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A Case Study: Teachers' Perceptions Of The Influence Of Professional Development On Self-Efficacy Related To Implementing A Balanced Literacy Model

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A CASE STUDY: TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE INFLUENCE OF PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT ON SELF-EFFICACY RELATED TO IMPLEMENTING A BALANCED
LITERACY MODEL

A Dissertation

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Doctor of Education

By

Kathryn Kryscio

December 2022

A CASE STUDY: TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE INFLUENCE OF PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT ON SELF-EFFICACY RELATED TO IMPLEMENTING A BALANCED
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By

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Approved December 8, 2022 by

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Dedication

It is with great admiration and thanksgiving that I dedicate my dissertation to my parents, Dr. Richard Kryscio and Karen Kryscio. Thank you for your unconditional love and support. Thank you for modeling the importance of faith, education, perseverance, and teamwork to my siblings and me. I hope to instill the same values in my sons, Luke and Zak; may you both have unswerving faith and steadfast perseverance to conquer your goals and pursue your dreams!

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To the true superhero, God. Thank you for opening the doors for me and orchestrating the precise support I needed each step of the way in this journey.

To my support team, you are my greatest asset. I am a better person because of each one of you. Luke and Zak, you inspire me each day because you are determined and resilient. To my Kryscio family, thank you for cheering me along this eleven-year journey! Dr. Serenity Wright, thank you for your honesty, wisdom, and perspective; I couldn't have done this without you! Kim, Jennifer, Mom, and Andrea, thank you for faithfully reminding me I am loved and not alone. Joy, Ashleigh, April, Carmen, Amanda, Elise, Jaimie, Paige, Parker, Diana, my teacher colleagues, my doctoral peers, thank you for your consistent encouragement.

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Abstract

Researchers have known for several years that when a child is reading below proficiency by the end of third grade, it is likely the child will continue to struggle learning to read through the child's academic career (Dickinson & Porche, 2011; Wasik & Hindman, 2011). Yet, the problem of children falling below third grade reading proficiency continues. If teaching a child to read is a moral purpose, and it is essential for a child to read proficiently by the end of third grade, then literacy instruction in kindergarten through third grade is pivotal. In this case study, the researcher sought to illustrate the beliefs and literacy teaching practices of teacher participants within one public school district that provided training in Balanced Literacy components and required teachers to implement Balanced Literacy. Specific research questions explored teacher perceptions of self-efficacy and preparedness to implement Balanced Literacy. A purposive convenience sample was used to identify Kindergarten, Grade 1, and Grade 2 teachers within the school district who taught literacy to their students in the 2016-2017, 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years. Individual interviews and classroom observations were transcribed and coded by discrete idea relative the study's conceptual and theoretical frameworks: Fountas and Pinnell's (1996) Balanced Literacy framework and Bandura's (1997) sources of self-efficacy theories. Findings indicated teacher self-efficacy varied across Balanced Literacy components. Teachers felt most prepared to teach Word Study. Teachers benefited from modeling by the Reading Specialist, felt encouraged by feedback, and desired support in differentiating instruction. Word Study instruction had high alignment to the Balanced Literacy Model provided by the school district, and Guided Reading and Writing Workshop had low alignment. These findings validate the support the school district provides for teachers and directs school leaders in developing professional development needs to support stronger reading teachers.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

Among the most valuable gifts an educator can give a student is the ability to read and write. When a child is a proficient reader and writer, it is a positive for the child's future and for society. It is positive for the child because being a literate adult means, for example, more opportunities open to better jobs and higher incomes. It is positive for society because a child who can read and write is more likely to become an adult who is a productive, taxpaying citizen, better able to contribute to the community (Bartik, 2014; Snow et al., 1998).

However, if a child does not learn to read, it has the potential to harm the child and society. Illiteracy limits a child's opportunities. A person must be able to read proficiently to attain and succeed in most professional or technical jobs. Illiteracy has been linked to higher dropout rates, teenage pregnancies, delinquent behavior, and prison time (Chetty et al., 2014). When Greenberg and colleagues (2007) studied the prison population, they found 50-56% of inmates had either basic or below basic literacy. Each of these negative consequences associated with illiteracy increases the chance of poverty and has a negative impact on society. When educators teach students to read proficiently, it has the potential to change the trajectory of the students' lives, increasing the chance of creating a productive citizen who contributes to society. Educators have a moral purpose to teach students to read and write.

If society agrees literacy is a priority, then educators must teach students to read. In the United States, students typically learn to read in kindergarten through second grade. In these

grades, the child will learn how to decode, or use letter sounds and word parts to read new words. Starting in third grade, the child transitions and focuses on comprehension. After third grade, the child is expected to use his or her reading skills independently to read and gain content knowledge and to learn additional subjects, such as history and science. To build a foundation for future academic success, children should be reading proficiently by the end of third grade (Hernandez, 2011; Houck & Ross, 2012; Joint Legislative Audit And Review Commission [JLARC], 2011). If a child is not reading proficiently by the end of third grade, it is likely the child will continue to struggle learning to read (Dickinson & Porche, 2011; JLARC, 2011; Wasik & Hindman, 2011). When a child begins to fall behind in reading proficiency, the child is at risk for the negative consequences previously discussed. In U.S. schools, the problem of children falling below third grade reading proficiency continues. In 2017, 68% of the nation's fourth grade students did not meet the reading proficiency criteria; this number is not significantly different than the percentage in 2015 but was significantly higher than reading scores from 1992 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). If this stagnant trend continues, over half of the nation's children are at risk for illiteracy.

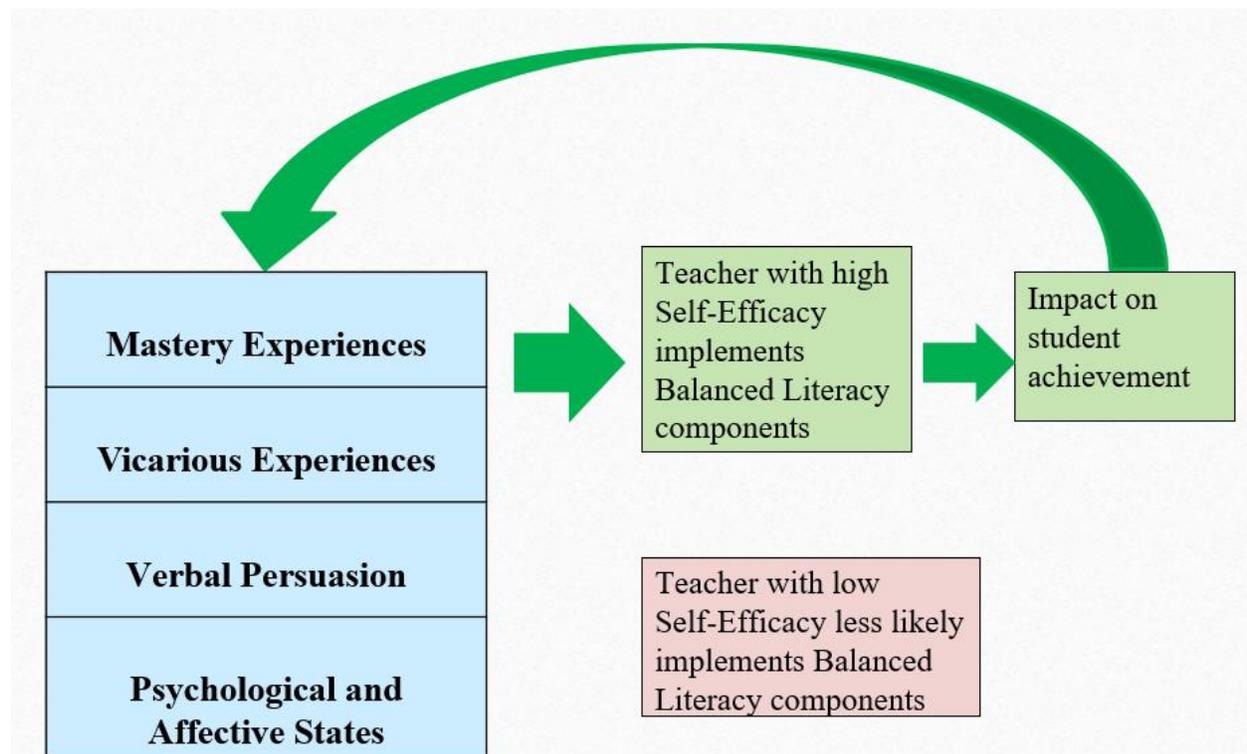
If teaching a child to read is a moral purpose, and it is essential for a child to read proficiently by the end of third grade, then literacy instruction in kindergarten through third grade is pivotal. This study examined how a sample of teachers in one school district perceive their literacy instruction. Extant literature related to self-efficacy reveals that a teacher's self-efficacy determines how persistent the teacher is in meeting the instructional needs of her students. This study explored teacher perceptions of self-efficacy and preparedness to implement Balanced Literacy.

Conceptual Framework

Many factors determine an individual teacher's implementation of instructional strategies. A teacher's self-efficacy is one construct that determines the extent to which a teacher may embrace and implement strategies introduced during teacher training experiences. Self-efficacy, or a person's perception of her ability, may determine how motivated a teacher is to implement a new strategy (Bandura, 1997). A teacher's self-efficacy is developed through four sources. The sources of self-efficacy are represented in Figure 1, with a rectangle. A teacher's self-efficacy may come from one source or more than one source of self-efficacy. At the top of the rectangle is the most powerful source of self-efficacy, mastery experiences, or personal experiences in which an individual teacher is witness to student improvement based on her teaching (Bandura, 1997). When a teacher does not have mastery experiences, such as a novice teacher, or a teacher has not yet developed mastery experiences because they are implementing a new teaching strategy, the teacher will rely on other sources of self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007). In the second row of the rectangle is the second source of self-efficacy, vicarious experience, in which the teacher observes another teacher modeling a successful teaching strategy, or a teacher attends training in which new strategies are modeled (Bandura, 1997). The other sources are listed in subsequent rows of the rectangle, verbal persuasion (feedback) and physiological and affective states (a teacher's mood). Mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and psychological and affective states are all in bold-face print because I focused my study on these sources of teacher self-efficacy. Figure 1 depicts the sources of self-efficacy.

Figure 1

Impact of Self-Efficacy



In this case study, the construct of self-efficacy interacts with the construct of Balanced Literacy. Fountas and Pinnell’s (1996) Balanced Literacy framework is an instructional approach that uses both phonics and whole language to guide a teacher’s reading and writing instruction. The school district that provided the context of this study provided teacher training in the Balanced Literacy areas of Writing Workshop and Guided Reading.

The two constructs interact because a teacher’s level of self-efficacy will determine how likely a teacher is to implement components of Balanced Literacy with fidelity. For example, a teacher with high self-efficacy, or belief that she is capable of impacting students, is more likely

to perceive the new teaching strategy as a challenge, willingly embrace the change, and implement Writing Workshop and Guided Reading into her classroom teacher practices (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). However, a teacher with low self-efficacy might feel threatened by the new strategy and be less likely to implement Writing Workshop and Guided Reading in her classroom. Evidence also suggests that self-efficacy impacts both teachers and students. Researchers acknowledge that teacher self-efficacy is powerful predictor of student achievement, more so than a child's socioeconomic background, pre-assessed reading level, or the teacher's level of teaching experience and education (Armor et al., 1976). Teachers with higher self-efficacy believed they could affect student achievement (Armor et al. 1976). In Figure 1, a teacher with a higher teacher-self efficacy is more likely to implement the components of Balanced Literacy and more likely to affect student achievement.

Self-efficacy is cyclical in nature. Figure 1 uses a curved line to depict this cyclical nature. When a teacher successfully influences student achievement, the teacher gains confidence, and this increases her mastery experiences, motivating her desire to develop future self-efficacy (Hansen, 2006). Looking at Figure 1, a teacher with high self-efficacy must have experienced successful teaching experiences, high impact teacher training experiences, or positive feedback. However, a novice teacher might not have gained mastery experiences and will need to rely on the other sources of self-efficacy in the rectangle which may impact her future self-efficacy beliefs.

Problem Statement

The purpose of this case study is to understand the lived experiences of teachers within one school district who are implementing Balanced Literacy. Tribe School District (TSD) bounded this case study because TSD deployed Balanced Literacy professional development to

their teachers starting in 2015. This study describes how teachers within TSD who share similar training experiences perceived their own self-efficacy and preparedness to implement Balanced Literacy. If TSD instructional leaders responded to a literacy need within the school district by introducing a new instructional model and providing training, then it was worthwhile to explore the observed and articulated perceptions of the teachers who have experienced this training.

For the past 4 years, TSD has provided professional development to teachers in Grades K-5 to support the implementation of Balanced Literacy instruction, specifically in the Balanced Literacy subset areas called Guided Reading and Writing Workshop. I proposed a close examination of these subsets because Guided Reading (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Routman, 2000; Tompkins, 2009) and Writing Workshop (Routman, 1991) are the heart of Balanced Literacy instruction. I explored the lived experiences of teachers in TSD who have implemented Balanced Literacy in their classrooms because I want to hear from teachers how the program is being implemented. To develop an in-depth understanding of this case, I conducted in-person interviews and observed Balanced Literacy classroom instruction with all participants and explored how teachers observed and articulated perceptions aligned with the Balanced Literacy model.

Context

TSD is a public school district located in the southeastern region of the United States. TSD is a high performing school district, and all schools are accredited. TSD serves approximately 13,000 students in preschool through 12th grades. TSD has a high mobility student population, with nearly half of the student body having parents in the military. Diversity is increasing in TSD, especially regarding increased enrollment of English Language Learners. A small population of students, 29.4%, in TSD receive free and reduced-price lunch. In 2013, TSD

developed an instructional reading model, outlining what reading and writing instruction should look like in Grades K-5. This study explored teacher perceptions of self-efficacy and preparedness to implement Balanced Literacy.

Instructional Reading Model

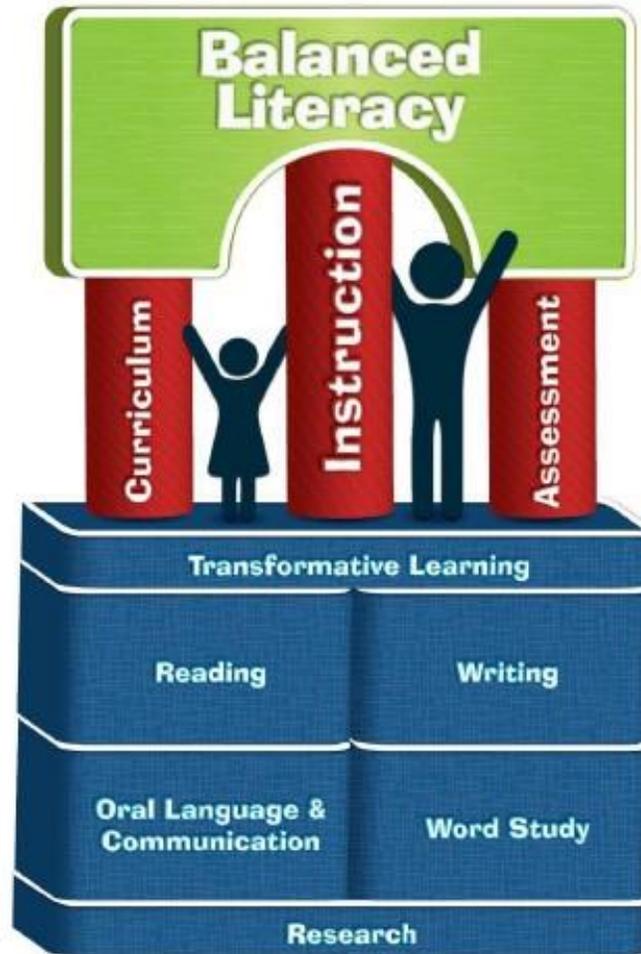
I interviewed an instructional leader in TSD to gain an understanding of the background of the instructional reading model. The following are findings from the internal interview. TSD established an objective in the school district's strategic plan to create a K-5 instructional reading model. This was the result of an internal evaluation of the school district's literacy instruction. TSD determined they needed a model to outline the philosophy for teaching reading, and a model that Guided Reading and writing instruction for teachers. TSD acknowledged they did not adopt literacy materials or conduct district-wide literacy training in the last decade. Therefore, prior to the instructional reading model, much was left open for teacher interpretation.

As the district continued to investigate areas for improvement in reading instruction, they issued a follow-up survey to teachers. Results showed that teachers had high levels of confidence in being able to deliver instruction and suggests teachers had a high self-efficacy. However, the follow-up survey revealed a moderate number of teachers said they needed more resources, materials, and assessments. Only half of the teachers said they regularly used running records as an informal assessment to determine how to help a child problem solve when reading. These findings suggested that even though teachers felt confident, they needed more support from the school district in terms of resources and assessment. Findings from the interview and follow-up survey indicated problems with the TSD reading model and a deficit in teacher resources and assessment.

Since 2013, the school district has taken several steps to implement a new instructional reading model (Figure 2). These steps include forming a District Literacy Team with representative stakeholders, including a classroom teacher, principal, and reading specialists from each elementary school across TSD. The District Literacy Team reviews current trends and best practices in reading and writing instruction. Each year the District Literacy Team adds more description to the instructional reading model. Additionally, each year the district provides training for targeted components of Balanced Literacy instruction. The model is intended to be a guide for Literacy instruction in TSD because it outlines best practices for kindergarten through fifth grade literacy instruction. In this study, references made to the TSD Balanced Literacy (TSD BL) are used to help the reader distinguish between TSD BL and the term Balanced Literacy in the extant literature.

Figure 2

Tribe School District Balanced Literacy Model



Note. This shows the district’s literacy model as of the 2019-2020 school year. The model is considered a living document and the District Literacy Team meets regularly to review and update this model and its supporting documents.

Intended Launch of Balanced Literacy. In a 4-year period, TSD implemented Balanced Literacy and focused on training teachers in selected components of the framework. In the first year of implementation, the focus was reading. TSD reviewed the current resources and replaced the older basal reader with another basal reading program. Instead of using the new reading

program as a scripted program, TSD recommended teachers use the new resources as one method among many to deliver and assess literacy instruction. Additionally, TSD teachers were trained in recording informal running records and conducting Guided Reading.

In the second year of implementation, the focus was on Writing Workshop. TSD used a train-the-trainer model with each school’s designated instructional trainers serving as experts responsible for attending Writing Workshop professional development sessions. These representatives would then adapt key elements of the professional development sessions into training for the staff in their schools. Professional development activities were also held to identify the expectations for a literacy rich classroom environment, and to train teachers how to allocate time for each component of the Balanced Literacy framework.

In the third and fourth year of Balanced Literacy implementation, the implementation focus for the literacy model was word study. Teachers were trained using a new word study assessment tool, introduced to a new word study scope and sequence to teach word patterns, and trained in a Day 1-5 instructional framework that outlined best practices and word study instructional expectations.

Table 1

Timeline of Balanced Literacy Teacher Training in Tribe School District

Timeframe	Balanced Literacy Teacher Training Focus
Year 1 (2015-2016)	Guided Reading, informal running records, replacing scripted basal reading program
Year 2 (2016-2017)	Writing Workshop, literacy rich classroom environment, allocating time for Balanced Literacy components
Year 3 (2017-2018)- Year 4 (2018-2019)	Word Study assessment tool, Word Study scope and sequence, Day 1-5 instructional framework

In TSD, the teacher participants have had similar Literacy training experiences with Writing Workshop and word study. Participants were asked to reflect on their teacher training experiences, and how these experiences have impacted their implementation of Balanced Literacy.

Research Questions

This study explored teacher perceptions of self-efficacy and preparedness to implement Balanced Literacy. These research questions guided the case study:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of their preparedness to implement Guided Reading and Writing Workshop?
2. What are teachers' perceptions of the extent to which their self-efficacy related to providing literacy instruction has affected their teaching practices?
3. To what degree is the observed implementation of Balanced Literacy strategies aligned with the professional development provided in a school district's Balanced Literacy model?

Significance of the Study

This study explored how teachers perceived self-efficacy and preparedness impacts their literacy instruction. Findings from this study could inform future professional development needs in TSD and support the development of stronger reading teachers. In turn, those teachers could positively impact the trajectory of student success.

This study took place within one school district, TSD. TSD invested time and resources to establish a district Balanced Literacy model and provide training to support teachers. Findings from my study could validate TSD's efforts to support teachers' Balanced Literacy implementation or could suggest changes to further support teachers' self-efficacy. Findings

could also be meaningful for the instructional leaders who support classroom teachers in TSD. To develop stronger reading teachers who can improve student achievement, we first needed to explore and understand teachers' perceptions of how their training experiences influenced their implementation of the Balanced Literacy model. This study shed light on what teachers found helpful in developing their self-efficacy, and what areas teachers still need to grow. The findings could point TSD school leaders to pay attention to what works to translate a district mandated Literacy Model into classroom action. Instead of providing one district level Guided Reading training in the 2015-2016 school year and expecting teachers to remember the training, teachers felt ongoing support from Reading Specialists in their schools was most influential. Therefore, findings from this study could help school leaders improve how they design teacher training experiences to support teachers' self-efficacy to positively affect student achievement.

Definitions of Terms

- **Balanced Literacy:** an instructional approach for teaching reading and writing in which the teacher integrates whole language and explicit phonics skills (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012).
- **Guided Reading:** a component of the Balanced Literacy model in which a teacher meets with a small group of students who are grouped by similar levels. In the 20-30-minute Guided Reading group, students read a teacher-selected leveled text to practice their decoding work. After reading, teachers discuss how selected words are built (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).
- **Gradual release of responsibility:** a scaffolding framework in which the teacher helps each student accept total ownership for the reading and writing tasks. The framework begins with the teacher modeling most of the task. Teacher modeling

leads into guided practice in which the teacher guides the student in applying the strategy. Eventually the student is fully responsible for the task (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983).

- **Self-efficacy:** “refers to beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (Bandura, 1997, p. 3).
- **Teacher training experiences:** experiences in which the teacher learned how to teach. These experiences might include undergraduate or graduate courses, student teaching experiences, professional development sessions, or professional learning communities.
- **Writing Workshop:** the guided writing component of the Balanced Literacy model (Routman, 1991). Writing Workshop includes a teacher-led mini-lesson, student writing time in which teachers confer with students, and a student sharing session (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The rate at which a student progresses in reading and writing is one of the best predictors of whether the student will be able to function competently in school and will go on to actively contribute as a member in a literate society (Meyer, 2008). To have literate students, the field of education needs teachers who effectively implement instructional strategies related to reading. The teaching of reading is a challenging and complex process (Armor et al., 1976), but self-efficacy gives teachers the confidence they need to meet this challenge. Research on self-efficacy suggests that a teacher with high self-efficacy will work harder and persevere to meet the needs of students (Bandura, 1997). Developing teacher self-efficacy has tremendous benefits; however less is known about how teachers perceive their self-efficacy affects their literacy instruction. Although there is plentiful research about the importance of self-efficacy, few researchers have looked specifically at how teachers perceive their self-efficacy impacts reading and writing instruction, or whether teachers perceive that they are making a difference in the reading and writing achievement of their students.

Balanced Literacy

The term Balanced Literacy was first used in the United States in 1996. California public schools implemented a new curriculum called Balanced Literacy in response to low student reading performance on national examinations (California Department of Education, 1996). When California experienced gains in their student reading scores using a Balanced Literacy curriculum, many educators began implementing and promoting a Balanced Literacy approach

(Wren, n.d.). Balanced Literacy was compelling because it combined elements from the whole language approach with phonics, a skills-based approach, to teach children to read (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012).

Prior to the implementation of Balanced Literacy, there had been a long-standing debate about how to teach children to read. On one side of the debate—the phonics approach—researchers believed systematic phonics instruction was the necessary approach to teaching students to read (Chall, 1967). Students begin by learning the alphabetic code, or the relationship between letters and sounds, and learned to decode words in isolation before starting to read words within a text (Chall, 1967). In a phonics-based approach, beginning readers spend most of the time learning letters and sounds and reading words in lists and decodable texts—books that use a contrived pattern and simple vocabulary throughout the text. Then, when students have a grasp of phonics, the teacher begins discussing word meanings and students move on to enjoying stories with a meaningful plot (Chall, 1967).

The whole language approach is the other side of the reading debate. In the whole language approach, researchers do not advocate breaking the language into decodable letters and sounds (Stahl & Miller, 1989). Rather, whole language researchers believe students construct meaning from language because words function in relation to one another (Moats, 2007). In the whole language approach, students are immersed in text and enjoy authentic reading experiences; students learn how to read with exposure to literature rather than being taught the language (Smith, 1971). Students are not required to demonstrate mastery of phonics skills before being given the opportunity to read and write. In the whole language approach, emphasis is placed on exposure to “real literature” regardless of whether the student can read the words on the page (Moats, 2007).

After four decades of the phonics-whole language debate, also known as the reading wars, in 1997, Congress commissioned a National Reading Panel (NRP) to assess the research-based knowledge and the effectiveness of different approaches to teaching students to read. The NRP expanded on the work of Snow et al. (1998). The NRP Report (National Institutes of Health, 2000) remains a seminal study. For this Literature Review, I provide a broad overview of the NRP, then focus on the aspects of the NRP report that are relevant to my study. Fourteen individuals were chosen that made up the NRP including reading research scientists, education college representatives, reading teachers, administrators in education, and parents. The NRP hosted public hearings to listen to stakeholders, and determine which issues were important to the public. After the public hearings, the NRP discussed the views shared by stakeholders and decided to proceed with the following topics for intensive study: Alphabetic (Phonemic Awareness and Phonics instruction), Fluency, Comprehension (Vocabulary, and Text Comprehension, as well as Teacher Preparation and Comprehension Strategies instruction), Teacher Education and Reading Instruction, Computer Technology and Reading Instruction. Then, the NRP developed and used stringent criteria to screen study in the extant literature in each of these areas. For each of the reading subareas above, if the study met the NRP criteria, then the NRP pursued further analysis, and used the analysis to answer specific questions and draw conclusions based on the studies.

The NRP concluded that teacher training increased student achievement. When teachers were provided training experiences in phonemic awareness, the students' phonemic awareness, reading, and spelling skills improved. NRP also pointed out that the teacher and student motivation is a critical ingredient of success. The NRP also concluded that there is variation in a teacher's explicitness of phonics instruction. The NRP (National Institutes of Health, 2000)

found that systematic and explicit phonics instruction impacts students more than non-systematic or no phonics instruction. Systematic instruction in phonics increases students' ability in learning to read from kindergarten through Grade 6 as well as for students with difficulties in learning to read. In Kindergarten and Grade 1, students were able to decode and spell words when given explicit phonics instruction, and explicit phonics instruction positively impacted student comprehension. When students in Grades 2–6 were given phonics instruction, it increased their decoding and spelling, but did not affect their comprehension. The NRP (National Institutes of Health, 2000) recommended explicit and systematic phonics instruction is a necessary and vital component of a successful classroom reading program, and should be integrated with instruction in phonemic awareness, fluency, and comprehension strategies for a comprehensive reading program. The NRP (National Institutes of Health, 2000) asserted that the teacher's role is essential. The NRP (National Institutes of Health, 2000) advised it is crucial that teachers are provided with evidence-based training in both preservice and in-service training so that teachers can choose and implement the most effective and phonics instruction and assess the needs of their individual students and adjust to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of their students. Additionally, during the NRP's (National Institutes of Health, 2000) discussion of comprehension, the NRP pointed out that teacher preparation is linked to students' reading comprehension achievement because teacher preparation equips teachers to develop and apply their comprehension strategies. The NRP reminded us that teaching reading comprehension at all grade levels is complex because a) teachers need a firm understanding of the context within the teacher provided text; b) the teacher must be flexible in providing the most effective strategies for different students' needs; c) teacher's need to know how to best model and teach these necessary strategies; and d) the skillful teacher needs to remain flexible to provide instructive

feedback as the student reads. The NRP emphasized there is a problematic gap between studies that outline best practices and implementing the best practices as strategies in the classrooms. Therefore, teachers need extensive training in reading comprehension, preferably beginning in preservice. As a final relevant finding, while there were limited studies of the quality of teacher education that measured student outcomes, the NRP (National Institutes of Health, 2000) found in-service professional development led to significantly higher student achievement.

Expanding on the work of the NRP, the JLARC (2011) studied teaching methods that increased reading proficiency and comprehension for third grade students in the state of Virginia. Members of JLARC (2011) analyzed third grade standardized test data, surveyed school districts within the state of Virginia, performed site visits, classroom observations, interviewed literacy experts and reviewed the literature. Although the Commission provided several recommendations that will increase third grade students' reading proficiency, I discuss the recommendations that are relevant to my study's focus.

JLARC (2011) echoed NRP's (National Institutes of Health, 2000) recommendations by stating that a classroom reading program should include key components: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, text comprehension, and writing. JLARC also added support for NRP's recommendation for a systematic and effective phonics instruction, especially in kindergarten and grade one. JLARC added to NRP's research and asserted the following best practices support teachers' implementation of the key components. First, a daily reading block should include, and total a minimum of 90 to 120 minutes. Second, small group differentiated instruction is vital to the reading block. Third, teachers should use data to group students by ability level and to guide instruction. When teachers differentiate reading instruction, teachers match the instruction with student need, and students achieve greater success. However, during

the interviews and observations conducted by the JLARC (2011) staff, teachers reported they desire to implement small-group differentiated instruction but the teachers believe they need more training experiences in order to implement effectively. Compared to whole group and small group instruction, the ability for a teacher to differentiate instruction requires a deeper knowledge of teacher skills because the teacher is required to diagnose individual needs and adjust their instructional focus and routines to meet the students' needs (JLARC, 2011). Fourth, teachers should provide engaging and high-quality reading materials at different reading levels to meet students' needs. JLARC also endorsed the gradual release of responsibility model, a teacher should provide modeling and allow for students apply and practice skills well before the student is expected to the independently demonstrate mastery of these skills.

A teacher may be provided all the best practices outlined above, but the success of the strategies depends on how effective they are implemented by the teacher. The classroom teacher is the most critical factor that determines the effectiveness of the classroom reading program (JLARC, 2011). The JLARC (2011) study revealed that school divisions that exceeded predicted student outcomes had teachers who were better trained, more effective, and received better support as part of larger teaching culture compared to school divisions who performed below expectations. Effective teachers are masters of classroom management, consistently highly engage their students, and efficiently and effectively cover more skills during each hour of the school day (JLARC, 2011).

To improve reading proficiency in third grade, JLARC provided several recommendation options at the state and local level while acknowledging practical challenges. To maintain well-trained early education teachers in reading instruction, JLARC (2011) recommended that at the local level, it is high priority to expand and provide ongoing training opportunities in early

reading for teachers. JLARC (2011) explained the school divisions that are performing better than expected attribute success to “having a clearly articulated division-wide reading program would lead to more consistency across the division, and division-staff may be in better position to help support teachers” (p. 71). Additionally, teachers should be supported by administrative efforts to coordinate the literacy curriculum and coordinate the instructional materials with staff development to equip teachers with the necessary tools. Furthermore, it is beneficial for some school districts, especially districts serving large percentages of students at risk of succeeding, to receive guidance and direction from the school district on how to best structure a reading program to affect student achievement.

The JLARC (2011) report explained that it may take months of professional development for a teacher to master explicit reading comprehension strategy instruction that leads to significant student achievement in struggling readers. Instead of attending a single session workshop, teachers need repeated exposures so new teaching behaviors are learned and implemented over time. To support early education classroom teachers, funding should be prioritized at the state and local level for increasing professional development opportunities. Additionally, JLARC advocated that funding be allotted for literacy coaches in each school. Literacy coaches differ than Reading Specialists. Ideally, there would Reading Specialists and one literacy coach per school, possibly two literacy coaches for schools with higher student populations. Reading Specialists should be designated to support and provide reading remediation to students who are not make grade level proficiency benchmarks. On the contrary, literacy coaches would provide on-site professional development and in-class coaching to support teachers learning of best practices (JLRAC, 2011). Literacy coaches themselves would require ongoing training and skills to maximize their effectiveness.

Researchers were unable to find significant evidence to support either the whole language or phonics approach exclusively (Wren, n.d.). The Balanced Literacy approach to instruction was—and continues to be—compelling for educators because it seeks to balance direct phonics instruction and meaning-based whole language instruction (Duffy, 2001; Pressley et al., 2002; Rasinski & Padak, 2004; Snow et al., 1998). Balanced Literacy integrates explicit skills-based instruction while providing students opportunities to read and write whole, authentic texts (Pressley et al., 1996). In Balanced Literacy, the teacher uses both phonics and whole language strategies to help students acquire phonics skills while providing authentic reading and writing activities.

Empirical Evidence to Support Balanced Literacy

Neither the phonics nor the whole language approach was fully supported by evidence. In contrast, the Balanced Literacy approach does have supporting research. Balanced Literacy is compelling for educators because it is a highly effective framework that increases student literacy skills (Calkins, 2014; Lee & Schmitt, 2014). Kennedy and Shiel (2010) investigated the implementation of the Balanced Literacy Framework over a 2-year period in a highly disadvantaged urban school in Dublin, Ireland. The researchers discovered when teachers received professional training about literacy, teacher professional knowledge and self-efficacy increased, and teachers felt empowered to motivate students, as a result, the implementation of Balanced Literacy significantly increased student scores in reading, spelling, and written expression. Kennedy and Shiel's (2010) findings provided empirical evidence that the implementation of Balanced Literacy framework could increase student achievement in some settings. Similarly, Brown and Fisher (2006), analyzed the school-wide implementation of a Balanced Literacy program in a middle school in Florida. The teachers received 4 days of

professional development by Janet Allen, a researcher and publisher for reading in Grades 4-12. Teacher participants were provided Allen's book as a reference and were required to follow an implementation schedule and model their lessons after the training. By the end of the first year of Balanced Literacy implementation, reading scores on a statewide assessment showed the most significant gains in four years for the individual school, with some of the largest gains made by the lowest performing students. The middle school was the highest ranking of the 42 middle schools in the school district. These scores showed growth in the individuals, school, and district rankings, and provided further evidence that Balanced Literacy could positively impact student achievement in reading.

There is additional evidence that Balanced Literacy is effective for even the lowest performing students. The Toronto Catholic School Board serves disadvantaged students, defined as students who had limited exposure to text before pre-kindergarten, and a student population comprised of 40% English Learners. During a review of the Toronto Catholic School Board's pre-kindergarten to Grade 3 Language Arts program, a 3-year systematic plan centered around Balanced Literacy was developed (French et al., 2001). Teachers provided 30 minutes of instruction and assessment aligned with Balanced Literacy components: Guided Reading, Word Study, Writing, and Independent Reading. Post-test data showed Balanced Literacy was effective: in 7 out of the 8 standardized measures, students showed more than a year of growth in literacy (French et al., 2001). These findings further support the idea that Balanced Literacy is effective when meeting the needs of a diverse student population.

In addition, Balanced Literacy may also be an effective approach for students who are learning English. O'Day (2009) investigated an implementation of Balanced Literacy over a 3-year study in San Diego City Schools. The Balanced Literacy reform provided both novice and

veteran teachers with professional development that helped deepen teacher knowledge related to literacy and instructing English Learners. When O’Day (2009) compared San Diego schools’ student achievement data with seven neighboring school districts, San Diego had the highest percentage of proficient English Learners and the second highest gains. These studies suggested that Balanced Literacy can be an effective intervention across a variety of settings and with diverse student populations.

Gradual Release of Responsibility in Balanced Literacy

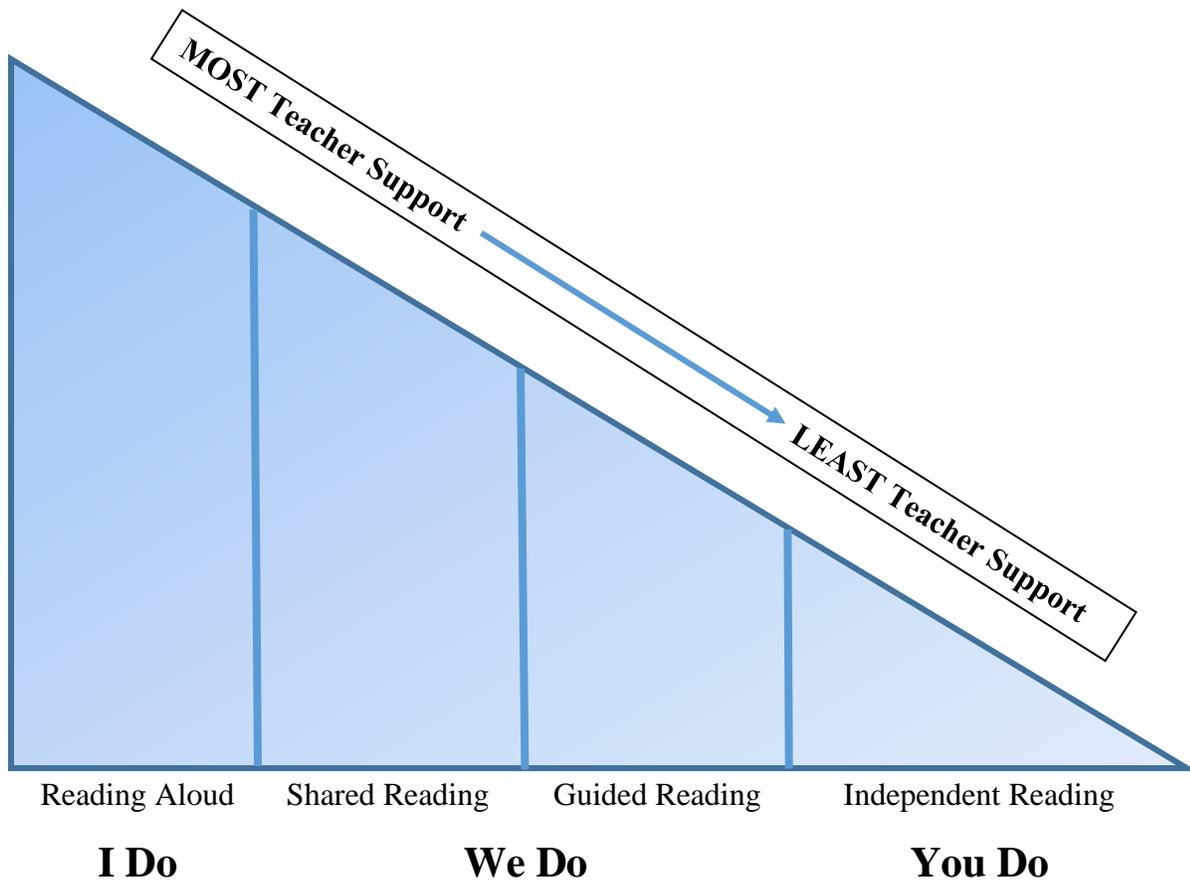
The goal of Balanced Literacy is to promote life-long readers and writers (Rasinski & Padak, 2004; Tompkins, 2002). To accomplish this goal, Balanced Literacy relies on students incrementally taking ownership of their reading and writing. The power of Balanced Literacy is in the scaffolding, or gradual release of responsibility, to the student. The framework relies on teachers modeling the strategy and then steadily shifting the control of learning to students (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Langer, 1995; Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). For example, the teacher fully controls the read aloud, while students listen, and then the teacher scaffolds instruction to gradually give students more responsibility for reading until reaching the independent reading component of Balanced Literacy (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). During the independent reading component, the student reads to himself with little to no teacher support or prompting.

Additionally, Balanced Literacy honors the philosophy that suggests reading and writing are developed at individual rates for each student. Therefore, the teacher must be skilled to provide different levels of support to each student based on each student’s developmental rate for reading and writing skills (Fitzgerald & Cunningham, 2002; B. Frey et al., 2005; Hoffman et al., 2000). The Balanced Literacy framework typically consists of eight individually effective

components, each of which calls for the teacher to provide a specific level of support and dictates how much of the task the students will control (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

Figure 3

Balanced Literacy Components Tip Sheet



Note. Gradual release of responsibility for learning is shown. Figure copyright 2014 by William H. Sadlier, Inc. Reprinted with permission (see Appendix A).

Balanced Literacy Frameworks

Although the term Balanced Literacy has been used since the 1990s, there are many different interpretations of the Balanced Literacy model. A Balanced Literacy framework

typically includes reading aloud, shared reading, Guided Reading, independent reading, shared writing, interactive writing, guided writing or Writing Workshop, and independent writing. However, various curricula have organized these Balanced Literacy model components differently. For the purposes of this study, Fountas and Pinnell's (1996) Balanced Literacy model will be used because it aligns most closely with the model used in TSD. In the sections that follow, the individual components of Fountas and Pinnell's model are described. This study focused on teachers' implementation of Guided Reading and Writing Workshop portions of the curricula, but it was important that readers understood how these components were situated within the full framework.

Reading Aloud

The first component of the Balanced Literacy framework is reading aloud, often referred to as a "Read Aloud." In this component, a teacher reads whole texts to the class or to small groups of children. In terms of the gradual release of control that characterizes the Balanced Literacy framework, the teacher completely controls the Read Aloud component of Balanced Literacy. As the teacher reads the text, she may stop to model her thinking, such as predicting story events, asking questions, or making personal connections to the text. Although the teacher purposefully chooses a wide variety of texts to read aloud, the teacher in kindergarten through second grade may also revisit and reread familiar stories while reading aloud (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Read Alouds are beneficial because they provide children an opportunity to enjoy the story, learn how stories work, hear storybook language, be exposed to larger vocabulary, and build background knowledge. Fountas and Pinnell (1996) asserted that participating in Read Alouds provides a foundation of teaching literacy because it allows children to gain exposure to text and literacy structures that will support independent reading later in the Balanced Literacy

process. Writing 20 years later, Benjamin and Golub (2016) redefined the Read Aloud component of the Balanced Literacy instruction as “read aloud with accountable talk,” stressing the importance of the teacher not only stopping to model thinking aloud, but also stopping to give children the opportunity to practice the thinking aloud the teacher modeled. This provides a subtle shift in control of the learning process.

Shared Reading

The second component of the Balanced Literacy framework is shared reading. In shared reading, the teacher reads aloud a text that both the teacher and child can see at the same time, releasing some of the responsibility for learning to the student. Holdaway (1979) developed shared reading so that the teacher could invite the child to begin to look at print using a text written at a slightly more advanced level than what the child could read independently. In kindergarten through second grade, the teacher may use a “big book,” like an oversized version of the text, or pocket charts with familiar lines of poems (N. Frey & Fisher, 2006). In the primary grades, the teacher uses shared reading to point out early concepts about print, such as reading with left to right directionality and matching voice to print (e.g., pointing under the correct word and reading the correct number of words versus inventing too many or too few words on a page). Because the teacher and child can see the text at the same time, the child may be invited to point at words; during repeated reading or repetitive lines, the child can join the teacher to share the reading of parts of the text.

Between shared reading and Guided Reading, Tompkins (2002) adds another component to Balanced Literacy continuum called *interactive reading*. During interactive reading, the teacher and child take turns reading in activities such as choral reading (where a group of students read the same text simultaneously) or readers’ theatre (where a story is adapted and read

aloud as a script, with different readers taking on individual roles within the story). This is helpful for the child because the teacher models reading fluently, or smoothly, with appropriate expression. In contrast, Fountas and Pinnell (1996) do not characterize choral reading and readers' theater as interactive reading; instead, these strategies are viewed as a continuation of shared reading, saved for when the child is more independent as a reader.

Guided Reading

The third component of the Balanced Literacy framework, Guided Reading, is the bridge between the teacher modeling during reading aloud or shared reading and the independent reading that comes in the later stages of the framework. In the Guided Reading component, the responsibility for learning is evenly divided between the teacher and student. Guided Reading is the heart of the Balanced Literacy program (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Routman, 2000; Tompkins, 2009) and a central focus of this study.

In the Guided Reading stage, a teacher groups 4-6 students based on ability levels. The teacher then meets with each group for 20-30 minutes of targeted instruction at the group's level (N. Frey & Fisher, 2006). The teacher introduces a leveled text, which is a reading selection leveled according to the text characteristics and vocabulary expected across a gradient (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). The teacher then states a short summary of the entire text, drawing students' attention to familiar words or words that may be challenging to decode (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Students apply decoding and reading strategies while reading at the instructional level (P. Cunningham & Allington, 2011). The teacher listens in as children in the Guided Reading group independently whisper read the text, helping if a child needs help decoding new words (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). The teacher might also choose to listen in to one student and take a running record, a tool to informally record correctly read words and words that were misread so the

teacher can analyze patterns of difficulty in the child's reading (Clay, 1993). For example, if a child only used meaning to read four unknown words, but did not attempt to use the letter sounds, the child's patterns of error would inform the teacher to help the child use letter sound relationships to decode new words. After the text is read in Guided Reading, the teacher discusses the meaning of the text, and draws attention to how selected words are built (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). This final step typically incorporates manipulatives and visual aids such as magnetic letters or a white board. The teacher might also invite students to identify known and unknown parts with the selected word (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

Word Study. Depending on the specific Balanced Literacy model used, the Guided Reading component might include word study. There are significant differences, however, in the word study components of different Balanced Literacy models. While Fountas and Pinnell (1996) encouraged the teacher to teach letters and words within an authentic guided or shared reading text, rather in than isolation, other models—such as those proposed by N. Frey and Fisher (2005) and Benjamin and Golub (2016)—advocated for explicit word study instruction each day. According to N. Frey and Fisher (2005), children naturally progress across developmental spelling stages. For children to learn how to spell and move across the word study stages, teachers need to know each child's spelling stage and how to choose developmentally appropriate word study instruction for the corresponding stage (Ganske, 2014). N. Frey and Fisher (2005) recommended teachers provide a 30-minute word study component within the Balanced Literacy framework. The word study component includes word recognition activities like making and breaking words, manipulating letters to form new words, locating words within printed text, and learning the meaning of words (Juel & Minden-Cupp, 1999/2000). Similarly, Benjamin and Golub (2016) believed word study should be a 15-minute standalone component

of Balanced Literacy. They recommended word sorting as one way to help students discover spelling patterns and learn the spelling rules. In the context of my study, TSD chose to combine word study with Guided Reading; the district refers to this component of Balanced Literacy as *small-group instruction*.

Independent Reading

In the fourth and final reading component of the Balanced Literacy framework, the teacher releases all control for learning to the child, and the child reads independently. The child reads a book or other printed material in the classroom to himself or with a partner and the teacher provides minimal or no support (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). The independent reading component provides students with opportunities to reread books from shared or Guided Reading as well as practice new skills the child learned during Guided Reading. The child's confidence grows during independent reading because the child sees himself as a reader. The teacher is then able to teach Guided Reading instruction with other reading groups, provide specialized instruction to students who need the greatest amounts of support, or conference with individual students about what they are reading (N. Frey & Fisher, 2006).

As with other components of the Balanced Literacy framework, there is variation among different models related to how independent reading is described. Benjamin and Golub's (2016) model renames independent reading as *reading workshop*. They describe the reading workshop as an opportunity for students to transfer and use the skills the teacher has explicitly taught. For example, when a teacher models thinking aloud during Read Aloud, the child can transfer what they observed the teacher model to thinking about independent texts. Likewise, when a teacher draws attention to spelling patterns during word study, the student can apply his knowledge of spelling patterns when decoding new words during independent reading.

In summary, the teacher gradually releases control throughout the reading components of Balanced Literacy, starting with the Read Aloud and ending with independent reading, when the child completely controls the reading task. Similarly, as described in the sections that follow, the teacher gradually releases control of the writing tasks in the Balanced Literacy framework.

Shared Writing

The first writing component in the Balanced Literacy framework is shared writing. In shared writing, students gather and informally talk about a shared experience while the teacher guides the conversation (Routman, 1991). The teacher provides full support, helping children develop their ideas and scribing the children's thoughts (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). With full teacher support, the child can focus on generating ideas rather than being concerned with the task of transcribing the ideas on paper. Thus, in shared writing the child is more confident in writing and the stories are much richer compared to the stories the child can write by himself. The stories generated in shared writing are usually read and reread, then displayed in the classroom for students to use as a reference (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

Although Routman (1991) also listed shared writing as a component of literacy instruction, he distinguished shared writing from writing aloud. Routman viewed writing aloud—the process in which the teacher uses large chart paper and thinks aloud as she records the spoken words—as the highest level of teacher support. Shared writing is based on students' collective ideas, while writing aloud is based on teacher-generated ideas. Routman asserted writing aloud is valuable for students of all grade levels, including primary-grades students who can observe a writer's process moving from the spoken to the written word. In the context of this case study, TSD lists both modeled writing and shared writing as possible ways for teachers to deliver a mini-lesson, or the highest level of teacher support.

Interactive Writing

Interactive writing is the second writing component in the Balanced Literacy framework. Originally an extension of Holdaway's (1979) shared reading, in the interactive writing component of Balanced Literacy, the teacher shares the pen with the student to collaboratively write a message word by word. Often shared writing is a natural response to shared reading (Routman, 1991). In a kindergarten classroom, the teacher would record the message on large chart paper, calling on students to add their names or known letter sounds to the story. In a first- or second-grade classroom, as the child's knowledge of letter sounds increased, the teacher would share the pen so children could help record more complex words (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). The most important aspect of interactive writing is the process, so the teacher provides a high level of support and shows how the written word works, carefully choosing when to share the pen—and the responsibility for learning—with the students. Additionally, shared writing only occurs for 5-15 minutes each day in a classroom, so composing and rereading an interactive writing product could take up to three weeks (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

Writing Workshop

In the third writing component of the Balanced Literacy framework, Writing Workshop (also referred to as guided writing), the teacher begins to release control to the student. Routman (1991) made a parallel between guided writing and Guided Reading because the teacher's role in both is to guide students, respond to students, and extend students' problem solving in reading and writing. Like Guided Reading, Routman described guided writing as the heart of writing instruction. While the terms guided writing and Writing Workshop are synonymous, this study will rely on the term Writing Workshop because TSD emphasizes Writing Workshop.

Writing Workshop begins with a 5-10-minute mini-lesson. The teacher calls the class together and leads a lesson to teach a procedure, skill, or craft that the teacher has noticed students need based on observations or conferences (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). TSD uses an instructional reading model that specifies mini-lessons—depending on the skill being taught—may be taught in the form of shared or modeled writing (e.g., Routman, 1991) or interactive writing (e.g., Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

Next in Writing Workshop is a 20-30-minute writing and conferencing time. Students choose topics they have expertise or interest in and write their own texts, at their own rates. Self-selection of topics encourages student engagement and excitement in the writing process. Meanwhile, the teacher guides and supports by moving throughout the room, conferencing individually with students, or providing skill instruction to a small group of students who need support with the same skill.

Writing Workshop closes with a 10-15-minute sharing session. The children gather together, and the teacher chooses one child to sit in the author's chair and share a finished writing piece (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). After the child reads his writing, his peers are encouraged to provide feedback. The author's chair excites children and helps reinforce the idea of a community of learners who are growing in their knowledge of the writing process.

Independent Writing

In the fourth and final writing component of Fountas and Pinnell's (1996) Balanced Literacy framework, independent writing, students create their own messages with little to no teacher support. The child knows how to use resources in the classroom to write new words. For example, the child sees the word "could" posted on the word wall, an alphabetized list of high frequency words posted on the classroom wall, and the child writes "should" and "would"

correctly. Additionally, in independent writing, the child writes for a variety of purposes across the content areas, including survey questions, friendly letters, journals, and reading response (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Routman, 1991). As outlined in the instructional reading model, TSD views independent writing as part of Writing Workshop and subscribes to the method of independent writing described in this section. Independent writing is not a separate component outside of Writing Workshop.

Reading Instruction Without Balanced Literacy

In contrast to the methods described in the previous sections, teachers who do not follow a Balanced Literacy model might solely use the phonics-based approach or whole language approach. A teacher who uses a phonics-based approach would focus on isolated phonics skills. For example, students would study how to decode words in isolation and then read from contrived phonics readers, or books that only use the emphasized spelling feature. Additionally, students practice grammar or sentence composition in isolation. Similarly, if a teacher used a whole language approach, emphasis would be placed on reading authentic texts. Students would be immersed in reading texts with little emphasis on learning how to decode or learning how words work. In contrast, a teacher using a Balanced Literacy framework provides a hybrid of the two approaches, incorporating direct phonics instruction within the context of authentic texts and using the gradual release of responsibility to guide students to independence.

Summary of Balanced Literacy Components

The Balanced Literacy framework pulls together eight components that are considered best practices for reading and writing instruction. While Fountas and Pinnell (1996) attest their Balanced Literacy framework is a tool to help teachers plan and organize, they believed it is the interactions between the teacher and child that are most important: “It is not the elements

themselves but the teaching decisions within them that lead to new learning” (p. 42). Balanced Literacy is a framework, but the individual teacher’s instructional decisions within the framework are paramount.

To look closely at the individual teacher’s instructional decisions within the Balanced Literacy framework, I investigated two components: Guided Reading and Writing Workshop. The following sections review literature related to these two components of Balanced Literacy.

A Closer Look at Guided Reading

Guided Reading is a vital component of the Balanced Literacy framework because the structure of Guided Reading enables teachers to meet the needs of all students, helping students develop into stronger readers (National Center on Response to Intervention, 2010). However, empirical research suggests the effectiveness of Guided Reading instruction is contingent on teacher beliefs and teacher skills (Fisher, 2008; Lee & Schmitt, 2014). For example, Fisher (2008) found that students’ development of literacy skills varies according to the teacher. Fisher interviewed and observed three primary school teachers in England and discovered it was the teacher’s skill level in facilitating a meaningful conversation among students that determined the extent to which students developed new literacy skills. In other words, if a teacher was skilled at facilitating a meaningful conversation, and guiding students in learning new skills, the students developed new skills. However, if the teacher was unskilled at facilitating this conversation, students did not develop the new skills. Additionally, Fisher found the individual teacher’s view of the definition of “guided” determined the teacher’s implementation of Guided Reading. When teachers held a view that guided meant the teacher spends the most time modeling while students watch, then the teacher dominated the Guided Reading conversation. Fisher (2008) suggested

teacher beliefs and skills impact implementation of Guided Reading, and thus impact students' development of new skills.

Similarly, Skidmore and colleagues (2003) recorded and analyzed the student-teacher dialogue in Guided Reading sessions at five schools in England over a 6-month period. They found that teachers dominated the Guided Reading conversations. When teachers dominate the conversation, this deprives students of the opportunity to express their own ideas and develop their own skills with the guided support of teachers. Recall that Guided Reading is at the heart of the Balanced Literacy model, because the child gets to practice the strategies modeled by the teacher in a leveled text and receive feedback and support from the teacher. Although Skidmore et al. (2003) found teachers dominated the Guided Reading component of Balanced Literacy, Lee and Schmitt (2014) built on the importance of a deeper investigation of the Guided Reading dialogue. In their study, Lee and Schmitt (2014) investigated four Reading Recovery teachers at schools in a Midwestern school district of the United States. They found in 8 out of 11 reading behavioral categories, there was a strong correlation between quality of teacher language and students' reading behaviors, as evidenced by a pre- and post-test measure of student growth. High quality teacher language, defined as effective teacher prompting, predicted students learning new reading behaviors that, in turn, increased student achievement. This suggested it is more important to seek teacher perceptions and quality of teacher-student dialogue in the Guided Reading setting rather than tracking the amount of time spent in Guided Reading. Doing so may help researchers understand how teacher beliefs impact practice, and, in turn, student reading achievement.

Ford and Optiz (2008) and Ferguson and Wilson (2009) have also investigated Guided Reading implementation through the lens of professional development. Ford and Optiz (2008)

randomly selected 1500 kindergarten-Grade 2 teachers and surveyed them about key issues considered most crucial for successful Guided Reading implementation. They identified the most critical problems to examine when school districts design professional development: ensuring teachers understand the purpose of Guided Reading, situating Guided Reading within the context of Balanced Literacy, shifting from quantity issues to quality issues of Guided Reading, text selection, independent reading, and using assessment to drive fluid and flexible grouping. Ford and Optiz (2008) also attested that the implementation of Guided Reading practices differs based on context and learners, so it could be helpful for school districts to administer their own surveys and address the implementation issues of their unique contexts through professional development. These findings suggested in-depth professional development, specific to the context of the school district, could shape how an individual teacher perceives and implements Guided Reading in her classroom.

Likewise, Ferguson and Wilson (2009) examined teacher implementation of Guided Reading in one urban school district in Texas. The researchers surveyed 40 kindergarten-Grade 5 teachers from four schools in the district. They concluded that even though all teachers received training in Guided Reading, the teachers' knowledge was lacking, and descriptions of the Balanced Literacy components varied greatly, as indicated by teachers' survey answers. Ferguson and Wilson (2009) advocated for administrative support, coaching, and mentoring of Guided Reading practice until teachers feel comfortable and confident implementing Balanced Literacy; increased teacher support could help teachers feel more confident using Guided Reading to meet the varied needs of students, increasing the likelihood that students will experience reading growth. To increase the probability that students make reading growth in the

Guided Reading setting, teachers need support so that they feel confident in their abilities to implement Guided Reading (Ferguson & Wilson, 2009; Ford & Optiz, 2008).

In summary, when Guided Reading is implemented as intended, it has the potential to impact student achievement positively. However, Guided Reading may not always be implemented as intended. This suggests a need to investigate teachers' professional development experiences related to Guided Reading as well as how teachers perceive these experiences. It is then that researchers can glean whether teachers implement the Guided Reading structure as it is intended in the model. Past research in the field also points to teacher confidence, or self-efficacy, as one factor that might support Guided Reading implementation as it is intended in the model, increasing the chance of positively influencing student achievement. In this study, I investigated Guided Reading implementation within the Balanced Literacy framework.

A Closer Look at Writing Workshop

Writing Workshop as an instructional component is an evidence-based practice. Graham, and colleagues (2001) conducted a meta-analysis to investigate which writing treatments improved elementary student writing achievement. Their study included determining the effect sizes of 12 writing instructional components. Graham and colleagues found that Writing Workshop as a comprehensive program had an effect size $d = .40$. Effect sizes greater than 0.33 are generally considered significant, meaning that the intervention being studied had a significant or powerful effect (Gall et al., 2007). This suggested that Writing Workshop has a positive impact on student achievement. Additionally, the individual components of Writing Workshop were shown to have significant effect size (Graham et al., 2001). For example, the mini-lesson portion of the Writing Workshop indicated that providing explicit instruction had an effect size $d = 1.02$; conferring with students and setting clear and specific goals had an effect size $d = 0.76$.

Direct instruction related to how different types of text are structured had an effect size $d = 0.59$ (Graham et al., 2001). The results suggested the individual components of Writing Workshop are effective practices for literacy instruction. These components are part of the Writing Workshop model in TSD.

Like Graham and colleagues (2001), Hertz and Heydenberk (1997) researched the progress of kindergarteners after a semester of Writing Workshop instruction. Hertz and Heydenberk (1997) found that kindergarten students' spelling, writing vocab, and written language improved at the end of the semester, as evidenced by student scores on a pre- and post-test. Specifically, 13 out of the 19 kindergarteners were able to write two lines of print after a semester of Writing Workshop instruction. Based on average development for kindergarteners, this outcome is worthy of attention. Further, at the end of the semester, the teachers in this study felt that Writing Workshop provided the structure they needed to challenge each student regardless of the student's entering skill. Writing Workshop helped the teachers feel a higher sense of self-efficacy. Hertz and Heyenberk's (1997) suggested that Writing Workshop provides teachers with a sense of self-efficacy and positively affects students' writing skills.

Jasmine and Weiner (2007) also concluded Writing Workshop positively impacted students. In their 6-week-long mixed methods study, they observed 21 first graders who were instructed using Writing Workshop. They found Writing Workshop created a positive writing climate for students, produced excitement and enjoyment for writing, and increased the students' perceptions of themselves in the writing process. These conclusions further support the idea that Writing Workshop is an effective practice for increasing student achievement in writing.

However, according to Troia and colleagues (2011), implementation of Writing Workshop can be challenging for teachers. In Troia et al.'s (2011) study, a school district

conducted a one-year implementation of Writing Workshop instruction. All teachers in the school district implemented the main components of Writing Workshop, but not all teachers used the Writing Workshop vocabulary. Additionally, teachers differed in how they managed the Writing Workshop, engaged students, and provided materials. The researchers suggested teacher training did not equate to teachers implementing the Writing Workshop with fidelity. Troia et al. (2011) also concluded that despite receiving Writing Workshop training and implementing Writing Workshop all year long, teachers' beliefs about writing did not change. In fact, four of the six teachers reported they were less confident in their ability to overcome obstacles by the end of the year (Troia et al., 2011). The implementation of Writing Workshop for the teachers in this sample did not impact their beliefs or self-efficacy. Additionally, Troia and colleagues (2011) found that, although students' motivation for writing improved regardless of ability, only strong and average writers performed well; poor writers did not benefit from Writing Workshop. Troia and colleagues (2009) suggested that implementing Writing Workshop is challenging; in order for Writing Workshop to improve student achievement, it must be implemented with fidelity. Fidelity of implementation is supported through training. Only then can teacher beliefs be encouraged to change, increasing the likelihood of positively impacting student achievement. In TSD, Writing Workshop has been implemented with ongoing support; therefore, Writing Workshop was investigated.

Across the literature for Writing Workshop, it appears student motivation for writing increases when Writing Workshop is implemented. Additionally, there is evidence that Writing Workshop might positively impact student achievement; however, inconsistent teacher implementation could hinder these results. It would be beneficial to further explore how teacher beliefs and teacher training help or hinder teacher implementation of Guided Reading and

Writing Workshop with fidelity. I investigated teacher perceptions of self-efficacy and preparedness to implement Balanced Literacy, specifically Guided Reading and Writing Workshop.

Uneven Implementation of Balanced Literacy

Balanced Literacy is an effective framework for literacy instruction because students in a variety of educational settings have been shown to make significant reading progress when Balanced Literacy is implemented with fidelity (Brown & Fisher, 2006; Kennedy & Shiel, 2010; O'Day, 2009). However, some researchers have suggested that the ideals of Balanced Literacy are not evident in classroom teacher practice (Bingham & Hall-Kenyon, 2013). In their separate studies, B. Frey et al. (2005) and Shaw and Hurst (2012) found that teachers were implementing all parts of the Balanced Literacy framework, but with unequal distribution. The independent reading and writing components were implemented with a higher frequency compared to the teacher-directed components of Balanced Literacy. Therefore, teachers in the studied school districts did not provide explicit modeling and appropriate guided practice because they did not implement the read aloud, shared reading, and Guided Reading components of Balanced Literacy as the framework intends. Put simply, the teachers did not use the gradual release of responsibility model, which is required to implement Balanced Literacy with fidelity and maximize impact on student achievement.

In some cases, uneven implementation of Balanced Literacy could be a result of inadequate professional development prior to implementation. B. Frey et al. (2005) investigated how one high-poverty urban school district in the United States implemented a Balanced Literacy program. The researchers observed 67 elementary teachers and 126 elementary-aged students, completed inventories of classrooms and schools, and conducted teacher and student

interviews. Teachers implemented independent activities more frequently than teacher-directed activities. B. Frey et al. (2005) recommended that when a school district mandates the Balanced Literacy program, teacher support is provided to allow for effective instruction. Similarly, Shaw and Hurst (2012) studied a Midwestern metropolitan school district with observations and surveys of 111 kindergarten-Grade 6 teachers. The researchers found that all teachers in the sample could define Balanced Literacy, but because there was minimal professional development, teachers implemented only the components of the Balanced Literacy framework that they had prior experience in and felt comfortable with. Although some researchers have suggested the framework of Balanced Literacy is not specific enough to describe what teachers should teach and how to teach it (e.g., Freppon & Dahl, 1998), others suggested a need to provide adequate professional development opportunities that would then translate to implementing Balanced Literacy effectively (e.g., B. Frey et al., 2005; Shaw & Hurst, 2012). Inadequate professional development negatively affects the fidelity of the Balanced Literacy framework and jeopardizes its effectiveness on student achievement.

Other researchers have found Balanced Literacy classrooms provided more emphasis on reading instruction than writing instruction. Bitter et al. (2009) investigated the extent to which classroom practices were consistent with San Diego schools' literacy reform, aligned with a Balanced Literacy approach. Over a 2-year period, the researchers conducted observations, held teacher interviews, and measured reading achievement with two teachers per grade level in each of the nine high-poverty elementary schools in the study. Bitter et al. (2009) observed that reading instruction was emphasized over writing instruction in the classrooms. The researchers concluded this was problematic for student achievement. Students in classrooms where there was a greater amount of writing had higher reading comprehension compared to students who did

less writing in their classrooms (Bitter et al., 2009). This means when teachers unevenly prioritized reading instruction over writing, students made fewer reading gains. Additionally, Bitter et al. (2009) found a significantly positive relationship between quality reading instruction, writing instruction, and student reading scores. In other words, when teachers regularly teach writing, and students write regularly, student reading scores improve. In another study, Bingham and Hall-Kenyon (2013) surveyed 581 kindergarten-Grade 5 teachers from across the United States. All teachers taught in school districts that supported Balanced Literacy instruction. Teachers in the study reported participating in more Guided Reading routines than writing routines. Bomer (2007) suggests the less emphasis on writing could be a result of the National Reading Panel's lack of writing emphasis. Recall that the Balanced Literacy model encourages reciprocity between reading and writing, so that both reading and writing growth can support the child's literacy development (Clay, 1993). Uneven implementation, with a focus on reading instruction at the expense of writing instruction, could negatively affect the potential benefits of Balanced Literacy.

Looking across these implementation studies, there are two trends noted in the research: overemphasis in independent activities versus teacher-directed instruction and more emphasis on reading than writing. When teachers make their own interpretations of the Balanced Literacy model, and do not implement Balanced Literacy with fidelity, their students might not reap the academic gains promoted by Balanced Literacy. In this study, I explored selected teachers' implementation of Balanced Literacy, and the extent to which that implementation follows the district Balanced Literacy framework.

Literacy Teacher Self-Efficacy

I used Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy as the conceptual framework for this study. According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy "refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (p. 3). A key element of self-efficacy is the individual's belief in his or her ability to complete a given action. If an individual perceives she has no power to create results, the individual will have little motivation to act (Bandura, 1997). Hence, a literacy teacher's perceptions of her ability to impact student reading and writing achievement could determine how motivated the teacher is to take action with Balanced Literacy instruction.

Four Sources of Self-Efficacy

Recall from Chapter 1 that Bandura (1997) theorized that self-efficacy beliefs are formed from four sources of information: *mastery experiences*, *vicarious experiences*, *verbal persuasion*, and *physiological and affective states*. An individual's self-efficacy beliefs might come from a single source or could be drawn from more than one source. Although the theory of self-efficacy encompasses many fields outside of education, the examples that follow describe how each source of self-efficacy might affect a literacy teacher's actions and beliefs.

Mastery Experiences

Mastery experiences, or personal experiences in which a teacher witnesses a student improve because of her teaching, are the most influential sources of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Mastery experiences provide the teacher with authentic evidence that she is capable of impacting student achievement. When a teacher has a successful experience, the teacher believes that in the future, if she exerts the necessary effort, then she will experience success again. Bandura (1997) asserted that after an individual develops a strong sense of self-efficacy with

repeated successes, it is unlikely an occasional failure or setback will weaken that individual's beliefs about his or her own capabilities. Similarly, Tschannen-Moran and Johnson (2011) posited that mastery experiences were the most powerful source of efficacy for literacy teachers.

Vicarious Experiences

Another source of self-efficacy is vicarious experiences, which is when a target activity is modeled by another person, such as another teacher or reading specialist. Bandura (1997) asserted that humans socially compare themselves to others; therefore, the influence of the vicarious experience is highly contingent on how the observing teacher views the model and compares herself. When a teacher sees a model like herself successfully conducting Guided Reading, for example, this typically increases the observing teacher's self-efficacy because she persuades herself that she can do a comparable activity (Bandura, 1997). If the observing teacher sees herself as very different from the model teacher, the vicarious experience could have little impact. An observer might see herself differently than the model because of preconceived notions the observer associates with the model's personal characteristics, such as age, race, or education level. It is important to note that Bandura asserted modeling is more than mimicry; instead, effective modeling includes thinking aloud so the observer can note how the model's thought processes are met with action. Additionally, it is helpful if the modeling is presented as an opportunity to develop a teacher's skills and pedagogy rather than a function of comparing and evaluating teaching.

Verbal Persuasion

An individual's self-efficacy can also increase with verbal persuasion, or evaluative feedback describing a teacher's personal capabilities (Bandura, 1997). When a teacher has limited knowledge about an activity, such as a teaching strategy, the teacher must rely on others'

feedback about her capabilities (Bandura, 1997). Therefore, the feedback the teacher receives about her teaching and capabilities plays a critical role in helping to shape the teacher's self-efficacy. In determining how much weight to give the feedback, the individual teacher considers who gives the feedback, the person's credibility, and the person's knowledge about the given activity (Bandura, 1997). A mentor providing verbal persuasion should encourage a teacher's self-confidence and help structure activities to foster success rather than placing the teacher in a situation where failure is likely. To accomplish this, the mentor must know the teacher's strengths and weaknesses, structure activities to turn potential into actual, and encourage the teacher to gauge self-success in terms of improvement, rather than comparison to another teacher (Bandura, 1997). In summary, the strength of the verbal persuasion is contingent on many factors, but it is strongest when the feedback is coupled with another of source of self-efficacy.

Physiological and Affective States

An individual's physiological and affective state—her reactions and mood—are another component of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). How an individual perceives and interprets the reaction is more important than the intensity of the mood. For example, when introduced to a new teaching strategy, a teacher with high self-efficacy might feel energized; a less confident teacher might interpret the excitement as anxiety. Additionally, an individual might base her judgment of self-efficacy on a set of past experiences. For example, if a teacher is in a negative mood, the teacher is more likely to remember past failures; on the other hand, a positive mood triggers a teacher's memories of success. In essence, a teacher will act according to her mood-altered beliefs of self-efficacy, meaning a teacher with high self-efficacy might take on more challenging tasks than a teacher who is uncertain about her efficacy (Bandura, 1997).

Self-efficacy is important because a teacher's task of creating a productive learning environment for her students depends on the teacher's talents and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Additionally, teacher self-efficacy shapes how the teacher structures learning activities, and, in turn, the ways students perceive themselves. For example, a teacher with high self-efficacy believes she is capable of impacting student learning, so she is motivated to diligently pursue appropriate instructional strategies. As I will discuss more in the sections that follow, teacher self-efficacy predicts students' language and math growth (Ashton & Webb, 1986), teachers with high self-efficacy had the most effective classrooms (Armor et al., 1976), and teacher self-efficacy predicts teacher behavior (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Graham et al., 2001; Guo et al., 2010). When the teacher provides developmentally appropriate activities, the child is more successful and believes he can succeed. On the other hand, a teacher with low self-efficacy believes she will be unable to help the struggling learner, so she is unmotivated to find strategies to ensure the child is successful (Bandura, 1997). Balanced Literacy instruction requires the teacher to plan both whole- and small-group lessons targeted to improve the skills of students. Understanding and supporting teachers' implementation of Balanced Literacy requires analysis of how a teacher perceives her ability. My study examined these perceptions through the lens of Bandura's (1997) four sources of self-efficacy.

Why Literacy Teacher Self-Efficacy Matters

I explored how teachers perceive their implementation of Balanced Literacy. Extant research suggests that the effectiveness of Balanced Literacy programs is contingent on the individual classroom teacher's understanding and implementation of components in the Balanced Literacy model (Fisher, 2008; Kennedy & Shiel, 2010; Lee & Schmidt, 2014; Skidmore et al. 2003). What are some factors that might affect a teacher's implementation of the Balanced

Literacy framework? Compared with teachers with lower self-efficacy, teachers with high self-efficacy are more willing to persevere to adequately address the needs of students (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). It is also important to consider self-efficacy as a valuable layer of a teacher's perception of her teaching abilities.

For over 40 years, teacher self-efficacy has been acknowledged as valuable for impacting both teacher behavior and student achievement. Los Angeles schools implemented a new reading program in 1972 and provided individual schools local autonomy to support the implementation. After 3 years, when reading gains were evident in schools with predominantly Black and Hispanic populations, the Los Angeles Board of Education contracted the RAND group to identify individual classroom and school-level autonomous decisions as factors that might explain the significant reading gains. Armor et al. (1976) investigated which variables could explain minority students' considerable and steady reading gains. The researchers chose 20 elementary schools that had demonstrated consistent reading gains over the 3 years, had predominantly minority student populations, and served students from low-income homes. The researchers discovered it was not the instructional materials themselves, but how the reading program was taught—meaning the building-level decisions made to support teachers and individual teachers' decisions—that affected student achievement. The most effective individual classroom teachers had high self-efficacy and believed they could connect to their students and impact reading achievement. The researchers concluded school and classroom environments were the most important in improving student reading achievement, even more important than student socioeconomic status, students' prior reading skills, or teacher background. In other words, it might be more powerful for a teacher to believe she can affect student achievement than to consider a child's home background and pre-assessed reading level or the teacher's years

of experience and education. Armor et al.'s (1976) seminal study highlighted the importance of teacher self-efficacy; subsequent researchers have worked to expand and refine the concept of teacher self-efficacy.

Ashton and Webb (1986) added to the work of Armor et al. (1976) with their study of teacher behaviors in high school basic skills classes. Ashton and Webb (1986) conducted teacher observations in basic skills classes because teachers with low self-efficacy doubt their abilities to affect student achievement. The researchers believed they would most likely observe low self-efficacy teacher behavior with groups of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds and who were assigned to basic skills classes based on standardized achievement testing. In a 2-month period, the researchers observed each of the 48 teachers in the study at least twice in each basic skills class. The teachers taught in four high schools in the southeastern region of the United States. Observational data were triangulated with teacher efficacy questionnaires and mathematics, language, and reading achievement data. Ashton and Webb (1986) found that even when controlling for students' baseline academic ability, teachers' perceptions of their own instructional self-efficacy predicted student language and math growth over the course of an academic year. Teachers in the study who reported higher self-efficacy spent more time instructing students; these teachers met students in small-group instruction and assigned individual seatwork rather than relying on whole group instruction (Ashton & Webb, 1986). Additionally, teachers with high self-efficacy maintained positive relationships with their students, giving individual students attention. In other words, a literacy teacher with high self-efficacy might be more willing to meet the instructional personal needs of students, even the lowest-performing students. Teachers with high self-efficacy use instructional techniques that help their students make progress, regardless of students' entering ability level. In contrast, low

teacher self-efficacy could hinder a child's academic progress. Whereas teachers with high self-efficacy believe they can positively affect student achievement, teachers with low self-efficacy do not believe they can deliver effective instruction or impact student achievement. These teachers might make poor use of instructional time, easily give up on challenging students, or blame students for poor performance (Ashton & Webb, 1986). Teacher self-efficacy seems to be a vital component in impacting student achievement.

Collective Self-Efficacy

Teacher self-efficacy matters at the individual teacher level, but something even more amazing happens when an entire group of teachers develop teacher self-efficacy, a construct called *collective self-efficacy*. Collective self-efficacy refers to teachers' beliefs that the faculty, as a whole, has the ability to positively impact student learning (Goddard et al., 2000). I acknowledge that this study's research questions are not pointed to collective self-efficacy; however, TSD has provided training for their teachers. I interviewed and observed teachers across TSD who had similar training experiences. It is possible the concept of collective efficacy may emerge as factor in teacher perceptions of how the training is going for themselves, and teacher's perceptions of their individual school's collective self-efficacy.

In their seminal study, Goddard et al. (2000) added to Bandura's (1997) research by providing further evidence that collective self-efficacy impacts student achievement. Goddard and colleagues (2000) surveyed teachers and used a multilevel analysis of Reading and Math achievement tests from 7,106 students across 47 elementary schools from one school district in an urban setting. When the researchers performed a factor analysis, they concluded collective teacher efficacy was the common unobserved factor (Goddard et al., 2000). The researchers affirmed that collective self-efficacy has a greater impact on student achievement than the

students' socioeconomic status. In other words, it is more important that teachers believe that the faculty as a whole can positively impact students than whether a child grows up in a high- or low-income home. Goddard et al. (2000) recommended administrators work to increase collective self-efficacy by increasing mastery experiences, vicarious learning experiences, and social persuasion for all teachers; raising collective self-efficacy shapes the school culture and impacts teachers' effort and persistence in day-to-day teaching.

How Teacher Self-Efficacy Develops

Although there is strong support suggesting teacher self-efficacy can positively impact student achievement, researchers disagree about how teacher self-efficacy develops. For example, Fackler and Malmberg (2016) explored possible predictors of teacher self-efficacy. They randomly selected 44,701 teachers of 15-year-old students across 2,648 schools in 14 countries. By analyzing teacher participant questionnaire answers, Fackler and Malmberg (2016) found that reports of more varied instructional strategies, increased flexibility, and greater willingness to account for individual student differences were predictive of high teacher self-efficacy beliefs. Additionally, the researchers discovered more experienced teachers had higher levels of teacher self-efficacy. This latter finding—those years of teaching experience predicted self-efficacy—was somewhat at odds with other extant literature. Although some researchers have found evidence that teacher self-efficacy increases during the early years of teaching and decreases later in a teacher's career (Cousins et al., 1990; Wolters & Daughtery, 2007), other researchers have concluded that teaching experience does not significantly impact teacher self-efficacy (Guskey, 1988; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Fackler and Malmberg (2016) attributed their finding to differences in the tools used to determine a teacher's self-efficacy. Scales and tools for measuring self-efficacy will be discussed later in this chapter.

Complexity of the Self-Efficacy Construct

As previously discussed, there is disagreement among researchers about how teacher self-efficacy develops. One possible explanation for this disagreement is the complexity of self-efficacy. There is broad agreement among researchers that self-efficacy is a complex construct. Many researchers characterize self-efficacy as a multidimensional construct (Bandura, 1997; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Guskey & Passaro, 1994; Tschannen-Moran & Johnson, 2011). Teacher self-efficacy is complex because it predicts teacher behavior, is cyclical in nature, differs across subject strands, and relies on teacher perceptions. The following sections explore literature related to the complexity of self-efficacy and the resultant challenges with measuring the construct.

Teacher Self-Efficacy Predicts Teacher Behavior

Teacher self-efficacy is a complex construct because self-efficacy, in part, shapes teacher behavior. For example, teachers with high self-efficacy have higher expectations of their students and themselves; as a result, their high expectations impact how teachers interact with their students (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). In the third phase of their research, Gibson and Dembo (1984) wanted to find out how high- and low-efficacy teacher behaviors differed in a) focus on academics; b) teacher feedback; and c) perseverance when faced with a challenge. Eight participants were selected from a subsample of 208 elementary school teachers: four teachers with high self-efficacy and four teachers with low self-efficacy. Participants worked in two neighboring school districts in the United States and had been selected to participate in the previous phases of Gibson and Dembo's research. The researchers used two teacher classroom observation tools to measure teachers' use of time and question-answer-feedback interactions between teachers and students, then coded classroom behavior. When comparing the two groups,

high self-efficacy and low self-efficacy teachers, there was no significant difference in the teachers' use of time. The researchers did observe that high self-efficacy teachers spent more time preparing and completing necessary paperwork as compared to low self-efficacy teachers. Although both groups of teachers provided students additional opportunities to correct their incorrect answers, teachers with high self-efficacy used effective questioning to guide students to the correct answer, whereas teachers with low self-efficacy were observed calling on another student or moving to the next question before the student demonstrated the correct answer. The authors suggested that when teachers expect students to learn, and have self-efficacy related to their abilities to teach, the high-efficacy teacher communicates these high expectations to students, uses less criticism when students do not answer correctly, and demonstrates persistence with appropriate questioning until the student responds correctly (Gibson & Dembo, 1984).

Gibson and Dembo's (1984) findings align with those of Ashton and Webb (1986). Recall that Ashton and Webb (1986) discovered a teacher's perception of her own instructional self-efficacy predicted student language and math growth over the course of an academic year. Therefore, a teacher with high self-efficacy would be more willing to persevere when faced with a challenging student to meet the instructional and personal needs of the student. Gibson and Dembo's (1984) findings provided possible suggestions as to how a teacher's self-efficacy can impact student achievement: higher teacher self-efficacy leads to a teacher having higher expectations of herself and demonstrating persistence with students, all of which positively influences student achievement.

Graham et al. (2001) expanded on Ashton and Webb's (1986) research, further investigating the connection between teacher self-efficacy and student literacy gains. Graham et al. (2001) studied how self-efficacy impacts writing instruction. The researchers randomly

selected and surveyed 220 first-, second-, and third-grade teachers in the United States. Using factor analysis of participant survey answers, the researchers found that teachers with the highest self-efficacy for teaching writing spent significantly more time on writing each week, gave more attention to the writing process and grammar instruction, and were generally more enthusiastic about writing with their students. This suggested teacher efficacy could be a predictor of student achievement, in part, because teacher self-efficacy determines teacher behavior and the quality of instruction.

Supportive Classroom Environment

An additional variable in complexity of self-efficacy is the classroom learning environment. Guo and colleagues (2010) added to the work of previous researchers with their investigation of the relationships between teacher self-efficacy, classroom quality, and children's literacy gains over an academic year. The researchers randomly selected 67 preschool teachers within one state and administered a pre- and post-assessment to the teachers' students. They also used teacher questionnaires and reviewed teacher portfolios. Guo et al. (2010) found that teacher self-efficacy was a positive and significant predictor of the students' print awareness literacy gains over the academic year. Students in classes taught by teachers who reported having the ability to bring about change in student performance (i.e., teachers with high self-efficacy) showed greater gains in print awareness compared to students taught by teachers who reported having low self-efficacy. However, high teacher self-efficacy alone did not predict student vocabulary gains. It was only when teachers' self-efficacy was coupled with the teacher providing high levels of emotional support to students those students made significant gains in vocabulary. The authors suggested a possible explanation: teachers with high self-efficacy alone may have high expectations of themselves and may create harsh classroom environments in

which the child is afraid of failing. This means a teacher's ability to impact some skills, such as vocabulary, is dependent on the teacher being able to emotionally respond to the needs of her students.

Cyclical Nature of Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is a complex construct, in part, due to its cyclical nature: Firstly, a teacher's sense of efficacy is likely to be somewhat cyclical in nature as teacher proficiency of a specific performance creates a new mastery experience and this, in turn, provides new information to shape future efficacy beliefs. The more practical teaching experience a teacher undertakes, the greater is the chance to gather efficacy information from mastery and other vicarious experiences. (Hansen, 2006, p. 54)

Mastery experiences, or successful teaching experiences, are the most important source of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Tschannen-Moran & Johnson, 2011; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007). When a teacher is successful in impacting student achievement, the teacher gains confidence from mastery experiences. However, to be successful, a teacher must have successful teaching experiences. This is challenging for a novice teacher because a novice teacher does not yet have a bank of successful teaching experiences. Instead, the novice must rely on other, less powerful sources to develop her self-efficacy. How do novice teachers and teachers who are not as confident in themselves build self-efficacy if these teachers have not had mastery experiences?

Woolfolk Hoy and Spero (2005) used a longitudinal study to assess teachers' self-efficacy before their teacher preparation program, at the end of student teaching, and after the teachers' first year of employment. Using a factor analysis from 53 prospective teachers in a Master of Education program at a university in the United States, Woolfolk Hoy and Spero

(2005) found that self-efficacy increased during teacher preparation and student teaching but decreased with the first year of teaching experience. As the first-year teacher completed her first year of teaching, she faced challenges and the confidence she felt from teacher preparation was replaced with doubts. This research illustrated the cyclical nature of self-efficacy: first year teachers are challenged with learning to manage their individual classrooms and often lack opportunities for mastery experiences; as a result of having few mastery experiences, first year teachers' self-efficacy decreases.

Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2007) studied self-efficacy in 225 teachers who were graduate students at three state universities, as well as volunteer teachers in elementary, middle, and high schools. The researchers compared the effects of verbal persuasion and mastery experiences on novice and experienced teachers' self-efficacy. Their findings suggested that mastery experiences were the strongest source of self-efficacy for both groups. However, the groups also differed. For novice teachers, availability of resources and verbal persuasion were significant contributors to self-efficacy; these variables were not significant contributors for the experienced teacher group. The authors proposed that, because the novice teachers had not yet accumulated enough mastery experiences in their first years of teaching, verbal persuasion (e.g., feedback from others) played a significant role in shaping their self-efficacy. As teachers become more experienced and accumulate more mastery experiences, verbal persuasion could play a less significant role in sustaining self-efficacy. The challenge is how to create more mastery experiences for teachers, especially novice teachers, in order to build novice teachers' self-efficacy. Based on the cyclical nature of self-efficacy, increasing a novice teacher's mastery experiences would build a novice teacher's self-efficacy.

Finally, Abernathy-Dyer and colleagues (2013) explored variables that influenced or hindered reforming elementary-teacher practices. The researchers provided a questionnaire and observed four first-grade teacher participants. Abernathy-Dyer et al. (2013) found that students' ending reading levels influenced each teacher's confidence. If students made acceptable progress, the teacher felt confident in her abilities to teach. Each teacher used the students' reading growth as a significant factor in evaluating her teaching confidence. Again, there is evidence of the cyclical nature of self-efficacy: teacher self-efficacy impacts student achievement, and student achievement impacts how a teacher perceives herself. Teachers with high self-efficacy impact student achievement (Armor et al., 1976; Ashton & Webb, 1986). But for a teacher to have high self-efficacy, the teacher needs successful teaching experiences, which is a particular challenge for novice teachers. This cyclical nature of self-efficacy and student achievement adds to the complexity of the construct of self-efficacy.

Self-Efficacy Differs Across Subject Strands

Self-efficacy is also complex because a teacher's self-efficacy is usually not consistent across all subjects or teaching strands within a subject. Rather, Bandura (1997) and Tschannen-Moran and colleagues (1998) have posited that teacher self-efficacy is subject-specific, meaning a teacher might feel confident teaching writing but less confident teaching reading. Expanding on this idea, Hansen (2006) looked even more closely at literacy teachers' self-efficacy, assessing specific teacher efficacy beliefs across the range of different literacy competencies. Hansen surveyed 126 in-service and pre-service English teachers in New Zealand. Hansen concluded that English teachers' self-efficacy beliefs differed across a range of teaching standards, regardless of the number of years of teaching experience or the teacher's knowledge. For example, one teacher in Hansen's study had higher self-efficacy in traditional teaching

competencies (e.g., reading, writing, speaking, and listening strands), but lower self-efficacy in strands that were recently introduced to the curriculum, such as visual language and educational technologies. Hansen's (2006) findings added another layer of complexity to self-efficacy. In this case study, a teacher implementing Balanced Literacy instruction is required to be skilled across many knowledge domains (such as oral language and reading and writing strands) as well as pedagogical competencies (such as whole group instruction, small-group instruction, and individual conferencing). These findings provide rationale for further investigation of literacy teachers' self-efficacy in the individual components of Balanced Literacy framework, Guided Reading, and Writing Workshop, since teachers' self-efficacy in each area could differ.

Guided Reading. Guided Reading is thought of as the heart of Balanced Literacy because teachers use this time to expertly guide students in building reading power (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012). During small group Guided Reading, the skillful teacher is the most important element because it is the teacher's responsiveness that guides the students to independence (Iaquinta, 2006). Although other reading components of Balanced Literacy (reading aloud and shared reading) expose students to grade-level-appropriate texts, Guided Reading instruction is small-group instruction differentiated at the level or skill of the students within the group (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012). In congruence with Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development, the teacher in Guided Reading chooses "just right" texts for the students to practice, so the reading is neither too difficult nor too easy, and the teacher can support and extend the student's knowledge of the reading process (Fountas & Pinnell, 2017). In addition to purposefully selecting leveled texts, the teacher must observe student reading behaviors in order to provide immediate feedback to guide students to problem solve and expand students' reading strategy toolboxes (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012). I looked closely at the teacher's self-efficacy in

Guided Reading since the teacher might feel confident in other areas of Balanced Literacy but might not feel confident in the critical role as a teacher of Guided Reading.

Writing Workshop. Recall that Writing Workshop is the heart of writing instruction in Balanced Literacy because the teacher provides explicit modeling, provides time for the child to write on a topic the child chooses, and then remains available to guide the child's writing process (Routman, 1991). Additionally, Writing Workshop is important because of the reciprocal process of reading and writing (Clay, 1998; Collins, 2004; Fountas & Pinnell, 2012). In writing, the child has the opportunity to practice the skills learned in reading such as linking sounds to letters, crafting sentences with appropriate sentence structure, and constructing meaning (Clay, 1998; Collins, 2004). Although reading and writing are reciprocal processes, Hansen's (2006) findings suggest a teacher might feel confident in teaching writing but not in teaching Guided Reading, or vice versa. Therefore, it is important to investigate a teacher's perception of her self-efficacy in specific areas. In this study, I explored selected teachers' self-perceptions of their own efficacy when implementing the two central components of Balanced Literacy: Writing Workshop and Guided Reading.

Measuring Self-Efficacy

Because self-efficacy is a complex construct and cyclical in nature, researchers have struggled to develop reliable tools for measuring it. It is important to remember that self-efficacy is a measure of the teacher's perception of her own abilities, not an objective measure of the teacher's actual abilities (Bandura, 1997). This is a complicating factor because researchers must rely on teachers' self-reported perceptions of abilities rather than an impartial measure of teaching ability. Self-report data could be misconstrued or incomplete because a participant might hide information the participant wants to keep secret; even if a participant attempts to give

accurate information, the participant might not have the level of self-awareness to articulate a thorough answer (Gall et al., 2007). In summary, self-report data is not always an accurate or complete measure of the participant's actual ability.

Some researchers have attempted to develop scales that will predict teacher self-efficacy based on a subset of characteristics. There is no single definitive tool that everyone agrees is best. Tschannen-Moran and Johnson (2011) developed the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy for Literacy Instruction, based on the theory that teacher self-efficacy for reading instruction is a complex construct that encompasses a set of subskills. In their factor analysis, the researchers concluded that the following four subskills were related to literacy teacher self-efficacy beliefs: perceived quality of literacy instruction during university coursework from their teacher preparation program, perceived quality of professional development, participation in a children's literature course, and collaborative book study with teacher colleagues in a teachers-as-readers group or a book club (Tschannen-Moran & Johnson, 2011). Two of the four subskills in Tschannen-Moran and Johnson's research reveal teachers' self-efficacy is related to the perceived quality of their university coursework and professional development. Factors such as earning an advanced degree, years of teaching experience, and race were not related to teachers' self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Johnson, 2011). Even when researchers develop scales to measure teacher self-efficacy, it is important to know the scales ask teachers to rate perceptions of their own experiences—perceptions that could greatly vary between individual teachers. My study relied on interviews with teacher participants about their experiences from teacher preparation and professional development to glean which aspects of these experiences, if any, have developed their perceptions of self-efficacy.

Assessing Teacher Knowledge. Self-efficacy scales are problematic, in part, because teachers' judgment of their own self-efficacy could be skewed based on their perceptions of experiences. Additionally, there is evidence to suggest teachers may overestimate their own literacy knowledge. A. E. Cunningham and colleagues (2004) studied whether teachers were able to accurately judge, or calibrate, their own literacy knowledge levels. The researchers surveyed 722 kindergarten-Grade 3 teachers from 48 schools in a Northern California urban school district. Through a pre-assessment inventory, A. E. Cunningham et al. (2004) discovered teachers poorly judged and overestimated their own phonological awareness and phonics knowledge. Furthermore, when comparing novice teachers (those with 0-3 years of experience) to experienced teachers (those with 15 or more years of experience), the novice teachers were more accurate in their knowledge than the experienced teachers. A. E. Cunningham et al. (2004) cautioned that if teachers overestimate their knowledge, this could limit a teacher's receptivity to new learning; in contrast, a teacher who accurately rates her knowledge might be more willing to soak in new information and benefit from professional development. This is consistent with Tschannen-Moran and colleagues (2018) review of literacy teacher self-efficacy, in which they cautioned that when a teacher grossly overestimates her level of content knowledge, she might blame students for their lack of progress or view professional development as meaningless. In other words, the teacher might feel so confident that she no longer feels a need to continue professional growth. The challenge then becomes how to help a teacher remain receptive to new ideas when self-efficacy is erroneously high. To increase teachers' knowledge and self-efficacy, it is essential to look at best practices in developing teachers as learners.

The Role of Professional Development in Self-Efficacy

There is not agreement in the literature that years of teaching experience predicts teacher self-efficacy. For example, some researchers have found that years of teaching experience did not predict teacher self-efficacy (Eun & Heining-Boynton, 2007; Tschannen-Moran & Johnson, 2011), while others have found that teaching experience is connected to teacher self-efficacy (Fackler & Malmberg, 2016). Because teaching experience alone is an unreliable predictor of self-efficacy, schools must work to develop teachers' self-efficacy to implement Balanced Literacy with fidelity. Teacher self-efficacy can be developed through professional development (Cantrell & Hughes, 2008; Ross & Bruce, 2007; Strickland et al., 2003). However, professional development sessions must account for more than teachers learning new instructional strategies when striving to increase teacher self-efficacy (Fritz et al., 1995). School leaders need to be mindful that professional development should be differentiated based on where teachers are in their career and teachers' learning needs. The sections that follow outline considerations school leaders need to keep in mind when planning professional development.

Professional Development Increases Teacher Self-Efficacy

Effective professional development is important for increasing teacher self-efficacy. Ross and Bruce (2007) compared sixth-grade teachers who participated in professional development addressing teacher self-efficacy with sixth-grade teachers who did not participate in the training. The researchers compared data from 106 Grade 6 teachers from one school district in Ontario, Canada; teachers were randomly assigned to the control or treatment group. Teachers in the treatment group received one day of training and three 2-hour follow-up sessions. After adjusting for pre-test scores using a multivariate analysis of covariance, teachers in the treatment group scored higher than the teachers in the control group on all teacher efficacy post-test variables;

however, only the differences in classroom management efficacy were statistically significant. The findings suggested that professional development programs positively affected the teachers' ability to manage students in the mathematics classroom. When a teacher attends professional development, the teacher learns to manage her classroom, and feels more confident implementing instructional techniques. Recall from the Uneven Implementation of Balanced Literacy section, teachers tend to implement independent reading and writing components with a higher frequency compared to teacher-directed components of Balanced Literacy (e.g., read aloud, shared reading, and Guided Reading; B. Frey et al., 2005; Shaw & Hurst, 2012). It is possible the teachers avoided implementing the teacher-directed components of Balanced Literacy because these components required classroom management skills they were lacking. For a teacher to implement the teacher-directed components of Balanced Literacy effectively, the teacher must be skilled at leading and managing both whole group instruction and small-group instruction. Ross and Bruce (2007) suggested one benefit of professional development is providing teachers with strategies to manage their classrooms so that they can focus on instruction. I explored how teachers perceive their self-efficacy and preparedness affects their literacy instruction. Specifically, I asked participants to reflect on professional development experiences, describing how the experiences affected their ability to implement and manage the Balanced Literacy components of Guided Reading and Writing Workshop in their classrooms.

Cantrell and Hughes (2008) explored the impact of a yearlong literacy professional development program on teacher self-efficacy and implementation of content literacy strategies. Participants were 22 Grade 6 and Grade 9 teachers across eight schools in one southeastern state. Through pre- and post-test data, observations, and participant interviews, the researchers found that the largest gains were in the teachers' sense of personal efficacy for teaching literacy. As a

result of the yearlong professional development program, teachers were more confident in their abilities to positively affect student literacy growth. The researchers found that all teachers in the study increased implementation of the professional development strategies from fall to spring. However, teachers who started the program with the belief that teachers, in general, can positively affect students' literacy learning were more likely to implement the strategies learned during professional development. These findings suggested a teacher's general self-efficacy is more important during the initial implementation phase than other phases of professional development because those beliefs could determine how receptive the teacher will be in adopting the presented strategies in her own classroom. I sought to describe teacher perceptions of self-efficacy and preparedness to implement Balanced Literacy.

Greenleaf and Schoenbach (2004) examined teacher and student growth among middle and high school subject area teachers who were practicing inquiry learning methods. The eight teachers participated in a simulated reading activity in which teachers read a challenging text and facilitators modeled an inquiry conversation to help teachers articulate the mental strategies they used to comprehend the text. Additionally, teachers analyzed case studies of struggling readers and brought student work samples from their classrooms to reflect upon. Over a 2-year period, the researchers used pre- and post-interviews with teachers, viewed videotapes of teacher colleague discussions, and analyzed lesson plans and student work. Greenleaf and Schoenbach (2004) concluded that the inquiry professional development increased teacher confidence in helping students to make sense of the text. This was an important finding because many content area teachers lack the confidence to help students with reading (Greenleaf & Schoenbach, 2004). The researchers concluded the professional development sessions profoundly changed teacher practice because teachers learned to critically read curriculum materials and reflect on student

performance, which informed the teachers' professional judgment and teaching actions. The inquiry learning methods improved teacher pedagogy and created classrooms with high student engagement and self-direction. In addition, the inquiry methods also impacted student achievement. The students in Greenleaf and Schoenbach's (2004) case study were achieving below their national peers' level; however, students in the study demonstrated more than a year's growth on a standardized reading comprehension measure after their teachers began using inquiry learning methods. The findings suggested professional development sessions increased teachers' self-efficacy because teachers learned a repertoire of strategies and had the opportunity to practice these strategies with teacher colleagues. Then, because of the professional development, teachers felt equipped to implement the new strategies in their own classrooms.

Components of Effective Professional Development

Although effective professional development can increase teacher self-efficacy, it is essential school leaders account for teachers' prior beliefs and perceptions about themselves when designing professional development. An individual teacher's prior experiences determine how likely that teacher is to change her practices based on professional development. Smylie (1988) investigated which school and classroom environments explained individual teacher variation in adopting change from professional development sessions. Participants were 56 elementary and secondary teachers, across 13 schools in three school districts in the southeastern United States. Smylie conducted multiple classroom observations, teacher surveys and interviews, and classroom information questionnaires and found that teachers' perceptions and beliefs related to their own teaching practice were the most significant predictors of change. In other words, an individual teacher's decision to change her teaching practice based on professional development depended on the teacher's perceptions of herself, affected by

experiences in the classroom and with teaching colleagues (Smylie, 1988). A teacher who had a high perception of her teaching abilities was more likely to change her practices due to professional development compared to a teacher with a low perception of her teaching abilities. Recall from the previous section that self-efficacy is cyclical in nature. Smylie's research adds that a teacher's perception of her own teaching abilities could also influence the cyclical nature of self-efficacy.

In another study of how teachers' perceptions influenced their learning, Eun and Heining-Boynton (2007) explored how professional development influenced classroom teaching practices for 90 teachers of English Learners. Participants were enrolled in one of the two identical English Learner training programs in North and South Carolina. Data were collected using scales to measure teacher self-efficacy, organizational support, and impact. The researchers found teachers with high self-efficacy implemented the highest number of strategies from the professional development sessions in their own classroom practices (Eun & Heining-Boynton, 2007). The researchers concluded that teachers at all stages of their careers—beginning, mid-career, and end-of-career phases—needed strong teacher self-efficacy and strong organizational support at the school level to implement new practices acquired at professional development. Smylie (1988) and Eun and Heining-Boynton (2007) separately concluded that teachers with high self-efficacy are more likely to acquire new strategies learned during professional development in the classroom. My study explored, in part, the professional development experiences of teachers who are implementing Balanced Literacy and described how those teachers' perceptions of their self-efficacy influence their implementation of Balanced Literacy.

Fritz et al. (1995) examined how teacher training and implementation of the Dare To Be You curriculum affected teacher self-efficacy. A group of 241 teachers participated in the study;

130 participated in the treatment group and 111 were assigned to a control group. Most teachers in the study were elementary teachers. The treatment group received 20-24 hours of professional development in a recommended, but not required, program that focused on the teacher as the key factor in the classroom. The study measured teacher self-efficacy using a pre-test, post-test, 9-month follow up design. Fritz et al. (1995) found the two groups had the same level of self-efficacy in pre-test; however, the treatment group maintained or increased their teaching self-efficacy over the school year while the control group's self-efficacy declined over the school year. Although each group started the school year with enthusiasm and positivity, the control group's self-efficacy faded throughout the school year. Of note, more teachers in the control group had master's degrees and more belonged to professional organizations. The researchers suggested that teachers in the treatment group increased self-efficacy due to several factors: the content teachers learned; teachers' volunteered commitment to the training; and the support provided by the Dare to Be You staff, who emphasized classroom teachers as the key factor in the program (Fritz et al., 1995). Further, Fritz et al. (1995) recommended professional development should extend beyond delivering new knowledge and teaching strategies to providing teachers control over the curriculum, encouraging teacher innovation, and providing peer support to allow ongoing teacher reflection and learning when teachers are implementing new strategies and the innovation fails. The findings provided evidence that effective professional development that results in change of teaching practices should address more than introducing teachers to new instructional strategies.

Recommendations for High Quality Professional Development

Professional development is one way to increase teacher self-efficacy, yet researchers have argued it must be high quality professional development to effectively increase teacher self-

efficacy. High quality professional development should provide teachers with time to reflect, both individually and with colleagues (Cantrell & Hughes, 2008). Recall from the Professional Development Increases Teacher Self-Efficacy section that Cantrell and Hughes (2008) asserted professional development is more important in the initial phase of a teacher's career because a teacher's prior beliefs can determine the extent to which a teacher implements new strategies. These findings suggested leaders of professional development should empower teachers to believe teaching impacts student achievement. When teachers believe they can positively affect students' achievement, they persevere and want to implement new strategies. Cantrell and Hughes (2008) also found that the greatest challenge to increasing teacher self-efficacy was lack of time. Teachers need individual reflection time to process newly learned content and collaborative time to reflect with their colleagues. The findings suggested professional development should include structures that provide teachers adequate time to digest newly learned information, individually and with colleagues, so that recently acquired skills are implemented in the classroom.

Guskey and Yoon (2009) provide evidence for the importance of job embedded professional development. In Guskey and Yoon's (2009) research synthesis on effective professional development, the authors reviewed a pool of 1,343 studies of professional development; only nine studies met their standards for valid evidence. A review of these nine studies provided additional evidence that effective professional development requires extensive time focused to develop teacher content, teaching skills, or both. Additionally, Guskey and Yoon (2009) recommended time for job-embedded support so that teachers can grapple with implementing the new strategy in their own unique classroom setting (Guskey & Yoon, 2009).

Recall that Hansen (2006) encouraged school leaders not to assume that once a teacher is trained, the teacher is automatically confident across all domains. On the contrary, Hansen's (2006) findings suggested teachers needed ongoing professional development to learn and acquire new skills. Hansen (2006) found that when teachers learn new skills with ongoing professional development, they develop positive perceptions of themselves. Therefore, ongoing professional development expands teachers' opportunities for mastery experiences using newly learned skills, increasing teachers' confidence. In other words, ongoing professional development feeds the cyclical nature of self-efficacy. During ongoing professional development, the teacher learns new skills, these skills are implemented, and the teacher reflects and continues to learn, increasing success (mastery experiences). When a teacher has mastery experiences, these feed the teacher's self-efficacy. TSD uses a model of ongoing professional development. I sought to understand the experiences of teachers who have participated in ongoing professional development, and the impact of this professional development on their self-efficacy.

Carlisle and Berebitsky (2011) added to Hansen's (2006) research. Carlisle and Berebitsky compared groups of Grade 1 teachers in Michigan who had participated in literacy professional development. Following the professional development session, 43 teachers in the study received follow-up support from a reading coach in their school; 33 teachers were in a control group and did not receive additional support. The researchers used a pre- and post-test design and analyzed student achievement, teacher observations, and teacher surveys. The treatment group showed patterns of instruction that mirrored the strategies modeled in professional development, including limiting whole-group instruction, and providing small-group lessons (Carlisle & Berebitsky, 2011). Recall that small-group lessons address specific

student needs and are essential for student growth (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). In Carlisle and Berebitsky's (2011) study, students whose teacher received support from the reading coach made greater reading gains across the school year compared to students of teachers in the control group. While the researchers did not attribute the difference in the teacher groups solely to the reading coach, they did recommend further research to determine which components of the reading coach supported changes to teachers' instructional practice. Like Carlisle and Berebitsky's context, TSD uses instructional trainers to support teacher implementation of the Balanced Literacy components. I explored how teachers perceive their self-efficacy influences their implementation of Balanced Literacy. I used interview questions about teacher training experiences and vicarious experiences (i.e., observing a modelled lesson) that might have influenced teachers' implementation of Balanced Literacy in the classroom.

Stein and D'Amico (2002) have argued that, just as educators differentiate instruction to meet the needs of students, so should school leaders differentiate professional development to meet the needs of teachers. In their study of a New York City District #2 initiative for a Balanced Literacy program, the authors conducted classroom observations with 21 elementary teachers from seven schools. Teachers received different levels of assistance and support—direct instruction, co-teaching, or colleague study groups—according to their proficiency levels with Balanced Literacy. The researchers found that some teachers implemented all the structural guidelines of the Balanced Literacy program, but underlying goals were not met; in other cases, the underlying goals were met, but structural guidelines of the program were not followed (Stein & D'Amico, 2002). For example, one veteran teacher used the gradual release of responsibility model (high-quality) but did not use each component of the Balanced Literacy model (low-alignment). In contrast, teachers who used all components of the Balanced Literacy model (high-

alignment) but did not structure their lessons using the gradual release of responsibility model (low-quality) were in their first or second year of teaching (Stein & D'Amico, 2002). These novice teachers went through the motions of using each of the Balanced Literacy components but did not provide the expected gradual release of responsibility to students. To attain both high-quality and high-alignment instruction, the researchers recommended instructional coaches be housed in schools so they could be accessible to teachers in candid and reserved moments. When teachers regularly work alongside instructional coaches, teachers begin to believe that with perseverance and grit, new strategies can be mastered. Additionally, this creates a community of learners in which support is viewed as an ingredient in the community of professionals (Stein and D'Amico, 2002). Although professional development is one way to increase teacher self-efficacy, effective professional development must be high quality and include ongoing support for teachers' learning. I explored how professional development experiences have impacted teacher perceptions of their own teacher self-efficacy.

Summary

The components in Fountas and Pinnell's (1996) Balanced Literacy framework are structured so the teacher gradually releases control of reading and writing activities to students. If instructional leaders want to support teachers as they shift away from using a scripted teacher's manual, such as a basal program, then teachers need to have the self-efficacy to implement the components of Balanced Literacy effectively. This literature review highlighted support for Balanced Literacy in the extant literature, emphasized the importance of teacher self-efficacy, and described the features of high-quality professional as one way to develop teacher self-efficacy. My study of how one school district (TSD) implemented Balanced Literacy

explored teachers' perceptions of preparedness and self-efficacy to implement Balanced Literacy, as well as the fidelity of implementation.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Teacher training improves teacher self-efficacy, and teachers with higher self-efficacy are more persistent in reaching the needs of all readers (Bandura, 1997). Balanced Literacy is one framework teachers use to reach the literacy needs of all readers. However, few qualitative studies describe the lived experiences of teachers implementing Balanced Literacy instruction. Understanding how teachers experience the implementation of Balanced Literacy could assist school leaders and reading specialists in learning what support teachers need in order to help students progress in reading and writing. The purpose of this case study was to describe what teachers within Tribe School District (TSD) experience when implementing Balanced Literacy. Fountas and Pinnell's (1996) Balanced Literacy conceptual framework and Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory were the frameworks for this study. The following research questions guided the investigation:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of their preparedness to implement Guided Reading and Writing Workshop?
2. What is my assessment of teachers' perceptions of the extent to which their self-efficacy related to providing literacy instruction has affected their teaching practices?
3. To what degree is the observed implementation of Balanced Literacy strategies aligned with the professional development provided in a school district's Balanced Literacy model?

Case Study

In case study research, the case is a single entity that allows the researcher to draw boundaries around what will be studied (Merriam, 1998). My research was bound to the teachers within TSD who have implemented Balanced Literacy instruction; the case was defined as a school district that implemented a Balanced Literacy model. Merriam (1998) has also suggested researchers select the case, or bounded system, to investigate an issue or a hypothesis and uncover significant factors that define the characteristics of the chosen phenomenon. In this study, I explored teacher perceptions of self-efficacy and preparedness to implement Balanced Literacy.

Pragmatic Paradigm

This case study was situated in the pragmatic paradigm because I strived to understand (a) what teachers perceive is useful and practical when impacting their perception of self-efficacy and (b) what a teacher perceives “works” when implementing Balanced Literacy in her classroom (Creswell, 2013). The pragmatic paradigm focuses on practical conclusions and employs many tools to allow for analysis of objective and subjective evidence (Creswell, 2013). In this case study, I generated data using individual teacher interviews (subjective evidence) to hear participants explain their perceptions of self-efficacy and influences on their implementation of Balanced Literacy. Additionally, I used classroom observations (objective evidence) to compare teachers’ implementation of Balanced Literacy to the school district’s Balanced Literacy model.

Participants

I took a purposive sample from an accessible population within TSD. Purposive sampling means the researcher intentionally selects participants and a study context because they both

inform an understanding of the phenomenon explored in the study (Creswell, 2013). In my study, the target participant population is classroom teachers from one school district (TSD) in the southeastern region of the United States. I chose TSD because teachers throughout the district are expected to use the TSD BL framework for literacy instruction. TSD has implemented a 4-year focus for the professional development of teachers and has provided training and resources to implement specific components of Balanced Literacy. Principals monitor implementation with a literacy walk-through tool to assess whether the components are evident in each classroom. I expected to listen to and capture the perceptions of teachers who have had similar training experiences within TSD.

I invited teachers from multiple schools within TSD to increase the chance of forming a representative sample of teachers who have participated in the professional development and implemented strategies related to the TSD BL model. I selected teachers who teach at different school buildings across TSD. Although TSD BL is a district-wide initiative, implementation, and support of the TSD BL likely looks different in each school building and classroom. I wanted to represent the implementation and experiences of teachers across TSD to construct a broader understanding of Balanced Literacy implementation.

I invited Kindergarten, Grade 1, and Grade 2 teachers in separate schools across TSD to participate as part of the study sample. In schools in the United States, Grades Kindergarten to Grade 2 are critically important years for reading instruction (Barone, 2003; JLARC, 2011). A student's first grade reading ability is a strong predictor of the student's eleventh grade educational outcomes (JLARC, 2011). I chose teachers in Kindergarten, Grade 1, and Grade 2 because there is a sense of urgency for these teachers to teach children to read so students are prepared to succeed in Grade 3 (JLARC, 2011). Educators agree that Grade 3 is a pivotal

milestone in learning to read (Hernandez, 2011; Houck & Ross, 2012). Students who are reading below grade level by the end of the third grade are more likely to struggle learning to read throughout their academic careers (Dickinson & Porche, 2011; Wasik & Hindman, 2011) and have elevated and aggressive behavior in Grade 3 and Grade 5 (JLARC, 2011). Additionally, as students progress through school, they are expected to apply what they have learned while reading longer texts, including texts from social studies and science content (Snow et al., 1998). Kindergarten, Grade 1, and Grade 2 teachers provide an important foundation for success in Grade 3 and beyond. In TSD, teachers in Grades K-2 attended training in Writing Workshop in 2016-2017. In 2017-2018 and 2018-2019, they received additional training that combined Guided Reading and word study instruction into small-group instruction.

Teachers in my participant sample varied in terms of career stage and experience level. They also varied in training experiences, especially in preservice experiences or training received in school districts prior to teaching in TSD. Therefore, I began each interview by asking about the participant's years of teaching experience, preservice experiences, and training outside of TSD; these past experiences might contribute to an individual participant's implementation of Balanced Literacy in his or her own classroom. Additionally, by collecting relevant background information about each participant, I was able to make comparisons and identify differences, adding to a more in-depth description of the lived experiences of participants.

The context of my study determined the size of my study. When possible, I choose participants with varied backgrounds to participate in my study. From the approximately 70 teachers who meet the selection criteria (i.e., Kindergarten, Grade 1, or Grade 2 teachers with 3 years of Balanced Literacy implementation in TSD), I recruited 7 volunteers to participate in the study. I invited all 23 teachers to participate; however, I had difficulty recruiting participants and

left open the possibility of recruiting a teacher who taught Kindergarten, Grade 1, Grade 2 during this 3-year period, and received the same training, but now teaches another grade within TSD during the 2019-2020 school year. The representative sample of teachers across the case added more in-depth description of the varied experiences of teachers within TSD who are implementing Balanced Literacy.

Teacher participants with initial interest in participating were provided a formal research participant consent form (Appendix B) for signature. The formal consent detailed information about participant selection; data generation; confidentiality; and the potential benefits of participation, including providing a time for reflection and personal growth. Furthermore, the consent form described the small incentive, an Amazon gift card, for agreeing to participate in all parts of the study. Interviews were scheduled with participants following the receipt of signed consent forms.

I chose to offer an incentive without penalty for participants because I wanted to ensure each participant interprets a “fair return” was given for the time invested in the study (Spradley, 1979). Although some participants might have perceived their reflection time and opportunity to share with an interested listener is a reward, I wanted to reduce the chances of any participant feeling “used” by the research study for my personal gains (Creswell, 2013).

Confidentiality

Given the small sample size, I took extra precautions to protect the identities of the participants and the school system. Merriam (1998) suggested assigning each participant and context a pseudonym to protect the participants and organize the data. Teacher participants who agreed to take part in this study were assigned a pseudonym and the teacher participant’s personal identification was only be known to me. I used the teachers’ pseudonyms on all

documentation associated with the study, including the reporting of my findings, and maintain contact information and actual identities in a locked box. Furthermore, I did not divulge the actual school district name for this case study; instead, the school district has been named TSD. I also masked the identities for specific people and places that might emerge during interviews, assigning a pseudonym for any other school district the teachers might have worked in previously as well as pre-service university programs discussed during the study.

The interviews were recorded on a digital recorder and later transcribed. Both the audio files and transcripts were kept on a password-protected computer. Once transcribed, I retained the audio recordings until EDIRC approval expires. Printed interview transcripts and notes taken during the interview were also destroyed after this study.

Data Collection

In this study, I examined the lived experiences of individual literacy teachers within TSD. I generated data through an interview and a classroom observation with each teacher participant. Although the teachers in this case will share some similar Balanced Literacy training experiences, I chose to interview participants individually because I expect individual experiences within the case to reflect each teacher's unique background, teaching experiences, and interpretation of the training. Then, I observed the teacher's Balanced Literacy instruction. A classroom observation allowed me to explore how the teacher's description of Balanced Literacy compares to her implementation of the model, and then compare how these align with the Balanced Literacy model recommended in research.

Semi-Structured Interview

The goal of this study was to describe the lived experiences of a sample of teachers within TSD implementing Balanced Literacy. During the interview, I used a semi-structured

interview protocol (Appendix C). I used the questions to provide a basic structure to the interviews and aligned questions to the theoretical frameworks of the study. The interview protocol is aligned to the Fountas and Pinnell's (1996) Balanced Literacy framework and Bandura's (1997) sources of self-efficacy theory. It was designed to capture teacher participants' descriptions of their lived experiences regarding these theories in the context of implementation of the TSD Balanced Literacy model. When teachers used terms unique to their school context or classroom teacher language, and it was important I asked follow-up questions to ensure I understood these terms. Additionally, participants saw other topics as related to the conceptual and theoretical frameworks chosen for this study. The semi-structured interview questions allowed me, as a novice researcher, to stay on topic and generate data to answer my research questions (Patton, 2002). The semi-structured interview also allowed me to ask follow-up questions for clarification or help me redirect my participants in describing their experiences in a way that is focused on the purpose of this case study. Furthermore, the semi-structured interview provided opportunities to engage with participants through follow-up questions that emerged from the participants' responses, adding richness to the interview experience and data collection (Patton, 2002). The semi-structured interview is less rigid than a structured interview and provided me flexibility to follow the participants' leads as they reflected on their experiences without losing track of my case study purpose.

Although I initially planned to conduct in-person interviews, instead I conducted them on Teams. The individual interview with each participant was conducted face-to-face and lasted approximately 60 minutes. From the beginning of the interview, it was vital I built rapport with each participant so that each participant felt comfortable and eager to provide honest answers (Charmaz, 2006). I built rapport by first introducing myself and explaining my role as a

researcher in this study. I explained the purpose of the study using language my participants would understand (Spradley, 1979). In this study, I emphasized the teacher as expert; my role is to record the teacher's experiences in a non-evaluative manner. I also emphasized that the teacher's answers are de-identified and asked each teacher to choose a pseudonym so that I could ensure privacy.

The first three items in the interview protocol (Appendix C) asked teacher background questions to establish rapport and respect for the study participant's past experiences and allowed me to describe each participant with relevant demographic information when I compiled my results (Charmaz, 2006). Then, I led the teacher through a series of questions so the teacher could list and rank teaching experiences and describe self-perceptions of preparedness. The remainder of the interview questions asked the teacher to reflect how the sources of self-efficacy impact her Balanced Literacy instruction. I investigated each teacher's rationale, descriptions of successful experiences teaching Guided Reading or Writing Workshop, and finally their assessment of whether they have the skills to impact students' reading and writing achievement. Table 2 represents the interview questions as they relate to the study's research questions.

Table 2*A List of the Teacher Interview Prompts Related to the Study's Research Questions*

Item	Prompt	Research Question
Background	Please tell me how long you have been teaching.	1, 2
	Please share how long you have taught in this school district.	1, 2
	Please tell me your highest level of education.	1, 2
1	Would you please give me a list of all training experiences you brainstormed in and outside of TSD?	1
2	Can you order these experiences from least to greatest impact on your ability to influence students' achievement? (I used a Hover Cam to provide each participant a line plot for visual support.)	1, 2
3	Will you tell me more about why you placed these cards here? (I used a Hover Cam and pointed to cards near "most impacts" and then the cards near "least impacts.") Will you describe an example?	1, 2
4	Do you feel you would benefit from a training experience that you have not had? Why or why not?	1
5	Will you please describe an exceptionally successful experience you had with teaching either Guided Reading or Writing Workshop?	2
6	Thinking about your successful Guided Reading or Writing Workshop experience, what impact, if any, has this successful experience had on your ability to implement Guided Reading or Writing Workshop in your classroom?	2
7	Can you describe to me an experience in which someone modeled Guided Reading or Writing Workshop to you?	2
8	What impact, if any, did having the Guided Reading or Writing Workshop modeled to you have on your ability to implement the Guided Reading or Writing Workshop in the classroom?	2
9	What impact, if any, has receiving feedback from another person had on your ability to influence students' reading and writing growth?	2
10	How confident are you in your ability to execute each of these components of Balanced Literacy? What makes you feel this way?	1, 2
11	Do you feel you have the skills to impact your students' reading and writing progress throughout the year? Why or why not?	2
12	What will I see when I observe you teaching in your virtual classroom? If needed, I asked follow-up questions: What do you mean by small-group instruction? What will the teacher and student be doing throughout the Balanced Literacy instructional block?	3
13	Did some training carry you into teaching in the virtual classroom? (I revisited the line plot of teacher training experiences.)	3
14	Which of the Balanced Literacy components did you rely on most heavily in the virtual classroom? (I showed the list of Balanced Literacy components)	3
15	How did you make a decision about what to keep in the virtual classroom?	3

Note. TSD = Tribe School District

Although most interview questions blend Fountas and Pinnell's (1996) Balanced Literacy framework and Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory, I directed my interview questions to the subsections of these frameworks that are most relevant to my research questions. For example, Question 5 asked the teacher to describe an exceptionally successful experience the teacher had with Guided Reading or Writing Workshop. This question asked the teacher to recall a mastery experience, the first source of Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy, while simultaneously focusing on either the Guided Reading or Writing Workshop component of the Fountas and Pinnell's (1996) Balanced Literacy framework. Questions 5-9 focus on teachers' experiences implementing Guided Reading and Writing Workshop components, which are the heart of the Balanced Literacy framework (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Routman, 1991, 2000; Tompkins, 2009).

According to Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory, mastery experience is the most important source of self-efficacy, followed by vicarious experience. Therefore, in Questions 1-4, I sought a rich discussion about teacher's training experiences. Questions 3 and 4 gave teachers the latitude to share their perceptions about which training experiences had the most and least impact on their ability to affect students' reading and writing growth throughout the year.

My study sought teachers' perception of their preparedness to implement Balanced Literacy. I wanted teachers to reflect on which training experiences have been most and least helpful in their preparedness. Prior to our interview, I asked each participant to brainstorm a list of relevant training events and share this list with me during the interview. Because teachers had similar training experiences in TSD, I also prepared cards with these training experiences prior to the interview (i.e., Writing Workshop training, Guided Reading training). I wanted teachers to include these training experiences in their list because they are training experiences all teachers

in this study would have experienced. I also recognized it is important I give participants the latitude to reflect upon training experiences that might be unique to them so that I can capture each individual teacher's perceptions. To that end, I also had spare notecards and recorded any unique training experiences, with one notecard for each training experience.

During the interview, as a teacher recalled a training experience from her brainstormed list, I checked my prepared cards and set aside the training events the teacher recalled, creating new cards as needed. When the teacher has listed all training experiences, I asked the teacher to use the cards and rank the training experiences from least to greatest impact on student achievement using a line plot. I provided the line plot, a line drawn in the middle of a large sheet of paper. On the left side of the line, I had the words written "least impact" and on the right side of the line, I had the words "greatest impact." The notecards served as manipulatives, so the teacher ranked the training experiences from least to greatest impact on student achievement using a line plot. I took a picture of the teacher's line plot so that I could reference it during data analysis. I then asked follow-up questions about training experiences on each side of the line plot so I could gain an understanding of the participant's perceptions about her training experiences (Spradley, 1979).

After the interview questions about mastery experiences, I asked a few questions about Bandura's other source of self-efficacy. In interview Question 9, I asked the participant to reflect on feedback, Bandura's (1997) vicarious experience, and describe the impact this feedback has had on the teacher. In Question 10, I asked teachers to describe how confident they feel implementing each Balanced Literacy component and then asked them to explain why. Interview Question 11 was focused on another source of Bandura's self-efficacy theory, physiological and affective states, meaning a person's mood or feelings. In this question, I ask teachers if they felt

they have the confidence to affect student achievement. Finally, I asked teachers to use the literacy schedule he or she brought to the interview to describe the instruction I observed when I visited their classrooms. When the interview was scheduled, the teacher was told to bring her Literacy schedule with her to the interview. This helped me understand the teacher's perceptions of the Balanced Literacy model and enabled me to compare those perceptions to the model I observed when visiting their classrooms.

Classroom Observation

Although I initially planned to conduct in-person classroom observations, lasting 150 minutes—the required length of time for a Kindergarten, Grade 1, or Grade 2 Literacy block in TSD, instead I conducted the observations on Teams. I scheduled a classroom observation with each teacher, lasting 75 minutes- the required length for the Virtual Literacy block in TSD. This observation served as a snapshot of the teacher's literacy block. During the classroom observation, I used a Balanced Literacy classroom observation tool (Appendix D) to focus my observation. The Balanced Literacy classroom observation tool was intended to measure evidence of the teacher's implementation of Balanced Literacy. I developed the tool using three sources: (a) the literature review presented in Chapter 2, (b) the theoretical frameworks for this study, and (c) TSD's current principal walk-through tool. I asked four literacy experts to review the tool and revised the classroom observation tool based on their feedback. I used the tool to record teacher and student interactions, record my observations; I also took a screen short of any anchor charts or relevant Balanced Literacy instructional materials used that aligned with my classroom observation tool.

I solicited a panel of four experts, each with a Master's in Reading and a Reading Specialist teaching endorsement, to review my Classroom Observation Tool. I purposefully

chose individuals who are knowledgeable about Balanced Literacy, but who work at different levels within public education so they could provide different perspectives about Balanced Literacy. One expert is currently a building Reading Specialist in TSD, another works with Elementary Principals in another school district, the third works at the central office in Reading in a different school district, and the fourth works at the state level in Reading instruction.

One expert encouraged me to triangulate data using either other published observation tools, such as a tool that measured teacher wait time, or to ask teachers for copies of lesson plans. After considering the feedback relative to my research focus, I made two changes. First, I asked teachers to bring a copy of their literacy block schedule to the interview so the teacher could explain what I might observe during the scheduled observation. Second, I agreed that my observation tool could more clearly identify teacher and student behavior. Based on the expert feedback, I selected codes to classify teacher and student behavior during the observation and added additional columns so that Balanced Literacy components and teacher and student behaviors could be recorded on one observation tool.

Other experts provided feedback about specific components of Balanced Literacy. Based on their feedback, I added several descriptors to the observation tool. Under the Read Aloud section, I added that the teacher introduces the learning target for grade level skill or strategy that could later be woven throughout the lesson. Under the Guided Reading section, I added students are aware of the learning objective. Also, under the Guided Reading section, one literacy expert recommended that a teacher's explicit teaching will depend on the child's reading level, so I revised one descriptor to read, "teacher provides explicit teaching points on decoding or comprehension depending on the reader and/or part of the lesson." Under the Independent Reading section, another expert suggested I specify the teacher's role during Independent

Reading and recommended I expand the role of the teacher and provide examples of how a teacher would hold her students accountable during Independent Reading. Finally, based on feedback, I added a descriptor for Mentor Text under the section Writing Workshop mini lesson.

Member Checking. I audio recorded each interview and later transcribed the data verbatim into a Word document. I then uploaded the transcription and observation notes into Dedoose for data analysis. I created a bulleted list of the observations I made during the classroom observation. From the interview transcription and classroom observation, I created a one-page summary document to email to the participants. I asked each participant to confirm the major ideas I captured. I encouraged participants to add new thoughts or clarify my phrasing. During member checking, participants had an opportunity to read a summary of the researcher's interpretation of what has been shared during an interview (Creswell, 2013). Each teacher was asked to review my one-page summary document to answer the question, "Did I get the story right? Or this what you meant when you said this?" If a participant disagreed with my interpretation, I asked the participant to clarify my misunderstanding. This will be discussed in greater detail in the sections that follow.

Data Analysis

The data analysis plan for this study includes five parts: holistic reading, coding individual participant interviews, coding classroom observations, creating parent categories, and within-case analysis.

Holistic Reading

Holistic coding means the researcher reads the documents completely, identifying key ideas, to review the breadth and depth of the data (Creswell, 2013). Holistic reading is important because it allows the researcher to gain an understanding of the key issues in this case study,

grasp the complexity of this case study, and accurately describe participants' perceptions in the case (Creswell, 2013). In this case study, I explored teacher perceptions and preparedness to implement Balanced Literacy. I relied on holistic reading to identify key issues that helped me answer my research questions as I embarked on the iterative data analysis process.

The first time I read the transcribed interview and classroom observation notes, I rapidly read all notes in their entirety to gain an overall familiarity and get a sense for the depth and breadth of the interview data for each participant (Bazeley, 2013). In the initial read, my goal was to gain a sense of the key points shared in the interview and observed during observation. In my second holistic read of the transcription and my classroom observation notes, I read more actively, focusing on the key elements I established during my first read to draw lines between connected ideas.

The holistic reading step of my data analysis plan is essential because it revealed key points. These key points served three purposes. First, I recorded these key points as memos in my reflexive journal and for reference as I worked through the rest of the analytic process. Second, the holistic reading and memo making enabled me to create a one-page summary to serve as a member checking document with each teacher participant (Creswell, 2013). Finally, I summarized the key elements in a separate document called a profile summary chart. As I holistically read each participant's transcript, I added another row for each participant's key elements to the profile summary chart. This chart was helpful during my within-case analysis later in the process (Bazeley, 2013).

Coding Individual Participants

In the second step of reading, I coded each participant's transcript by discrete thought relevant to my research focus (Bazeley, 2013). I either assigned a code to each discrete thought

from the list of a priori codes (Appendix C) or as needed, developed a new, emergent code relative to my research focus. I explain more about the coding process in the sections that follow, including the use of a priori and emergent codes, memos, and a codebook.

A Priori Codes

A priori codes guided my initial analysis of data and ensured I aligned my codes with the research questions. I used two theoretical frameworks in this study—Fountas and Pinnell’s (1996) Balanced Literacy framework and Bandura’s (1997) sources of self-efficacy framework—to create the interview questions and classroom observation tool. Prior to data generation, I generated a priori codes for each interview question as a starter set to code my interview data (Appendix C). When I choose one of the a priori codes for discrete idea code, I ensured the code linked to my research question and I remained focused on my guiding theoretical frameworks throughout the coding process (Bazeley, 2013).

Emergent Codes

In addition to a priori codes, I created new codes that I did not list prior to data generation. It is important to consider emergent codes because I learned through interview or observation information that data did not always fit the a priori codes. As I explored teacher perceptions, I wanted the flexibility to follow the data and answer my research questions through a pragmatic lens. As I reread the transcripts and determined a code to label interview data, my most important consideration was my research focus (Bazeley, 2013; Creswell, 2013). I wanted to explore teacher perceptions of self-efficacy and preparedness to implement Balanced Literacy. While I expected there to be commonality across participants’ training experiences, I also anticipated each participant’s experiences would be unique. Therefore, I found new, specific

codes emerged to represent what occurred in each participant's transcript relative to my research focus.

Memos

Memos are notes the researcher makes for herself to record analytic thoughts that come to mind (Bazeley, 2013). Memoing allowed me to process and add depth to my analytic thinking as I worked toward drawing conclusions to answer my research questions. After I created a new code, I recorded my thinking in a memo in my reflexive journal as well as in my codebook. In my reflexive journal, I consistently stopped and recorded my thinking, especially recording why each emergent code was important (Bazeley, 2013). When I stopped and recorded my thinking in a memo, I captured why this code was necessary and identified what in the participant's response sparked the need for a new code. Establishing a new code was one coding decision; I needed to capture my coding decisions in my reflexive journal so that I could reference these decisions later in the process as I explained my data analysis process and justified my findings and conclusions (Bazeley, 2013).

Codebooks

Codebooks are separate documents that list each code used by the researcher and the code's properties according to the broader category it falls under (Bazeley, 2013). Each time I created a new code during data analysis, I also created a memo and recorded the code in my codebook. For example, if I created a new code titled "affirmed with feedback," the code might read "due to feedback provided by the principal, the teacher felt affirmed she was making the right instructional decision." Then, this code would be logically organized under the term "verbal persuasion," because this is the source of self-efficacy that led to the teacher feeling confident. While I defined each code once I have created it, I was ready to refine and clarify the code's

definition as I collected more data (Bazeley, 2013). As an example, when I read a participant's transcript, and recalled that another participant had a similar experience (i.e., positive feedback experience with a reading specialist), the code's definition could become more specific to capture what occurred in both participants' related experiences. As I applied a priori codes from Appendix C, I also listed and defined the a priori code in my codebook, and refined the definition as needed. Additionally, in this step of the coding process, I developed new categories that helped to organize my codes in my codebook. The codebook benefited me as an organizational and reference tool as I continued to code additional transcripts and merge data during the data analysis process. The codebook also became part of my audit trail, a database evidencing the basis of my interpretations and conclusions (Bazeley, 2013), as I documented codes and definitions and began to establish categories.

Coding Classroom Observations

In the third step of data analysis, I coded the classroom observation data, or field notes, using a discrete idea unit of analysis (Bazeley, 2013). Using the Balanced Literacy observation tool as my guide during the classroom observation, I coded each new observation I made in my field notes (Appendix D). Field notes often generate descriptive and straightforward codes because they capture interactions between teachers and students and document the researcher's "look-fors," listed in observation tools (Bazeley, 2013).

Integrate Findings

I anticipated my data collection to be fluid. I scheduled teacher interviews and classroom observations based on the teacher's availability. I interviewed each teacher before observing a teacher but scheduled interviews and observations fluidly. For example, I scheduled interviews and observations Interview 1, Interview 2, Observation 1, Interview 3, Observation 2, and so

forth. As outlined above, I began reading and starting preliminary analysis between data collection tasks.

After I coded the interview and field notes for each participant separately, I integrated the findings of these two data sources. I returned to the key ideas captured in my holistic read and determined related themes between the two data sources. It is important I looked at each participant's data sources before I merged the data.

Creating Parent Categories

Parent categories are clusters of coded data that help a researcher merge and organize codes into categories and subcategories to refine data (Bazeley, 2013). Creating parent categories was an important and necessary step in the data analysis process because it encouraged me to rearrange and merge codes and enabled me to look for patterns between codes as I sifted through the data and moved toward tentative findings (Bazeley, 2013). After holistically reading and coding each data source, I created parent codes for each participant's data. I used Dedoose to locate examples of each code and sorted data into groups according to the code. I then organized the codes into a hierarchical system in which I assigned parent categories; all codes below a parent category were more specific types of the categories (Bazeley, 2013). I recorded the parent category, and my thinking for grouping the codes into parent categories, in my reflexive journal. Additionally, in my codebook, I recorded the parent code, any necessary subcategories, and any revisions to the code definition. I described not only the beliefs and experiences of each teacher participant in this study, but also whether there are similarities or differences across participants that helped me draw conclusions about the experiences of typical Grade 2 teachers in TSD.

Within-Case Analysis

During within-case analysis, the researcher looked across the different participants in a case study to create thematic analysis (Creswell, 2013). While it is important to capture individual participant's perceptions, in this case study, I wanted to draw conclusions based on the experiences of the teachers in one school division who received the same training over a four-year period. The within-case analysis enabled me to explore my research questions from different perspectives within my case (Bazeley, 2013). Since I was interested in the lived experiences of teachers who implemented TSD BL, I found differences in the training experiences teachers perceived as having the most impact. For example, I wanted to determine if teachers ranked the same training as having high impact on student achievement, and why the teacher ranked these training experiences in this way.

As I explored different perspectives within my case, I wrote and reflected a concise summary in my reflexive journal of each identified code I planned to examine using the within-case comparison. The summary helped me track the perceptions and experiences of each participant relative to my research focus so later I compared similarities and difference across the participants. I created a single pattern matrix, or a table created in a new Word document, in which the codes I examined closely were listed in rows and the columns represent demographic information or levels of perceived self-efficacy (Bazeley, 2013). As I reread participant data, I inserted information into each cell that summarized data for the code in that column and recorded additional notes and specific examples in my reflexive journal. When my within-case comparison was complete, I had one table for each code I closely examined, along with specific excerpts, reflections, and thoughts about the comparison recorded in my reflexive journal. I used the single pattern matrix and my reflexive journal to record what I learned from the different

perspectives and refine the higher-level concepts I defined and organized in previous steps of the data analysis plan. To help me move from a single pattern matrix to drawing conclusions about the experiences of typical teachers in TSD, I used pattern matching. Pattern matching means I compared a predicted pattern, variables from the extant literature that impact a teacher's self-efficacy, to the pattern of my results (Yin, 2009). If the patterns matched, this provides evidence for a stronger conclusion that explains how teacher perception of self-efficacy and preparedness to implement Balanced Literacy are related.

Timeline

To guarantee the quality of my research process, I presented my proposed study to my dissertation committee for feedback and revision in April 2020. Upon a successful proposal, I followed the guidelines of William & Mary's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for permission to conduct research. Once approved, I obtained permission from TSD to conduct the study and request access to the list of teachers who fit the criteria. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, I changed my original design from in-person interviews and observations to interviews and observations on Teams. I resubmitted my proposal to the IRB. Once I was approved, I resubmitted to TSD to gain permission from my study. I sent an introductory email (Appendix E) to the potential participants, explaining the purpose of the study and a describing the individual interviews and observations. Participants were informed that their participation is voluntary. I did not share individual participant responses with school administration.

After successfully recruiting a participant sample that meets my criteria (described earlier in this chapter), I conducted interviews and observations with study participants during September, October, November, and December 2020. Once data generation was complete, the analysis process occurred in January 2021 to June 2022. When my data analysis was complete

and I synthesized my study's findings, I submitted my study findings to an external literacy expert to review the study findings. My findings were reported through the final dissertation defense in December 2022.

Trustworthiness and Authenticity Criteria

Creswell (2013) argued the importance of validation strategies to ensure a qualitative researcher accurately represents study participants' experiences and beliefs; the validation strategies should align with the lens used in the study. To align with the pragmatic lens used in this study, I employed Lincoln and Guba's (1985) trustworthiness and authenticity criteria. In this case study I strived to understand how each of my participant's perceptions about his or her literacy instructional practices have been shaped by past experiences. Lincoln and Guba's (1985) trustworthiness—meaning quality or rigor—and authenticity criteria ensured that I represented the perceptions and experiences of my participants rather than my own experiences. I outlined my plan to meet the trustworthiness criteria in the following sections: transferability, credibility, dependability, and confirmability.

Transferability

In qualitative research, it is readers' responsibility to assess whether the study can be transferred, or generalized, to another setting (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Creswell (2013) recommended that the researcher provide a thorough description of the study context to determine the transferability of the study's findings to other settings. Chapter 3 provides a detailed and transparent description of my research methods; this was part of the transferability of this study. This study was bound by the case, which included the broader context of the school district as well as the context of each teacher participant. Therefore, in this case study, I provided a rich description of the school district that provided the context for this study, as well as detailed

information about each participant, so that readers could determine the extent to which findings from this study could be generalized to other settings (Stake, 1995). I provided a thorough description of TSD that described the school district's instructional literacy expectations, professional development provided in recent years, and any significant differences in teacher support provided to individual schools within the district. Further, for each teacher participant, I provided descriptions of each teacher's years of experience, any additional relevant training or support provided by the school or sought by the individual, explanation related to how Balanced Literacy has been implemented in the classroom, and the teacher's perceived level of self-efficacy while maintaining anonymity of the participant.

Credibility

In qualitative research, the reader also determines the credibility of a study's findings by retracing the researcher's process (Bazeley, 2013). As one method to establish credibility in the study's findings, I maintained a reflexive journal throughout the research process. During the iterative analytical process, I frequently created memos in my reflexive journal so that I documented my data analysis process, thoughts, and revelations as each transcript was read and assigned codes (Merriam, 1998). Additionally, I used member checking to ensure the study findings accurately reflected the lived experiences of the participants as shared with me (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). When a researcher uses member checking, the study results have a higher level of credibility, or truth value (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Furthermore, an external literacy expert reviewed the study findings. The external literacy expert was not involved in the research process and is a specialist in the field of Early Literacy. This person served as a peer reviewer. After completing the second round of coding, I shared the parent codes and tentative study findings and asked the literacy expert to confirm that my findings are supported by what

participants shared during interviews and are relevant to Fountas and Pinnell's (1996) Balanced Literacy and Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory. I incorporated relevant feedback from the peer reviewer, amending and refining my findings if appropriate.

Dependability

When a researcher carries out a study according to a research plan, this adds to the study's dependability; Lincoln and Guba (1985) described the importance of the researcher adhering to the process planned in the methodology of the study, and the ease in which the study could be replicated in another context. Again, Chapter 3 supports the dependability criteria since it documents my work with my dissertation committee to map out a plan for my research prior to beginning. Additionally, to meet the dependability criteria, I used a reflexive journal as part of an audit trail to document my study plan and processes. The reflexive journal was a consistent method to record my notes and thoughts after interviews and observations, capture thoughts and follow-up questions that emerged while transcribing interviews and record emerging findings during data analysis. Additionally, I used my reflexive journal throughout data generation or coding and record any of my own biases that emerge relative to Fountas and Pinnell's (1996) Balanced Literacy framework and Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy. My reflexive journal added to the transparency of my study and helped to explain how I arrived at the study's findings (Bazeley, 2013).

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the extent to which a research's findings are neutral, and a reflection of participants' experiences, rather than the researcher's bias or individual motivation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To meet the confirmability criteria, I used member checking to ensure I

accurately represented each participant's story. Additionally, I acknowledged my personal biases in a researcher as instrument statement.

Researcher as Instrument Statement

I am currently a Reading Specialist in one of the elementary schools in TSD. I teach students in need of reading remediation and provide professional development to teachers in my school. Based on my role in TSD, I believe Kindergarten, Grade 1, and Grade 2 teachers need support to implement Balanced Literacy, especially Guided Reading, in such a way that impacts student achievement. Students in these grades can span a wide developmental range, and teachers need support beyond what is currently provided by TSD to reach the diverse needs of students in their classrooms. Only two teachers at my school, out of a total 70 possible participants across TSD, met the sampling criterion for this research study.

I followed Creswell's (2013) recommendation to address my positionality by first talking about my experiences related to the phenomenon explored, and then discussing how my past experiences might shape my interpretation of the phenomenon. Therefore, in my first reflexive journal entry, I have written a researcher as instrument statement (Appendix F). This statement explains the past experiences and biases that might impact my interpretations related to this study. I created my statement prior to data generation. To ensure I minimized biases that could impact my interpretation of responses and study findings, I continued to keep a reflexive journal throughout this study.

Assumptions, Delimitations, and Limitations

The following sections describe assumptions related to the teacher participants in this context, the delimitations that bind the study, and the limitations that could influence the analysis of data.

Assumptions

TSD provided teachers several months of training in Guided Reading and allotted a 2-year training cycle for Writing Workshop implementation. Since TSD provided training in these Balanced Literacy components, and the teachers in this study taught in TSD for the 4-year period in which this training was provided to teachers, I assumed that teachers who participated in this study would have had similar Literacy training experiences. It was likely that the teachers in this study had individual opinions related to their training experiences, literacy instruction, and about their level of self-efficacy. I assumed the participants were willing to share these opinions with me openly and honestly. I assumed the instruction provided during classroom observations will authentically mirror the daily instruction occurring in the classroom. Teachers who have attended Balanced Literacy training for 2 years are also assumed to be beyond the “implementation dip” of introducing new strategies during literacy lessons. As teachers are introduced to new teaching strategies and grapple with how to implement the new strategies, it is common to experience an implementation dip, or a slight decline in teacher confidence or student achievement scores, because implementing new strategies require new skills and new knowledge (Fullan, 2001).

Delimitations

This case study is limited to 7 teachers across one school district. Bounding the case limits the study sample and makes the study feasible. Additionally, reliance on a self-report instrument (i.e., semi-structured interviews) is a delimitation because the participant responded with his or her self-perceptions, which may have differed from the participant’s actual teaching practices. However, this is appropriate given the focus on self-efficacy, a construct inherently based on self-perception. Although student achievement data or teacher evaluation data could have been included as additional data sources, the scope of this research is focused on the

perceptions and experiences of the teachers. Finally, TSD provided professional development in grade level bands, so this case study included only teachers who taught in the Kindergarten, Grade 1, and Grade 2 band, who shared similar training experiences provided by TSD.

Limitations

The case study is limited to the teachers in TSD who experienced Balanced Literacy training and who implemented Balanced Literacy in their classrooms for at least four years. I used a purposive sampling method, which limits the generalizability of my findings. The value in this case study will be in its applicability to the teaching practices within the context of its participants. The study results are less likely to transfer to other contexts, yet my study findings will tell a story that might be useful to other researchers, literacy teachers and coaches, and school leaders in schools implementing the Balanced Literacy model.

The study is also limited to the data the study participants are willing to share. It is possible study participants could have a lack of trust and withhold honest responses. Given that the school district has an expectation for utilizing a Balanced Literacy framework, participants' responses could reflect how they perceive the researcher and the school district want them to respond. To address the possible limitations for trust and honesty, the researcher established rapport during the interview and ensured teachers' participation in the study remained anonymous.

The timeframe for the data collection process could pose a limitation. Although I invited participants to the study simultaneously, the participants joined the study at staggered times. Additionally, since all participants were fulltime classroom teachers, finding mutually agreeable times to schedule interviews and observations possibly extended the time required for data collection. The staggered interview times could have also posed a limitation because additional

teaching experiences or additional support might be offered to a participant during the delay, which might influence participants' responses. I noted the dates the interviews and observations are conducted to help determine how timing impacts participant answers.

Contextual factors within and among schools influence the experiences of those in an organization (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). Factors such as student population, experience of other teachers in a grade level, school leadership, and teacher training specific to the school might also impact an individual teacher's literacy instructional decisions (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). Since the participants in this study teach in different public schools, the variables associated with each context could significantly influence an individual teacher's perceptions and experiences and may have limited individual participant responses. For example, one school has four Reading Specialists, and this made the Reading Specialist more available to the teacher compared to one school had one Reading Specialist, and the teacher did not speak of the Reading Specialist providing her additional support. I acknowledge that contextual variables exist in schools, and I attempted to ask questions about these variables through the interview process; however, controlling for these contextual variables is beyond the scope of this study.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this case study was to describe the lived experiences of teachers within Tribe School District (TSD) who are implementing Balanced Literacy. When analyzing the interview and classroom observation data, themes and patterns within themes emerged that demonstrates teachers in this case study received trained that prepared and increased their self-efficacy to teach the Balanced Literacy components. Chapter 3 provided this study's methodology and outlined the data collection procedures aligned with Fountas and Pinnell's (1996) Balanced Literacy framework and Bandura's (1997) sources of self-efficacy theory.

These research questions guided this case study:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of their preparedness to implement Guided Reading and Writing Workshop?
2. What is my assessment of teachers' perceptions of the extent to which their self-efficacy related to providing literacy instruction has affected their teaching practices?
3. To what degree is the observed implementation of Balanced Literacy strategies aligned with the professional development provided in a school district's Balanced Literacy model?

I used a semi-structured interview and classroom observation data to answer the research questions. I used a five-part iterative data analysis process to move from data to the findings described in this chapter.

First, I transcribed each interview and classroom observation so I could accurately describe each participant's experiences. Transcriptions were necessary for all other parts of the data analysis to occur because I strived to report each teacher's perceptions of her own experiences. After transcribing, I did a holistic reading to identify key ideas and review the breadth and depth of the data (Creswell, 2013). Then, I read the interview and classroom observations a second time to begin making connections between the teacher's training experiences, their confidence implementing literacy instruction, and evidence of the implementation of Balanced Literacy components.

Next, I coded each participant's transcript by discrete thought relevant to my research focus (Bazeley, 2013). I assigned either an a priori code, a code created prior to data collection for each interview question or created an emergent code. I kept a running list of a priori and emergent codes in my codebook.

Third, I coded and merged the classroom observations data, or field notes, for each participant using a discrete idea unit of analysis (Bazeley, 2013). It was helpful to use the Balanced Literacy observation tool as my guide when analyzing the classroom observation. Since my observations were virtual due to COVID-19 protocols, I decided to limit my "look fors" to only the Balanced Literacy components in which TSD provided teacher training: Guided Reading, which included Word Study and Writing Workshop. This helped narrow my focus and code observations that were relevant to my research questions. After I conducted the interview and classroom observation, I integrated the findings of these two data sources before merging the participant data across the case study.

Fourth, I created parent codes by merging and rearranging codes for each participant to move toward tentative findings (Bazeley, 2013). I printed each participant's data and used the

participants' answers to look for patterns, locate examples of each code, and sort the data into groups according to a hierarchical system of parent codes and subcategories (Bazeley, 2013). Then, I merged the data for each research question and recorded parent codes by teacher participant to tentatively answer each research question.

The final step of data analysis, within-case analysis, yielded the findings in this chapter. During within-case analysis, I looked across all participants in my case study to create thematic analysis (Creswell, 2013). I created a single pattern matrix to list each significant code found across four or more participants, and then I listed the specific quotes from individual teacher to support my finding. I looked for patterns within themes that answered each research question: quotes that described why a teacher felt prepared or not prepared, confident or not confident, and evidence of implementation or no evidence of implementation of the Balanced Literacy components. Ultimately, I reported findings across participants as frequency counts for each interview question, patterns within themes, and specific quotes as findings and evidence of my findings from individual teachers.

Change in the Interview Protocol

I initially invited Grade 2 teachers in separate schools across TSD to participate as part of my study sample. I gained permission from TSD and sent emails to prospective teachers in September 2020. However, few teachers responded to my emails, and I was having difficulty recruiting participants for my study. I gained permission from the IRB and through the school division that provided the context of my study to expand the recruitment guidelines for my study sample. I included teachers who taught in either Kindergarten, Grade 1, or Grade 2 for the years of 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019. Therefore, the teachers all attended the same Literacy training TSD provided to all K-2 teachers. I then recruited 7 teachers who agreed to participate.

Additionally, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, two significant changes occurred in my data collection. First, TSD granted me permission to conduct classroom observations in the virtual environment. At the time of each classroom observation, September to December 2020, all classes were being taught virtually. Teachers were not teaching in person in the regular classroom; therefore, I changed my classroom observations to observations of the virtual classroom.

Due to the virtual teaching environment, my dissertation chair advised I add three questions about teaching in the virtual environment to the interview protocol:

- Did some of the training carry you into the virtual environment?
- Which of the Balanced Literacy components did you rely on most heavily in the virtual environment?
- How did you make a decision about what to keep in the virtual environment?

Because I observed Literacy instruction in the virtual environment, I wanted to know teacher's perceptions of how the virtual environment affected their preparedness, self-efficacy, and literacy instruction. The virtual teaching questions related to Research Question 3.

Table 3*Revised List of Teacher Interview Prompts Related to Research Questions*

Item	Prompt	Research Question
Background	Please tell me how long you have been teaching.	1, 2
	Please share how long you have taught in this school district.	1, 2
	Please tell me your highest level of education.	1, 2
1	Would you please give me a list of all training experiences you brainstormed in and outside of TSD?	1
2	Can you order these experiences from least to greatest impact on your ability to influence students' achievement? (I used a Hover Cam to provide each participant a line plot for visual support.)	1, 2
3	Will you tell me more about why you placed these cards here? (I used a Hover Cam and pointed to cards near "most impacts" and then the cards near "least impacts.") Will you describe an example?	1, 2
4	Do you feel you would benefit from a training experience that you have not had? Why or why not?	1
5	Will you please describe an exceptionally successful experience you had with teaching either Guided Reading or Writing Workshop?	2
6	Thinking about your successful Guided Reading or Writing Workshop experience, what impact, if any, has this successful experience had on your ability to implement Guided Reading or Writing Workshop in your classroom?	2
7	Can you describe to me an experience in which someone modeled Guided Reading or Writing Workshop to you?	2
8	What impact, if any, did having the Guided Reading or Writing Workshop modeled to you have on your ability to implement the Guided Reading or Writing Workshop in the classroom?	2
9	What impact, if any, has receiving feedback from another person had on your ability to influence students' reading and writing growth?	2
10	How confident are you in your ability to execute each of these components of Balanced Literacy? What makes you feel this way?	1, 2
11	Do you feel you have the skills to impact your students' reading and writing progress throughout the year? Why or why not?	2
12	What will I see when I observe you teaching in your virtual classroom? If needed, I asked follow-up questions: What do you mean by small-group instruction? What will the teacher and student be doing throughout the Balanced Literacy instructional block?	3
13	Did some training carry you into teaching in the virtual classroom? (I revisited the line plot of teacher training experiences.)	3
14	Which of the Balanced Literacy components did you rely on most heavily in the virtual classroom? (I showed the list of Balanced Literacy components)	3
15	How did you make a decision about what to keep in the virtual classroom?	3

Note. TSD = Tribe School District

Research Question #1

What are teachers' perceptions of their preparedness to implement Guided Reading and Writing Workshop?

Semi-Structured Interview Responses

Individual interviews were conducted to answer this research question. Following an initial introduction, semi-structured interview questions helped guide each interview. Interview questions, which were aligned to Fountas and Pinnell's (1996) Balanced Literacy framework and Bandura's (1997) sources of self-efficacy theory, were designed so that participants listed their teacher training experiences, used a line plot to order the training experiences from greatest to least impact on student achievement, named any training they perceived they were missing, and discussed their confidence level in teaching Guided Reading and Writing Workshop.

Training Received. Prior to the individual interview, I asked each participant to brainstorm a list of teacher training experiences she attended, both inside and outside of TSD. In the individual interview, each teacher shared her list. Table 4 shows teacher training experiences listed by four or more participants.

Table 4

Teacher Training Responses, Frequency, and Percentage for Interview Question 1

Training Received	No. (<i>n</i> = 7)	%
Guided Reading training provided by TSD	4	57%
Writing Workshop training provided by TSD	7	100%
Word Study training provided by TSD	7	100%
Attended TSD Word Study training as their school's Word Study Instructional Trainer	5	71%
School-based professional development with their school's Reading Specialist	5	71%
Attended Junior Great Books training	6	86%
Personally sought additional training outside of TSD	5	71%

Note. TSD = Tribe School District

Training Experiences With the Most Impact on Student Achievement. After teachers listed their teaching training experiences, they ranked the training experience on a line plot from those training experiences that most impacted student achievement to training experiences that least impacted student achievement. Four out of seven teachers ranked Writing Workshop provided by TSD as having a high impact on student achievement. The teachers described Writing Workshop training as helping them shift from using teacher-provided writing prompts to having students select their own topics.

- “Writer’s Workshop, when we learned about having the kids write...not from a prompt but from their own experiences...that greatly impacted student achievement just being able to write from [their own] experience.”
- “Writer’s Workshop really was the first writing training I’d probably ever received in my career and just really reorganized [my teaching], moving away from these topic-based writings to thematic units of students for writing genres of writing, and just writing authentically, where the students are coming up with their own topics.”
- “The students are writing about something they choose. They’re learning to perfect their craft and elaborate. And I think that with Lucy [Calkin’s] way, she’s very thorough...and if kids are learning that way from the get-go, their writing is going to be amazing. I think they take ownership of it, and they’re really invested in their writing...and they’re proud of what they accomplished at the end.”

Word Study Training. In addition to Writing Workshop having a high impact on student achievement, five out of seven teachers ranked Word Study training provided by TSD as having a high impact on student achievement.

- “I loved [Word Study training], like systematic and it was this certain way. Because it worked for my kids. So, I would rank [it] towards a 10.”
- “I learned more in that training about teaching phonics and how kids learn and how to pick up what they’re missing as far as their developmental stage. What they’re missing...and where to backtrack, what assessments to give to figure out where their gaps are. I wish that we were still having ongoing Word Study instruction. It’s fascinating to me.”
- “There are good things [in Word Study training], and things I still use in [my] classroom.”
- “Orton-Gillingham and Word Study, I use those together every day. Every small group is word study involved.”

Looking at Data for Student Growth. Although five out of seven teachers ranked Word Study training as having a high impact on student achievement, a theme emerged for five out of seven teachers that the most impactful training taught teachers to look at their students’ data for evidence of student growth and to target instruction for students’ needs.

- “You can’t get better unless you see how [the students are] growing. I think that it’s just so important to talk about how we’re impacting student achievement by looking at what they’re doing, where are they, how are they doing on their [Developmental Spelling Assessments].”
- “It’s amazing to see the progress that they make with the targeted learning, whether it’s [TSD Word Study training provided by the first or second presenter]. My kids went from early Letter Name spellers to almost Syllable Juncture [three stages of Word Study development]. But just by doing those same things every day. So, I

believe it works. And I see the results. Knowing how to spell makes the kids more confident, whether it's in writing or reading.”

Writing Workshop and Word Study Training. Although teachers indicated that Writing Workshop and Word Study trainings both impacted students, four out of seven teachers shared that Writing Workshop and Word Study had an equal impact on student achievement.

- “I think that all of these pieces really need to be done every day. Word study, Writer’s Workshop, Guided Reading, fluency, all of those need to be done every single day...it’s exactly what students need to improve their spelling, their writing, their reading, everything.”
- “I like how they get to the heart of the problem. Whether it’s segmenting or blending. You have to start there before you can add on more.... So, you have to go back to the basics. And I think both [Word Study and Writing Workshop] trainings cover that.”

School-Based Reading Specialist Training. In addition, the district-wide training provided by TSD, four out of seven teachers ranked school-based professional development with their school’s Reading Specialist as having a high impact on student achievement.

- “The [Guided Reading and Word Study] activities that we did with our Reading Specialist were really good. So, I do see that it would promote growth through the year.”
- “I really enjoyed that because we had maybe five teachers and then the [Reading] Specialists. It was very specific to our grade level versus sitting in a staff meeting where you have K-5, and everybody has their own questions for their age group, and some aren’t developmentally appropriate. It was great, quality [professional development].”

Ongoing Professional Development with School's Reading Specialist. Further, a theme emerged, four out of seven teachers shared that on-going professional development with the school's Reading Specialist supported teacher's preparedness and implementation of the new strategy.

- "I have most enjoyed Guided Reading training with continuous development from [my school's] Reading Specialist...she broke up components of [the] small group lesson plan piece by piece. I do not feel overwhelmed and frustrated because you can feel confident to implement the pieces."
- "When I see it modeled [by the Reading Specialist], it makes me feel I can improve."

Personally Selected Training. Four out of seven teachers said the training they sought outside of TSD had the greatest impact on student achievement.

- "Orton-Gillingham is that multi-sensory piece, so I feel like it can get to those kids who need that...something extra, like don't typically catch it or understand it...like involving writing in sand and sky writing...stretching out sounds, counting the sounds...it reaches those kids in a better way."
- [When I talk with preservice teachers,] "I have to spend a lot of time talking about teaching reading, looking at my own practices to help novice teachers and their practices. I also learn what is going on currently in [the preservice teachers' cooperating] classrooms. So, hopefully I am being insightful to them, but I learn [just as them] as much from them...[when I talk with preservice teachers] I really have to stop and look at what we [in-service teachers in TSD are] doing in the classroom and be able to explain it to a novice teacher."

Effects of Training. Although teachers responded that training provided by TSD, by their school's reading specialist, and personally sought professional development impacted student achievement, several themes emerged with the data.

Improved Teacher Confidence. Five out of seven teachers shared that training experiences with the most impact improved their confidence to implement a new strategy in their classroom.

- “I was able to turn around and implement that strategy that the Reading Specialists presented to us.”
- “It felt it was helpful in working with more English Language Learners that was what I needed at the time.”

Importance of Modeling. Another emergent theme related to the importance of modeling. Four out of seven teachers shared that when the training experience included modeling of the new strategy, the training was more effective.

- “When somebody models for you, it changes from feeling overwhelmed to implement with confidence.”
- “It was very useful to see [Reading Specialists] show us, get a book out, mark how you would use references in the book to make inferences.”
- “I think the world of teaching is very isolating and it's hard to know...what's going on beyond our walls. I'm a visual learner. I have to hear it and see what other people are doing to help me.”

Presenting to Colleagues. Modeling was also effective when teachers conducted training for their colleagues. Six out of seven teachers shared that when they presented to other teachers

about what they had learned from a training experience, it increased their understanding of the training experience.

- “Yes, I learned a lot during that [Word Study training], and then turning around and teaching it reinforced what I learned.”
- “Anything that you helped to create, I feel like you have a better understanding than sitting in a staff meeting being told what’s going on.”
- “If I have to teach somebody else to do something, then I have to understand it more. I have to look at my own practices and self-reflect as to those best practices...if I’m modeling for somebody else, I have to make sure I’m on my game and understand what’s going on.”

Application to Other Literacy Areas. Finally, four out of seven teachers stated that the training experience with the most impact enabled them to apply what they learned to other areas of literacy instruction.

- “If [students] have trouble with *sh* and *ch*, it should be fixed in Word Study, and then [the student] can see it in their writing as well.”
- “Running records training...when I got the training, I thought oh my...this is a lot of work...But I found out that it was a really good tool for evaluating their reading...very helpful in the end, and to see what was going on in their little brains while they’re reading...and correct those things they’re doing...to fill in those holes...you need to know where the holes are.”

Training Experiences With the Least Impact on Student Achievement. After teachers ranked the training experiences that had the least impact on student achievement, I asked them to

explain their rankings. Four out of seven teachers responded their undergraduate and graduate coursework and student teaching had the least impact on student achievement.

- “That was a great [undergraduate] training to learn about books. But I’ve grown in what I know. Now, it is more important to think about where students are. If students can’t decode, they can’t read the great book.”
- “I just think about student teaching where I was 10 years ago, and it just is completely opposite ends of the spectrum of where I am now. I’m deeper in the thinking, and deeper in PLCs, and what does it look like, and how we can get better...I have learned so much.”

Five out of seven teachers ranked Junior Great Books as having least impact on their ability to impact student achievement because it did not meet their students’ needs.

- “It is not applicable to [my students] in 2nd grade.”
- “I don’t know if it would be every student’s ideal format to learn...you use guided questions, but not to the point where you’re pointing them in the right direction of the answer...it has a great philosophy behind it, I just don’t know how if, I have students that are below or just average readers. I could see myself doing it more with extend students. Like the gifted that just need enrichment.”
- “Junior Great Books...the year I was trained in it, I had a low average class. I did try it with the few kids who could benefit from it. It was hard. Honestly, I put it back on the shelf.”

Time to Prepare and Implement. In looking across all low-impact training experiences, a theme emerged, with five out of seven teachers that lack of time prevented the teacher from implementing what she learned from the training experience. Either the teacher did not have time

to prepare the materials, or she did not have the instructional time to use the materials. Both time constraints prevented the teacher from implementing new strategies they learned in the training experience. When teachers believed time hindered implementing what they learned in the training, the strategy was not implemented; therefore, the training had low impact on student achievement.

- “But then I came back to the classroom and just reality hit. And I tried it a few times with my higher-grade groups, but just found that [Junior Great Books] did not mesh well, especially with the shift to our current Word Study model. There was no way to integrate [Junior Great Books].”
- “It was a lot of really great resources, good ideas. I’ve got them organized in my OneDrive, but I have not used them at all, because life happens...I’m also trying to use my time the best I can. And while the resources that they gave us in that webinar are free on their website...it takes a little time to set it up, ahead of time.”
- “I just don’t use [Junior Great Books] as much as I had hoped I would with my level of kids...the amount of time it takes to work with just that small group, and the amount of time it takes to plan, prepare on top of everything else...there’s just not enough time within a day.”

Training Still Needed. After teachers ranked their training experiences on the line plot, I asked them to look over their lists and describe any training experiences they felt they would benefit from but had not yet had. Five teachers said they are missing training in Guided Reading.

- “With Guided Reading, so many people have their own different ways of doing it. I think that each teacher on my current grade level probably does Guided Reading a little bit differently. How to chunk time, how to progress in an effective way to make

sure we've covered just the pacing ...that's probably where most of my independent research has come in, and at the end of the school year, where I reflect the most is my groups and how to make them better."

- "I am more confident in writing versus reading. After all these trainings, as hard as I work, I still don't feel confident. I am using the tools that I have, but I still am just not confident, and worry constantly that I am not giving these kids what they need. But I don't know exactly what else I to do. I struggle."
- "For me, I think [I need to learn] more of what you do with the upper elementary in a reading group. And it was kind of like the school wide small group how to. But I would want to watch that again, or maybe have somebody else model what they do with older kids for fourth grade."

Differentiation. As an emergent theme, four out of seven teachers responded they are missing the ability to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all their students in reading.

- "Small [reading] group differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all students."
- "I am meeting children based on Word Study feature, but there is a disconnect with the Guided Reading levels, so there is difficulty in what level you pick and how you meet each of the child's needs."
- "This year, I also have more emergent readers than I ever had before...I just realized I don't exactly know what those [emergent] reading groups look like, especially how to do it virtually...to make sure I meet all the needs of the classroom."
- "Currently my word study groups, they're all on the same level as far as word study, but the reading is all over the place, so especially over the computer virtually, it is tough to try to find a book that we're all going to want to read and be able to read."

[Reading levels] are all over the place...because sometimes the kids are reading much higher, but they have holes, and that's why they're down here in word study, but they're reading up here...and I know we've got to fill in those holes and try to help that, but for the meantime, they're reading so much better.”

Teachers described they needed additional training in differentiating instruction. This is finding can be explained with the extant literature. The ability for a teacher to differentiate instruction requires a deeper knowledge of teacher skills because the teacher is required to diagnose individual needs and adjust their instruction focus and routines to meet the students' needs (JLARC, 200). Due to the deeper knowledge and skill level required in differentiating instruction, it makes sense that teachers believe they need additional training to develop these skills and meet the needs of their students.

Confidence in Different Components of Balanced Literacy. The last interview question related to Research Question 1 asked the teacher to describe how confident she was in her ability to teach the different components of Balanced Literacy. For the purpose of this research question, I will only report the findings for the Guided Reading and Writing Workshop components of the Balanced Literacy. The other components of the Balanced Literacy model are included in the discussion of Research Question 2.

Guided Reading. Six out of seven teachers were confident teaching Guided Reading during in-person instruction.

- “Guided Reading...I'm fairly confident in an in-person setting, I would say I'm very confident. In a virtual setting, I've been told that I'm doing okay...But the pacing is hard. It's difficult virtually.”

- “Guided Reading, I’m pretty confident. The word study model really changed a lot of what we do, and one that did kind of shake our confidence was just the less importance on that book...but, I feel like we have so many materials...I feel in terms of confidence, pretty confident in Guided Reading.”

Writing Workshop. Like findings related to teaching Guided Reading instruction, six out of seven teachers felt confident or very confident teaching Writing Workshop. Writing Workshop is the term used in the extant literature and throughout this dissertation; however, some teachers call it Writer’s Workshop. When teachers use the term Writer’s Workshop, teachers mean Writing Workshop.

- “Writer’s Workshop, I feel very confident in that. I love teaching that...And just to see them grow as writers...that would be my favorite and most confident.”
- “Writer’s Workshop, I think I do a really good job at...I think attending TSD professional development, and the fact that TSD has really invested time into the resources that go along with that...I can go to TSD and find any document I need to help me implement Writer’s Workshop. Whereas with Guided Reading, not so much, or it’s a little bit more hunt and peck for things. I think we’ve been well taught, well prepared to do Writer’s Workshop in TSD.”
- “Writing Workshop...I’m pretty comfortable with it after teaching it for a few years now... so of course the trainings have helped with writing. We’ve mostly had the Writing Workshop training. Before that, we didn’t really have a lot of trainings.”

Good Routines Improved Confidence. A theme emerged for four out of seven teachers. The four teachers stated that the good routines they established in their classrooms when

implementing Guided Reading and Writing Workshop improved their confidence in teaching Guided Reading and Writing Workshop.

- “Guided Reading...I have them come to my table and they’re practicing for fluency. And, then I listen to them read. And then, we talk about the story. It’s a pretty good routine with the students. So, I feel confident about that.”
- “Writer’s Workshop, I feel confident...Just because we start out with the brainstorming, and they do it step-by-step. So, by the end of the unit, they have a couple or three drafts. And then, when it comes to publishing it, they’re super excited. Because they get to pick their best one.”
- “I feel pretty confident in Writer’s Workshop, and that really is how I generally run that reading block of modeling a mini lesson, then go participate in a small group lesson. And we tend to, like in a [traditional school year], we do kind of [an] *I Do, We Do, You Do* kind of process.”

The teachers’ reflections about their confidence were consistent with Hansen’s (2006) findings about the cyclical nature of self-efficacy: when the teacher implements a strategy successfully and improves student achievement, the teacher gains confidence, and this increases the teacher’s mastery experience and motivates her desire to develop more self-efficacy.

Teachers felt prepared. To ensure I answered research question 1, I went back to read each teacher’s answers to every interview question designed to answer research question 1. I looked for specific examples that told me the training they received was relevant to being prepared to teach Guided Reading and Writing Workshop.

Guided Reading. Five out of seven teachers stated they felt prepared to implement Guided Reading instruction in their own classroom.

- “One that really stuck out to me was the Junior Great Books... I had the gifted cluster in second grade, so it was really important that I learned how to use those... it's just a matter of how you ask the questions and how you get them thinking about the story ...With the Junior Great Books, it just provides good conversation. And the kids are learning how to talk about books, and they're learning to go back and find evidence to support their point...it's just taking reading groups a step higher when they're actually taking what they know, and if they can talk about it and defend their answer...you know they're getting it.”
- “I think the way [TSD provided Word Study training]...it's targeted instruction. And for these kids to learn to spell and be good spellers. And once they're spellers, they can encode and decode. And they're better readers and all of that. I think the way she taught it, was very specific and very helpful to those students....And I use all of those things....it's amazing to see the progress that they make with the targeted learning... just by doing those same things every day. So, I believe it and it works. And I see results.”
- “Tier one Thursdays at of 10. Definitely, because it was applicable to what we were doing at that time. Say we were talking about inferencing, I could turn around and go implement whatever they taught us in the classroom at that time..... just a good almost in-depth professional development on each strategy that we were tackling in the classroom. I was able to turn around and implement that strategy that the reading teachers presented to us....[our school's Reading Specialists] would just give good concrete examples on how to teach an effective lesson. That's, I think, what a lot of

teachers are craving right now is just show me how to do it and the best way to interest the kids and engage them.”

- “I feel I could do Word Study with my eyes closed because I was trained on it and I’ve done it for so many years, and I’ve seen great results.”
- “The entire word study training as an umbrella, really opened my eyes to some parts of the reading development that I hadn't thought a lot about... then we're introduced to the idea of COW...how just fundamental COW is. It just was kind of eye opening that I went 10 years of my career really never focusing much on phonological awareness or COW. And now how much time is spent on it, to really launch those emergent readers. I feel like the [TSD Word Study training] really reorganized the entire way I do my reading groups...I feel pretty confident in Guided Reading.”

Writing Workshop. Although five out of seven teachers responded they felt prepared to teach Guided Reading, five out of seven teachers also shared they felt prepared to implement Writing Workshop.

- “So of course, the trainings have helped with writing. We've mostly had the Writing Workshop training.”
- “Writer’s Workshop.... It's just kind of embarrassing thinking back on your career before some of these [trainings]. But I feel like my kids write with so much more of a purpose now and I do a better job of encompassing all the genres...so in that case, I would say I feel pretty confident in Writers Workshop, and that really is how I generally run that writing block...I model, they go do, I model, they go do.”
- “Writer's Workshop is a great way to get teachers thinking about the progression of writing that the kids need, not just here's your prompt, go write... It was a great

training in the thought process that goes behind a student's ability to write a good story. It was invaluable really, it was wonderful training.... I think that we've been taught, well prepared to do Writer's Workshop in TSD."

- "Writing Workshop, yeah, I mean, I really followed the majority of the lessons that we received, and following those, I mean, I feel mildly comfortable."

Teachers described when they received training, teachers felt prepared. This finding is consistent with the extant literature. When a teacher receives high quality professional development, the teachers' self-efficacy increases (Ross & Bruce, 2007; Cantrell & Hughes, 2008; Greenleaf & Schoenbach, 2004; Fritz et al., 1995; NRP, 2000).

Summary

In summary, teachers felt they were prepared to implement Guided Reading and Writing Workshop in their classroom. All seven teachers listed Writing Workshop as a memorable training experience, with four ranking Writing Workshop as having a high impact on student achievement and four ranking it as having equal impact to Word Study training. Further, when teachers established good routines in the classroom, their confidence to teach Writing Workshop improved.

Teachers' level of Guided Reading preparedness was less consistent. Four teachers listed Guided Reading as a memorable training experience. TSD provided Guided Reading training in 2015-2016, and all the teachers in this case study should have received this training. However, five teachers responded that they were missing Guided Reading training. Teachers might not have been able to recall or were not thinking of this training when they listed the training, and this affected their responses.

However, six teachers responded they were prepared to teach Guided Reading in their classrooms. Teachers grouped Guided Reading and Word Study together when explaining why they felt prepared to teach Guided Reading. Additionally, five out of seven teachers ranked Word Study as having a great impact on student achievement. However, four teachers believed they needed additional training to help them differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students. Recall that TSD provided Guided Reading training in the first year of TSD BL implementation, and TSD provided Word Study training was provided in the third and fourth years of implementation. It is possible that the timing of the training may have impacted the teachers' responses to feeling prepared to teach these components. Additionally, teachers reported they needed additional support in differentiating instruction to meet their students' reading levels and Word Study levels within small groups. Emergent themes indicated ongoing professional development with school's Reading Specialist, having strategies modeled, and presenting strategies to others contributed to teachers feeling confident about implementing Guided Reading with Word Study. Table 5 lists emergent themes that informed Research Question 1.

Table 5

Emerging Themes, Frequency, and Percentage for Research Question 1

Theme	No. (<i>n</i> = 7)	%
Looking at student data for student growth	5	71%
Ongoing professional development with school's Reading Specialist	4	57%
Improved teacher confidence	5	71%
Training experience was modeled to teacher	4	57%
Presenting to colleagues	6	86%
Timing of training experiences	4	57%
Application to other literacy areas	4	57%
Time to prepare and implement	5	71%
Differentiation	4	57%
Good routines improved confidence	4	57%

Research Question #2

What is my assessment of teachers' perceptions of the extent to which their self-efficacy related to providing literacy instruction has affected their teaching practices?

Teachers participated in an individual semi-structured interview to answer Research Question 2. The participant answers in this case study underwent the five-step iterative coding process to determine themes and patterns that emerged within the themes related to self-efficacy.

Semi-Structured Interview Responses

The semi-structured interview questions designed to answer Research Question 2 asked participants to describe a successful teaching experience when teaching Guided Reading or Writing Workshop, share about a time when someone modeled Guided Reading or Writing Workshop for the teacher, talk about the effects of receiving feedback, rate their confidence in executing each component of Balanced Literacy, and explain whether they felt they had skills to affect their students' reading and writing progress. After coding individual participant responses, responses were coded across participants and using within-case analysis; themes emerged from the participant answers to these interview questions.

Successful Writing Workshop Experiences. When asked to describe a successful teaching experience in Guided Reading or Writing Workshop, five out of seven teachers described a successful Writing Workshop experience.

- “Writer’s Workshop...I felt like that first year, I launched it so authentically, and the students just loved it...I knew it was effective because of students’ response. When I said ‘writing time,’ students cheered! They were just super excited.”

- “I enjoy writing more because of the conversations with kids...it’s not just one setting, but the little bits and pieces of conferencing and talking through a piece of writing, and working through that process, because it’s a process.”

Student Growth Made Their Teaching Experience Successful. Although five teachers chose to describe a successful experience teaching Writing Workshop, an efficacy theme emerged in the data. These five teachers responded that student growth made their teaching experience successful.

- “When the kids get excited...just seeing a kid that really struggles finally get excited about this writing, and realizing, ‘Hey, I did a good job on that.’ So that, to me, was a rewarding experience, just seeing that light come on and realizing themselves that they could express themselves and write these things, and people would understand.”
- “I had a student new to TSD...I feel he had not received instruction in Kindergarten he needed. He was well below grade level. He was double-grouped by me for Guided Reading and Word Study. When pandemic hit, I virtually met with him one-on-one 3 times a week plus small group. He ended up on grade level at the end of the year.”
- “On the first day of the first week [of school], I ask my students to write about their family. Then I ask the same thing at the end of the year and compare. I share samples with my students. And the kids look at their beginning of the year, and they do, ‘I didn’t write that.’ Yeah, you did, because now they can write page upon page, and then they could write like two sentences. I mean, it’s just a lot of growth. When it’s done systematically every day.”

Effects of This Successful Experience. When teachers described their successful teaching experience, five out of seven teachers said the successful teaching experience gave them confidence to repeat the same successful teaching strategy.

- “It inspired me to kind of do something similar [in subsequent writing lessons] to get them hooked. Because you need that before you can even start with teaching.”
- “I guess when I feel better about something, then I feel more confident about it, and then it gets easier. And I feel my Writing Workshop has gotten stronger over the years with conferencing.”
- “At first I implement because my principal said I have to, but later I see the benefit and so I keep going.”

Teacher Confidence Made Continued Implementation Easier. Of the five teachers who said the successful teaching experience gave them the confidence to repeat the same teaching strategy, a theme emerged. Four teachers also said that their increased confidence made continued implementation of the strategy easier.

- “If you can teach them to enjoy writing, and to be self-motivated, that intrinsic motivation, it’s so much more effortless.
- “When I feel better about something, then I feel more confident about it, and then it gets easier. And I feel my Writing Workshop has gotten stronger over the years.”

Modeling of Guided Reading or Writing Workshop. In the individual interview, each teacher was asked to reflect on a time someone modeled either Guided Reading or Writing Workshop, describe the experience, and describe the effect modeling had on their implementation. Four out of seven teachers described an experience in which a Reading Specialist modeled a reading lesson.

- “[The] Reading Specialist just modeled quickly how to do the sort, how to review the sort, and then rolled into seamlessly...predicting what the story would be about...go write a short summary about what we read today...it is really fast and seamless, and it’s just supernatural for her.”
- “We go to visit our phenomenal Reading Specialist...she would break up into pieces so it would be nice and easy for us to work on a little piece at a time... This is what it’s going to look like.”
- “[The] Reading Specialist came to model a virtual novel study [in Guided Reading] group. My team of teachers were the students in a mock lesson. [The] Reading Specialist modeled what to do virtual.”

Modeling Motivates Teachers to Try New Strategies. Four out of seven teachers described a Reading Specialist modeling a reading lesson. All seven teachers said that when a Guided Reading or Writing Workshop lesson was modeled, the modeling improved their confidence to implement the strategy in the classroom.

- “When someone is able to model it...[it] is so helpful. It literally takes all the weight and stress off your shoulders to see, ‘oh, yeah, I can do this.’...It’s not overwhelming...because you can go, ‘Oh yeah. I can go back and implement this.’”
- “You know when you’re just seeing it and you’re like ‘Oh, I can do that.’ It was just another confidence builder for me...it was very motivational in that way...it was something you could just start tomorrow with your kids.”
- “The Reading Specialist is trained to do this so it makes you, not doubt, but like, ‘Okay, I can do so much better in this area’...it’s inspiring to watch somebody who really knows what they’re doing teach a Guided Reading group.”

- “If I think of Word Study, having seen it, you know what it should sound like, and the pace that those kinds of things like that, that’s helpful. So the fact that I have not had it for [Writing Workshop] could be why my writing lesson takes forever in a traditional school year.”
- “I think in a lot of ways it was a validation that what I had in my mind was good, that it was good practice.”

Effects of Receiving Feedback. During the individual interview, participants were asked how receiving feedback from another person affected their ability to influence their students’ reading and writing growth. Four out of seven teachers described feedback they received from a Reading Specialist or a Literacy Coach.

- “More meaningful feedback I’ve gotten has been me seeking out people to come observe and not been from admin...I’ve had a Literacy Coach come in once.”
- “Last year, it was nice that the Reading Specialist came in and just helped us with just kind of watching and coaching...it makes it less scary and less nerve-wracking. And you realize some of the things, like, ‘oh, I could have said this,’ or ‘I could have asked it this way,’ versus like, ‘oh my gosh, I’m not doing anything right.’ It kind of eliminates all of that. You are on track. You’re doing what you’re supposed to.”

Positive Feedback Validates Efforts and Encourages Continued Implementation. Six out of seven teachers said the positive feedback they received from a Reading Specialist or Literacy Coach validated their efforts related to implementing a new strategy and encouraged them to continue implementing the strategy in their classrooms.

- “Most of [my feedback] has been an encouragement, a validation that our Word Study is going well, that we are using our timing groups effectively.”

- “Feedback is huge, because I guess it’s just human nature. We need that. But the more that you see that you’re doing well, the more you’re going to want to do well.”
- “With Word Study, the way we ran Word Study in my class, [the student] made great progress. To not only have a parent and your principal tell you how great you did on that, it made me feel confident. Like I am doing the right things. It validated all the stuff that I’m doing, is what works.”

Feedback Provided Suggestions. Four out of seven teachers replied the feedback provided them with suggestions that they were open to but might not have been able to adopt in the classroom.

- “Well, it affirms that you’re right on track, but at the same time helping you go beyond that. Sometimes we get real comfortable in the routine, and sometimes we need to get out of our comfort zone, and reach a little further, to help the children to achieve higher.”
- “And I’ve been given some suggestions. I’m open to suggestions. I tried the suggestion. If the suggestion did not go well the first time or feel right, it went away. Most of the times, if I don’t adopt it, it’s a time issue for me. I know that about myself. Timing as a teacher, especially in small groups, is difficult.”
- “I’ve had some suggestions that I just hadn’t figured out a way to include.”

Teachers’ Confidence With Different Components of Balanced Literacy. I asked teachers to reflect on their confidence teaching each component of Balanced Literacy. Earlier in Chapter 4, I discussed participant responses to their perceived confidence in the Guided Reading and Writing Workshop components of Balanced Literacy. To answer Research Question 2, I will discuss participant responses to the other Balanced Literacy components, in which TSD did not

provide training during 2015-2019, the 4 years that bind this case study. I have grouped these trainings into two categories: Balanced Literacy components TSD did not provide training for, but that teachers feel confident teaching; and Balanced Literacy components TSD did not provide training for, but that teachers do not feel confident in.

High Confidence Without Training. Teachers reported feeling confident teaching Read Aloud, Independent Reading, and Shared Writing, even without training from TSD (Table 6).

Table 6

High Teacher Confidence in Balanced Literacy Components Without Training

Balanced Literacy Component	No. (<i>n</i> = 7)	%
Read Aloud	7	100%
Independent Reading	7	100%
Shared Writing	5	71%

Selecting Texts That Engage Students. All seven teachers were confident teaching the Read Aloud component and most (5) were confident teaching the Shared Writing component. An efficacy theme emerged within the data for these Balanced Literacy components without training. Seven out of seven teachers felt they were good at selecting texts that engaged the students, so this is how the teachers gauge they are teaching these Balanced Literacy components well.

- “In my ability to do a Read Aloud... I try to always pick something that’s engaging for them, as well as maybe pertinent to what we’re learning. So, I’m very confident.”
- “Read alouds, [I feel] very confident [in this component]...[I am] pretty good about finding a good text to match whatever we’re working on and get the kids hooked.”
- “I feel confident in gaining interest and asking question, and just keeping the kids involved and interested.”

- “I love doing Shared Writing with them. Gosh, even in kindergarten, where you did the morning message, and they help you write, and they share the pen with you is so fun because the kids are engaged and sharing their thoughts. I wish we had more time for that. It’s a lot of fun. I think I’m good with the Shared Writing.”

Trained Students in Routines. All seven teachers also felt confident in their abilities to teach Independent Reading. Six out of seven felt prepared to train their students with Independent Reading routines, which led to teachers knowing the expectations and Independent Reading running smoothly in their classrooms.

- “I felt confident letting them read independently. I help them choose their books. I always make sure they have some leveled books, but also some fun books in their book box. So, they have a variety and they’re interested in reading. So, I’m very confident about helping the students with their independent reading.”
- “I feel like my students are really good with independent reading. I think that we’ve gone over it...we talked about building stamina, how independent readers build stamina, and we’re getting more and more [stamina] each time.”
- “They need to self-monitor where they’re at to choose a just right book. Now that we’re using everything digitally, we as teachers can cancel a lot and so their books are shaped for them within a spectrum. They’re not reading anything too easy or too hard, which is nice with that program. It’s hard sometimes when they just go to the classroom library and pick something because they cover looks great...just modeling and having that conversation with them about important independent reading is.”

Low Confidence Without Training. Teachers were not confident teaching all components of Balanced Literacy without formal training. They reported low confidence in their abilities to teach Shared Reading and Independent Writing (Table 7).

Table 7

Low Teacher Confidence in Balanced Literacy Components Without Training

Balanced Literacy Component	No. (<i>n</i> = 7)	%
Shared Reading	5	71%
Independent Writing	4	57%

Teachers Lack Confidence Because They Lack Training. Five out of seven teachers responded they were not confident teaching Shared Reading, a component for which TSD did not provide training.

- “I’ve never really truly been trained on how to do that, or what that really looks like. So, I do a version of what I think it is, that’s why I’m not confident at all because I don’t know really exactly.”
- “I want to say less confident in the Shared Reading...I just don’t feel like I have as much training in it. I don’t feel like I’ve had as many materials that I’ve ever used...So I didn’t spend a lot of time thinking about that.”

Teachers Lack Confidence Because of Classroom Management. Similar to Shared Reading, four teachers responded they were not confident teaching Independent Writing. These teachers felt classroom management was an issue during Independent Writing.

- “Independent Writing...I had to start, and this was big no, no. But I had to start providing prompts. So, I’d give them a choice of what they could write about. And I

felt horrible doing that, but it did help some kids. I think I had to learn more about motivating students to do better with their independent writing.”

- “Independent Writing is where I struggle a little bit...For me, it’s more that the classroom management issue...good use of time, making sure everybody’s on task.”
- “I think I probably allowed them to write independently for too long and so the time stretched, and then they were off task more.”

Teachers Asked for Definitions. Since teachers reported they were confident, or lacked confidence, but teachers did not truly understand how to implement these Balanced Literacy components with fidelity, then the reliability of my findings is limited in these Balanced Literacy components areas. In looking across all Balanced Literacy components for which TSD did not provide training, a theme emerged. Four out of seven teachers asked for a definition of the Balanced Literacy component.

- “So, the read aloud. And here’s another problem, people have multiple definitions than everybody else. So when you say a read aloud, do you mean in my ability to read to my students and talk about a book that I’ve chosen as a read aloud?...what do you consider shared reading...shared writing, I’m assuming, that’s more modeling?”
- “Shared reading, I must not be very confident because I’m not sure I can even give you a clear definition of what shared reading is. Can you tell me if this has to do with shared writing and interactive writing?”

Teachers’ Perceptions of Their Ability to Affect Students’ Reading and Writing Progress. During the individual interview, teachers were asked if they had the ability to change students’ reading and writing progress throughout the school year. Six out of seven teachers responded yes, they have the skills to impact students’ reading and writing growth.

- “Well, absolutely, I don’t think I’d be teaching if I didn’t influence them in a good way.”
- “I feel very confident about it...I think I am confident I do a good job.”

Teachers Attribute Confidence to Teacher Training and Teaching Experience. Four teachers reported that their training and teaching experiences explained why they felt confident in their ability to affect her students’ Reading and Writing growth.

- “Yes, I got it. Because I’ve been teaching for so long, and I’ve gotten a lot of good training. I mean, all of it kind of put together and helps me to know that I can do this.”
- “After 12 years, I think I have had enough time for trial and error...and you get those new trainings, and you take them with a grain of salt, and you blend what works together in your environment. But I do feel confident as a whole.”
- “Yes, I think I do. I think the consistency with which the lessons are given, I think the interaction that I’m having with the students on a regular basis, I think that will definitely impact. I think the training that I’ve gotten whether it’s word study or Orton-Gillingham, I think those definitely will impact student growth.”

Summary

Teachers attributed their self-efficacy to several factors: witnessing their students’ make growth in reading and writing, selecting texts that engage students, and feeling prepared to teach Balanced Literacy components based on teacher training experiences and their own teaching experiences.

Additionally, there appeared to be a relationship between self-efficacy and these teachers’ desire to implement the new teaching strategy. When a teacher observed a Reading Specialist

modeling a lesson, the teacher described herself as motivated to implement the instructional strategy in her own classroom. Teachers in this study appreciated positive feedback, and positive feedback encouraged them to continue implementation. Observing another model and receiving positive praise are consistent with Bandura’s (1996) self-efficacy theory. When a teacher gains confidence, the teacher finds continued implementation of the strategy easier.

In contrast, there were several factors that hindered the teacher’s self-efficacy. Several teachers lacked confidence implementing Shared Reading because training was not provided in this Balanced Literacy component. Similarly, several teachers asked for definitions of Balanced Literacy components in which they had not been trained. Teachers in this study also lacked confidence when there was a classroom management issue implementing Independent Writing. Emerging themes that informed Research Question 2 are listed in Table 8.

Table 8

Emerging Themes, Frequency, and Percentage for Research Question 2

Theme	No. (<i>n</i> = 7)	%
Student growth made their teaching experience successful	5	71%
Teacher confidence made continued implementation easier	4	57%
Modeling motivates teachers to try new strategies	7	100%
Positive feedback validates teachers’ efforts and encourages continued implementation	6	86%
Feedback provided teacher with suggestions	4	57%
Selecting texts that engage students	7	100%
Trained students in routines	6	86%
Teachers lack confidence because they lack training	5	71%
Teachers lack confidence because of classroom management	4	57%
Teachers asked for definitions	4	57%
Teachers Attribute Confidence to Teacher Training and Teaching Experience	4	57%

Research Question #3

To what degree is the observed implementation of Balanced Literacy strategies aligned with the professional development provided in a school district's Balanced Literacy model?

To answer Research Question 3, teachers participated in an individual semi-structured interview, and the teachers were observed teaching literacy in the virtual environment. In the interview, teachers told me what I should expect when I virtually observe their classroom. During the virtual observation, I used the classroom observation tool I developed for the purpose of this study (Appendix D) to record my observations, and record teacher and student interactions. I also took screen shots of anchor charts or materials used throughout the observation. I looked for evidence of the teacher using strategies from TSD's professional development in Guided Reading, Writing Workshop, and Word Study. I was looking for alignment of the TSD professional development and the teacher's instruction of the TSD BL strategies. The following themes emerged from my observations.

Semi-Structured Interview Responses

During the individual interviews, which took place before each teacher's observation, I asked the teacher to describe what I would see when I observed her during virtual instruction, and I recorded my observations when I observed the lesson. During data analysis, I compared the teacher's interview answer describing what I would see in the classroom observation to the data I collected during the observation. These data allowed me to compare teachers' implementation of Balanced Literacy to TSD's Balanced Literacy model. I also added three virtual teaching questions to the interview so that I could acknowledge that the teacher's implementation of Balanced Literacy might be different in the virtual environment compared to a physical classroom environment. I used the iterative process of coding in a within-case analysis for the

interview and observation data across all participants to determine themes and patterns within the themes.

Teachers’ Descriptions of the Literacy Block Schedule. When I asked teachers about their literacy block schedule, they listed similar Balanced Literacy components. Table 9 shows how teachers most frequently described what I would observe during their virtual instruction.

Table 9

Literacy Components Teachers Reported Would Be Observed

Component	No. (<i>n</i> = 7)	%
Whole group reading instruction then 3-4 differentiated small reading groups	7	100%
Writing Workshop	5	71%
1:1 teaching or remediation	4	57%

Instruction Aligned With Professional Development Provided in TSD. All seven teachers described the Guided Reading and/or Writing Workshop instruction that aligned with the professional development provided in TSD.

- “So that bottom group, we’re writing the alphabet, we’re practicing those alphabet sounds, we’re working on short vowel word families [and] having a book and doing the book in a Guided Reading piece.”
- “Tomorrow we’re starting to introduce personal narratives...we’ll go over the recipe for personal narrative tomorrow and start brainstorming on Tuesday.”
- “And then I model writing. Again, it’s not as fun, and it’s not as easy as in the classrooms; I don’t spend as long in my minilessons as I would.”

Challenges With Writing Workshop During Virtual Instruction. Five out of seven teachers changed their Writing Workshop instruction from the TSD BL model during virtual instruction. According to the TSD BL model, teachers teach Writing Workshop every day, including a whole group mini lesson, followed by individual student writing and teacher conference time, and ending with share time.

- “Writing will be during this small group [reading] time because it’s really hard to do that in the whole group online.”
- “Most of Writing Workshop is being modeled on [video recording]...so a lot of that is done [using video recordings] with instruction and a lot of anchor charts. And then a lot of times, depending on what we’re working on, like when we were adding dialogue, they would have to reply in the reply box.”
- “It’s not as fun and it’s not as easy as in the classrooms, I don’t spend as long in my minilessons as I would, but I am also taping asynchronous lessons a lot of times to go with it. So, they’ll watch me do it once [live] on the call, and then they will also watch me do it with a different piece of writing [asynchronously because] I wanted that lesson for the parents who will go back and watch, ‘Oh, this is what they learned today, and this is the expectation,’ in case [the parents] were not present during the call.”

Challenges With Other Balanced Literacy Components. Six out of seven teachers described challenges with teaching Balanced Literacy components in the virtual environment. This may begin to explain the Balanced Literacy instruction I observed during my virtual classroom observation.

- “Some days we did writing mini lessons in small groups. The writing strategy groups helped them focus so they could be successful with their independent writing. If I wanted anything done, I would pretty much have to hold their hands during small group so I could see that they were practicing things we learned in writer’s workshop.”
- “And I talked with [Reading Specialist] but said, ‘I can project up a book, but I can’t hear them reading beside the [reader that is unmuted], and then we already know that that is a terrible practice. But I mean, what other options do I have here?’ So, I do introduce a book that I do then assign them later on in the day, but a lot of times we only get through a few pages of it. They whisper read, and then I choose a kid to read, and they’re supposed to be whispering along with them, but it is what it is.”
- “And then I’m going to say not independent reading, no matter how much I beg and plead for those parents to try to impart on them the amount of reading we would have been doing in first grade and how that is really hard to replicate at home...we are trying, but I feel like that is definitely not where we’re at this year.”
- “So as far as their writing, I can’t see their independent writing, so I have to do a lot more of the shared writing and the interactive writing, because that’s something that they could help me with...until I get that reader response journal in, and I try to make notes on what they have done well or not have done well, but that’s like weeks after they’ve written it, so it’s kind of...is it too late to correct that... because I can’t see their independent writing like right when they do it...I wish I could see more of that.”

Challenges With Grouping Students. Four out of seven teachers described challenges to grouping students into ability-based differentiated small groups. According to the TSD Balanced

Literacy model, teachers should provide small group instruction to students, and the small groups should consist of word study and guided differentiated reading instruction to meet the needs of the students. The challenges teacher described grouping students might explain why some literacy instruction the teachers described, or I observed was not have aligned with the professional development provided in the TSD Balanced Literacy model.

- “And so, with the small groups, it’s been a little tricky. Because they’re not set up reading groups where you have their [reading scores] to look at, to form those groups. So, they’re just random groups for me right now.”
- “I felt that there were many kids who did not fit neatly into a combination group. And so, I know that’s not ideal, and I’ve never done it this way before. But I had some of my highest readers in the lowest word study groups. I couldn’t wrap my head around that being the best thing for everybody, and so we do 3 days a week of word study instruction...And then, at the end of that word study lesson, I try to have a decodable text with that feature so that they’re reading on that day also. And then on Tuesday and Thursdays are the true Guided Reading groups.”

Challenges With Teaching Literacy in the Virtual Environment. All seven teachers reported challenges with teaching literacy in the virtual environment. Additionally, five out of seven teachers acknowledged they felt less confident teaching in the virtual learning environment vs. the in-person classroom. These challenges might also explain why the instruction I observed was not fully aligned with the professional development provided in the TSD Balanced Literacy model.

- “That was a choice that we made where I did not feel like my small group time was impactful enough...Whereas I do feel like working in pairs seems to be like the

- maximum of two kids on a call can get a lot done...but anymore [students] than that, [and we're] spending way too much time muting and unmuting”
- “But some days I don’t meet with every group every day. I have to rotate it because they either end up being shorter, or something comes up, or someone’s pulled from another teacher. It’s hard to be consistent right now. That’s why I’m looking forward to them coming back and having a little bit more time for [reading] groups”
 - “That’s how I felt when I was stretching out that morning meeting call, I could only fit in three groups. And one of my groups was eight kids big, just more and more kids got added to my class, and when we got to that eight, it was my high group, which should have been fine based on the students in it, but it was just stalling out completely. You’re trying to ask them a question or two, but eight kids on a call in 20 minutes, what do they get to ask? Answer one question, read one word, it just wasn’t effective.”
 - “I feel confident teaching all this in person, but teaching it virtually, I just feel like, what am I missing? The reading piece is hardest part for me. I can’t sit side-by-side and let them read to me, and I miss that. It’s tragic.”
 - “[In a normal school year], I do feel confident [in teaching Balanced Literacy] as a whole...which is why this year is so challenging, because all of a sudden, [in this Virtual school year] all that confidence is no longer coming, and I don't know what's going on.”

Teachers’ Reflections on Teaching Virtually. All seven teachers described challenges teaching literacy in the virtual environment, and most made changes to their instruction to meet address challenges. Six out of seven teachers reflected on the virtual schedule TSD provided and

made changes to meet the reading and writing needs of their students. At the time of their interviews, some teachers had already started implementing the changes and others were still considering adjustments to their virtual schedules.

- “[The Reading Specialists] said, ‘Well, what you’re feeling, do you feel like they are instructional on grade level?’ I said, ‘I don’t know, they’re on mute most of the time.’ And we’ve been assessing PALS and we’ve been meeting with parent teacher conferences, so there just hasn’t been time to hear them read. So, I said this week, now that that all is finished with...I’m going back and I’m doing [Informal Running Records], and getting a feel for them, so I can better help them and better focus myself in those small group calls.”
- “I just hate that [writing] is asynchronous...I don’t think you can learn what you need to, from a video...You need to make it meaningful for them. And I think with writing, you needed to do the same thing. So, I’m kind of torn. I don’t know, maybe we do 3 days of reading skills, 2 days of writing. I just think it’s important to have that back and forth with the students.”

Recall that I added three virtual teaching items to the end of each teacher’s interview. I asked participants about training that carried them into the virtual classroom, which Balanced Literacy components they relied on in the virtual environment, and how they decided what to keep in the virtual environment. Five out of seven teachers reported applying the Word Study training provided by TSD in the virtual classroom.

- “The Word Study training was the most beneficial as far as content training...having a firm understanding in Word Study made me feel more prepared in that subject area while teaching it virtually.”

- “Yes, I really am trying do the things I would have done in class, which was really refined through that Word Study [training], the Words Their Way [training], the literacy model. It’s been really a struggle to find the biggest bang for my buck in that short 20 minutes when everybody’s on mute...I feel like I am using all of that information I got in my training, and I am just trying the best that I can to adapt it as effectively as I can.”
- “The Word Study I can still do because the Hover Cam works with that.”

Teachers Adjusted in Virtual Environment. As with other changes teachers made to adapt to teaching virtually, four out of seven [reported they adjusted from what they learned in their training experiences when implementing these strategies in the virtual environment.

- “I wish there was a way to get more things in kids’ hands... I even sent home word building mats. So, I’m trying to use those things I know [from training]. I know that I’m not using [things] exactly the way they were designed for kids. We’re sorting, but it’s like, ‘Okay, tell me where to put this word.’ It’s still missing that part where they’re manipulating them and they’re moving around.”
- “I’m very much trying to mirror what I would normally do in a reading group rotation online. Obviously, it’s taken some finagling. I started with the PowerPoint reading specialist developed...But what I found was on the PowerPoint, it just wasn’t engaging enough to catch their attention...So, I’ve gone back to using just the original sorts and my hovercam, where I can point and grab their attention for things and physically move things...because me and my Virtual Academy teammate, we do deliver materials to their house once a month.”

- “I’m struggling, but I’m trying. I have my magnetic letters that we use, and I will pull them out on boards and manipulate them or ask the kids to verbally tell me how to manipulate them, which is a poor substitute, to be honest, for what we would have done in group, where every kid participates every time. It is really hard to maintain their attention and hear from them at the same time... We rely on the boards and markers a lot, just because it’s the one thing where they can all participate every time without them off mute, which is too distracting with their environments they have.”

When I asked which Balanced Literacy components teachers relied most heavily on in the virtual classroom, six out of seven selected Guided Reading.

- “Most definitely Guided Reading and small group instruction... The big challenge with the other facets of Balanced Literacy is that they are whole group.”
- “Guided Reading, I mean, that’s a lot of the effort, it’s really, really heavy on Word Study right now, less on reading... So, Guided Reading is important, it just maybe looks much more Word Study heavy.”
- “I feel that the other pieces fell into place when I focused my energy on Guided Reading and [providing] Tier One support [to my students].”

Virtual Guided Reading Most Impacted Students. Four out of seven teachers explained that Guided Reading, compared to other Balanced Literacy components, enabled them to differentiate instruction and have the most impact on students compared to other components.

- “I relied mostly on Guided Reading because I could differentiate the instruction and engage with the students more effectively in a small group.”
- “The Guided Reading component, really, I knew that in a small group, I would be able to reach most students and have the most impact.”

- “Guided Reading, because [in] those small groups... we have to teach kids to their level, and how important that is.”

Deciding What to Keep in Virtual Classroom. When I asked teachers how they decided what to keep in the virtual classroom, all seven teachers responded they choose to keep the Balanced Literacy component they felt most engaged students or affected student growth.

- “I go off of engagement, like what is engaging them the most, because if they’re not engaged, then I could be teaching these amazing lessons, then what’s the point? And...can see them where they’re looking or talking to siblings or walking away from [the computer]. I mean, I’m seeing it all, and it’s demoralizing, but we do a lot of work. But the only thing I can incorporate are the whiteboards because that’s the one thing that’s sure to engage them, and that they have to participate, that I have a judge for their participation.”
- “I kept what I thought would work well. I thought would give me interaction with the kids where I knew whether or not they were actually showing growth...I’ve had to really kind of think about what would keep their attention, what they can interact with me on, so that they’re actually doing something and not just listening...paired with what I think will show them most growth but will impact their learning most.”
- “Looking at the SOLs and the end of year objectives for ELA in third grade guide my instruction and planning. As well as TSD’s pacing guide and practical expectations for each student based on reading assessments at the beginning of the 2020-21 school year.”

Teachers Adjusted TSD Mandated Schedule. Although engagement and impact on learning were primary considerations, four out of seven teachers reported that TSD’s mandated

schedule influenced their decision about what to keep in the virtual schedule. TSD provided teachers across the school district in each grade level literacy block, Math block, and asynchronous independent learning time without the teacher. The teacher chose which group she met within the given block allotted for literacy instruction.

- “That was given to you ...all of that was mandated. I went ahead and squeezed in that group in the afternoon, because I didn’t know how else, with the kids that I have, there was no way I could squeeze that into three groups.”
- “Well, I think some of that decision was made for me.”
- “Conferencing was tricky in virtual as there was not enough time. So, I chose whole or small group activities with mini lessons that could be used with all students. There was not enough time to get to each student on a regular basis. Instead, I used my small groups to do ‘group conferences.’

Virtual Classroom Observations

I observed each teacher for 75 minutes of her virtual literacy instruction. In October, I observed three of the teachers for 2 days of Literacy observation. These three teachers would soon be returning to in-person instruction. In November and December, I observed four teachers during 1 day of Literacy instruction. These teachers would remain virtual teachers all year. I believed the literacy instructional routines of these teachers would have been more established because it was further into the school year, and one observation was sufficient.

During my virtual observation, I joined the virtual lesson via Teams and kept my camera off and my microphone muted during the observation. During the virtual observation, I kept a copy of the classroom observation tool (Appendix D) beside my computer and focused on these look-fors during the class. I split my screen so that on one side of my screen streamed the live

lesson. The other side of my screen was a word document in which I recorded a transcription of the virtual lesson, teacher-student interactions, and added screen shots of any materials the teacher used throughout her lesson. After the observation, I used the classroom observation tool to code the data. Several themes emerged within the classroom observation data.

Teachers Used Differentiated Guided Reading Texts. Four out of seven teachers used differentiated texts during their Guided Reading groups. These teachers taught in 3-4 small groups and chose different texts for each group to meet the needs of the learners in each group. This is directly aligned with the professional development provided by TSD. For example, one teacher chose a different leveled text for each of her small groups. In her first group, the teacher briefly introduced the book and asked the students to predict what would happen in the book. The teacher explained a vocabulary word, and then asked all students to turn their microphones on, and whisper read the page she was showing on the screen. In her second group, the teacher introduced a different book than the book she used with her first group. The teacher discussed the book with the students and introduced unfamiliar vocabulary words. The teacher explained they ran out of time and would read the book tomorrow. In her third group, the teacher introduced a different book, introduced unfamiliar vocabulary words in the book, and asked students to whisper read and give her a thumbs up when they finished. The teacher called on a student to read aloud to her and gave feedback to the student.

Although all seven teachers responded during the interview that they taught differentiated reading and word study groups, I only observed four out of the seven teachers using differentiated texts. This could mean that teachers have different definitions of the term differentiated level texts.

Teacher Read to Students During Guided Reading. Like the use of differentiated text, four out of seven teachers read to the students during the Guided Reading lesson. This does not align with the Guided Reading professional development provided by TSD. According to the TSD Balanced Literacy model, the teacher would have chosen an appropriate level text for the student to read and the student would read aloud while the teacher listens in and supports. If the readers are reading above grade level and do not need the support of the teacher during the Guided Reading lesson, the teacher would facilitate a conversation about the book with her students. In the gradual release of responsibility model of Balanced Literacy, it is expected that during Guided Reading, the student should take ownership of the reading and comprehension of the text, guided by the teacher.

In one observation that was representative of others fitting this pattern, the teacher started a small group lesson by stating the learning objective: The students will be able to draw conclusions after reading a text. The teacher modeled how to read a part of the text and draw a conclusion. Then, the teacher read to her students again, and used the text to ask questions and guide students with the skill. During another small group, the teacher read the text aloud to her students and asked her student questions about what she read.

Teachers Used Writing Workshop to Model and Assign Independent Writing. During the second year of implementation, TSD provided teachers Writing Workshop training using a train-the-trainer model. During virtual observations, I looked for evidence of teachers using Writing Workshop. Four out of seven teachers used Writing Workshop to model a mini-lesson and assigned the students to add what was modeled to their independent writing. This aligned with the Balanced Literacy model.

In one representative example, a teacher identified that today they would add the inside part of the story. The teacher read aloud her personal narrative that she had previously written, and together with students, they discussed how she might have felt during this experience. Then, the teacher went back to read each sentence, and together they discussed whether the sentence was part of the inside (feelings) or outside (events) story. The teacher guided student discussion, and color coded the inside story yellow and outside story orange. The teacher provided the students sentence starters and asked them to include both the inside and outside story when they wrote their personal narrative in the coming days.

Although five out of seven teachers reported during the interview that they taught Writing Workshop, I only observed four of them doing so. Of these four, two teachers taught Writing Workshop for 5–6 minutes. According to the TSD BL model, 30–45 minutes of the literacy block should be devoted to Writing Workshop each day. In the TSD Virtual schedule, 75 minutes were allotted for daily Literacy instruction, with no specified Writing Workshop block in the virtual Literacy schedule.

Teachers Used TSD Word Study Cards to Teach Word Study. In TSD’s third year of implementation, TSD provided professional development in Word Study. TSD provided teachers with activities to use with Word Study cards that aligned with the scope and sequence. Each elementary school received sets of Word Study cards to support implementation. During my observations, six out of seven teachers used the Word Study cards to provide differentiated instruction to student groups. This was in alignment with the Word Study training provided in the TSD Balanced Literacy model.

For example, during small group instruction one teacher reintroduced the Word Study feature the group was working on. Then, she created three columns and chose the header words

from the Word Study sort to put at the top of three columns and wrote the numbers 1, 2, and 3 above the header words to label each column. The teacher read one word from the Word Study cards and asked the students to hold up either 1 finger, 2 fingers, or 3 fingers to show which column the word would be sorted into. The teacher showed the students the word and placed the word under the correct column. The teacher repeated this procedure for her three small groups.

Teachers Used Similar, Differentiated Routine for All Word Study Groups. When TSD trained teachers in Word Study, teachers learned how to sort words with students using Word Study cards and additional activities that could be used in their small groups. These activities were intended to create a similar routine, so that the structure of the Word Study activities remained the same, and the student and teacher could focus on the feature. During my observations, six out of seven teachers used the same Word Study routine in each of their small groups but differentiated the Word Study feature to meet the needs of the group. This is in alignment with the Word Study professional development provided by TSD.

In one representative example, a teacher used three Word Study activities in each of her groups: phonics review, word building, and word sorting. The amount of support she provided for each group was different based on the abilities of the students in the small group. In her first group, the teacher said a sound and asked the students to write the letter that made that sound; she then modeled and reviewed the mouth positions to articulate short vowel sounds. Next, the teacher asked her students to find a word building board that she previously sent home to help guide students through listening for sounds and building 3-letter words. Then, the teacher used the Word Study cards to guide the students in listening for and sorting by ending sounds. Students wrote the ending sounds on their white board. However, in the second small group, students needed less teacher support. For the phonics review, the teacher said a sound and asked

the student to write the letters or short vowel that made that sound. For word building, she used a visual of three dots. She modeled how to touch each dot and segment each sound in the word. The teacher asked the students to do the same on their white board, and the teacher provided feedback for incorrect sounds and letter reversals. Then she led the students through the Word Sort. In the third small group, students needed even less teacher support. Again, for the phonics review, she said a sound and asked the students to write the letters or short vowel that made that sound. For Word Building, she asked the students to build rhyming words on their white board and led the students through the Word Sort.

Emergent Themes From Virtual Classroom Observations

While I was looking for evidence of teachers implementing strategies presented in TSD's professional development, I also noted other patterns across classrooms during my teacher observations. The following are emergent themes that I observed happening during my classroom.

Changes to Read Aloud. Read Aloud is one component of the Balanced Literacy framework. TSD had not provided training on Read Aloud during the timeframe of this case study. However, TSD had allocated time for teachers to teach Read Aloud as part of the Balanced Literacy model. All seven teachers used whole group instruction to teach Read Aloud, I observed teachers teaching whole group read aloud for an average of 18 minutes, and the instructional focus in the read aloud was unrelated to the small group focus. Although teaching Read Aloud was in alignment with the TSD Balanced Literacy model, the model did not specify whether the read aloud focus should be continued during small group instruction. Based on teacher responses to interview questions, time was a factor in implementing all components of Balanced Literacy framework. It might be advantageous to consider how teachers spend their

time in whole group instruction, especially when professional development was not provided on Read Aloud.

For example, one teacher spent 30 minutes in whole group Read Aloud instruction. She shared her screen with students and showed the book *Run, Turkey, Run*. She stated her purpose for reading the book was to think about story elements as they read. As the teacher read the book aloud to her students, she asked students to reply to her questions. She quickly changed to asking questions using her thinking voice to predict the story, asking students to use a thumbs up/thumbs down signal to respond to questions about the character or events. When the book ended, the teacher asked students what book this reminded them of. A student responded with a familiar book title. The teacher closed the lesson by circling back to story elements, “If we think about story elements, we can ask questions about our story.” Then, she showed an anchor chart (“Good readers ask questions”) and modeled how to use this anchor chart to use the story elements to ask questions. When the teacher led small groups, the focus for Guided Reading groups was high frequency words, assigning the students to read silently, and then echo read with the teacher and student discussing the book.

Teacher Assigned Independent Reading. Like the read aloud component, independent reading is part of the TSD Balanced Literacy model, but professional development on independent reading had not been provided to teachers at the time of this case study. During my teacher observations, five out of the seven teachers assigned students independent reading following their Guided Reading lesson. In the TSD Balanced Literacy model, the teacher meets with differentiated small groups. For the teacher to meet with students in small groups, she must also assign independent activities for those students who are not at the Guided Reading table with her. Up to two-thirds of a child’s small group time is spent away from the teacher.

For example, one teacher led a small group lesson. During the Guided Reading portion of the lesson, the teacher introduced the book *A Party for Rabbit*. The teacher identified the sight words in the book and used an analogy to teach a new word. The teacher asked each student to whisper read each page of the book while the teacher choral read with the students. At the end of the book, the teacher told her small group, “You will read this book to a grown up today. Remember, we read more than one book a day because it helps us grow as readers.” The teacher then reviewed online resources that had books to choose from and reminded students she had dropped off books to their house.

Summary

I observed Word Study instruction as the strategy most aligned to the professional development provided in TSD Balanced Literacy model. This is evidenced by six out of seven teachers using the Word Study cards provided by TSD to teach Word Study. Additionally, six out of seven teachers used a similar routine for each of her Word Study groups and differentiated the support she provided based on the small group’s needs.

In contrast to Word Study, Guided Reading and Writing Workshop had the least alignment to the professional development provided in TSD Balanced Literacy model. Although teachers reported they decided to rely most heavily on Guided Reading in the virtual learning environment because Guided Reading allowed the teacher to differentiate instruction and have the most impact on student achievement, I observed only four out of seven teachers differentiated their texts for each reading group. Additionally, four out of seven teachers read the Guided Reading text to the students. Further, teachers reported they changed their Writing Workshop instruction for the virtual environment. However, I observed only four of seven

teachers using Writing Workshop to model and assign student independent writing. These practices were not aligned with the professional development provided by TSD.

It is important to note that the classroom observations were made in the virtual environment. Teachers reported challenges transferring what they learned from their professional development to the virtual environment. These challenges included grouping students, maintaining student engagement, and the need to adjust the mandated virtual schedule. These challenges might help explain why the observed implementation was not aligned with the professional development provided. Emerging themes that informed Research Question 3 are listed in Table 10.

Table 10

Emerging Themes, Frequency, and Percentage for Research Question 3

Theme	No. (<i>n</i> = 7)	%
Instruction aligned with the professional development provided in TSD	7	100%
Challenges with Writing Workshop during virtual instruction	5	71%
Challenges with other Balanced Literacy components	6	86%
Challenges with grouping students	4	57%
Challenges with teaching literacy in the virtual environment	7	100%
Teachers' reflections on teaching virtually	6	86%
Teacher made adjustments in virtual environment	4	57%
Virtual Guided Reading most impacted students	4	57%
Teachers adjusted TSD mandated schedule	4	57%
Teachers used differentiated Guided Reading texts	4	57%
Teachers read to students during Guided Reading	4	57%
Teachers used Writing Workshop to model and assign independent writing	4	57%
Teachers used Word Study cards to teach Word Study	6	86%
Teachers used similar, differentiated routine for all Word Study groups	6	86%
Changes to Read Aloud	4	57%
Teachers assigned independent reading after small group lesson	5	71%

Note. TSD = Tribe School District

Overall Summary of Findings

TSD provided professional development in Balanced Literacy areas of Guided Reading, Writing Workshop, and Word Study. I investigated how teachers felt about their preparedness and implementation of Balanced Literacy, and how classroom instruction aligned to the professional development provided by TSD. The findings of this study are consistent with Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory:

- Mastery experiences describe a personal experience in which a teacher witnesses a student improving because of her teaching. Teachers felt more confident in their literacy instruction when they observed their students making reading and writing improvements.
- Vicarious experiences involve observing a targeted activity modeled by another person. Teachers reported they felt prepared when they received ongoing professional development in Word Study. Teachers reported that when they observed a Reading Specialist modeling a strategy, it gave them the confidence to implement the strategy in their own classroom.
- Verbal persuasion is another person's evaluative feedback about an individual's capability. Teachers reported when they received positive feedback about implementing a new strategy, they wanted to continue implementing the new strategy in their classrooms.
- Physiological and affective states describe how an individual's self-efficacy can be affected by their reactions or moods. Teachers reported they felt motivated to implement the new strategy in their classroom when the strategy was modeled to them.

Teachers in this study felt most prepared to teach Writing Workshop. Teacher reports of feeling prepared to teach Guided Reading were inconsistent. When teachers grouped Guided Reading and Word Study together, they felt prepared to teach Guided Reading. This was because when the school's Reading Specialist provided ongoing professional development, the training included modeling strategies to the teacher and time for teachers to present what they learned in the training to her colleagues. Teachers in this study believed Word Study training helped them affect their students' learning.

Teachers in this study appeared to have greater self-efficacy when they witnessed their students making reading and writing growth or their students were engaged in their lessons, when they felt prepared to implement the Balanced Literacy components, when training experiences included observing a Reading Specialist modeling a lesson, and when receiving positive praise. Teacher self-efficacy was negatively affected when classroom management was an issue, or the teacher felt unprepared or unclear about the definition of a Balanced Literacy component.

During my 75-minute classroom observations in the virtual environment, Word Study instruction was most aligned to the professional development provided by TSD. In contrast, Guided Reading and Writing Workshop had the least alignment to the professional development provided by TSD. It is also important to consider that the classroom observations were made in the virtual environment. During the individual interviews, teachers reported challenges transferring what they learned from their professional development to teaching in the virtual environment.

CHAPTER 5

RECOMMENDATIONS

Students should be reading proficiently by the end of third grade so they can build on their foundational reading skills for future academic success (Hernandez, 2011; Houck & Ross, 2012). If the student is not reading proficiently by the end of third grade, it is likely they will continue to struggle learning to read (Dickinson & Porche, 2011; Wasik & Hindman, 2011). Because learning to read by the end of third grade is imperative for future academic success, then it is important to examine literacy instruction in kindergarten through third grade.

In the case that bounds this study, TSD provided Balanced Literacy training to teachers in their school district over a 4-year period. It was assumed that teachers who participated in this study would have had similar Literacy training experiences because each teacher was teaching in TSD during the time in which training was provided. In the first year of implementation, 2015-2016, TSD provided Guided Reading training, replacing a scripted basal reading program with a new reading series intended to be one method among many to deliver and assess literacy instruction, and informal running records training. In the second year of implementation, 2016-2017, TSD provided training in Writing Workshop, identified the expectations for a literacy rich classroom environment, and trained teachers how to allocate time for each component of the Balanced Literacy framework. In the third and fourth year of Balanced Literacy implementation, 2017-2018 and 2018-2019, TSD provided training on Word Study, including using a new assessment tool, a new scope and sequence to teach word patterns, and a Day 1-5 instructional framework that outlined best practices and Word Study instructional expectations.

Findings from my study could provide TSD school district leaders, principals, and Reading Specialists insight about how teachers perceived the Balanced Literacy training and how the training affected teachers' self-efficacy to implement the Balanced Literacy components. The purpose of this case study was to understand the lived experiences of teachers within one school district who are implementing Balanced Literacy as designed in this context. Data sources included individual semi-structured interviews with each participant and virtual classroom observations.

Synopsis of Major Research Findings

This chapter outlines a discussion of the major research findings for each research question as they relate to the literature, provides related recommendations, and suggests areas for future research.

Research Question 1: What are teachers' perceptions of their preparedness to implement Guided Reading and Writing Workshop?

Teacher self-efficacy matters because how a teacher perceives her abilities to affect student achievement predicts teacher behavior. Teachers with high self-efficacy are more willing to persevere to adequately address needs of students (Gibson & Dembo, 1984); believe they can connect with their students and affect student achievement (Armor et al., 1976); spend more time instructing students in small-group instruction (Ashton & Webb, 1986); and use more varied instructional strategies, flexibility, and show a greater willingness to account for individual student differences (Fackler & Malmberg, 2016). These teacher behaviors are aligned with behaviors that equate to quality instruction and positively affect student achievement (Graham et al., 2001). Additionally, extant literature also shows that teachers with high self-efficacy positively affect student achievement (Armor et al. 1976; Ashton & Webb, 1986). One way to

develop teacher self-efficacy is through teacher training experiences (Cantrell & Hughes, 2008; Greenleaf & Schoenbach, 2004; Ross & Bruce, 2007; Strickland et al., 2003). However, teacher training experiences must account for more than teachers learning new instructional strategies when striving to increase teacher self-efficacy (Fritz et al., 1995).

School leaders want teachers with high self-efficacy so the teacher can affect student achievement, and because teachers with high self-efficacy are more willing to change their teaching practices compared to teachers with low self-efficacy (Eun & Heining-Boynton, 2007; Smylie, 1988). However, teachers who overestimate their self-efficacy blame their students when they do not make progress and view professional development opportunities as meaningless (A. E. Cunningham et al., 2004; Tschannen-Moran et al., 2018). To synthesize the answer to Research Question 1, I discuss findings across all teacher training experiences and address findings specific to Guided Reading and Writing Workshop training separately.

Training Experiences With the Most Impact. In individual interviews, teachers were asked to rank their training experiences from most impact to least impact on student achievement and explain their rankings. Teachers felt prepared to implement new strategies when their descriptions of these training experiences aligned with the characteristics of high-quality professional development in the extant literature.

When teachers attended a training, they ranked as having a high impact on student achievement, teachers felt confident implementing the new strategies they learned. Likewise, when a teacher presented to other teachers what they learned from a training experience, it increased the teacher's understanding of the strategy. In both scenarios—the teacher attending professional development and a teacher providing professional development—the teacher's confidence increased due to a training experience. This finding is consistent with previous

research that teacher self-efficacy is developed through teacher training experiences (Bandura, 1997; Cantrell & Hughes, 2008; Greenleaf & Schoenbach, 2004; Ross & Bruce, 2007; Strickland et al., 2003).

When teachers ranked training experiences as having a high impact on student achievement, they described that these high impact training experiences improved their confidence to implement the new strategy in the classroom. This is consistent with the extant literature. When a teacher witnesses a student making growth because of her teaching (Abernathy-Dyer et al., 2013; Ashton & Webb, 1986; Greenleaf & Schoenbach, 2004), this becomes a mastery experience and increases the teacher's confidence (Bandura, 1997).

There were several factors that teachers attributed to feeling prepared, and thus confident, to implement training experiences. Teachers felt those training experiences that modeled the new strategy had the most impact. This finding is consistent with extant literature that when strategies are modeled for teachers, it improves the teacher's self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), and increases teachers' confidence to try the strategy in their own classroom (Carlisle & Berebitsky, 2011).

Teachers also felt prepared when they received ongoing professional development with their school's Reading Specialist. Teachers reported that the ongoing professional development supported their preparedness and implementation of the newly learned strategy. This is consistent with previous research that suggests teachers need ongoing, job-embedded support to implement new strategies effectively (Ferguson & Wilson, 2009; Fritz et al., 1995; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Hansen, 2006). Further, teachers in this study ranked training experiences as having a high impact on student achievement when they could apply what they learned in the training to other areas of literacy instruction. Consistent with previous research, self-efficacy is content

specific, so when a teacher can generalize what she learns to other areas of literacy, it improves her confidence (Hansen, 2006).

Additional Training Needed. Even though TSD provided training throughout a 4-year period, four out of seven teachers said a training experience they sought outside of TSD had the greatest impact on student achievement. This is consistent with Fritz et al. (1995), who recognized teachers have different professional development needs based on where they are in their career and in their learning. Teachers reported that the most impactful training taught them to look at student data for growth and target instruction for students' needs. In contrast, when teachers felt the training did not meet their students' needs, teachers did not feel confident and chose not to implement what they learned. If the training met students' needs, teachers implemented the training, and if the training did not meet students' needs, they dismissed the training experience. This suggests that teachers feel prepared to implement strategies that teach them to look at student data and use the data to target the differentiated needs of students. When I asked teachers what training they felt they were missing, four out of seven mentioned training that helps them differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students in reading. After the 4 years of teacher training experiences provided by TSD, teachers in this study did not feel prepared to differentiate their instruction to meet the needs of all students. This is consistent with previous research that effective literacy teachers must be skilled to provide different levels of support to each student based on each student's developmental rate for reading and writing skills (B. Frey et al., 2005; Fitzgerald & Cunningham, 2002; Gibson & Dembo, 2002; Hoffman et al., 2000; Stein D'Amico, 2002).

Time and Timing Prevented Implementation. The timing of the training experiences was also a factor in teacher preparedness—training that took place near the beginning of a

teacher's career seemed to have less influence on their classroom practices than training that had taken place more recently, pointing to a need for ongoing professional development. Teachers also described reasons training experiences that had little effect on student achievement. Lack of time changed teachers' perceptions of preparedness. Teachers described not having enough time to implement what they learned in the training experience. Either the teacher did not have time to prepare the materials she acquired in the training or did not have the instructional time in the literacy block to use the materials. Both time constraints prevented teachers from implementing new strategies. For teacher training experiences to be effective, extant research recommends teachers need ongoing reflection time after the training experience to translate training into implementation (Cantrell & Hughes, 2008; Fritz et al., 1995; Guskey & Yoon, 2009).

Guided Reading. Although there are several interpretations of the Balanced Literacy model, for the purpose of my study, I chose Fountas and Pinnell's (1996) Balanced Literacy model because it aligned most closely with the model used in TSD. The Balanced Literacy framework uses a gradual release of responsibility, or scaffolding, in which the teachers model the strategy, and then steadily shifts the control of learning until students reach the independent reading or writing component of the Balanced Literacy model (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). Recall from Chapter 2 that Guided Reading is a process in which teachers create groups of four to six students based on the students' pre-assessed skills, and the teacher guides each small group in reading a text using before reading, during reading, and after reading instructional strategies (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

Study participants did not feel consistently prepared to teach Guided Reading. TSD provided Guided Reading training in 2015-2016; therefore, all teachers in this study should have received Guided Reading training. However, five out of seven teachers reported they felt they

were missing Guided Reading training. Furthermore, three out of the seven teachers never listed Guided Reading training as a training experience. This suggests that the Guided Reading that TSD provided had little to no effect on teachers in this study. During individual interviews, four out of seven teachers responded that the timing of the Guided Reading training experience influenced their implementation of Guided Reading. It is likely that since this training was provided several years before this study, in the first year of the Balanced Literacy model implementation, teachers were not able to recall this training experience or realize this training experience affected their instruction. In contrast, teachers acknowledged that the more recent Word Study training provided by TSD in 2017-2018, had a higher impact on student achievement than the Guided Reading training. Five out of seven teachers ranked Word Study training as having a great impact on student achievement. The teacher responses indicate the more recent the training, the more likely the teacher uses what she learned in training in her classroom. This finding is supported in the research advocating for ongoing professional development; when teachers learn new skills with ongoing professional development, they develop positive perceptions of themselves (Carlisle & Berebitsky, 2011; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Ferguson & Wilson, 2009; Ford & Optiz, 2008; Fritz et al., 1995; Hansen, 2006).

As participants described their preparedness to implement Guided Reading, the ways they defined Guided Reading varied. When an individual teacher grouped the Guided Reading and Word Study training experiences together, six out of the seven teachers responded that they felt they were prepared to teach Guided Reading in their classrooms. This was consistent with previous research. Some researchers teach Word Study within an authentic text, calling both Balanced Literacy components “Guided Reading” (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996), while other researchers advocate for explicit daily Word Study that is different than Guided Reading

(Benjamin & Golub, 2016; N. Frey & Fisher, 2005). Additionally, Fisher (2008) found the individual teacher's beliefs and skills affected the teacher's definition of "guided," which affected the teacher's implementation of Guided Reading. Clear definitions of the Balanced Literacy components are imperative for effective teacher implementation.

Writing Workshop. In the Writing Workshop component of the Balanced Literacy model, there are three parts. The teacher begins with a 5–10-minute mini-lesson about a procedure, skill, or craft the teacher has observed students need (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Next, there is 20–30-minute writing and conference time in which students plan, write, or revise their self-selected topics and the teacher conferences with individuals or small groups of students who need the same skill. Writing Workshop ends with a 10-15-minute sharing session in which the teacher chooses one child to sit in the author's chair and share their finished writing piece while classmates listen and provide feedback (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

Teachers in this study were confident in their preparation to teach Writing Workshop. All seven teachers listed Writing Workshop as a training experience, and four out of seven ranked it as having a great effect on student achievement. Teachers felt confident implementing Writing Workshop because they were able to establish a good routine with Writing Workshop in their classrooms. I compared the teacher's transfer to a good routine with an outlier that emerged from the data. Three out of seven teachers reported that when a training experience does not provide a starting place and explicit directions for the teacher to begin implementation, then the teacher perceives the training experience has a low impact on student achievement. This is consistent with the research. The greatest challenge to increasing teacher self-efficacy was lack of time (Cantrell & Hughes, 2008). When a teacher must take time to "figure out" how to implement a

new strategy in her classroom, this hinders her self-efficacy and desire to implement the new strategy.

Another finding that emerged to support a teacher's preparedness to implement Writing Workshop was looking at student data for student growth. Teachers felt encouraged when they witnessed how much their students had grown in their writing from the beginning to the end of the year, and this improved teacher confidence. This finding aligns with Bandura's (1997) mastery experiences source of self-efficacy.

Research Question 2: What is my assessment of teachers' perceptions of the extent to which their self-efficacy related to providing instruction has affected their teaching practices?

Recall from previous discussion that Bandura (1997) theorized that self-efficacy beliefs are formed from four sources of information (a) *mastery experiences*, (b) *vicarious experiences*, (c) *verbal persuasion*, and (d) *physiological and affective states*. Teachers in the study believed their self-efficacy in implementing Balanced Literacy is increased when the teacher witnessed student growth, observed a Reading Specialist model, received positive feedback, and observed their students engaged, as supported by the following data.

Mastery Experiences. When teachers witness a student improve because of instruction, this mastery experience provides the teacher with authentic evidence that she is capable of future success (Bandura, 1997). The mastery experience improves the teacher's confidence to exert continued effort and believe she can influence student achievement. In this study, teachers described a successful Guided Reading or Writing Workshop teaching experience. When teachers explained what made the experience successful, they described a mastery experience: when they witnessed their student making growth, the successful teaching experience provided them with confidence to repeat the same strategy; when teachers felt confidence, it made

repeated implementation of the new strategy easier. My findings align with those in previous research (e.g., Abernathy-Dyer et al., 2013). Teacher efficacy determines teacher behavior and the quality of instruction; teachers with the highest self-efficacy provided more time teaching writing, gave more to the instruction, and were more enthusiastic (Graham et al., 2001). My findings provide further evidence that mastery experiences are powerful influences in how teachers perceive their self-efficacy and plan future instruction.

Vicarious Experiences. A second source of self-efficacy is vicarious experience, which happens when a teacher observes successful modeling of a new strategy or attends a training that models the new strategy (Bandura, 1997). Bandura (1997) suggested that effective modeling is more than mimicry; instead, effective modeling includes the model thinking aloud so the observer can hear and see how the thinking processes are met with the actions. When the observing teacher observes another teacher's instruction, and listens to the model teacher thinking aloud, the observing teacher's confidence to implement a new strategy will increase. Additionally, it is helpful if the modeling is presented as an opportunity to develop a teacher's skills and pedagogy rather than a function of comparing and evaluating teaching. When the observing teacher feels supported with the model as an opportunity to improve her skills, the modeling experience increases the teacher's self-efficacy. Bandura (1997) cautioned that the influence of the vicarious experience is highly contingent on how the observing teacher views herself compared to the model. If the teacher observes a teacher like herself modeling the strategy, then she usually convinces herself that she can also teach a similar strategy. When the model thinks aloud, presents the model as an opportunity to improve the teacher's skills, and the teacher sees herself similar to the model, then the vicarious experience of a model increases the observer's self-efficacy. In the current study, participants reported feeling encouraged when they

participated in vicarious experiences. Four out of seven teachers noted that training experiences that modeled the new strategy to the teacher had the most impact on them. Furthermore, study participants held positive perceptions of Reading Specialists modeling Guided Reading. Teachers shared that this modeling improved their confidence to implement the strategy themselves. This finding is similar to findings from Carlisle and Berebitsky (2011); teachers in their study who received follow-up professional development from a reading coach in their schools showed patterns of instruction in their own classrooms that mirrored the strategies modeled in professional development.

Nearly half of the teachers in this study wanted more support than what was provided in the TSD training to implement the Balanced Literacy component. Although this provides further evidence that reading coach follow-up is important (Bandura, 1997; Carlisle & Berebitsky, 2011), these responses also point out that each teacher has individual needs to sustain effective implementation in classroom. As an example, one teacher stated:

I've never seen a teacher model it in a small group setting other than in videos or from the trainer herself. So, the fact that I have not had [modeling] for [Writing Workshop] could be why my writing lesson takes forever in a traditional school year.

Although the Writing Workshop and video tutorial training included modeling, this modeling experience did not transfer to her classroom. Instead, she saw herself differently than the presenter and perceived this modeling as ineffective; this teacher drew a conclusion that negatively affected her implementation of Writing Workshop. Her description aligns with previous literature. If the observing teacher sees herself as very different from the model teacher, the vicarious experience could have little effect (Bandura, 1997). An observer might see herself differently than the model because of preconceived notions the observer associates with the

model's personal characteristics, such as age, race, or education level. As school leaders plan training experiences that model new strategies, they should consider how the modeling is presented as an important factor if they hope to influence teacher self-efficacy.

Another teacher said it was helpful to see her school's Reading Specialist model a small group lesson with her students in her classroom. However, the classroom teacher wanted more instruction to help her transfer what she observed to her own classroom:

But to plan that on paper for somebody who's not trained to think that way, it's a challenge...in planning efficiently because...digging for a book for the Group 1, Group 2, Group 3, Group 4, that's going to meet everybody's needs, meet the comprehension strategy we're working on, keep them engaged. These are four separate lesson plans within a small chunk of time. It's just so much.

When the teacher sees herself differently than the Reading Specialist (model) who is trained, this is not as helpful in boosting her confidence; she would benefit from observing the reading Specialist's planning or thinking aloud, both of which are consistent with Bandura's (1997) recommendations of an effective vicarious experience.

Verbal Persuasion. A third source of self-efficacy, verbal persuasion—evaluative feedback that a teacher receives about her teaching and capabilities—can play a critical role in a teacher's self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). When a teacher receives feedback, she determines how much weight to give it based on who provides the feedback and this individual's credibility and knowledge about the given activity (Bandura, 1997).

Study participants reported that most of the feedback they received about their literacy instruction came from their school's Reading Specialists. Compared to feedback from a Reading Specialist, one teacher reported she does not get frequent or meaningful administrator

observations and feedback. If school leaders want to increase teacher self-efficacy and support teachers changing their practice, they must provide administrative support, coaching, and mentoring until teachers feel confident to implement Guided Reading (Ferguson & Wilson, 2009; Ford & Optiz, 2008). Six out of seven teachers in this study said the positive feedback they received validated their efforts implementing the new strategy they learned in training and encouraged them to continue implementing the strategy. This finding is related to previous findings from Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2007) that the significant factors for self-efficacy for novice teachers were availability of resources and verbal persuasion. Because novice teachers have not yet accumulated enough mastery in their first years of teaching, verbal persuasion plays a significant role, but for experienced teachers who have accumulated more mastery experiences, verbal persuasion could play a less significant role in sustaining self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007). When a teacher, novice or experienced, is grappling with implementing a new strategy, she might not have had mastery experiences with the new strategy and might instead rely on feedback to validate her efforts and encourage the development of self-efficacy.

Not all feedback is good feedback, but all feedback has the potential to affect teachers. An unexpected teacher response related to negative feedback points out the impact feedback can have on a teacher. One teacher described the negative feedback she received from a Reading Specialist 15 years before our interview; it continued to negatively affect her confidence:

[That negative feedback is] why I probably feel the way I do about reading and my lack of confidence. Instead of [the Reading Specialist] being like “Hey, next time why don’t you do this...” they were just flat out, “You know that was [wrong].”... You can probably still hear it in my voice. It still very much affects me... Now, when someone comes in, I

always tell them “Look, feel free to give me constructive criticism or advice. I will gladly take it if you just don’t crush my dreams.”

The feedback a teacher receives can help make or break an individual teacher’s confidence and her willingness to try or keep implementing a new strategy. It is imperative for Reading Specialists and instructional coaches to provide constructive feedback that encourages and supports a teacher’s attempt to implement the new strategy and feeds the cyclical nature of self-efficacy.

Physiological and Affective States. The fourth source of self-efficacy is physiological and affective states, meaning an individual’s reactions and mood. A teacher will act according to her mood-altered beliefs of self-efficacy, meaning a teacher with high self-efficacy might be more eager to take on challenging tasks than a teacher with low self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997).

Recall that there were several areas of the TSD BL model that teachers in this study did not receive training in. However, several participants reported feeling confident in teaching those components anyway. For example, despite a lack of training, teachers felt comfortable with Read Alouds and Shared Writing because they were able to engage students in these components, and that made them feel confident in their abilities. Additionally, teachers felt prepared to train their students with independent reading routines, which led to these procedures running smoothly in their classrooms. When teachers can engage students and establish classroom routines, their confidence improves. Learning to engage students and manage the classroom are benefits of teachers attending training, thereby increasing their self-efficacy (Ross & Bruce, 2007).

However, the teachers were able to engage students and manage the classroom without training, this finding was not aligned with previous research.

In contrast, teachers lacked confidence in several TSD Balanced Literacy model components that they did not receive training on. Teachers felt that because they had a lack of training in Shared Reading, they lacked confidence in teaching that component. Additionally, teachers asked for definitions of several Balanced Literacy components. A teacher who is unable to identify what the Balanced Literacy component is would likely feel less confident in their ability to teach that component. When a teacher receives training, it increases her self-efficacy to positively affect student literacy growth (Cantrell & Hughes, 2008; Greenleaf & Schoenbach, 2004), so providing a clear definition and training that aligns with the TSD Balanced Literacy model would be initial steps to increase teacher self-efficacy. Finally, participants shared that classroom management was an issue, making them feel less confident in their ability to execute Balanced Literacy in their classroom. This is consistent with the literature. Previous researchers have found that when a teacher feels challenged to manage her classroom, she relies more heavily on whole group activities versus small group and independent activities (Ashton & Webb, 1986). These findings provide insight as to why a teacher might not feel confident in teaching Balanced Literacy components in which they received no training.

Summary. To answer Research Question 2, I separated the current study findings into each source of self-efficacy. An individual's self-efficacy beliefs might come from a single source or could be drawn from more than one source (Bandura, 1997). My findings suggest that for the teachers in this study, self-efficacy could be attributed to witnessing their students' reading or writing growth (i.e., mastery experiences), observing a Reading Specialist model a lesson (i.e., vicarious experiences), receiving positive feedback that encouraged them to continue implementing the new strategy (i.e., verbal persuasion), or observing students engaged in their lessons (i.e., psychological, and affective state). Factors that hindered the teacher's self-efficacy

were a lack of training in the Balanced Literacy component, being unable to define the Balanced Literacy component, and having difficulty managing the classroom.

Research Question 3: To what degree is the observed implementation of Balanced Literacy strategies aligned with the professional development provided in a school district's Balanced Literacy model?

During the interview, participants shared their literacy block schedules, explaining what I could expect to see during my observation. Then, I observed their literacy instruction. In the original study design, I allotted for 150-minute observations because that was the required length of time for the TSD literacy block. However, the uninterrupted literacy block was amended due to online learning schedules, creating a further limitation to the interpretation of the findings.

As a result of the revised schedule, I observed teachers during their 75–90 minutes of virtual literacy instruction. I used the classroom observation tool I developed for the purpose of this study (Appendix D) to record my observations, teacher and student interactions, and screen shots of anchor charts or materials used throughout the observation. I compared what the teacher predicted I would observe to what I observed during the literacy block.

Alignment to TSD Balanced Literacy Model. I observed that teachers' Word Study instruction was most closely aligned with the TSD Balanced Literacy model, while teachers' Guided Reading and Writing Workshop instruction were least aligned. Extant literature suggests that even novice teachers can go through the motions to demonstrate high alignment with the model (Stein & D'Amico, 2002). The goal in TSD was high-quality implementation, meaning the teacher uses the gradual release of responsibility and instruction has high alignment with the model. To attain both high-quality and high-alignment instruction, instructional coaches should

be housed in schools to provide ongoing support with candid and scheduled moments (Stein & D'Amico, 2002).

During pre-observation interviews, all seven teachers said I would observe whole group reading instruction followed by 3–4 differentiated small groups. During my classroom observations, six teachers used the Word Study cards to provide differentiated instruction to each small group. This means the teacher organized students into differentiated groups based on Word Study needs and chose different Word Study cards to meet the differentiated needs of each group. This finding is consistent with previous research; the teacher must be skilled to provide different levels of support based on each student's developmental rate for reading and writing skills (Fitzgerald & Cunningham, 2002; B. Frey et al., 2005; Hoffman et al., 2000).

TSD provided teachers with Guided Reading, Writing Workshop, and Word Study training, and I used teacher observations to determine the degree the observed implementation aligned with these training experiences. Six teachers taught Word Study instruction that aligned with the TSD training and used the same Word Study routine in each small group. Although each of the seven teachers differentiated the Word Study level for each group, they kept the same Word Study activity across all groups. When TSD provided teachers with Word Study professional development that taught teachers how to form groups and choose differentiated levels based on Word Study assessments, teachers were encouraged to keep instructional routines the same for each group so that students could focus on the new Word Study feature, rather than learning a new Word Study level and instructional strategy. Teachers' use of the Word Study cards to provide differentiated instruction was in alignment with the training TSD provided. This finding of keeping the Word Study activities the same for each group was not supported in my literature review; however, the teacher differentiating instruction for each small

group is supported in the extant literature (P. Cunningham & Allington, 2011; Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; N. Frey & Fisher, 2006). Also, recall teachers were adapting to virtual instruction when I observed the Literacy block; adapting to virtual instruction likely impacted teacher implementation of the observed TSD BL instruction. Effective professional development, meaning teacher training that translates to increasing teacher efficacy to implement the strategy, is job-embedded (Guskey & Yoon, 2009); ongoing (Hansen, 2006); modeled by the Reading Specialist (Carlisle & Berebitsky, 2011); and provides adequate resources for implementation (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007).

Alignment of Guided Reading Observations. During my virtual observations, Guided Reading and Writing Workshop instruction had the least alignment to TSD's Balanced Literacy model. During the interview, all seven teachers said that they differentiated reading and word Study groups. Further, TSD provided training for teachers to choose a leveled text to meet the reading level of the students in the small group. However, I only observed four teachers choosing different text levels for their small groups; the other teachers used the same reading text for all students. Furthermore, I observed four teachers reading the texts to the students. In the gradual release of responsibility model of Balanced Literacy, a teacher has released the control to the student during Guided Reading, and students are reading independently while the teacher listens in and provides feedback (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). This might mean that teachers have different definitions of Guided Reading, a finding that is supported in previous research. An individual teacher's view of the term "guided" determined the teacher's implementation of Guided Reading (Fisher, 2008). This is concerning because all teachers should have received similar Guided Reading training. Ferguson and Wilson (2009) also found that even though all

teachers in their study received training in Guided Reading, the teachers' knowledge of Guided Reading was lacking, and their descriptions of Balanced Literacy components varied greatly.

Alignment of Writing Workshop Observations. During the interview, five teachers reported that they taught Writing Workshop. However, I only observed four teachers using the Writing Workshop to model and assign independent writing task for the students; two of these teachers taught Writing Workshop for only 5-6 minutes. According to the TSD Balanced Literacy model, there is 150 minutes allotted for the literacy block, and 30–45 minutes of the literacy block is devoted to Writing Workshop each day. It is important to remember the literacy block was modified during Virtual instruction. The TSD Virtual schedule allotted 75 minutes for the literacy block, but TSD did not specify how many of the 75 minutes a teacher should spend on reading or writing. So, this hindered the teacher's time to devote to Writing Workshop. However, this finding is consistent with previous research. Troia et al. (2011) suggested that training does not equate to teachers implementing Writing Workshop with fidelity: despite receiving training and implementing Writing Workshop all year long, teachers' beliefs about writing did not change, and most were less confident in their ability to overcome obstacles by the end of the year.

Teacher Decisions in the Virtual Environment. I added three virtual teaching questions to the interview to provide insight into teachers' self-efficacy teaching in the virtual environment. When asked about which training teachers relied on the most, teachers responded they relied on the Word Study training provided by TSD. This aligns with my observations that Word Study had high alignment with the TSD Balanced Literacy model. When asked about which Balanced Literacy component teachers relied on the most when teaching virtually, teachers reported they relied most heavily on the Guided Reading component because they were

able to differentiate instruction and affect students when teaching Guided Reading. Previous research suggests the effectiveness of Guided Reading hinges on teachers' beliefs and skills (Fisher, 2008; Lee & Schmitt, 2014). Although teachers believed Guided Reading helped them to affect student achievement, the observed Guided Reading instruction had low alignment to the TSD Balanced Literacy model. Finally, when asked how teachers decided what to keep in the virtual environment, teachers responded they chose to keep the Balanced Literacy component they felt most engaged students or affected student growth. The decision the teachers made in the virtual learning environment aligned with previous research about professional development. When teachers receive professional development, it increases their self-efficacy because they learn a repertoire of strategies that help them feel equipped to implement new strategies in their classrooms, increase student engagement, and positively affect student achievement (Greenleaf & Schoenbach, 2004).

Limitations

In Chapter 2, I addressed several limitations to my study: the purposive sampling method for the case study (Hoy & Miskel, 2013); teachers' willingness to share; and the timeframe for the data collection, which spanned September to December for the participants. Additionally, all of my observations were conducted in the virtual environment due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers were trained to teach the literacy components in-person, and the teachers in this study only had experience teaching in-person before the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the pandemic, teachers were required to shift their teaching to the virtual environment, which likely influenced the teacher's self-efficacy as they learned how to transfer in-person literacy instruction to virtual instruction. Finally, TSD provided a mandated virtual schedule for all teachers, reducing the 150-minute reading block to 90 minutes for K-Grade 3 teachers and 75 minutes for Grades 4 and

5. The reduction in literacy block time during the virtual environment likely affected the observation data collected.

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

When a child is not a proficient reader by the end of third grade, it is likely they will continue to struggle learning to read through their academic career (Dickinson & Porche, 2011; Wasik & Hindman, 2011). However, as a nation, developing proficient readers by the end of third grade continues to be a challenge. In 2017, 68% of the nation's fourth-grade students did not meet the reading proficiency criteria; this number is not significantly different from the percentage in 2015 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017).

In this case study, I explored the lived experiences of teachers in one school district, TSD, who were implementing Balanced Literacy in their classrooms. For the past 4 years, TSD had provided professional development to teachers in Grades K-5 to support the implementation of Balanced Literacy instruction. Although this study only included seven teachers, it is a meaningful study for TSD, who has invested time and resources into creating a TSD Balanced Literacy model. Based on the teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy findings in this study, I recommend changes to TSD's Balanced Literacy model initiatives (Table 11).

Table 11*Recommendations for Policy and Practice*

Finding	Related Recommendation	Supporting Literature
Teachers were not confident in each of the TSD Balanced Literacy model components; teachers asked for definitions of components in the TSD Balanced Literacy model	At the district level, ensure the Balanced Literacy model clearly defines each component of the literacy block; provide training on each component to increase teacher self-efficacy.	Freppon & Dahl, 1998; Greenleaf & Schoenbach, 2004; B. Frey et al., 2005; Cantrell & Hughes, 2008; Shaw & Hurst, 2012
Teachers positively perceived their abilities to implement strategies from their training experience when they established a good routine in the classroom, witnessed student growth and engaged students	Create teacher training experiences that are easy to implement in the classroom; provide suggestions for managing the classroom, engaging students, model the new strategy, and provide the resources to implement to increase teacher efficacy.	Armor et al., 1976; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Ross & Bruce, 2007; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007; Cantrell & Hughes, 2008; Carlisle & Berebitsky, 2011
Teachers demonstrated high alignment to the TSD Balanced Literacy model when teaching Word Study, but low alignment when teaching Guided Reading and Writing Workshop. Teachers felt prepared to implement Balanced Literacy components in their classroom when the Reading Specialist modeled the strategy	Provide ongoing professional development that includes Reading Specialist modeling the strategies, and circling back to previous trainings, if still pertinent, to support alignment with initiatives and teachers' positive perceptions of themselves.	Bandura, 1997; Stein & D'Amico, 2002; Hansen, 2006; Guskey & Yoon, 2009; Troia et al., 2011
Teachers felt validated in their efforts and encouraged to keep implementing the Balanced Literacy component when they received positive feedback	Provide coaching training for Reading Specialists and school leaders so feedback is both positive and constructive to support teachers' self-efficacy and cultivate a supportive and trusting school culture.	Bandura, 1997; Stein & D'Amico, 2002; Hansen, 2006; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007
Teachers reported perceptions of inconsistent preparedness to teach Guided Reading and need training in differentiated instruction to meet individual students' Guided Reading and Word Study needs	To sustain implementation, provide individualized professional development that considers individual teachers' class contexts, the level of support each teacher needs, and varying levels of teacher confidence.	Fountas & Pinnell, 1996; Bandura, 1997; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 1998; Stein & D'Amico, 2002; Skidmore et al. 2003; Fisher, 2008; Ford & Optiz, 2008; Ferguson and Wilson, 2009; Kennedy & Shiel, 2010; Hoy & Miskel, 2013; Lee & Schmidt, 2014

Note. TSD = Tribe School District

Recommendation 1

At the school district level, ensure the Literacy Model clearly defines each component of the literacy block; provide training on each component to increase teacher self-efficacy. The framework of Balanced Literacy is not specific enough to describe what teachers should teach and how to teach it (Freppon & Dahl, 1998). Instead of assuming teachers will understand what the terms mean in a Balanced Literacy model, TSD should support teachers to allow for effective instruction (B. Frey et al., 2005). This support should include providing adequate professional development opportunities that translate to implementing Balanced Literacy effectively (e.g., B. Frey et al., 2005; Shaw & Hurst, 2012) and increased teacher self-efficacy (Cantrell & Hughes, 2008; Greenleaf & Schoenbach, 2004). Teachers in this study felt confident in their ability to teach the TSD Balanced Literacy component of Word Study, a component in which TSD provided training. Even when training was not provided, teachers felt confident in their ability to teach Read Alouds, Shared Writing, and Independent Reading. However, they lacked confidence in teaching Shared Reading, a TSD Balanced literacy component that teachers were not trained in. Teachers asked for definitions of several TSD Balanced Literacy components. It is challenging for a teacher to be confident in teaching a component that is not defined and for which training has not been provided. Providing a clear definition and training that aligns with the TSD Balanced Literacy model would be initial steps to increase teacher self-efficacy. It is more important for a school district to support a teacher's self-efficacy during the initial implementation phase than other phases of implementation because teachers' initial beliefs could determine how receptive they will be in adopting future strategies (Cantrell & Hughes, 2008). If a school district mandates change, the school district can support initial teacher self-efficacy by providing clear definitions of the components a teacher is expected to implement. When teachers

receive inadequate professional development, this negatively affects the fidelity of the Balanced Literacy framework and jeopardizes its effectiveness on student achievement. To avoid these negative consequences, a school district who has provided the resources to introduce a Balanced Literacy model should clearly define the terms used in the model, and strategically plan training experiences to support teachers.

Recommendation 2

Create teacher training experiences that are easy to implement in the classroom; provide suggestions for managing the classroom, engaging students, model the new strategy, and provide the resources to implement to increase teacher efficacy. Teacher self-efficacy can be increased when teacher training experiences are effective. Effective teacher training experiences provide teachers with strategies to manage their classrooms so that they can focus on instruction (Armor et al., 1976; Ross & Bruce, 2007); engage students (Ross & Bruce, 2007); model the new strategy (Bandura, 1997); and provide necessary resources to implement the new strategy available (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007)—including adequate time for implementation (Cantrell & Hughes, 2008).

Teachers in this study positively perceived their abilities to implement strategies from their training experience when they were able to establish a good routine in their classroom, witnessed their students making growth, and engaged students. If the teacher had to take time to “figure out” how to implement a new strategy, this hindered her desire to implement the new strategy. In contrast, when teachers attended a training that modeled the new strategy, they felt prepared to implement it. During virtual observations, most teachers were using the Word Study cards that TSD provided teachers to teach Word Study, and teachers’ Word Study instruction had the highest alignment with the TSD Balanced Literacy model.

When planning teacher training experiences, school district leaders, principals, and Reading Specialists should strive to create effective professional development because effective professional development increases teacher self-efficacy. Increasing teacher self-efficacy is important because teacher self-efficacy predicts teacher behavior. Teachers with high self-efficacy have higher expectations of their students and themselves; as a result, their high expectations affect how teachers interact with their students (Gibson & Dembo, 1984).

Recommendation 3

Provide ongoing professional development that includes Reading Specialist modeling the strategies and circling back to previous trainings, if still pertinent, to support alignment with initiatives and teachers' positive perceptions of themselves. Furthermore, when principals work alongside Reading Specialists to create a culture of learning, this positively affects student achievement. Training does not equate to implementation with fidelity (Troia et al., 2011). Instead, research supports job embedded (Guskey & Yoon, 2009), ongoing professional development to help teachers develop positive perceptions of themselves and feed the cyclical nature of self-efficacy (Hansen, 2006). Specifically, to attain both high-quality and high-alignment instruction to a district provided model, researchers recommend instructional coaches be housed in schools, so they are accessible to teachers in candid and reserved moments (Stein & D'Amico, 2002).

Teachers in this study demonstrated high alignment to the TSD Balanced Literacy model when teaching Word Study, but low alignment when teaching Guided Reading and Writing Workshop. Participants held positive perceptions of the Reading Specialists modeling Guided Reading in their buildings. Teachers reported that the modeling improved their confidence to implement new strategies. Guided Reading and Writing Workshop trainings were the first

trainings TSD provided in the new model. Since there was low alignment with these initial trainings, it would be helpful if school district leaders and principals provided Reading Specialists professional development time with teachers to circle back to previous trainings, if the trainings were still pertinent, and provided additional training modeling how the “old” training fits in as a current best practice. This is ongoing (Hansen, 2006) and job embedded (Guskey & Yoon, 2009) professional development targeted to support teachers in aligning their instructional practice with the district’s model. Additionally, Reading Specialists should model the desired strategies while making their planning and thinking visible (Bandura, 1997). The principal helps to shape a school culture so that the Reading Specialist’s modeling is viewed as an opportunity for teachers to grow rather than evaluative or punitive, and modeling is viewed as a means to support the teachers’ implementation to positively affect student achievement.

Recommendation 4

Provide coaching training for the Reading Specialists and school leaders so feedback is both positive and constructive to develop teachers’ self-efficacy and cultivate a supportive and trusting school culture. Providing feedback, or verbal persuasion, can improve teachers’ self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Verbal persuasion was found to be a significant factor for developing novice teachers’ self-efficacy because novice teachers have not yet accumulated mastery experiences (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007). When implementing a new strategy, a teacher—novice or experienced—has not yet accumulated mastery experiences and relies heavily on verbal persuasion when implementing a new strategy and deciding whether to continue implementing the strategy. Self-efficacy is cyclical in nature (Hansen, 2006; Woolfolk Hoy & Spero, 2005), so if there are not yet enough mastery experiences, verbal persuasion could play a critical role in shaping a teacher’s self-efficacy. Teachers in this study felt validated in

their efforts and encouraged to keep implementing the Balanced Literacy component when they received positive feedback. However, a teacher received destructive feedback 15 years before the study that continues to negatively impact her self-efficacy. To build teacher self-efficacy, it is imperative the feedback Reading Specialists and principals provide is constructive. To support Reading Specialists in providing support and feedback to their teachers, Reading Specialists need coaching. Frequent, helpful feedback affirms teachers' efforts and guides them toward success. Reading Specialist should also model how to make instructional changes rather than point out what the teacher did wrong or give suggestions without showing teachers how to make the change. When Reading Specialists are working alongside teachers, this creates a community of learners in which support is viewed as an ingredient in the community of professionals (Stein & D'Amico, 2002). Although teacher decisions are the most important factor to influence student achievement, the second most important factor is building-level decisions by school leaders (Armor et al., 1976). Reading Specialists do not bear the load of increasing teacher self-efficacy alone; school leaders, such as principals, play a critical role in increasing teacher self-efficacy.

Recommendation 5

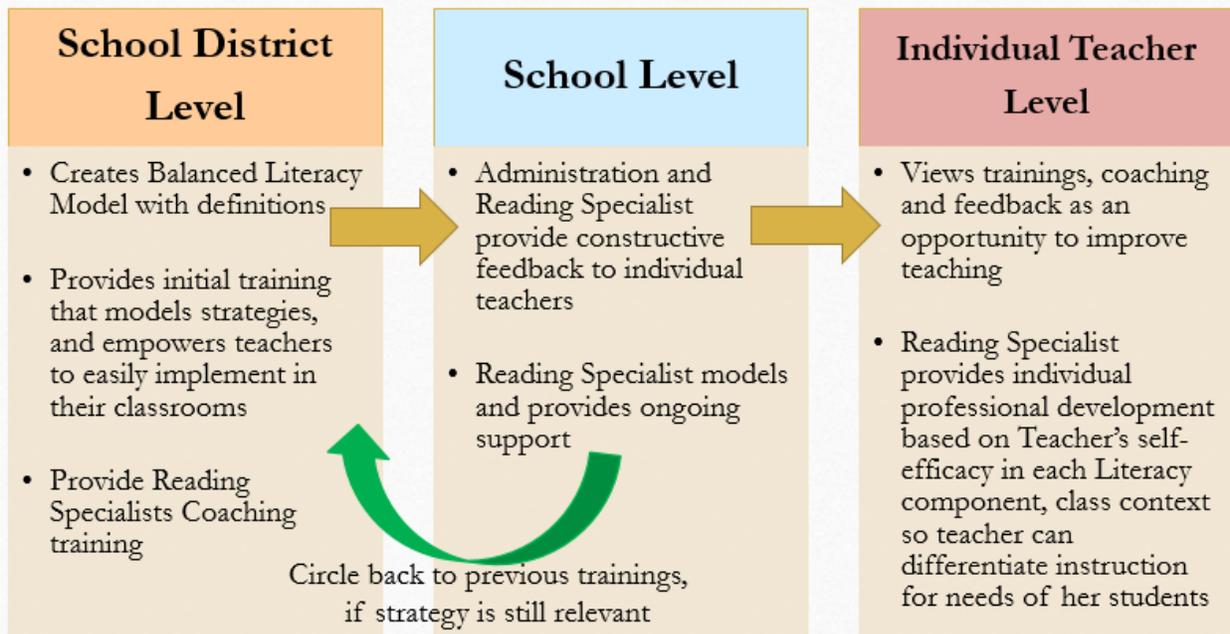
To sustain implementation, provide individualized professional development that considers teachers' class contexts, the level of support each teacher needs, and varying levels of teacher confidence. Ferguson and Wilson (2009) found that even though all teachers in their study received training in Guided Reading, the teachers' knowledge of and descriptions of the Balanced Literacy components varied greatly. The implementation of Guided Reading practices differs based on the context of learners, so professional development should be in-depth and context specific (e.g., Ford & Optiz, 2008). Stein and D'Amico (2002) have argued that, just as

educators differentiate instruction to meet the needs of students, so should school leaders differentiate professional development to meet the needs of teachers.

Teachers in my study reported perceptions of inconsistent preparedness to teach Guided Reading. They felt prepared but lacked training to teach Guided Reading. Unsurprisingly, teacher's instruction of Guided Reading was least aligned with the TSD Balanced Literacy model. Participants reported that they-needed training in differentiated instruction to meet the students' individual Guided Reading and Word Study needs. If the effectiveness of Balanced Literacy programs is contingent on the individual classroom teacher's understanding and implementation of components in the Balanced Literacy model (Fisher, 2008; Kennedy & Shiel, 2010; Lee & Schmidt, 2014; Skidmore et al. 2003), and contextual factors within and among schools influence the experiences in an organization (Hoy & Miskel, 2013), then it is worthwhile to invest in individual teachers. It is important to meet teachers where they are in their learning process, considering the context of their class, and their self-efficacy in that literacy domain because self-efficacy is subject specific (Bandura, 1997; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). Teachers need different levels of assistance and support—direct instruction, co-teaching, or colleague study groups—according to their proficiency levels with Balanced Literacy (Stein & D'Amico, 2002) to bring the individual teacher along in their implementation and build self-efficacy. Figure 4 represents a summary of recommendations at the school district, school, and individual teacher levels.

Figure 4

Recommendations Summary Model



My Growth as a Literacy Leader. I started my dissertation in 2017. Five years later, I have grown in my confidence as a literacy leader. Between 2011 and 2017, I completed my doctoral coursework and chose K-12 School Leadership as my concentration. The coursework opened my eyes to the importance of policies, strategic planning, and effective leadership. While I was incredibly blessed to work as a Reading Specialist, take in-person courses toward my doctorate, and start my journey as a mother during these years, my coursework, and my understanding of what each course taught me was choppy and isolated to the individual required courses.

There were three major events that made my coursework “real” for me as a practitioner in the field. The first major event was organizing my notes and reviewing my coursework to synthesize what I learned in my 69 credit hours into two 12-page papers called the

comprehensive exam. When I sat for my comprehensive exam in the Fall 2016, I started to identify which parts of my doctoral coursework resonated with me as a leader. Holcomb's (2008) strategic planning model has become the backbone of my decisions, shaping where I am in the strategic planning process and pushing me to think ahead as I work to initiate change in my school as a Reading Specialist.

The second event that brought significant meaning to my doctoral coursework was researching the topics of Balanced Literacy, teacher self-efficacy, and professional development to write Chapter 2 of this dissertation. When I equipped myself with literature that supported best practices, my own self-efficacy as a leader started to grow. Simultaneously, I worked with a co-Reading Specialist who led ongoing professional development in her previous school. Our current school's population was changing, and our reading scores were on the decline, so we initiated a plan to lead professional development at the school and coach teachers. At the time, I had no training in these areas. However, I had started researching and writing Chapter 2 and found myself leaning on the extant research to help me lead teachers. For example, when modeling, I started to just show teachers how to teach the lesson; then as I dug deeper into Bandura's (1997) theory, I learned that effective modeling is coupled with explaining and thinking aloud so teachers can hear the mental process. I recognized I did a lot of silent thinking when I modeled to teachers, and to be more effective, I needed to share my thinking aloud so teachers could follow why I made decisions, changed my plan, or responded to students in the manner I did. As another example, I vocalized to my teachers that modeling was an opportunity to help teachers grow their craft, rather than comparing and evaluating teachers (Bandura, 1997). I attribute my confidence in working with teachers to my research in this study, collaboration with my co-Reading Specialist, and remembering my *why*—our student population

is changing and our students, who will one day lead our communities, deserve teachers who are adapting their craft to be the best teachers they can be. At this time, my confidence was growing not only as an interventionist who served the lowest-reading students in each grade level, but also as a coach, who was developing teachers.

The third major event that boosted my confidence was conducting this case study. I have learned that I am a people person, and thankfully in the people business. I became enamored with the personal experiences the seven teachers shared with me about their experiences teaching literacy in a school district that provided training with a new Balanced Literacy model. It was evident that every teacher I interviewed and observed was working hard, long hours. While my interviews and observations took place during COVID-19, I was reminded how classroom teachers are doing their best every day to deliver instruction they feel is best. If a new strategy is introduced, and it is not easy to implement, I could see why the teacher reverts to “what has always worked.” I have seen my own initiatives flop and other initiatives soar. Although I was passionate about helping individual teachers during the beginning of this dissertation process, the data gathering, data analysis, and writing of Chapters 4 and 5 boosted my confidence as an advocate of teachers and our initiatives. While writing Chapter 4, TSD started to revise the Balanced Literacy model to align with the Science of Reading. Due to my experiences in this dissertation process, I was too passionate to sit and wait for the same outcomes to occur that occurred with the first Balanced Literacy model. So, I met with two leaders from the school board office to provide insight about how the initial roll-out of the new model was going. I presented facts and represented the voices of teachers who were questioning themselves as they were grappling with the initial steps. From teachers in my building, I kept hearing “I want to do it right,” and continually asking for affirmation. I increased my feedback to teachers in my

building and spoke up to provide feedback to the TSD leaders. The work of teachers in Grades K-3 is too important to let an unclear literacy model, vague definitions, or confusing professional development negatively affect teachers and have teachers revert to former practices. I urged TSD to think critically about the roll-out of the new literacy model; I requested clarity and reminded the leaders that the implementation of a great research-based plan hinges on how teachers interpret the professional development provided. It is the job of school and district leaders to develop teachers' self-efficacy, so teachers are willing to come along on the journey of adapting their instructional practices to align with the model.

The gap between research and practice need not be as wide as it is; we *know better* based on research, so we should *do better* developing teachers in the field. This starts with providing effective professional development and supporting change inside individual classrooms that will affect students and student achievement. I would not be an influencer and see myself as confident literacy had I not had this incredible journey as a doctoral student and candidate. I am well overdue my original timeline to complete my doctorate; however, my extended timeline has allowed me work in two worlds: one world of research and theory and the other world as a practitioner in the trenches with classroom teachers. My timeline has supported my growth and confidence as a literacy leader at my school, within my district, and as a contributor to the literature of the reading research.

Future Research

Consistent with previous research, teachers in my study created their own interpretations of the Balanced Literacy model and sometimes did not implement the model with fidelity. If building-level decisions made to support teachers and individual teacher's decisions are the second most important factor to impacting student achievement, then it is worthy to look more

closely how school leaders help to shape teacher self-efficacy (e.g., Armor et al., 1976). Therefore, the individual teacher nor the Reading Specialist does not bare the load alone, instead it is shared with the school leaders to prioritize and support professional development that increases teacher self-efficacy. Findings from previous studies indicated that teachers benefit from training experiences that provide them with strategies to manage their classrooms (Armor et al., 1976; Ross & Bruce, 2007); engage students (Ross & Bruce, 2007); model the new strategy (Bandura, 1997); and make necessary resources to implement the new strategy available (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007). TSD and many other school districts invest in professional development to increase teacher knowledge and teacher self-efficacy. Yet, in 2017, 68% of our nation's fourth-grade students did not meet reading proficiency criteria (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). There is a gap between what research shows is effective professional development, school district efforts to provide professional development that increases teacher self-efficacy and improving student achievement as demonstrated on proficiency assessments. Future studies could point school leaders in monitoring self-efficacy throughout implementation, effective modeling, feedback when implementing, and individualized professional development.

Monitoring Self-Efficacy Throughout Implementation

Future research should examine best practices for continuing to monitor teacher self-efficacy throughout the implementation process. Self-efficacy is most important during initial implementation because teachers' initial beliefs could determine how receptive they are to adopting new strategies (Cantrell & Hughes, 2008; Fritz et al. 1995). This study relied on interview data from a short amount of time, and asked teachers to reflect on teacher training experiences that TSD provided in previous years. Teachers' self-efficacy was inconsistent,

suggesting that a teacher's perceptions of her self-efficacy change throughout the implementation process. How do schools monitor and support teacher self-efficacy before implementation, during implementation, and when implementation fails? It would be valuable to know how teachers perceived their ability to influence student engagement as they implement strategies presented in the teacher training experiences so that schools could better support teachers' implementation needs and self-efficacy.

Effective Modeling

Future research should examine the effectiveness of modeling during the teacher training experience and when a Reading Specialist models in the classroom. Teachers in this study felt confident when the teacher training experience included modeling, and when the Reading Specialist modeled in their classroom, both of which are consistent with Bandura's (1997) findings related to vicarious experiences. This study relied on interview data with seven participants. Modeling, or vicarious experiences, are a vital source of self-efficacy. It would be valuable to research what teachers believe is most effective about modeling: having the model think aloud when planning or thinking aloud during implementation so that practitioners can provide this targeted model and boost teacher self-efficacy.

Feedback When Implementing

Future research should examine how often and what type of feedback is most helpful to teachers. In this study, teachers responded positively when they received positive feedback. This is consistent with Bandura's (1997) research on self-efficacy and Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy's (2007) research that novice teachers rely on verbal persuasion because they have not yet accumulated mastery experiences. Although the teachers in this study were veteran teachers, they had not yet had mastery experiences with the new strategies they learned in the

teacher training experiences, so they relied heavily on feedback to support their self-efficacy. It would be valuable to research how often and what type of feedback teachers need as they grapple with implementing a new strategy. If feedback is important, schools need more information about how often and what type of feedback so that school leaders and Reading Specialists can feed this source of self-efficacy and encourage implementation.

Individualized Professional Development

Future research should examine the different models of individualized professional development to help an individual teacher meet the needs of her students. The findings of this study suggest that sustained implementation requires individualized professional development. This consistent with the findings of Stein and D’Amico (2002), that instructional coaches were housed in schools and teachers received different levels of assistance and support—direct instruction, co-teaching, or colleague study groups—contingent on the teacher’s proficiency levels with Balanced Literacy. Future studies should be expanded to determine which individualized professional development models are most effective and what roles the Reading Specialist or literacy coach should take on to partner with school leaders to lead individualized professional development efficiently and effectively.

Conclusion

TSD should be commended for creating a TSD Balanced Literacy model that aligned with evidence-based practices and for providing teacher training experiences in a 4-year implementation timeline. These are great first steps in supporting teachers in changing their literacy instructional practices. The findings from this study affirm TSD’s efforts. Teachers in this study demonstrated strong alignment between the observed Word Study instructional procedures and the Word Study teacher training experiences provided by TSD. Also, the findings

in this study affirm TSD's efforts that modeling and feedback provided by Reading Specialists encouraged teachers' implementation. TSD was strategic in creating a Balanced Literacy model and providing support to teachers, both of which were apparent in my findings.

The transition to a district mandated literacy model from no literacy model was a change for district leaders, school leaders, and teachers. Findings indicate that teachers lacked confidence and were unclear about components in the Balanced Literacy model. Additionally, when teachers were able to implement strategies from teacher training experience easily, they had positive perceptions of the training experience. TSD should provide clear definitions and initial training on each component in the Balanced Literacy model that empowers teachers to implement new strategies in their classrooms.

Findings in this study also indicate that while teachers demonstrated both high and low alignment when teaching components of the Balanced Literacy model, teachers felt most prepared to implement components in their classrooms when the Reading Specialist modeled the desired instructional strategy. Additionally, when teachers received positive feedback, the teachers felt validated and encouraged to continue implementing the new strategy. Therefore, at the school level, teachers should receive ongoing support through modeling and constructive feedback from school leaders and Reading Specialists. Teachers in this study also wanted more training to differentiate their instruction to meet the needs of their students. To sustain implementation, individualized professional development should be provided to support teachers implementing the desired strategies in their unique class contexts.

Each recommendation is intended to develop teachers' self-efficacy and sustain implementation of new strategies. Teachers need strong teacher self-efficacy at all stages of their careers, along with strong organizational support at the school level to implement new strategies

acquired at professional development (Eun & Heining-Boynton, 2007). Improving self-efficacy is paramount for a literacy teacher who needs to change instructional practices and reduce the gap between evidence-based practices and non-evidence-based practices used in the classroom. Although the priority of developing teachers will likely compete with other agendas school leaders have, I urge school leaders to protect the instructional core and prioritize developing teachers. If all students are to learn to read proficiently, teachers will need support at the district, school, and individual level.

APPENDIX A

Permission to Reprint Balanced Literacy Tip Sheet

Burr, Kathryn

From: Sadlier School <noreply@sadlier.com>
Sent: Saturday, January 18, 2020 8:49 AM
To: Burr, Kathryn
Subject: Your Balanced Literacy Components Tip Sheet

Use Caution

This message originated outside of [REDACTED].
Use caution when opening attachments, clicking links or responding to requests for information.



Thank You!

We appreciate your interest.

Download your *Balanced Literacy Components Tip Sheet* now.

Want More?

Visit Sadlier School's [ELA Blog](#) or [Math Blog](#) and resources for more great free downloads! And don't forget to preview our academic products and request free samples at www.SadlierSchool.com.

Check in with Sadlier School



APPENDIX B

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT

WHAT DO I HOPE TO LEARN FROM YOU?

This dissertation study, entitled “A Case Study: Teachers’ Perceptions of the Influence of Professional Development on Self-Efficacy Related to Implementing a Balanced Literacy Model” is designed to explore your perceptions and experiences as a teacher in our school district, especially your perceptions of self-efficacy in implementing Balanced Literacy instruction.

WHY IS YOUR PARTICIPATION IMPORTANT TO ME?

Studying your perceptions and experiences could inform instructional leaders about the type of support teachers need, so they can work toward providing the needed support. This study is my dissertation, a requirement for my doctoral program.

HOW WERE YOU SELECTED?

TSD has identified you as a Kindergarten, Grade 1 or Grade 2 teacher in our school district during the 2016-2017, 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years. This study will include 8-10 total participants who taught one in one of these grade levels during these years, continue to teach in our school district, and provide literacy instruction to students.

WHAT WILL I REQUEST FROM YOU?

- One interview will be conducted. The interview will be 60 minutes and will be conducted via Teams. The interview will be audio recorded so that I can analyze the data after the interview.
- One classroom observation will be conducted. I will use a Balanced Literacy classroom observation tool to help me make observation notes. I may also take pictures of anchor charts and instructional materials.
- Before the first interview, the interviewer will ask you to brainstorm a list of relevant training events and bring the list with you to share during the first interview. Additionally, the interviewer will ask that you bring a copy of your Literacy block schedule.
- After the interview and classroom observation, the interviewer will send you a one-page summary for your read and confirm or clarify the interviewer’s understanding of you.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Please know that:

- The human subjects guidelines outlined by The College of William & Mary’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) will be used to protect the confidentiality of your personally identifying information.
- Your name and other identifiable information will be known only to the researcher through the information you provide. Neither your name nor any other personally identifiable information will be used in any presentation or published work without prior written consent.
- The audio recording as described above will be erased after the study has been completed.
- You may refuse to answer any question during the interviews. You may also terminate your participation at any time by simply informing the interviewer of your intention. Neither of these actions will incur a penalty of any type with the College of William & Mary, your school district, or your principal.
- Your participation in this study is completely voluntary.
- Benefits of completing this study may include self-reflection and personal growth.
- A summary of the results of the study will be sent to you electronically once the study is complete.
- You will be given a small incentive, an Amazon gift, for agreeing to participate and fulfilling all the steps in the study.

HOW CAN YOU CONTACT US?

If you have questions or concerns about this study, please contact the interviewer, Kathryn Kryscio (kxkrys@email.wm.edu) at The College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia (757-508-7296) or her dissertation chair: Dr. Margaret Constantino at 757-221-2323 or meconstantino@wm.edu. If you have additional questions or concerns regarding your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact anonymously if you wish, Dr. Tom Ward at 757-221-2358 (tom.ward@wm.edu), Supervisor of the IRB process at School of Education.

By signing below, you are stating agreement to voluntary participation in this study and are confirming you are at least 18 years of age.

A copy of this consent form will be given to you to keep.

Participant Signature: _____

Date: _____

Interviewer Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW

Case Study Research Questions

1. What are teachers' perceptions of their preparedness to implement Guided Reading and Writing Workshop?
2. What is my assessment of teachers' perceptions of the extent to which their self-efficacy related to providing literacy instruction has affected their teaching practices?
3. To what degree is the observed implementation of Balanced Literacy strategies aligned with the professional development provided in a school district's Balanced Literacy model?

1. Greeting.

2. **Researcher explains purpose of study** "I am studying the perceptions of teachers who are using Balanced Literacy in their classrooms. I am interested in your point of view, you are the expert about your own teaching. I want to find out how you confident and prepared you believe you are to implement Balanced Literacy instruction in your classroom. By Balanced Literacy, I mean Read Aloud, Shared Reading, Guided Reading, Independent Reading, and Writing Workshop. I want to find out about your training in Balanced Literacy, and your experiences implementing Balanced Literacy in your classroom. Let's start with background information."

Framework	Interview Question	A priori codes
Demographic Items	Please tell me how long you have been teaching.	
	Please share how long you have taught in this school district.	
	Please tell me your highest level of education.	
Bandura's Self-Efficacy theory. Source 2: Vicarious experiences	1. Let's visit the list of teacher training experiences you brainstormed as preparation for the interview. I have some prepared cards. As you list your teacher training experiences, I will check your list with my prepared cards. I have spare cards if I do not have your teacher training experience prepared on a card. After we get a list, we can go back over the list and find out how these training experiences have influenced your teaching. Ok, let's start. Would you please give me a list of all training experiences you	-Student teaching -university coursework -Writing Workshop training -Guided Reading training -Literacy Model -Word Study training

	brainstormed in and outside of TSD? (The researcher’s list of prepared teacher training experiences include: Writing Workshop training, Informal Running Records, Word Study training provided by the school district, Guided Reading training, college class in Literacy, relevant graduate classes, Literacy conferences, Professional Learning Communities, Professional Book Clubs, student teaching).	-additional Master’s coursework -context of the school
Bandura’s Self-Efficacy theory. Source 2: Vicarious experiences	2. I’m interested in the way you see these experiences impact your ability to affect students’ reading and writing growth throughout the year. Can you order these experiences from least to greatest impact on your ability to impact students’ achievement? After the participant has ranked the cards, researcher will take a picture of the line plot to use as reference during data analysis. (Researcher uses a Hover Cam to provide each participant a line plot for visual support.) <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">0 Least impacts student achievement</div> <div style="text-align: center;">10 Most impacts student achievement</div> </div>	-belief of one’s capabilities -motivated -teacher sees herself differently -manage classroom/students -implement
Bandura’s Self-Efficacy theory. Source 1: Mastery experiences	3. Let’s look at your cards closest to the number 10, the training that you said most impacted your ability to affect students’ reading and writing growth throughout the year. (Researcher covers all other cards from the table.) Will you tell me more about why you placed these cards here (researcher uses a Hover Cam and points to cards near “most impacts” and then the cards near “least impacts”)? Can you describe an example?	-change in practice -training aligns with or disputes prior experience -teacher experienced -perceived quality -manage classroom -believes in future
Bandura’s Self-Efficacy theory.	4. (Researcher uncovers all other cards so that researcher and participant can see all cards.) Let’s look over your list of training experiences. Do you feel you would benefit from a training experience that you have not had. Why or why not?	-adequate professional development -ongoing professional development

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -organizational support -reflect -job embedded
<p>Balanced Literacy: Guided Reading component and Bandura's Self-Efficacy theory. Source 1: Mastery experience</p>	<p>5. Next, I am interested in a successful experience you had teaching either Guided Reading or Writing Workshop. You can pick either Guided Reading or Writing Workshop. Will you please describe an exceptionally successful experience you had with teaching either Guided Reading or Writing Workshop? (If needed, researcher will ask follow-up questions: what was it about that experience that stuck with you, or let you know you were effective?)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -successful experience - once before (last year, 2 years ago) -implementation -initial beliefs (I will pull in specific Guided Reading or Writing Workshop codes if they match what the teacher says)
<p>Balanced Literacy Framework and Bandura's Self-Efficacy theory. Source 1: Mastery experience</p>	<p>6. Thinking about your successful Guided Reading or Writing Workshop experience, what impact, if any, has this successful experience had on your ability to implement Guided Reading or Writing Workshop in your classroom?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -recall past experience -repeated success -setback
<p>Balanced Literacy: Guided Reading component and</p>	<p>7. Now I'm interested in learning if someone has modeled Guided Reading or Writing Workshop to you. You can pick either one – Guided Reading or Writing Workshop. Can you describe to me an experience in which someone modeled Guided Reading or Writing Workshop to you?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -support implementation -when implementation failed -modeled, showed me

<p>Bandura's Self-Efficacy theory. Source 2: Vicarious experience</p>		<p>-model did think aloud</p> <p>-teacher compared self to model</p>
<p>Balanced Literacy Framework</p> <p>Bandura's Self-Efficacy theory. Source 2: Vicarious experience</p>	<p>8. What impact, if any, did having the Guided Reading or Writing Workshop modeled to you have on your ability to implement the Guided Reading or Writing Workshop in the classroom?</p>	<p>Guided Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -differentiated instruction - developmentally appropriate according to stage of reading continuum -leveled text with book introduction -Explicit word work or word study instruction -small-group instruction -Teacher "listens in" or running record -Independent seatwork/stations <p>Writing Workshop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Mini lesson with modeled, shared, interactive writing -individual or skill-based conferences -share session -student self-selected topics -composing, craft, elaboration

<p>Bandura's Self-Efficacy theory. Source 3: Verbal Persuasion</p>	<p>9. Next, I want you to think about feedback you have received in your Balanced Literacy instruction. By feedback, I mean another person telling you how well you are doing or what to improve upon in your literacy instruction. What impact, if any, has a person's feedback had on your ability to impact your students' reading and writing growth?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -teacher experiences -person's qualifications --encourage -improvement
<p>Balanced Literacy And Bandura's Self-Efficacy theory</p>	<p>10. Now, I am interested learning more about your beliefs in your ability to teach the different components of Balanced Literacy. How confident are you in your ability to execute each of these components of Balanced Literacy? (Researcher will provide a list of Balanced Literacy components: Read Aloud, Share Reading, Guided Reading, Independent Reading, Shared Writing, Interactive Writing, Writing Workshop, and Independent Writing.) What makes you feel this way?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Gradual Release of Responsibility -modeling, scaffolding -independent differentiate -effective -diverse student population
<p>Bandura's Self-Efficacy theory. Source 4: Physiological and Affective States</p>	<p>11. Now, I want to know how you feel about your ability to impact your students' reading and writing growth. Do you feel you have the skills to impact your students' reading and writing progress throughout the year? Why or why not?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -life-long readers and writers -meet diverse student needs -positive climate for students -students motivated -professional development -past memories -reactions or mood -excitement challenge -anxious, threat

	<p>12. Let's look at your Literacy block schedule that you brought with you. What will I see when I observe you teaching in your virtual classroom? If needed, researcher will ask follow-up questions: what do you mean by small-group instruction? What will the teacher and student be doing throughout the Balanced Literacy instructional block?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Balanced Literacy instruction in context of the school -context of individual classroom -gradual release to student independence -description of 8 Balanced Literacy components -schedule -teacher-student interaction
	<p>13. Did some training carry you into teaching in the virtual classroom? (I revisited the line plot of teacher training experiences.)</p>	
	<p>14. Which of the Balanced Literacy components did you rely on most heavily in the virtual classroom? (I showed the list of Balanced Literacy components)</p>	
	<p>15. How did you make a decision about what to keep in the virtual classroom?</p>	

APPENDIX D

BALANCED LITERACY CLASSROOM OBSERVATION TOOL

Case Study Research Questions

1. What are teachers’ perceptions of their preparedness to implement Guided Reading and Writing Workshop?
2. What is my assessment of teachers’ perceptions of the extent to which their self-efficacy related to providing literacy instruction has affected their teaching practices?
3. To what degree is the observed implementation of Balanced Literacy strategies aligned with the professional development provided in a school district’s Balanced Literacy model?

Researcher looks for evidence of classroom teacher’s implementation of Balanced Literacy component	Teacher Behavior	Student Behavior	Researcher’s Observation	Researcher’s code to be determined
<p>General Balanced Literacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the 8 components of Balanced Literacy • Implementation of school district’s professional development • Length of time designated for each component of the Literacy block • Adequate balance of teacher directed activities vs. independent activities • Response to student’s emotional needs (i.e., wait time) • Management of the classroom (i.e., students work independently and cooperatively during work stations, students know expectations during Literacy block) 				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of the gradual release of responsibility model • Use of minilessons to state instructional goals • May use anchor charts to capture big idea of the lesson 				
<p>Read Aloud</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texts align to the chosen skill or strategy teacher is modeling • Teacher introduces learning target for grade level skill or strategy that may be later woven through the Guided Reading and Independent practice • Students are engaged and may be given opportunities to participate 				
<p>Shared Reading/Interactive Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher reads aloud text that both teacher and student can see (big book, choral reading, readers theatre) • Students are invited to join teacher and read parts of the text 				
<p>Guided Reading (Small Group Instruction)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of flexible grouping based on Word Study and/or reading level • Teacher meets small groups of students for 20-30 minutes • Interactions evenly divided between student and teacher • Students are aware of what the learning objective is for the tasks completed in small-group 				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher facilitates meaningful conversation • Word Study should include phonics activities and phonemic awareness on feature being studied • Each student reads the text quietly to him/herself • Teacher provides explicit teaching points on decoding or comprehension depending on the reader and/or part of the lesson • Teacher makes observation notes about student, including but not limited to running records 				
<p>Independent Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student completely controls task • Students spend most of their time independently reading material of his/her choice • Teacher holds student accountable for reading completed (i.e., reading log, response journal, etc.) • Teacher provides feedback to support student choice 				
<p>Writing Workshop Minilesson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short 5-10 minute minilesson • Teacher states instructional goals for minilesson based on procedure, skill, or craft the teacher has observed her students need • Teacher uses mentor texts (published authors, anonymous student writing, teacher modeled writing) • Teacher provides full support (students may give ideas for shared writing or teacher may 				

<p>think aloud and recording her spoken word)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mini lesson lays foundation for independent writing • Teacher uses Writing Workshop vocabulary 				
<p>Interactive Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher may share pen with student to collaboratively write a message • Student eagerly and confidently participates • Student observes while teacher models process moving from spoken to written word • Past interactive writings are posed in classroom to be read and reread 				
<p>Independent Writing and Conferring Time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20-30 minutes of independent writing time • Students choose own topics • Students are motivated to write at their own rate • Positive climate for students • Teacher moves through the room to confer with students or provide skill instruction to a small group of students who need the skill 				
<p>Writing Sharing Session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10-15 minutes • Students gather and teacher choose one student to share in author's chair • Teacher either models how to provide feedback to student readers or students provide feedback to peer 				

Teacher Behavior Key	Student Behavior Key
<p>T1: Modeling/Explicit Teaching T2: Guides practice: monitors, coaches, remediates T3: Questioning T4: Listening T5: Defining learning objectives T6: Providing feedback T7: Advanced Organizers T8: Assigning varied and leveled text T9: Provides time for independent practice T10: Assessing</p>	<p>S1: Listening/watching S2: Reading S3: Responding/discussing to teacher's question with oral response, partner, or writing S4: Asking questions/clarifying S5: Demonstrate comprehension of lesson S6: Making connections to prior learning S7: Engage in cooperative learning/reciprocal teaching S8: Discussing text S9: Self-assessment S10: Engaged in off-task behaviors/conversations</p>

APPENDIX E

INITIAL EMAIL CONTACT WITH PARTICIPANTS

Dear teacher,

I teach at [REDACTED] and am also a doctoral student at William & Mary. I am writing to ask for your participation in my dissertation research study. I am researching classroom teachers' perceptions of their literacy instruction. I would like to hear from you, as a 2nd grade teacher in our school district, about what impacts your decisions about how you teach reading and writing to your students using the Balanced Literacy model.

Your participation would include a 60-minute individual interview via Teams and one 75–90-minute classroom observation in which I would “tune into” your Literacy instruction through Teams, each scheduled at your convenience. Please know your participation in this study is voluntary and all individual responses will be kept strictly confidential. Information you share will not be communicated to your principal, the school district, or William & Mary.

As an incentive to participate in the study, you will be given an Amazon gift card for agreeing to participate and fulfilling all the steps in the study. The findings from this study could inform the professional development needs of classroom teachers in our school district. William & Mary has approved my dissertation study, EDIRC number-2020-04-23-14275-meconstantino. Additionally, [REDACTED] has approved my study and provided your name as someone who taught 2nd grade during the 2016-2017, 2017-2018, and 2018-2019 school years.

Please reply to this email if you are interested in participating in the study or if you would like more information. I do hope you will choose to participate so I can learn from you and your experiences as a classroom teacher.

Thank you for your time,

Kathryn Kryscio

APPENDIX F

RESEARCHER AS INSTRUMENT STATEMENT

Experiences

I am a doctoral student, studying educational leadership. I have had extensive training in the field of early literacy, including a master's degree in Reading, Language, and Literacy and Reading Recovery training. I am currently a Reading Specialist in a K-5 public school, providing intervention for students reading well below grade level. I have attended Writing Workshop and Word Study training alongside the classroom teachers in my building. I acknowledge my own experience as a literacy teacher and the work as a specialist supporting teachers who are implementing Balanced Literacy instruction. My interpretation of the study participant experiences may be influenced by my personal experiences. I also acknowledge that I have been in my current position for nine years and have seven years of previous experience as a classroom teacher. As a classroom teacher, I taught third, fourth, and first grades, to include teaching experience in other states. I implemented Balanced Literacy each year in the classroom. Therefore, I am aware of the expectations outlined in training, but it has been eight years since I have implemented these Balanced Literacy components in my own classroom. I may draw upon my classroom teaching experiences from the past, but I acknowledge these are not current classroom teaching experiences.

Topics

This study focuses on two key topics: Balanced Literacy and self-efficacy. Balanced Literacy is a topic over used in classrooms and in school districts as the preferred framework for organizing and delivering literacy instruction. However, when I combed the extant literature, I realized there are many interpretations of what the term Balanced Literacy represents. Many

theorists have added their personal spin on the framework and chosen to emphasize one area over another. I am concerned if we continue to use the term Balanced Literacy, but the framework is not defined for teachers, there may be large inconsistencies in the implementation of Balanced Literacy, and our students may be impacted because the frameworks interpreted by individual teachers may not be implemented with fidelity. I also believe that implementation of Balanced Literacy is at the mercy of the teacher's knowledge gained from pre-service or in-service training experiences as well as the allotted resources provided by the teacher's school district. However, these are not reasons to skirt away from Balanced Literacy. As leaders and Literacy experts, we are charged with ensuring we understand what Balanced Literacy mean and to share this definition with our teachers. Furthermore, it is important that districts allocate resources to train teachers in the Balanced Literacy components so we can help teachers' knowledge of each component grow, and to help teachers assess and provide instruction to each student.

Additionally, I was alarmed the extant literature was sparse in providing evidence to support Balanced Literacy. I would have expected there to be many more studies and evidence to "prove" Balanced Literacy works for students. This makes me wonder if the different frameworks have impacted teacher implementation, making Balanced Literacy a difficult construct to research and support with empirical evidence.

I have observed many teachers feel confident in their ability to lead whole group components of Balanced Literacy but feel less confident when meeting with students at the Guided Reading table. I wonder is this because teachers were not adequately trained to effectively teach Guided Reading, or teachers feel they have less control over the entire class, or

the on-the-spot instructional decisions needed at the Guided Reading table challenge the teacher outside of her comfort zone. Perhaps it is a combination of all three factors?

The second topic in this study is self-efficacy. From the extant literature, we know it is important for teachers to have a high self-efficacy because self-efficacy impacts both students and teachers. However, I have observed effective teachers who have low self-efficacy, and ineffective teachers who have high self-efficacy. The challenge becomes how to boost a teacher's perception of her own self-efficacy, while also developing her actual teaching skill.

My answer revolves around leadership and school culture. As a doctoral student in an Educational Leadership program, I understand change is a multidimensional construct that must be sustained with a trusted leader and healthy school culture. Through leadership courses in my doctoral program, I learned about the importance of a leader's relationships with followers. I believe an instructional leader has the influence to positively impact how teachers perceive themselves as teachers, and instructional leaders can encourage (and conversely, degrade) how teachers feel about their teaching. Furthermore, there is agreement in the literature that ongoing, job-embedded professional development is most effective. I believe to boost a teacher's self-efficacy, there needs to be a healthy school culture, and continuous instructional training. Countless times I have heard effective veteran teachers mutter when trying to adopt the new initiative learned at training, "this makes me feel like I don't know how to teach reading." Of course, change is difficult and feels uncomfortable. To support teachers, teachers need to know it's okay to take a risk and leap into trying something new, let's work together to help you grow comfortable with your new strategy.

Beliefs

As I reflect on my past experiences, I realize my beliefs and values are a direct correlation to my past experiences. For example, when I think about my beliefs about the context of this study, I strongly believe the context of the elementary school plays a key role for the teacher. In my first year of teaching, most of my energy was spent on behavior management rather than instruction. The focus on behavior management was reinforced by the student population in my classroom, and by the school-wide professional development focus that year. As I observe the experiences of other teachers, I think it will be equally important to gain a picture of the teacher's school context and the professional development support offered at the school. As a result, this may create a hurdle when comparing individual participant experiences. For example, if a teacher worked in a school with little support and spent most of her time learning how to manage the students in her classroom, her experiences may not be generalized to another different teacher who works in school with a literacy focus and is expected to focus on reading instruction.

Further, I believe all children can learn. Likewise, I believe all teachers can learn, no matter how many years the teacher has been in the profession. It may be more challenging to motivate change in a veteran teacher, but I strongly believe all teachers can learn. I also believe in explicit teaching. Often, I hear teachers say, "They [students] don't get it." My immediate response is "did you teach them?" Consistently, I hear the classroom teacher respond, "We talked about it." Students, especially those who struggle in the areas of reading and writing, need explicit teaching and then prompting for what was taught. We, as educators, cannot expect young readers to hear teacher talk and magically apply the reading strategy it in a different book. I also believe in the use of leveled readers. When teaching a child to read, the first step is giving the

child a book on the child's correct reading level. A child who is struggling to read will not be successful problem solving if the text is too difficult. I believe we often overlook the importance of book levels.

Finally, I believe a teachers' experience does not determine effectiveness. I have observed veteran teachers who are effective and non-effective; likewise, I have observed new teachers who are effective and those who are trying to figure out how to survive. The number of years a teacher has been teaching does not determine how well she does her job.

Values

As a teacher and an instructional leader in my building, I value professional development. My most valuable professional development experience was my Reading Recovery training. As I reflect on the differences between this professional development and other professional developments I have had, I conclude this was a year-long training, job embedded, relevant to our individual students, and coached by our Teacher Leader. Thus, when I think about the value of professional development, I value experiences that include meaningful, job-embedded, and reoccurring opportunities for the teacher to improve her practice. Also, I value a supportive grade level team. Again, based on my own experiences, a grade level team who plans and shares materials is likely to be productive compared to team members who are isolated. Collaborating with teammates provides new teachers support that enables the grade level to work more efficient and effective.

I also value the professional skill of observing students. A teacher makes critical instructional decisions to scaffold the growth of her individual students. The only way she can make individual decisions is by pre-assessing her students and observing and recording their reading behaviors. While formal assessments are important, it is the informal observations and

record keeping that help a teacher consistently shift her teaching and meet the needs of the child. In regard to my participants, I also value the knowledge and skills he or she brings to the table. I acknowledge I have extensive training in reading and cannot expect every classroom teacher to have the same knowledge I have. Instead, I value where teachers are in their professional learning. Likewise, I value the pedagogy new teachers have from their teaching preparation programs. Pedagogy is an important foundation that helps new teachers build their skill set upon.

Finally, I believe in the power of self-reflection. Self-reflection will be a main component of my research focus because I am asking first-year teachers about their experience, their training, and their perceived self-efficacy. In my National Board experience, I became a reflective practitioner. I realized my self-reflective “ah-has” impacted my teaching more than the feedback I received from my principal’s formal observations. Once I became comfortable with self-reflection, I accepted there is no perfect lesson. Instead, a proficient teacher realizes during the lesson the students may not be “getting” the reading or writing standard taught, and need the content delivered in a different manner. Thus, a proficient teacher prepares, delivers, and consistently observes and adjusts her lesson. Afterwards, a proficient teacher reflects on her lesson to ensure the learning goals were met. The effective teacher uses her reflection to plan the following day’s lesson.

Expect To Find

In the context of the study, I expect to find the individual teacher’s school setting matters. My individual teaching experience leads me to believe there are variables in the context (school setting), which will serve as factors in the participant’s answers. I would also expect a variable of colleague support to impact the teacher’s answers. I would expect a teacher who works with a supportive grade level team may be further in her professional skill set than a teacher who works

with a grade level team who does not collaborate. In addition, I expect to find a teacher who works closely with the Reading Specialist may be more aware and able to articulate her experiences compared to a teacher who rarely interacts with the Reading Specialist.

Also, I expect to find different actions, or personalities, may impact the answers provided by the participants. For example, I anticipate if a teacher is one who seeks help from the Reading Specialist or seeks resources and professional development herself, she might be able to clearly articulate her literacy needs compared to a first-year teacher who consistently teaches lessons from the textbook but does not ask for help. I expect if a teacher is someone who seeks help or is a self-starter, it is possible this teacher is further in her literacy knowledge and has a higher self-efficacy. As a result, the actions of the teacher may impact my findings in the study.

I expect to find individual teacher's access to objects, or teaching materials, may impact my findings as well. In some school districts, a teacher is expected to use the mandated district materials in a particular scope and sequence. In other districts, the classroom teachers are encouraged to use the reading series as one of many tools but are not required to use the reading series from cover to cover, or follow the strict scope and sequence. In these schools, teachers have access to a book room full of leveled readers and read alouds. I expect to find the later schools may have more collaboration between proficient and novice teachers to create meaningful lesson plans that differ from the prescribed reading series lesson plans. Even though the teacher may not be confident in executing this planning themselves, but the teacher may have been part of the planning process with her grade level using various teaching materials in their building.

I also expect to find variation in the actors (the teachers, the teacher's mentor, and the Reading Specialist) of the study. As described above, I expect to find teachers' actions, such as

the willingness to seek resources, will impact the teachers. In addition, I expect the teachers' additional commitments to be factors as well. For example, during my first years of teaching, it was normal for me to stay at school late into the evening preparing lesson plans. At the time, I was not married and did not have children. I chose to commit my evenings to lesson planning and grading papers. If some of my teacher participants are able to commit long hours to lesson planning, this may impact the instructional delivery. On the contrary, if the teacher has family needs, tutors or works a second job, or is attending graduate school, I expect these commitments could impact the number of hours the teacher can allot to her profession.

Willing To Discover

I am willing to discover each of my participants may have a different teaching experience. I understand a teacher's experience is contingent on many variables and the individual. Further, I am willing to discover the tentative theory I create may not be generalized to other teachers. I understand parts of my study may be useful, but due to the highly contextual field of teaching, I am willing to discover all results may not be generalized to a different teaching context.

In addition, I am willing to discover there are deficits in our teachers' knowledge and skills of teaching reading. As an instructional leader, it may be difficult to discover our teachers are struggling to teach Reading. However, I believe the specific data gleaned from this study will be helpful in gaining a better sense of what a sample of teachers' experience implementing Balanced Literacy in their classrooms.

Likewise, I am willing to discover college teacher preparation programs, student teaching opportunities, and professional development offered by the school district may not be helping our teachers implement strategies in their own classroom. Even if comments become personal

such as William and Mary graduates reveal they were not prepared for the classroom, I am willing to discover this reflection and use it to inform professional development decisions for the future.

I am also willing to discover the Reading Specialist was not available to help the teacher. As a Reading Specialist, I will admit this will be difficult to hear. There is a great student and teacher need in school buildings for Reading Specialists. In this position, it is difficult to prioritize the demands; the reality is you cannot help every student and every teacher in your building. When it is articulated that the teacher did not receive support from the Reading Specialist, I will need to remain neutral rather than defensive. Also, I should keep in mind this is relevant data to pose to my principal and school district administration that might help us as a district prioritize the demands of the Reading Specialist.

In summary, I am anticipating I may be confronted with findings personal to my job as Reading Specialist. I need to remember not to take these personally, but to remember the more neutral and open I am to discover the different reflections, the more potential my study has for informing decision makers and initiating change in the future.

Not Willing To Discover

I am also not willing to discover a teacher who blames the students or parents for her deficits in reading instruction. There are some realities when working with students, and parents that make it challenging to work with both. However, I believe as a professionals, we have an obligation to serve our clients, the students. It is our responsibility to take the students as they come in the door, with strengths and weaknesses, and help them move forward. Blaming students or parents for your professional skill set, or lack thereof, is not the answer.

Realistic Outcomes

I believe one group who would benefit from learning the results of my study is Reading Specialists. Reading Specialists could use the information gained in this study to provide professional development that the teachers articulate is helpful. One of the challenges I described above about the job of a Reading Specialist is the great need, both for student remediation, and for working with teachers. I would be collecting the essential data to help the Reading Specialist understand which professional developments teachers view as the most impact on their teaching. Hopefully, the findings of this research study could help the Reading Specialists become more efficient and effective in serving the needs of teachers.

Another likely group who would benefit from the findings of this study include administration, both principals and instructional specialist at the district level. If these results were presented to the administration, then perhaps decisions about training and support at the district level could also be adjusted to assist new teachers. The adjustments to the training calendar could begin as early as August during new teacher orientation. Then, the administration could determine, based on the needs of the school, how each elementary school and the Reading Specialist, could provide follow-up professional development sessions for teachers. In my experience, data drives decision making at the administrative level. The data collected during this research study could provide the basis for making decisions about how to better support our teachers at the district level.

As I think about the possible audiences who would benefit from the findings of my study, I am eager and excited about preparing my research study.

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