percentage of students were reading on grade level?
0-25%, 26-50%, 51-75%, 76-100%
8. What percentage of students in your school receive free or reduced-price lunch?
0-25%, 26-50%, 51-75%, 76-100%, unsure
9. What percentage of students in your school are classified as English Language Learners?
0-25%, 26-50%, 51-75%, 76-100%, unsure
10. What percentage of students in your school are classified as students with disabilities?
0-25%, 26-50%, 51-75%, 76-100%, unsure
11. What type of educator program did you complete:
Traditional educator undergraduate program, Graduate degree leading to certification, district alternative certification program, state alternative certification program, Other (Please specify)

Please provide written responses to questions 7 - 16.

12. How many years have you been an educator?
13. What subject do you teach?
14. Which state are you currently employed?
15. How do you define content area literacy?
16. Can you list specific examples that would constitute content area literacy?
17. How do you integrate literacy into your lessons?
18. Describe the layout of your classroom to promote literacy development.
19. How does your district prepare educators to implement content area literacy in the classroom?

20. What strategy do you think had the most impact on increasing student proficiency in reading?
21. Is there anything else you would like me to know?
22. Would you be interested in participating in a follow-up interview with the researcher?
If yes, please provide your name and email address below.

APPENDIX B

Survey Questions: Administrator Participant

Please select yes or no for the following questions:

1. Are you an administrator at the high school level?
2. Do you have a reading endorsement?
3. Have you been trained in content-area literacy?

Please select all that apply for the following questions:

4. Check all of the levels for which you have been an administrator:
Elementary, Middle/Junior High School, High School
5. Check any accelerated levels your school offers :
Honors, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Cambridge Advanced International Certificate of Education, College Dual-Enrollment
6. What type of educator program did you complete:
Traditional educator undergraduate program, Graduate degree leading to certification, district alternative certification program, state alternative certification program, Other (Please specify)
7. What type of administrative program did you complete:
Graduate degree leading to certification, District alternative certification program, State alternative certification program, Other
8. What percentage of the students were reading on grade level?
0-25%, 26-50%, 51-75%, 76-100%
9. What percentage of the students in your school receive free or reduced-price lunch?
0-25%, 26-50%, 51-75%, 76-100%, unsure
10. What percentage of the students in your school are classified as English Language Learners?
0-25%, 26-50%, 51-75%, 76-100%, unsure
11. What percentage of the students in your school are classified as students with disabilities?
0-25%, 26-50%, 51-75%, 76-100%, unsure

Please provide written responses to questions 7 - 16.

12. How many years have you been an educator?
13. In which state are you currently employed?
14. How do you define content area literacy?
15. Can you list specific examples that would constitute content area literacy?
16. How is content-area literacy addressed in your school?
17. How do you check for content area literacy activities or strategies when evaluating?
18. How does your district prepare administrators to look for content area literacy when evaluating?
19. Is there anything else you would like me to know?

20. Would you be interested in participating in a follow-up interview with the researcher?
If yes, please provide your name and email address below.

APPENDIX C

Interview Questions: Teacher Participant

Interviews may be scheduled as a follow-up for more information with regard to the online survey questions:

1. How many years have you been an educator?
2. What subject do you teach?
3. Which state are you currently employed?
4. Do you teach at the high school level?
5. Do you have a reading endorsement?
6. Have you been trained in content area literacy?
7. How do you define content area literacy?
8. Can you list specific examples that would constitute content area literacy?
9. Do you integrate literacy into your lessons?
10. Describe the layout of your classroom to promote literacy development.
11. How is content area literacy addressed in your school?
12. Does your school have a policy for content area literacy implementation?
13. Is there anything else you would like me to know?

APPENDIX D

Interview Questions: Administrator Participant

Interviews may be scheduled as a follow-up for more information with regard to the online survey questions:

1. How many years have you been an educator?
2. Which state are you currently employed?
3. Are you an administrator at the secondary level?
4. Do you have a reading endorsement?
5. Have you been trained in content area literacy?
6. How do you define content area literacy?
7. Can you list specific examples that would constitute content area literacy?
8. Does your district have a policy for content area literacy development?
9. How is content area literacy addressed in your school?
10. If you do observations, how comfortable are you with evaluating content area literacy?
11. Does your school have a policy for content area literacy implementation?
12. Is there anything else you would like me to know?

APPENDIX E

Recruitment Flyer for Social Media: Teacher Participant

TEACHERS HELPING TEACHERS

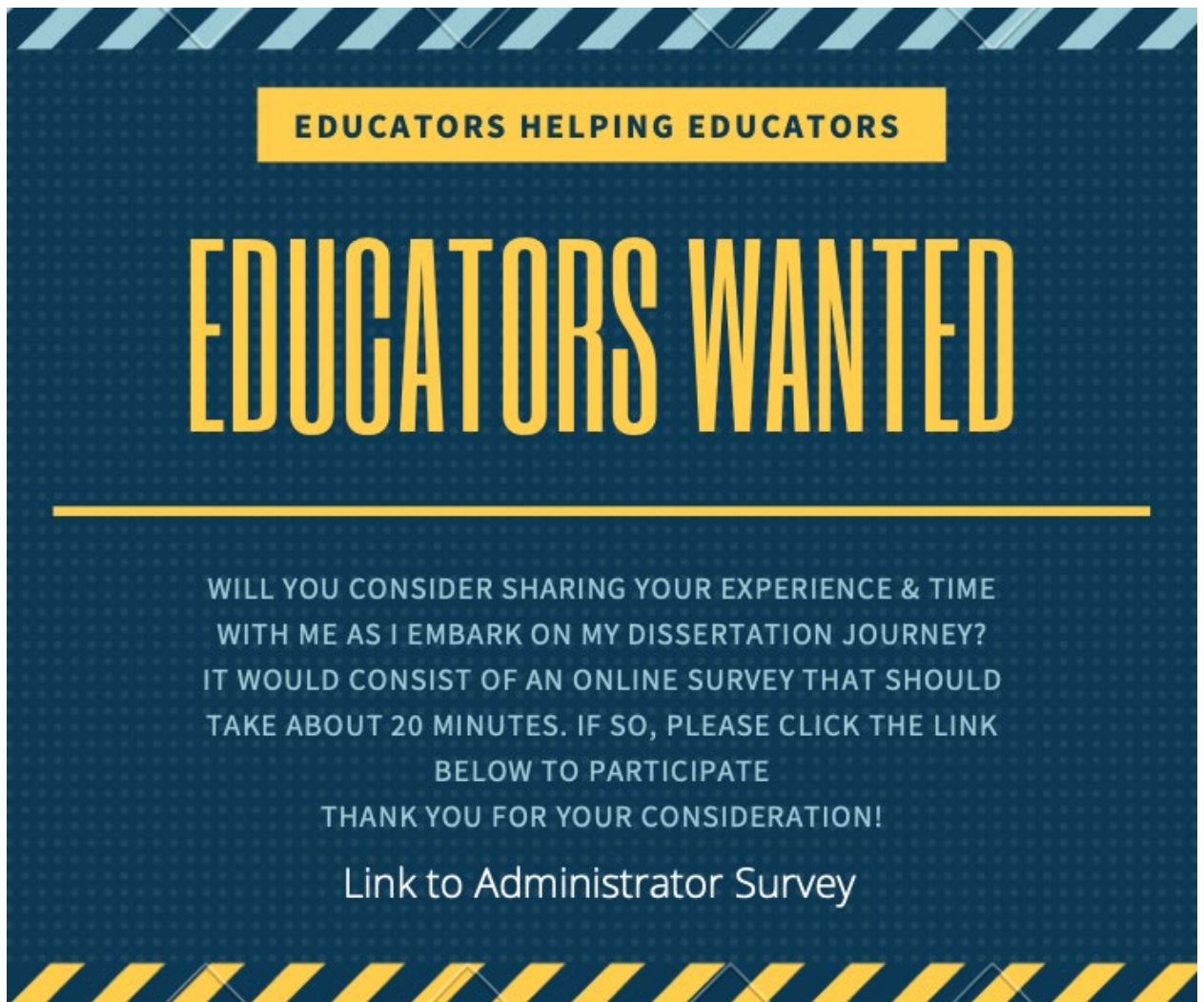
EDUCATORS WANTED

WILL YOU CONSIDER SHARING YOUR EXPERIENCE & TIME
WITH ME AS I EMBARK ON MY DISSERTATION JOURNEY?
IT WOULD CONSIST OF AN ONLINE SURVEY THAT SHOULD
TAKE ABOUT 20 MINUTES. IF SO, PLEASE CLICK THE LINK
BELOW TO PARTICIPATE
THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION!

[Link to Teacher Survey](#)

APPENDIX F

Recruitment Flyer for Social Media: Administrator Participant

The flyer has a dark blue background with a light blue dotted pattern. At the top and bottom, there are decorative borders with diagonal stripes in light blue and yellow. A yellow rectangular box at the top contains the text "EDUCATORS HELPING EDUCATORS" in dark blue. Below this, the words "EDUCATORS WANTED" are written in large, bold, yellow capital letters. A horizontal yellow line separates the title from the main text. The main text is in white, all-caps, and reads: "WILL YOU CONSIDER SHARING YOUR EXPERIENCE & TIME WITH ME AS I EMBARK ON MY DISSERTATION JOURNEY? IT WOULD CONSIST OF AN ONLINE SURVEY THAT SHOULD TAKE ABOUT 20 MINUTES. IF SO, PLEASE CLICK THE LINK BELOW TO PARTICIPATE THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION!". At the bottom, the text "Link to Administrator Survey" is written in white, with "Link" and "Survey" in a smaller font size than "Administrator".

EDUCATORS HELPING EDUCATORS

EDUCATORS WANTED

WILL YOU CONSIDER SHARING YOUR EXPERIENCE & TIME
WITH ME AS I EMBARK ON MY DISSERTATION JOURNEY?
IT WOULD CONSIST OF AN ONLINE SURVEY THAT SHOULD
TAKE ABOUT 20 MINUTES. IF SO, PLEASE CLICK THE LINK
BELOW TO PARTICIPATE
THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION!

Link to Administrator Survey