

2020

Embedding a Teacher Evaluation System Into a Middle School

Valynda Mae Andrews
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Education

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Valynda Andrews

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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the review committee have been made.

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Walden University
2020

Abstract

Embedding a Teacher Evaluation System Into a Middle School

by

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MS, Walden University, 2011

BA, Central Washington University, 1999

Doctoral Study Submitted in Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

August 2020

Abstract

Educators at one middle school were continually failing to meet the reading and writing activities requirements written into its school improvement plans. Despite added district-provided collaboration time and the state's 4-tier evaluation system, social studies, science and literacy grade-level teachers struggled to create a rigorous community-wide literacy program. No systematic investigation has been conducted to understand why these middle school teachers struggled to incorporate literacy learning into their learning environments. This qualitative instrumental case study examined how middle school educators use their state's mandated Teacher Principal Evaluation Program, which includes an Eight-Criterion Rubric and University of Washington's Center for Educational Leadership's 5 Dimensions of Quality Teaching and Learning Instructional Framework, to create a rigorous schoolwide literacy program. This 4-tier two-component evaluation program is the conceptual framework of this case study. A constant comparison inductive analysis approach analyzed both oral and written data collected in a 4-month period at the research site. Six themes emerged during data analysis phase that helped identify barriers middle school educators face attempting to integrate and use higher-level literacy learning instructional practices. This case study illustrates a need for ongoing and specific professional development, additional time, and greater accountability for educators to make systematic changes needed to establish a rigorous schoolwide literacy program. The case study's findings help create social change by highlighting the specific needs and training secondary educators require to ensure students are ready for college and career advancement in the 21st century.

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to my students past, present, and future. Good teachers must be willing to learn and grow just like their students. I hope my educational journey allows you to live the life you deserve. Hard work, determination, and the perseverance are just a few of the characteristics I want to instill in each of you. I hope and pray every day that I provide the skills and knowledge each of you need to become a successful and productive citizen of this nation. Like Gandhi said, “Be the change you want to see in the world.” Namaste.

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To my family, thank you for your unconditional love and support. Mom and Dad, thanks for keeping Antja at your house anytime I needed to write and for the unlimited supply of printer ink and paper. You both play such an important role in my life and no words could ever describe how grateful I am to call you my parents. You are the reason I am a teacher.

My special little lady, Antja, you bring such joy and love to my life. Thank you for allowing me to accomplish my dreams and understood the many sacrifices it took us to get here. Your smile, kisses, hugs, and cheerleading kept me going; you are the reason I never gave up! I pray I have shown you the importance of following your dreams and never underestimating your inner strength. You hold all the power within you; you just have to learn to breath, trust in God, and understand that every challenge you overcome makes you stronger. I am so proud to be your mom.

A special acknowledgement to my girlfriends Abby and Melissa; thank you for the many running therapy sessions. You kept me sane during this crazy ride. Thank you, April, Brandy, and Jeanne, for editing my work at a minute's notice. Kristi, although you were far away, your love and support was always here. I could not ask for better girlfriends.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

In 2012, Washington state's legislature transformed its K-12 public schools' teacher evaluation system from a two-tier process to a 4-tier system to qualify for a federal grant, Race to the Top (2011), which aimed ensure public educators, across the United States, prepared students to enter the 21st century global workforce. Washington's Teacher and Principal Evaluation Program (TPEP) was designed to ensure teachers transitioned their instructional practices and beliefs to include the higher-level literacy skills demanded in today's global and technical economy. Washington's Office of Superintendent (OSPI) provided every district with TPEP's Eight-Criterion Rubric (Eight-CR) then allowed each district's leadership team to pick, from 3 choices, an instructional framework to evaluate its teaching staff. The research site's district leadership team selected University of Washington's (2012) Center for Educational Leadership's (CEL) 5-D Instructional Framework (5D) help guide its schools' in creating a rigorous literacy environment for all students mandated by the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) established in 2009 (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction [OSPI], 2015).

Washington's TPEP system aimed to establish rigorous and student-centered learning environment schoolwide by requiring teachers to create both professional and student growth. Educators are expected to collect, analyze, and use both formative and summative student-generated data to prove they accomplished their yearly professional and student growth goals. Yearly, teachers' TPEP scores and rates how effectively they

collaboratively worked with other grade-level and/or content department teachers to accomplish specific activities embedded into the district's or school's school improvement plan (SIP) goals (OSPI, 2015). In 2012–13, the research site's district leadership team adopted a late start Wednesday schedule to provide weekly collaboration time for educators, district-wide, to accomplish the rigorous grade-level, content-specific activities included school's SIP reading and writing goals (██████, ██████ & ██████, 2013).

Starting in 2013, the research site's SIP mission was to establish a rigorous literacy-based learning culture at the middle school. Now, sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade social studies, science, and literacy teachers have certain higher-level reading and writing responsibilities built into their teaching roles, which includes assigning content-specific, open-ended writing activities, 4 times a year, to assess and measure students' ability to understand grade-specific content knowledge. Science, literacy, and social studies departments were transformed into Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and expected use the district-provided collaborative time to plan, monitor and adjust grade-level or department's instructional practices and learning activities to accomplished SIPs reading and writing goals.

One of the goals the research site's leadership team had for established weekly collaboration time was to encourage PLCs to regularly and use collected formative student-generated data school-wide to measure students' academic growth, at least 4 times a year. Then, collaboratively teachers use the collected student-generated data to adjust individual teacher's, grade-level's, and department's literacy instructional practices

to better align with the CCSS benchmarks. A schoolwide summary-writing rubric was created to aid teachers' ability to assess students' content-specific literacy progress in each grade-level classroom, while creating some school-wide literacy language and expectations.

By the of the 2015–16 school year, once again, the middle school's science, social studies, and literacy department heads acknowledged little to none of the rigorous reading and writing activities were completed by grade-level teachers. nor were the majority of the reading and writing SIP goals accomplished, despite the added collaboration time and adoption of Washington's TPEP 4-tier, two-component evaluation program 3 years ago (██████ & ██████, 2015; ██████ & ██████, 2016).

In April 2015, the middle school's principal released feedback from a schoolwide collaboration survey to help pinpoint why the teaching staff continually struggled to fulfill the SIP's reading and writing goals (██████, personal communication, May 23, 2015). ██████'s (2015) collaboration survey identified a clear lack of commitment from the science, social studies, and literacy PLCs to establish common literacy language and expectations (██████, ██████, ██████, ██████, & ██████, 2015). Fall 2015, the research site's new principal and the middle school's building management team (BLT), which includes the school's department heads, reviewed each content department's 2014–15 PLC minutes and acknowledged, even with weekly collaboration time, the literacy, science, and social studies teachers struggle to scaffold higher-literacy schoolwide because the school's learning culture included little to no common literacy

language or expectations (██████████, personal communication, September 12, 2015; ██████████ et al., 2015; ██████████, ██████████, ██████████, ██████████, & ██████████, 2016).

This qualitative instrumental case study examined why one Washington middle school's teaching staff persistently struggled to complete grade-level and content-specific reading and writing activities embedded into the research site's SIP goals, despite the district implementation of TPEP's Eight-CR and CEL's 5D. TPEP's 4-tier rating system labels the research site's educators from unsatisfactory, basic, proficient to distinguished using 38 well-defined indicators of quality teaching and leading (██████████ & ██████████, 2015; ██████████ & ██████████, 2016). The school's principal and sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teacher volunteers from the literacy, science, and social studies departments were interviewed to discover the barriers grade levels, content departments, and the entire middle school staff experience trying to incorporate TPEP's Eight-CR and CEL's 5D into individual classroom, grade-levels, science, social studies, and literacy departments, and schoolwide.

In this case study, I explored how Eight-CR and 5D influenced sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade science, social studies, and literacy teachers' ability to carry out grade-specific reading and writing activities written into their SIP goals. Interviewing the research site's principal revealed how one middle school principal influenced individual teachers', grade levels', and content departments' capabilities to shift instructional practices to meet the 21st century literacy demands and promote effective teacher collaboration needed to create the rigorous schoolwide literacy program outlined in the research site's SIP. The outcome of this study brings some awareness to the barriers

science, social studies, and literacy teachers experience trying to embed Eight-CR and 5D language and expectations into the school's learning culture.

Background

In 2009, the United States Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, wanted a coherent national educational system to develop more effective teachers, in every state, that adopted instructional practice and beliefs that catered to the learning needs for 21st century students. Educational reformers wanted to create a nationwide evaluation system that uniformly measured teachers' ability to positively influence students' academic performance. In 2011, Congress passed the Race to the Top Act (RTTP) with the goal to establish teacher evaluation programs clearly outlining the specific qualities, actions, student outcomes, and job performance for every educator in the United States. Duncan and the president's administration hoped RTTP grants would ensure every student, attending public school, would gain the higher-level literacy skills needed for the 21st century global workforce (Herlihy, Karger, Pollard, Hill, Kraft, Williams, & Howard, 2014).

Under pressure from federal education reforms, including the CCSS and RTTP (2011), and fueled by monetary incentives, many state legislatures created new researched-based teacher-evaluation systems that included the use of student achievement data to rate teachers' yearly instructional performance. Young, Range, Hvidston, and Mette (2015) stated new teacher evaluations served two purposes:

- (1) an accountability purpose in determining how well teachers are meeting expectations, also called the summative purpose, and
- (2) a professional growth

purpose by which data is collected about teachers' performance including strengths and weaknesses, also called the formative purpose. (Young et. al., 2015, pp. 159)

Doherty and Jacobs (2013) and Herlihy et al. (2014) investigated the validity and reliability of new teacher-evaluation programs implemented across the United States and found 17 state programs demanded all grade-level and content-area educators to use multiple sources of data to measure students' yearly academic growth. Nationally, states' new teacher-evaluation programs required teachers to employ research-based best practices to increase students' overall academic performance and mandated teachers create growth goals (Doherty & Jacobs, 2013; Herlihy et al., 2014). Many times, new teacher-evaluation programs aimed to fix the problems found in traditional models, which did little to differentiate between low- and high-performing teachers and lacked observer reliability between district and school administrators who conducted teacher evaluations (Young et al., 2015).

In 2010, Washington's legislature passed Senate Bill 6696, transforming the state's teacher and principal evaluation system from a two-tier system (satisfactory or unsatisfactory) to a 4-tier scored evaluation system. Washington's OSPI adopted TPEP and provided districts with 3 instructional frameworks aimed at constructing rigorous learning environments business leaders demand from 21st century workers. The first component of Washington's TPEP 4-tier evaluation system was creating Eight-CR, which rates all educators' performance levels from (a) unsatisfactory, (b) basic, (c) proficient to (d) distinguished. The skills found in this Eight-CR include:

Centering instruction on high expectations for student achievement, demonstrating effective teaching practices, recognizing individual student learning needs and developing strategies to address those needs, using multiple student data elements to modify instruction and improve student learning, and exhibiting collaborative and collegial practices focused on improving instructional practice and student learning. (WAC 392-191A-060, 2010, para.1)

The second component of Washington's TPEP process is the instructional framework. In 2012, Washington's superintendent of public instruction allowed school districts to choose an instructional framework to provide the descriptors of performance for each of TPEP's eight criteria from 3 different models: (a) Danielson's (2011) framework for teaching, (b) Marzano's (2011) teacher evaluation model, and (c) University of Washington's (2012) CEL's 5D of teaching and leading (OSPI, 2015). All 3 models outlined various indicators of what quality teaching and learning looked like in any classroom setting. OSPI's goal of creating TPEP was to provide Washington's educators common language, expectations, and teaching practices the CCSS demand and the SBA measures (OSPI, 2015).

Starting in 2012, Washington teachers are required to show observable moments and provide evidence to prove how effectively they adopted Eight-CR and 5D into their classroom and collaborative routines. With the adoption of TPEP, Washington educators must create two rigorous and student-centered growth goals, one whole class and one targeted group. Also, teachers must formulate one professional growth goal to prove they can effectively collaborate with grade-level or department peers, various district and

school staff members, or the local community to build the rigorous student-centered learning culture outlined in the district or school SIP. Finally, TPEP requires educators to regularly collect and analyze formative and summative student-generated data and use as evidence to prove how their professional and student growth goals builds and/or maintains the rigorous student-centered classroom environment outlined in Eight-CR and 5D (OSPI, 2015).

The Center of Strengthening the Teaching Profession (Fowler, 2014) surveyed 1,040 Washington teachers who were evaluated by TPEP to investigate how Eight-CR and the district-adopted instructional framework directly impacting student learning and achievement on high-stakes tests. Of the teachers surveyed, 68% agreed the most effective way to increase students' academic growth was to have common language, expectations, and activities built into entire school day. The results found 58% of surveyed teachers struggled to implement Eight-CR and their district-adopted instructional framework into their learning environments. It also exposed that educators, statewide, continually struggled to better prepare students for SBA tests, despite being one of the reasons Washington's legislature created TPEP (Fowler, 2014).

Washington's OSPI released a report showing 61% of the surveyed teachers were still unsure if their instructional practices and expectations incorporated the CCSS (Harmon, Becker & Miller, 2014). Only 32% of Washington teachers and 40% of principals who participated in the Harmon et al. (2014) study thought their district's leadership team provided relevant professional development for the teaching staff. The report also stated three-fifths of Washington's superintendents and principals

acknowledged more professional development was needed inside their district to create the cultural shifts the CCSS demanded from public schools.

Edwards-Groves and Hardy (2013) stressed the importance of secondary schools creating a collaborative and collective learning environment encouraging students to read, write, think, and communicate at a deeper level in all subjects. They confirmed it was the responsibility of a school's teaching staff to identify the higher-level literacy skills taught at every grade level. Marzano and Heflebower (2011) recommended content that teachers work collaboratively to scaffold higher-level literacy skills into their instructional practices to better prepare students for the 21st century workforce by establishing common literacy language, expectations, practices, and assessments aimed at increasing students' capability for learning.

To address the lack of specific and direct professional development that secondary teachers need to create rigorous schoolwide literacy programs identified in recent empirical studies (Chen, 2017; Gilles, Wang, Smith, & Johnson, 2013; Howard, 2016; Lenski & Thieman, 2013; Moje, 2015; Neugebauer, 2017), I used a qualitative instrumental case study approach examined how educators from one Washington middle school used Eight-CR and 5D to their reading and writing SIP activities and goals (Carbone & Reynolds, 2013). Within this study, I uncovered some barriers that middle school literacy, science, and social studies teachers experience trying to Eight-CR, 5D, and SIP into sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade learning environments. The study also provided some awareness to how individual, grade-level, and content-department work collaboratively to implement the rigorous schoolwide literacy community the CCSS

demands. These insights can be used to create specific professional development that secondary science, social studies, and literacy teachers need to work collaboratively with their PLC to fulfill their school's reading and writing SIP goals.

Problem Statement

The problem addressed in this qualitative instrumental case study was that research site's administrative team had plans to create a rigorous community-wide literacy program, but there has been no systematic investigation into why teachers were not meeting the reading and writing goals outlined in the middle school's SIP. Starting in 2012–13 school year, the school district adopted a late-start Wednesday schedule to provide collaboration time for educators with the goal of building a more rigorous learning community, as was outlined in Washington's TPEP system (██████████ et al., 2013). To accomplish this goal, the middle school's teaching staff developed SIP activities requiring teachers to incorporate more content-specific literacy instructions. Sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade science, social studies, and literacy teachers needed to create disciplinary specific reading and writing assignments demanding students to read, write, and communicate at a higher-level. Then, PLCs would work together to create grade-level, content-specific open-ended assessments to measure and track students' academic growth 4 times a year. Finally, PLCs would use the quarterly literacy-based assessment results to adjust individual teacher's and the entire department's instructional practices to scaffold higher-level literacy skills between the middle school's 3 grade levels (██████████ & ██████████, 2016; ██████████ et al., 2016).

These SIP activities were designed to not only establish the rigorous literacy community the CCSS demand at the middle school, but also help increasing students' academic achievement in their core classes, increase the number of students scoring Level 3 or higher on Washington's high-stakes SBA test, and ensure more high school graduates possess the higher-level literacy skills needed to be college and career ready in the 21st century. Both the district's (██████████, ██████████, & ██████████, 2016) and research site's (██████████ & ██████████, 2015; ██████████ & ██████████ et al., 2016) SIPs included growth goals for the entire research site: an increase in the percentage of middle school students passing their core classes and meeting standards on the middle school's high-stake tests, MAP, STAR, and SBA.

In April 2015, the research site principal released feedback from a schoolwide collaboration survey (██████████, 2015) identifying 70% of the middle school's teaching staff still were not using open-ended, student-centered assessments to assess students' yearly academic growth, despite it being written into the middle school's SIP for the past 3 years. ██████████'s (2015) collaboration survey indicated science, social studies, and literacy teaching teams did not scaffolding content knowledge or higher-level literacy skills between sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. Nor were content-specific PLCs using Wednesday mornings to create an action plan designed to fulfilled middle school's SIP goals. The survey exposed that the majority of teachers in the literacy, science, and social studies departments did not know the learning targets, instructional practices, learning resources, assessments, and grading rubrics their peers used in their grade-level subject-specific classrooms. The survey also found fewer than 10 teachers were collected

student-generated data weekly, and 65% of the teachers only used state or district-mandated high-stakes test (MAP, STAR, or SBA) results to measure students' yearly academic progress (██████, 2015). ██████'s (2015) findings illustrated the need to conduct this qualitative instrumental case study and investigate the specific barriers this middle school's staff experience trying to accomplish the reading and writing activities and goals outlined in its SIP. The findings identified the professional development middle school teaching staff needs to overcome the barriers hindering their ability to create a rigorous schoolwide literacy learning community.

Fall of 2016, the research site's new principal and BLT reviewed 2014–15 (██████ et al., 2015) and 2015–16 (██████ et al., 2016) PLC minutes compiled from the literacy, science, and social studies departments and found none had established literacy-based, grade-level learning targets demanding sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students to practice the higher-level literacy skills outlined in the CCSS for each department. The majority of science, social studies, and literacy teachers continued to use textbook published worksheets and tests that do not ask probing questions nor make students solve personal hypotheses. Many teachers still were using multiple choice, true/false, and fill-in-the-blank questions to assess students' understanding of the grade-level content knowledge gained from district-adopted textbooks and curriculum. Many teachers were not requiring students to write multiparagraph, open-ended assessments to build the higher-level literacy skills needed in postsecondary education. None of the science, social studies, or literacy PLCs minutes reviewed by the principal and BLT included discussions about the collection and usage of student-generated data (██████ et al., 2015;

██████ et al., 2016). Teachers in each department were not discussing how to adjust instructional practices, by grade level, to incorporate the higher-level learning expectations and activities written into the district's and research site's SIPs, Eight-CR, and 5D (██████ et al., 2016; OSPI, 2015; ██████ et al., 2016).

The 2014–15 and 2015–16 BLT minutes (██████, ████████████████████, ████████, & ████████, 2015; ████████, ████████████████████, ████████, & ████████, 2016) revealed that the social studies, literacy, and science department heads had stated their departments needed outside help to create an operational PLC to better support students' literacy learning for their particular subject matter. The literacy department head was concerned with the lack of responsibility social studies and science department teachers had in teaching nonfiction reading and writing to sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students. The science department head realized his department had literacy responsibilities but conveyed a concern about science teachers' ability to incorporate literacy skills into grade-level curriculums due to lack of time and knowledge of content-specific literacy instruction (██████ et al., 2015; ████████ et al., 2016). By the end of the 2015–16 school year, neither the middle school nor the district leadership team had provided the specific professional development the literacy, science, and social studies department heads requested (██████ & ████████████████████, 2016; ████████ et al., 2016).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this qualitative instrumental case study was to examine how educators from the research site used Washington's mandated TPEP 4-tier evaluation system to implement the rigorous schoolwide literacy program outlined in its SIP

(Carbone & Reynolds, 2013). For the past 4 years, the teaching staff of this Washington middle school has been provided collaboration time on Wednesday mornings for content-specific PLCs to embed the higher-level literacy skills demanded by the CCSS into each department's grade-level curriculums (██████ et al., 2015; ██████ et al., 2016). Both district and research site leadership teams expected science, social studies, and literacy PLCs to align instructional materials, practices, and assessments with the CCSS, then adjust instructional practices using student-generated data to better meet the learning needs of the middle school's diverse student population. None of the 3 departments had yet to fully accomplish any of the SIP reading and writing activities or goals, despite being provided weekly collaboration time for the past 4 years (██████ & ██████, 2015; ██████ & ██████, 2016).

Even with the implementation of Eight-CR, adoption of 5D, and added weekly collaboration time, this middle school had not met the NCLB adequate yearly progress standards in reading and writing for over a decade. In spring 2015, students from this middle school took the SBA for reading, and 2 of the 3 grade levels scored considerably lower than Washington's average (OSPI, 2015). In this study, I sought to explore how Washington's new teacher evaluation system influenced the integration of higher-level literacy skills into the science, social studies, and literacy departments' curriculums and PLC meeting times. My findings may provide some insight for how Washington's new teacher-evaluation system has transitioned middle school teachers' instructional practices, values, and beliefs to better prepare students for postsecondary education and the 21st century global workforce. This qualitative instrumental case study provides some

detailed and in-depth attitudes and beliefs some educators from the research site have about Eight-CR and 5D. The findings pinpoint some barriers stopping a secondary teaching staff from creating the rigorous schoolwide literacy program embedded in the school's SIP (OSPI, 2015).

In 2015, Washington's OSPI released a report stating many district superintendents, principals, and teachers still lacked knowledge on how to integrate higher-level literacy instructional practices into their learning environments. Mendoza, Harman, Anderson, and Becker (2015) reported that the lack of professional development was a concern when developing grade-level or content-specific PLCs that created and analyzed rigorous classroom-based assessments, which was the one of the reasons Washington's Congress created TPEP (Mendoza et al., 2015). Researchers have conducted empirical studies and identified a gap in practice on the specific knowledge, beliefs, and values content-specific that educators must adopt to create a rigorous community-wide literacy program inside a secondary school setting (Ippolito, Dobbs, Charner-Laird, & Lawrence, 2016; Lenski & Thieman, 2013; Monte-Sano, De La Paz, Felton, Piantedosi, Yee, & Carey, 2017; Reidel & Draper, 2011; Young et al., 2015). The outcome of this case study offers some awareness to the professional development middle school teachers need to successfully integrate Eight-CR and 5D into their learning community and fulfill the schoolwide literacy activities outlined in the school's SIP goals.

Research Questions

To examine how Washington's TPEP influenced middle school educators' abilities to create a rigorous schoolwide literacy program, this qualitative instrumental case study focused on one central question: Why are the middle school teachers, at the research site, still not meeting the SIP goals despite the use of Eight-CR, adoption 5D, and added collaboration time?

To further investigate the research problem and support the central question, I formed 3 procedural subquestions were formed: How are collaborative teams, at one middle school, using Washington's TPEP Eight-CR and CEL's 5D to scaffold literacy skills between departments and grade levels to establish the rigorous literacy expectations and language outlined in the school's SIP? How are specific departments and grade-level teams, at the research site, integrating CEL's 38 indicators of quality teaching and leading into their learning targets, instructional practices, learning activities, and common assessments to accomplish the reading and writing goals outlined in the school's SIP? What barriers do middle school teachers experience trying to regularly collect, analyze, and use student-generated data in PLCs and other collaborative groups to produce a more student-centered and goal/task-oriented curriculum for each grade level and entire middle school?

Conceptual Framework for the Study

Marzano and Arredondo (1986) conducted research on how to restructure schools to promote scaffolding of higher-level thinking skills between different grades and departments. Arredondo and Marzano's (1986) work shifted teachers' educational beliefs

and practices to embed more student-centered learning, which included creating, using, and monitoring of student growth goals. Marzano and Heflebower (2011) discussed how traditional grades do not measure students' knowledge or abilities to reach rigorous academic goals. Content teachers must work collaboratively with their peers to scaffold higher-level literacy knowledge into their instructional practices, test students using open-ended assessments to measure how well each student gained the content knowledge and higher-level literacy skills targeted in unit of study, then using student-generated assessment adjust instructional practices and establish the next unit's learning targets. Today, teachers who use open-ended assessments to measure students' ability to think, read, write, and communicate at a higher level to better prepare students for postsecondary education and future careers compared to teachers who still use traditional testing methods (Arredondo & Marzano, 1986; Marzano & Arredondo, 1986; Marzano & Heflebower, 2011).

Washington's OSPI mission for implementing TPEP into its K–12 public school system was to construct a professional growth evaluation model that transitioned teachers' instructional practices and classroom environments to better prepare students for the 21st century workforce. Eight-CR rates teachers' ability to establish a student-centered classroom focused around eight pedagogy traits: (a) purpose, (b) student engagement, (c) curriculum and pedagogy, (d) assessment for student learning, (e) classroom environment and culture, and (f) professional collaboration and communication, (g) centering instruction on high expectations for student achievement, and (h) demonstrating effective teaching practices. Washington's superintendent of

public instruction believed the new evaluation program should include clear standards for instructional practices driven by students' diverse learning needs (OSPI, 2015). In 2012, CEL created 5D with the goal to develop an instructional framework focused on the core elements of high-quality teaching: (a) purpose, (b) student engagement, (c) curriculum and pedagogy, (d) assessment for student learning, and (e) classroom environment (University of Washington, 2012). CEL produced 38 indicators of quality teaching and leading that OSPI's leadership team integrated into Eight-CR, which established clear instructional standards driven by students' diverse learning needs (OSPI, 2015; University of Washington, 2012). In 2012, the research site's district leadership team adopted 5D as the district's TPEP's Eight-CR instructional framework.

Brown-Sims, Clayton, Chen, and Brandt (2013) found Washington school districts having a student population of 2,000 students or less adopted 5D as their instructional framework. These smaller school districts believed CEL's 38 indicators worked best for their student population, funds provided by state and district, and programs currently offered at both elementary and secondary levels. Brown-Sims et al. (2013) found 58% of Washington school districts either adopted 5D or Marzano's Evaluation Model (2012) as their TPEP instructional framework (Brown-Sims et al., 2013).

Washington OSPI developed Eight-CR to encourage reflective feedback and a career continuum for educators. The research site's educators are scored, rated, and labeled by administrators' classroom observations and student-centered evidence based around 5D's 38 indicators. University of Washington's CEL created the 38 indicators, or

subdimensions, of quality teaching and leading to provide teachers, at the research site, specific actions, values, and beliefs they must include inside their subject-specific, grade-level classroom environment. CEL's first dimension, purpose, assesses teachers' learning targets and curriculum's standards, teaching points, and learning targets. Teachers are rated on how effectively they can integrate higher-level, content-specific literacy skills into their instructional practices for students to connect content knowledge to a broader purpose of learning. Student engagement, CEL's second dimension, measures the intellectual work assigned to students, student engagement strategies, and students' ability to take ownership of their learning. Teachers are rated on if and how they demand students to critically think, read, write, and communicate at a deeper, more personal level (OSPI, 2015; UW, 2012).

Curriculum and pedagogy dimensions evaluate teachers' curriculum, teaching approaches, and/or strategies. CEL's third and fourth dimensions assess teachers' capacity set up a rigorous learning environment and how effectively are they scaffolding content knowledge and literacy skills inside their grade-level classroom to ensure students are ready for the rigors of postsecondary education and 21st century careers. CEL's last dimension, collaboration, determines how effectively teachers work with grade level, department, other school or district educators, or community members to increase students' academic performance outlined yearly in the district's and/or school's SIP (OSPI, 2015; UW, 2012). TPEP incorporates Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) because teachers are rated on how well they provide direct, explicit, and guided instructions, while providing multiple learning activities aimed at increasing a

whole group's and targeted students' academic performance every school year (██████████, NW ESD 189, ██████████ & ██████████, 2014; ██████████ et al., 2013; OSPI, 2015; UW, 2012; Vygotsky, 1978).

Both Eight-CR and 5D draw on Vygotsky (1978), Marzano and Arredondo (1986), and Arredondo and Marzano (1986) theories by measuring Washington educators' ability to scaffold content and literacy knowledge between departments and grade levels to ensure more students are better prepared for the literacy the 21st century global economy demands (OSPI, 2015). The research site's principals are expected to ensure teachers' classroom environments, learning activities, and assessments are student-centered and goal/task-oriented. Every teacher is required to provide students with a broader purpose of learning that cultivates students' ability to critically think how grade-level content knowledge affects their family, culture, local community, nation, and world (Arredondo & Marzano, 1986; Marzano, 2012; Marzano & Arredondo, 1986; OSPI, 2015; UW, 2012; Vygotsky, 1978).

Washington's TPEP includes two different types of evaluations: comprehensive and focused. Each teacher, at the research site, is required to do a comprehensive evaluation every 4 years. New teachers or teachers who received an overall score lower than proficient evaluation must be on a comprehensive evaluation program for up to 3 consecutive years. Teachers can also be put on a comprehensive evaluation anytime an evaluating administrator feels they could benefit from a more in-depth evaluation process (██████████ et al., 2014; ██████████ et al., 2013; OSPI, 2015). During the comprehensive evaluation process, teachers work with their supervising administrator to move up the 4-

tier ladder until being labeled either proficient (level 3) or distinguished (level 4) in TPEP's eight categories (██████ et al., 2014; ██████ et al., 2013; Marzano & Arredondo, 1986; OSPI, 2015; ██████ et al., 2016; UW, 2012).

Two meetings, an initial and goal setting, must take place between the supervising principal and teacher with the first 45 days of every school year. Before the initial meeting, administrators must encourage the teaching staff to self-evaluate their current teaching practices, beliefs, and values using TPEP's Eight-CR. The goal of this activity is for teachers to gauge where they currently fall on the 4-tier rating scale, unsatisfactory, basic, proficient, or distinguished, in each of the eight evaluated categories before meeting with their evaluating principal (██████ et al., 2014; ██████ et al., 2013; OSPI, 2015). TPEP's self-evaluation includes pieces of Vygotsky's (1978) ZPD by encouraging teachers to reflect on their capability to deepen students' learning capacity by incorporating higher-level reading, writing, thinking, and communicating so students can articulate their understanding grade-level content knowledge in a deeper, more personal way. Teachers should reflect on the different types of instructional tools, practices, activities, and assessments used to create, implement, and monitor the rigorous, student-centered, and literacy-based classroom environment outlined by federal, state, and local educational standards. The results of the self-evaluation form should be used during teachers initial and goal setting meetings (██████ et al., 2014; ██████ et al., 2013; OSPI, 2015; Vygotsky, 1978).

In the initial meeting, the teacher's self-reflection results, Eight-CR, and 5D should be the main topics of conversation (OSPI, 2015; UW 2012). Building

administrators are expected to have in-depth conversations with each teacher guaranteeing they understand 5D's 38 instructional standards, Eight-CR, and TPEP's 4-tier rating system. Administrators should discuss how the teacher and student language and actions embedded into Eight-CR and 5D will be observed, documented, and rated during two formal classroom observations, which includes the various types of student- and teacher-generated evidence teachers need to produce, track, and submit during the year's evaluation process. By the end of the initial meeting, teachers should understand how they will be rated and labeled from unsatisfactory, basic, proficient, to distinguished by mid-May (██████ et al., 2014; ██████ et al., 2013; UW, 2012).

After completing the initial meeting, but before the goal setting meeting, teachers at the research site are expected to review formative and summative student-generated data with their content department and/or grade level PLCs to help formulate their student and professional growth goals. This data can include spring SBA scores, fall MAP or STAR scores, or content or skill-based pretest results (Estvold et al., 2014; ██████ et al., 2013; OSPI, 2015). 5D enables teachers, from the research site, to have evidence-based conversations with their teaching peers and administrators to craft purposeful goals for that year's student population. Eight-CR's Criterion 3: Recognizing Individual Student Needs, Criterion 6: Using Multiple Student Data to Improve Learning and Criterion 8: Effective Collaboration to Improve Instructional Practices and Student Learning play a significant part in teachers' overall score (██████ et al., 2014; ██████ et al., 2013; OSPI, 2015; ██████ et al., 2016; UW, 2012).

Washington's TPEP process requires teachers to craft student and professional growth goals around Criterion 3, 6, and 8. During the comprehensive evaluation, Washington teachers are required to write 3 goals using Criterion 3: Recognizing Individual Student Needs, Criterion 6: Using Multiple Student Data to Improve Learning and Criterion 8: Effective Collaboration to Improve Instructional Practices and Student. Criterion 3 and 6 must measure either a whole group or a targeted group student yearly growth on a targeted skill or task. Targeted student groups include special education, English language learners, highly capable, lower performance students, or any other group of students a teacher wants to track within a school year. Criterion 8 demands teachers to summarize how they will collaborate with other educators or community members, like parents, to increase students' academic performance within the school year. The outcome and success of each of the 3 goals help determine how teachers are rated and labeled on Washington's TPEP's 4-tier system for the next 3 years (██████ et al., 2014; ██████ et al., 2013; OSPI, 2015; ██████ et al., 2016; UW, 2012).

TPEP's six-phase goal setting process was designed to foster students' learning of higher-level literacy skills in every classroom environment. TPEP's goal setting process was established to help Washington teachers incorporate awareness, responsibility, goal setting, task engagement, and task completion into their yearly plan of action. Teachers' student and professional growth goals should specifically state how they will independently and collaboratively accomplish some of the activities included in the school's SIP goals for their grade level and/or department. The middle school's reading and writing SIP goals outline a community-wide literacy program by including grade-

level specific literacy activities sixth-, seven-, and eighth-grade teachers should accomplish by the end of each school year. It also outlines the various types of student-generated data and activities grade-level science, social studies, and literacy teachers should assign, assess, and analyze once a quarter. TPEP's six-phase process is similar to Marzano and Arredondo's (1986) concept of learning to learn because teachers have to think about not just what students will learn that year, but how and why they learn it (██████ et al., 2014; ██████ et al., 2013; Marzano & Arredondo, 1986; OSPI, 2015; ██████ et al., 2016; UW, 2012).

The research site's science, literacy, and social studies teachers should create student growth goals aimed at accomplishing one of the reading, writing, or academic activities written into the middle school's SIP goals. Teachers' must present their yearly student-and professional-growth goals, in writing, to the supervising administrator before or after a mandatory 30-minute goal setting meeting. Supervising principal's rate teachers' student and collaboration goals according to the intellectual work, scaffolding of learning, challenge of task, and student engagement included in each goal, which are key elements of implementing a comprehensive community-wide literacy program outlined Vygotsky (1978), Marzano and Arredondo (1986), and Arredondo and Marzano (1986) educational research studies (Arredondo & Marzano, 1986; ██████ et al., 2014; ██████ et al., 2013; Marzano & Arredondo, 1986; UW, 2012; Vygotsky, 1978).

Washington's TPEP requirements mandate teachers have two 60-minute formal classroom observations within every school year. The first formal observation is usually set during the teacher's goal setting meeting. During each comprehensive formal

observation, the evaluating principal documents specific teacher and student observable moments as evidence on how the teacher incorporated some of 5D's 38 indicators into their classroom environments, teaching practices, and student work and assessments. If any of the indicators were not observed by the evaluator within the two scheduled 60-minute classroom observations, teachers must submit evidence or a written statement illustrating how they used that indicator to create a rigorous learning environment for their diverse student population (██████ et al. 2014; ██████ et al., 2013; UW, 2012).

Before each formal evaluation, a 30-minute pre-observation meeting takes place where teachers discuss the purpose and learning targets of the lesson the principal will observe and what specific Eight-CR and 5D observable moments will be targeted during that particular lesson or class period. There should be a discussion on how the administrator will document both teacher and student observable moments within the 60-minute formal classroom observation period using Eight-CR and 5D language and expectations. Supervising administrators are required to schedule a 60-minute post-observation meeting within 7 school days after each formal observation and send any notes of the observation so the teacher can review before the post-observation meeting (██████ et al. 2014; ██████ et al., 2013; UW, 2012).

During the post-observation meeting, the supervising administrator and teacher use Eight-CR to discuss and rate the documented observable moments found within that 60-minute class period. These discussions need to include why the teachers was rated on the TPEP's 4-tier rubric and how they can improve their instructional practices to ensure they will be at least label proficient by the end of the school year. These pre-and post-

observations conversations with the administrator are important for teachers to gain a deeper understanding of how their instructional practices directly impact students' academic progress. The administrator must provide, in writing, the teacher's midyear and final score within 5 school days of concluding a post-observation meeting and an action plan to improve any low scoring Eight-CR criterion. Washington educators should learn how to restructure their learning environment and instructional practices using TPEP, CEL, and SIP language and expectations (██████ et al. 2014; ██████ et al., 2013; UW, 2012).

Vygotsky's (1978) ZPD stated students could deepen their learning capacity if given direct, explicit, and guided instructions along with multiple opportunities of practice. TPEP should be a helpful tool for administrators to gage their teaching staff's ability to accomplish rigorous grade-level and subject-specific reading and writing activities written into the school's SIP goals. Washington's TPEP evaluation process should help administrators, district and building, identify instructional barriers individual, grade-level, department, school, and district educators hindering teachers' capability to accomplish SIP's goals (OSPI, 2015; UW, 2012; Vygotsky, 1978).

Teachers at the research site are expected to create a culture focused around high academic achievement, at the same time teaching content-specific literacy skills students need in postsecondary education (UW, 2012). To be labeled proficient or distinguished, a teacher must clearly establish and communicate rigorous learning targets for each lesson and/or unit. Students must understand there is a broader purpose of learning, which is necessary to become life-long learners. Students must be asked to critically think how the

unit's content knowledge is seen, used, or impacts the world and community, then communicate their findings using grade-level literacy skills outlined in the CCSS. Quality of questioning, substance of student talk, and ratio of student to teacher talk should increase by the end of the school year. Yearly, Washington teachers must demonstrate how they gradually release learning responsibilities to students and provide evidence proving what effective teaching strategies and learning activities allowed students master grade-, content, and disciplinary-specific literacy skills needed to become life-long learners. For a teacher to move beyond being rated as basic on Washington's TPEP rubric, student engagement must be at higher cognitive level than just reading and understanding textbook information and students are monitoring their own academic progress (██████ et al., 2014; OSPI, 2015; ██████t et al., 2016; UW, 2012).

To measure how well teachers work towards their student- and professional-growth goals, a point system, ranging for 5-20 points, is completed during the midyear and final observation periods. TPEP's 4-tier rating system attaches specific points to each of TPEP's Eight-Criteria: unsatisfactory equals 1 point, basic is 2 points, proficient receives 3 points, and distinguished is 4 points. If a teacher receives a 1 for Eight-CR's or 5D's categories and/or subdimensions, an inquiry of performance may take place (██████ et al., 2014; OSPI, 2015; ██████ et al., 2016; UW, 2012).

No later than February 15, the research site's administrators are required to provide the teaching staff their primary TPEP score, detailed reasons for the score, and a plan of how to improve in each of the eight criteria if lower than proficient. Then throughout the rest of the school year, teachers work closely with their administrator and

PLCs to improve their ability to provide a safe, rigorous, goal/task-oriented, and student-centered learning environment. Working collaboratively with their peers and supervising administrator hopefully ensures every teacher will score proficient or distinguished by the end of the school year. By the month of May, the evaluating administrators are required to have completed and combined teachers' two formal 60-minute evaluation scores with results of the teachers' student growth and professional goal and provide teachers at the research site their summative score for that school year. Any teacher who received 8-12 points is rated unsatisfactory will be placed on a plan of improvement and can lose their teaching position. Teachers who receive 15-21 points are labeled basic, 22-28 labels teachers as proficient, and 29-32 points are needed to be labeled distinguished. Teachers keep their final comprehensive score label for 3 years and will only receive focus scores during that period (██████ et al. 2014; ██████ et al., 2013; UW, 2012)

Vygotsky's (1978) and Marzano and Arredondo (1986) provided building blocks for a community-wide literacy program where teachers work collaboratively to scaffold higher-level literacy skills throughout students' entire school day. Washington's TPEP system rates the research site's literacy, science, and social studies teachers on their ability to incorporate content-specific literacy learning for students. Teachers are scored on how their ability to teach students how to read, write, think, and communicate at a deeper and instruct them on how to combine content knowledge and higher-level literacy skills to solve real-world problems. Teachers are rated on their capability set do-able academic goals that not only track how hard students worked, but how they learned the targeted content-knowledge, why was learning it important, and how can that knowledge

improve students' personal lives, community, and world. Vygotsky (1978), Marzano and Arredondo (1986), Arredondo and Marzano (1986), and Marzano and Heflebower (2011) laid the foundation University of Washington's CEL used to develop its Instructional Frameworks to label many Washington public school educators from unsatisfactory to distinguished (Arredondo & Marzano, 1986; ██████ et al., 2014; ██████ et al., 2013; Marzano & Arredondo, 1986; Marzano & Heflebower, 2011; OSPI, 2015; UW, 2012; Vygotsky, 1978).

Nature of Study

A qualitative instrumental case study design method was chosen to give an in-depth awareness to why educators at one Washington middle school's struggle to fulfill the reading and writing activities embedded in its SIP goals. This case study investigated middle school literacy, social studies, and science teachers' ability to create a rigorous student-centered, task/goal-oriented literacy learning environment demanded by the CCSS and assessed SBA and Eight-CR. Using a teacher focus group and one-on-one teacher and administrator interviews, this case study's findings provide a better understanding to how the middle school's SIP, Washington's Eight-CR and CEL's 5D impact sixth-seventh- and eighth-grade teachers, science, social studies, and literacy PLCs, and the teaching staff's ability to fulfill SIP activities and goals. The findings' present some understanding to which 38 indicators of 5D, individual, grade level, and department teachers successfully adopted into their classroom environments and PLC times. It also identified 5D indicators middle school teachers still struggle to understand, adopt, or employ when trying to make students think, read, write, and communicate at the

higher level Eight-CR demands. The qualitative instrumental case study design helped pinpoint some barriers middle school educators experience trying to fulfill the new teaching and learning requirements outlined in Washington's new teacher evaluation program, TPEP, and other state and federal educational requirements (██████████ & ██████████, 2016; ██████████ et al., 2016).

The qualitative instrumental case study's findings can help secondary administrators develop more specific professional development for science, social studies, literacy teachers, by grade level (sixth, seventh, and eighth), specific PLCs, and an entire middle school's teaching staffing. The findings discussed in Chapter 4 presents some insight to how teachers from one Washington middle school scaffold higher-level literacy skills between sixth, seventh and eighth grades for the science, social studies, and literacy departments. It identifies some difficulties specific PLCs and other collaborative groups at the research site experience trying to build the rigorous community-wide literacy program outlined in district and school SIPs. The findings provide some perceptions Washington middle school educators have about how the state's new evaluation system, TPEP, influences their ability to accomplish the rigorous literacy activities outlined the school's SIP goals. Finally, this in-depth study provides some understanding to how Washington TPEP system changed one middle school's literacy culture (OSPI, 2015).

Definitions

The following are a list of terms specific to this instrumental case study:

Common Core State Standards (CCSS): a set of high-quality academic standards that outline the learning goals of what a student should know by the end of each grade level in English language arts/literacy (ELA), literacy, science, and math. These standards were created to ensure all students have the necessary skills to succeed in both college and future careers (CCSS, 2016).

Content-area literacy: a set of unique literacy tools and skills needed to study a particular discipline. and how those tools and skills differ from learning other subjects in school. Students learn to use specific reading and writing skills needed to have a deeper, more personal connect with the subject matter and how those literacy tools and skills differ from learning in other grade-level, subject-specific classrooms (Chavin & Theodore, 2015).

Disciplinary literacy: a set of literacy strategies including building background knowledge specific to the discipline, learning specialized vocabulary, deconstructing complex discipline-specific text, mapping and using visual representations to summarize text, posing discipline-specific questions, and providing evidence to support real life content specific claims that answer real-world problems (Chavin & Theodore, 2015).

Digital literacy: building of higher-level literacy skills that advance students' ability to analyze, evaluate, and create using digital tools. Both cognitive and technical skills are needed to master this type of literacy skill. Students gain 21st century workforce skills by learning how to use technology to gather credible facts and evidence, solve personal hypothesis, and communication their findings an academic way (Manderino & Castek, 2016).

Growth goals (student): a change in student achievement between two points in time used in evaluating the summative performance of a teacher or principal (Washington Legislature, 2013).

Growth goals (teacher): yearly instructional and collaborative goals that embed transparent, sustainable, consistent, flexible results measurements of practice multiple times a year to increase student learning and success (OSPI, 2013)

Higher-level literacy skills: a successful application of critical, local, reflective, metacognitive, and creative thinking skills used to solve different kinds of problems discovered within the world. These skills promote continual and on-going learning within one's lifetime (King, Goodson & Rohani, 2012)

Instructional framework: common language for principals, teachers, and educators use to communicate effective teaching practices, give and receive professional feedback, monitor student growth with a school year by collecting student-generated data, and create an action plan with teaching peers to ensure students' yearly academic growth (OSPI, 2013)

Learning targets: brief statements teachers use to structure, sequence, and plan out what students are expected to learn and/or the skills students will be tested for mastery at the end of a class period, lesson, unit, or school year. Typically used to move students towards larger, longer-term goals, which include trying to better prepare students for the state's yearly standardized tests, increase graduation rates, and creating a college-like culture district- or schoolwide (Greater School Partnership, 2014).

School improvement plans (SIP): goals written by a district or individual school that include specific activities that need to be accomplish with a given year. SIP also outlines specific roles and responsibilities district and/or school staff members have inside the plan. Specific student and teacher evidence measuring if the goals were met within the outlined timeline, along with allocation of funds and time for the professional development needed to accomplish the various activities and goals, are written into the plan (Greater School Partnership, 2014)

Smarter Balance Assessment (SBA): national assessment commonly used to measure K-12 students' achievement in the knowledge and skills outlined in the Common Core State Standards by grade level in reading, writing, and math (Regents, 2015).

Student-generated assessments: data collection tools used by educators to evaluate, measure, and document academic readiness, learning progress, skill acquisition, or educational needs of all students in a classroom, subject matter, grade level, or educational setting (Greater School Partnership, 2014).

Teacher Principal Evaluation Program (TPEP): Washington's educator evaluation system outlining the observable indicators of quality teaching and leading for 21st century educators (OSPI, 2015).

Assumptions

The following assumptions are associated with Eight-CR and 5D used at one middle school:

1. TPEP evaluation system provides a common language and vision of what quality teaching and leading looks like inside any 21st Century learning environment.

2. Washington educators have a basic understanding of Eight-CR and 5D language and expectations outlined in its new teacher evaluation program, TPEP.
3. Research site educators have a basic understanding of how to use Eight-CR and 5D for their particular grade level and content area.
4. The research site's district and building leadership teams are trained to use Eight-CR and 5D accurately when evaluating the various grade-level, content-area teachers within the school.
5. Yearly, middle school teachers create both professional and student growth goals using Eight-CR, 5D, and SIP language and expectations.
6. Every teacher has (or currently) completed one comprehensive evaluation while working at this middle school.
7. The research site's principals established a common set of working principles to evaluate the middle school's teaching staff. District administrators established a common set of working principles to evaluate their teaching staff and principals are consistent when observing and rating teachers district- and schoolwide.

Assumptions related to this Washington district and research site's SIP consist of:

1. Eight-CR expectations and 5D's 38 indicators for quality teaching and leading are used to craft the district's and middle school's SIPs.
2. The goals found in the district SIP plan are embedded into the middle school's SIP. Then, teachers use the school's SIP activities and goals to formulate their yearly TPEP student- and/or professional-growth goals.

3. Both the district's and research sites' SIPs are at the center of all district and building designated collaboration time.

Assumption about district and building directed collaboration time involve the following:

1. The research site's PLC and other collaborative groups' agendas are designed to create an action plan to accomplish district and/or building SIPs goals and enable the teaching staff to embed 5D's 38 indicators into the school's academic culture.

3. Weekly collaboration activities try to accomplish the middle school's SIP activities and goals.

4. Research site educators use Eight-CR and 5D language to scaffold higher-level literacy learning between the school's 3 grade levels, the literacy, social studies, and science PLCs, and entire school.

5. Content teachers, by grade level, collect and use the same student-generated assessments to adjust teachers and PLCs instructional practices.

6. Sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade content teachers have a basic understanding of how Eight-CR and 5D has transitioned their educational responsibilities to incorporate more rigorous, literacy-focused classroom learning targets, activities, and assessments.

7. During PLC times, science, social studies, and literacy teachers have honest conversations about their understanding and usage of Eight-CR and 5D and the group's barriers are documented in their PLCs Wednesday morning meetings' minutes.

Assumptions associated with district and building leadership responsibility in this study are the following:

1. Leadership understands the observable indicators outlined in Washington's TPEP evaluation process for the different grade levels and content areas at the research site.

2. Leadership works together to identify and solve the barriers content-specific PLCs and other collaborative groups experienced attempting to accomplish the rigorous grade- and content-specific reading, writing, and student achievement goals outlined in research site's SIP.

3. District and building leadership are committed to providing on-going professional development opportunities to its teaching staff.

4. Leadership consistently uses Eight-CR, 5D, and SIP language with individual, grade level, and content teachers. Leadership's main goal is to promote a rigorous schoolwide literacy environment by holding educators accountable for accomplishing literacy activities written into the school's SIP during teachers' yearly evaluation process.

Assumptions associated with research methodology:

1. Participants of this study will answer the focus group and/or one-on-one interview questions honestly.

2. I will precisely transcribe all focus group and one-on-one sessions recorded answers without bias.

3. PLC and other collaborative group's minutes used in this study will accurately represent the actions, values, and beliefs of its members.
4. The middle school's SIP goals and activities accurately represent student achievement and growth goals within a given school year.
5. Educators honestly reflect on the reasons why content departments' PLCs and other collaborative groups did not accomplish the middle school's SIP activities and goals during district-provided collaboration time.
6. I housed all the case study's documents on my personal computer, located in my home, which has a set password, so no unwanted access is assumed.

Scope of Study

This qualitative instrumental case study developed an in-depth understanding of how educators from one Washington middle school use Eight-CR and 5D to accomplish rigorous reading and writing activities included in the school's SIP goals. It explored how different collaborative teams implement Eight-CR and 5D during designated collaboration times. It also investigated how science, social studies, and literacy PLCs collaboratively create the rigorous schoolwide literacy programs students need to be college and career ready in the 21st century. The finding of this case study outline some of the barriers educators from the research site experience trying to transition their teaching practices, beliefs, and values to fulfill the educational requirements outlined in Washington's TPEP evaluation system and other local, state, and federal educational reforms of the last decade (Carbone & Reynolds, 2013; Cornelius, 2013; Falk-Ross, 2014; Hubert and Lewis, 2014).

Delimitations

First, this qualitative instrumental case study only included the literacy, science, and social studies departments of the research site because these are the only departments that have literacy requirements outlined in the CCSS and have specific reading and writing activities and goals written into the middle school's SIP. The research site's SIP goals outline specific activities sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade literacy, science, and social studies teachers must accomplish quarterly. The SIP goals also include specific student-generated data teachers must collect and use to adjust individual, grade-level, and entire department's instructional practices and classroom structure (██████ & ██████, 2015; ██████ & ██████, 2016; ██████ et al., 2016).

Two social studies teachers were excluded from participate in this case study due to my teaching role at the research site. I did not investigate how each department's teaching believes or instructional practices effects students' SBA scores or their ability to read, write, or think at a higher level. This qualitative instrumental case study did not focus on the research site's diverse student population or their learning needs. Finally, this case study did not investigate if Eight-CR and 5D increase academically struggling students' ability to become more college and career ready upon graduating from high school (Marzano and Heflebower, 2011).

Limitations

The limitation of this qualitative instrumental case study is it does not address or encompass every educator, who meet the descriptors, found in this middle school. Instead, the case study's results are limited to only the views and beliefs of 5 teachers and

1 administrator because they were the only ones who voluntarily answered 18-open ended questions. There was a limited number of social studies teachers recruited to participate in this case study because of my current eighth-grade social studies teaching position at the research site: one was my mentor and the other my eighth-grade partner teacher. My teaching role might have caused possible teacher participants to not give honest answers or create bias in the study. To mitigate this limitation, I was granted permission not to attend any department, grade level, or staff meetings for the duration of this case study. Not attending meetings where literacy learning, SIP goals or outcomes, or any other case study's variable was discussed allowed me to have no prior knowledge on teachers' current teaching practices, nor influence teachers' literacy beliefs or instructional practices, which would have created bias in this study.

This one Washington middle school does not represent all the middle schools or teacher populations found in the state. Data collected did not uncover all science, literacy, and social studies educators' perceptions of TPEP, instead 5 teachers agreed to participate in 3 afterschool interview sessions. This case study is focused around 5D's 38 indicators of quality teaching and learning created by University of Washington's Center for Educational Leadership, which is 1 of the 3 options Washington's OSPI provided for its school districts in 2010. Results from this qualitative instrumental case study may be transferable to other Washington districts that adopted 5D as their Eight-CR instructional framework or experience similar difficulties with meeting the reading and writing activities and goals outlined in their district's and/or school's SIPs (OSPI, 2015).

Significance

In 2013, Brown-Sims et al. surveyed Washington school districts and found 51.8% of teachers and 55.6% of school directors had some understanding on how to successfully implement Eight-CR and their adopted instructional framework. This case study provides an understanding of how TPEP's 4-tier evaluation process influences educators' ability to collaboratively implement the rigorous community-wide literacy program the CCSS demand (Gilles et al., 2013). This case study aimed to uncover some of the barriers sixth-, seventh-, and eighth- grade teachers experience attempting to embed Washington's 4-tier teacher evaluation system, TPEP, into the various collaborative work done at this middle school.

The goal of performing this qualitative instrumental case study was to provide some understanding of how Eight-CR and 5D aids one middle school staff's ability to accomplish the rigorous reading and writing activities outlined in the school's SIP goals (Ball & Christ, 2012; Carbone & Reynolds, 2013). Accomplishing this study, I produced some awareness of the specific types of professional development district and school leadership teams can provide to their secondary staff to better prepared students for postsecondary education based around the barriers identified in Chapters 4 and 5 (Friedland, Kuttesch, McMillen & Hill, 2017; Lenski & Thieman, 2013; Young et al., 2015). I offer some insight on how a middle school principal, sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers, science, social studies, and literacy PLCs, and other collaborative groups currently use Eight-CR and 5D to make curriculum and assessment decisions that affect the outcome of the district and school SIPs (OSPI, 2015).

Summary

This qualitative instrumental case study explored why one Washington middle school teaching staff continually struggle to accomplish the reading and writing goals outlined in the school's yearly SIP despite the adoption of Eight-CR, 5D, and weekly collaboration time. In 2012, Washington designed TPEP, a 4-tier system, included two components, Eight-CR and 3 instructional frameworks, to provide districts the rigorous language and expectations needed to ensure teachers transform instructional practices, beliefs, and values outlined in the CCSS. In 2012, University of Washington's CEL developed 5D Instructional Framework outlining 38 indicators of quality teaching and leading for 21st century educators. One Washington district adopted 5D to evaluate its educators in the fall of 2012. This middle school, like many others, struggle to embed Eight-CR and the district-adopted instructional framework into its school's culture. The purpose of conducting this qualitative instrumental case study was to offer insight to how one Washington middle school staff uses Eight-CR and 5D to accomplish the rigorous reading and writing activities written yearly inside its SIP goals (██████ et al., 2015; ██████ et al., 2016).

The qualitative instrumental case study explored how educators collaboratively scaffold content and literacy knowledge between sixth, seventh, and eighth grades at one Washington middle school. Using focus groups and one-on-one interviews, this case study uncovered some barriers specific teachers, grade levels, and departments experience trying to embed Eight-CR and 5D into various learning environments and collaborative meetings. It highlighted how TPEP supports teachers and collaborative

groups transition their literacy values and beliefs to better prepare students for postsecondary education and future careers. Chapter 2 provides the literature reviewed to identify gaps secondary educators experience trying to create a schoolwide literacy learning program. It also outlined key components needed for secondary educators to create and maintain a rigorous literacy program and collaboratively scaffold higher-level literacy instructions and skills throughout students' entire school.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

By 2009, over 30 U.S. states had changed their teacher-evaluation instruments, and 20 states adopted or created a new evaluation system altogether. Many did this to meet federal guidelines to receive RTTP money. Teacher-evaluation programs, measuring instruments, and specific regulations varied among states, but they all aimed to improve the quality of education provided to students in public schools. By 2012, 14 states required the use of student-generated data to measure teacher effectiveness. Under President Obama's administration, the Department of Education wanted American high-school graduates to gain the higher-level skills and knowledge that colleges were requiring of their students and that 21st century business leaders sought from their employees. Many of the new teacher-evaluation programs moved to a 4-tier model to label teachers from ineffective to highly effective (Dodson, 2015).

RTTP incentives forced states to go to a value-added model (VAM) for teacher evaluations. This was the first time U.S. public schools used student-generated data to measure academic performance on high-stakes tests to evaluate and assess teachers' classroom performance (Moran, 2017). Some states' new teacher-evaluation programs made 50% of a teacher's yearly evaluation score based on administrative observations and the other 50% on student achievement scores (Dodson, 2015). State legislatures based teachers' tenure, dismissal, and compensation on how well students did on federal- and state-mandated high-stakes tests, which caused thousands of teachers across the country to retire, quit, or be fired. According to Dodson (2015) and Moran (2017), both

administrators and teachers felt overwhelmed with the new evaluation practices, including how to shift district and school cultures to match the rigorous evaluation programs established by the state legislatures.

Brown-Smith et al. (2013) and Mendoza et al. (2015) identified many Washington school districts struggling to fulfill the goals outlined in its RTTP (2011) application. Many district leadership teams realized a rigorous schoolwide literacy-learning culture included effective teacher collaboration. Brown-Smith et al. and Mendoza et al. reported teachers, statewide, struggled to embed literacy skills into to content-area curriculums. Educators from one Washington middle school continually struggled to accomplish the rigorous reading and writing activities written into its SIP goals, despite being provided common instructional language and expectations embedded into Washington's newly adopted TPEP 4-tier evaluation system. Starting in the fall of 2013, research site educators are provided weekly collaboration time by the district. Wednesday mornings, science, social studies, and literacy teachers were expected to work collaboratively with other grade-level and content-area teachers, as well as the administrative team, to fulfill the rigorous reading and writing goals outlined in the middle school's SIP. In this case study, I systemically explored how Washington's TPEP Eight-Criterion and University of Washington's CEL's Instructional Framework influenced teacher teams' and other collaboration groups' abilities to create the community-wide literacy program outlined in the SIP (██████ & ██████n, 2015; OSPI, 2015; ██████ & ██████, 2016).

A 2015 collaboration survey conducted by the research site's principal indicated that literacy, science, and social studies grade-level teachers had yet to create learning

targets scaffolding higher-level literacy skills into any of the sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade content-area curriculums. It also found that 70% of the middle school teachers did not use student-generated data to assess students' ability to read, write, and communicate at a higher level, which was required by CCSS (██████, 2015). Research site teachers struggled to create common learning targets and literacy expectations to embed both content knowledge and higher-level literacy skills in each grade level and department despite weekly PLC time (██████ et al., 2013; ██████, 2015).

Washington's OSPI commissioned studies evaluating how various districts, statewide, had implemented TPEP's Eight-Criterion Instructional Frameworks into their school cultures (Brown-Smith et al., 2013; Harmon & Becker, 2014; Mendoza et al., 2015). The studies revealed that Washington educators were struggling to embed Eight-CR and district-adopted instructional framework into various learning environments. This qualitative instrumental case study provides some awareness to the barriers and facilitates individual teachers, grade levels, and content departments experience trying to transition into the new content-specific literacy roles created by educational reform measures, including CCSS and the RTTP, and assessed yearly by Washington's TPEP 4-tier system and SBA results (OSPI, 2015). Recent empirical research provided different reasons why content teachers must transition their instructional practices to better prepare students for the 21st century workforce (Chen, 2017; Sodiq, 2015; Dostal & Gabriel, 2016; Greenleaf & Brown, 2017). Lawrence and Jefferson (2015) explained that literacy learning was more effectively taught throughout the school day instead of isolated inside literacy classes at secondary levels. Daniels, Hamby, and Chen (2015), Kite and Park (2017), and

Kühn (2017) indicated the need for teachers to create common assessments and use student-generated data to guide instructional practices in departments, grade levels, and school.

In the literature reviewed for this qualitative instrumental case study, I outline the need for educators to work collaboratively to build a community-wide literacy program to better prepare students for postsecondary education (Easton, 2017; Lawrence & Jefferson, 2015; Meyers, Molefe, Brandt, & Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness, 2015; Redmond, 2015; Vanblaere & Devos, 2017). The conceptual framework is based on Washington's state's TPEP 4-tier, two-component evaluation program. Eight-CR and 5D established 38 descriptors of quality teaching and leading at the research site. Vygotsky (1978), Marzano and Arredondo (1986), Arredondo and Marzano (1986), and Marzano and Heflebower (2011) laid the foundation Washington's 4-tier evaluation system, TPEP, by requiring systemic changes in each content area and grade-level classroom to build a rigorous community-wide literacy program.

The literature reviews key variables including different types of literacy learning students must master before graduating from high school, the need for community-wide literacy programs in secondary education, content teachers' new literacy roles, effective teacher collaboration, and responsibilities of district and school leadership teams to establish and maintain a rigorous schoolwide literacy culture. All these variables are included in Washington's TPEP 4-tier, two-component system. Washington educators are evaluated on how effectively they work together to accomplish the rigorous learning activities outlined in their SIP goals (OSPI, 2015; UW, 2012).

Literature Search Strategies

I used Walden University library's databases, ERIC, SAGE Journals, and Educational Source, along with Google Scholar to find the majority of the literature reviewed in this chapter. Washington's OSPI website provided literature and recent studies conducted to assess the effectiveness of Washington's TPEP 4-tier, two component evaluation system. I used the references lists of articles and empirical studies to discover additional information on the same topic. I narrowed literature review searches to fourth grade through college level to focus on secondary content-area teaching policies and reforms. The majority of the literature and research I selected for this qualitative instrumental case study had been conducted and written between 2013 and 2018.

The key search terms I used were *community-wide literacy, literacy and content area teachers, Common Core State Standards and science/social studies teachers, building higher-level literacy skills inside the content classroom, data-driven PLC and collaboration time, leadership skills needed for CCSS, leadership skills in the 21st century, informational text learning, scaffolding literacy skills, and teacher evaluation*. I found little research on professional development preparing secondary science and social studies content teachers for literacy demands created by the CCSS. Many empirical studies indicated the need for content teachers to transition into content-specific literacy teachers because of CCSS and other rigorous educational reforms created in the last decade (Argelagós & Pifarré, 2017; Chen, 2017, Graham-Day, Ressa, Peters, & Konrad, 2014; Cornelius, 2013; Daniels, Hamby, & Chen, 2015; Kite & Park, 2017, Kühn, 2017;

Redmond, 2015; Reed, Petscher, Truckenmiller, 2017; Sargent, Ferrell, Smith, & Scroggins, 2018; Spear-Swerling & Zibulsky, 2014). Educational researchers pointed out a need for more empirical studies on specific skills, beliefs, and values experienced secondary content teachers needed to embed CCSS into their instructional practices. The research emphasized all secondary teachers, not just literacy, had a responsibility to better prepare students for postsecondary education and 21st century workforce. There were gaps, or a lack of answers, for districts with a more experienced teaching staff and those that lacked literacy coaches or limited professional development funds. The majority of disciplinary literacy information focused on training new social studies and science teachers using CCSS, so those skills were applied to the professional development more experienced secondary content-specific teaching staff needed to be provided through professional development opportunities.

Conceptual Framework

Marzano and Arredondo (1986) conducted research on how to restructure schools to promote scaffolding of higher-level thinking skills between different grade levels and content departments. Marzano and Arredondo introduced the concept of learning-to-learn. This six-phase process requires teachers to facilitate learning of higher-level thinking skills in all content areas. Learning to learn was influenced by Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development (ZPD), which encouraged scaffolding of knowledge and skills from one grade level to the next to deepen students' learning capacity. Vygotsky's ZPD theory provided the hypothesis students can develop higher-level thinking skills when provided explicit, direct, and guided instruction along with

multiple opportunities of practice from adults. Using student-generated data, teachers measure how well each student met the learning targets and goals of a lesson or unit to pinpoint any literacy weakness of a whole group or targeted group of students.

Collaboratively, teacher teams gather and analyze student-generated data to monitor targeted literacy skills and scaffold more complex skills between the grade levels of a content department or school. Each of Marzano and Arredondo's (1986) six phases encouraged teachers to gradually release learning responsibilities to students by monitoring the targeted higher-level skills students need to master at each grade level. Restructuring of education introduced by Marzano and Arredondo allowed educators to confront teaching beliefs, values, and assumptions hindering students' ability to succeed in today's workforce. Learning how to collect and analyze student-generated data and developing operational PLCs are the first two steps schools must take to establish student-centered and goal/task-oriented school culture (Marzano & Arredondo, 1986).

Arredondo and Marzano's (1986) educational study helped implement comprehensive community-wide literacy programs to foster critical thinking skills in each content department, grade level, and school. This study found placing selected higher-level thinking skills in a specific curriculum and grade level were essential to a viable schoolwide literacy program. Arredondo and Marzano stated it was up to the school's staff members to decide what skills must be taught in every grade-level and/or content-specific classroom, but once the skills were established, it was every teacher's responsibility to use, monitor, and reteach in the grade level, discipline, and schoolwide until students' mastery was clearly evident. The facilitators and barriers educators from

one Washington middle school experienced attempting to create the community-wide literacy program outlined in its SIP were discovered during the data analysis phase of this instrumental case study. I investigated of how grade level and content-area teachers worked together to scaffold higher-level skill and explored how one middle school's teacher teams systematically tried to accomplish rigorous and content-specific reading and writing activities to fulfill each SIP goal (Arredondo & Marzano, 1986).

Marzano and Heflebower (2011) discussed how traditional assessments did not measure students' knowledge or abilities to reach academic goals. Instead, teachers should create student-generated assessments allowing students to think, read, write, and communicate at a higher-level than traditional tests. Vygotsky (1978) and Marzano and Arredondo (1986) provided the building blocks for a community-wide literacy program. Both studies pointed out how teachers, grade levels, and content departments must work together to scaffold both literacy and content knowledge between the school's various grade levels. In 2012, the research site's leadership team adopted 5D as its instructional framework to label every middle school teacher, during a comprehensive evaluation proves, Unsatisfactory, Basic, Proficient, and Distinguished. Every 4 years, Washington teachers must provide either observable moments or student-generated evidence for each of the 38 indicators embedded into 5D's instructional framework outlined in TPEP's Eight-CR (OSPI, 2015).

Washington's TPEP eight criteria include:

1. Centering instruction on high expectations for student achievement.
2. Demonstrating effective teaching practices.

3. Recognizing individual student learning needs and developing strategies to address those needs.
4. Providing clear and intentional focus on subject matter content and curriculum.
5. Fostering and managing safe, positive learning environment.
6. Using multiple student data elements to modify instruction and improve student learning.
7. Communicating and collaborating with parents and school community.
8. Exhibiting collaborative and collegial practices focused on improving instructional practices and student learning. (UW CEL, 2012, p. 2)

Every teacher at this middle school receives a number score for each of the eight categories on their comprehensive evaluation. These eight scores are combined with the teacher's professional and student growth goal scores to be labeled unsatisfactory, basic, proficient, to distinguished until the next comprehensive evaluation. The research site's educators are mandated to generate yearly a growth goal using TPEP's Eight-CR, whether on a comprehensive or focused evaluation plan.

The district leadership team provide teachers with a rubric to understand what specific actions, assignments, and assessments correlates to TPEP's each of the 4-tiers in its rating system. Teachers must show observable moments or student generated-data to prove how students are thinking, reading, writing, and communicating at a higher-level inside their content-specific grade-level classroom each school year. To get beyond a basic score, teachers' lessons activities and unit assessments must go beyond just

understanding and remembering textbook information and learn to take personal ownership of their academic progress within the school year. TPEP requires students to make deeper, more personal connections to the grade-level curriculum mandated federal, state, and local educational standards. During formal classroom observations, students are encouraged to relate the curriculum to their own lives or use content knowledge to solve local, regional, or world problems. Students learn how to read, write, think, and communicate for that specific discipline by answering open-ended questions using grade-level content knowledge.

Washington's Eight-CR weighs how rigorous teachers' varies learning activities and assessments are for a certain lesson or unit of study. It evaluates teachers' unit or lesson learning targets and success criteria. Eight-CR measures teachers' ability to collect and use formative and summative data to adjust their teaching practices to better meet students' diverse learning, while fulfilling district's and school's SIP goals. Finally, Eight-CR scores how effectively teachers collaborate with their grade-level peers, content department teachers, other school and district staff members, or local community members to promote and maintain the rigorous schoolwide learning community outlined in SIPs (██████████ et al., 2013; OSPI, 2015).

Marzano (2012) examined comprehensive evaluation models districts implemented, nationwide, and found all included student growth goals and collaboration with peers. The goal of Washington's new teacher evaluation system, TPEP, was to develop teachers who can produce highly skilled citizens of this nation. Marzano also noticed new teacher evaluation systems focused on the pedagogical skills students needed

to interact with new knowledge at a deeper level or accomplish more complex tasks. Research site teachers are evaluated, yearly, on their ability to communicate higher learning expectations by providing clear student-growth goals that include different success criteria for a diverse learning population. Then, measure a whole group or target group of students' capacities to meet their academic goals using district- or school-mandated rubrics. Finally, research site teachers must track a whole group's and/or targeted students' progress ability to reach their student-growth goals written within the first two months of each school year.

Literature Review Related to Key Variables and Concepts

Starting in 2012, studies (American Institute for Research, 2012; Brown-Smith et al., 2013; Fowler, 2014; Harmon & Becker, 2014; Mendoza et al., 2015) conducted about Washington's 4-tier, two component evaluation system, TPEP, identified the lack of professional development as a reason districts struggle to embed Eight-CR and district-adopted instructional framework into their schools' cultures. These studies found Washington teachers were unsure how to transition their instructional practices to embed Eight-CR's descriptors of quality teaching and leading into their learning environments. The findings of these studies exposed Washington superintendents and principals were unsure how to incorporate Eight-CR and district-adopted instructional framework into collaboration time. Brown-Smith et al., Fowler, Harmon and Becker, and Mendoza et al. studies found Washington educators understood successful collaboration created rigorous learning communities' students needed but uncertain what specific professional development was required to integrate TPEP's language and expectations into their

district's academic culture. Washington administrators acknowledged they lacked specific educational skills, beliefs, and values included in TPEP and essential in the 21st century global workforce (American Institute for Research, 2012; Brown-Smith et al., 2013; Fowler, 2014; Harmon & Becker, 2014; Mendoza et al., 2015).

Content-Area Literacy

Mitton-Kukner and Orr (2014) stated literacy learning was much more than just being able to read and write. Instead, students needed to learn how to understand, think critically, and engage with content-specific text in a deeper, more personal way. Falk-Ross and Evans (2014) found middle school content teachers should require students to have a considerable amount of reading responsibilities, but many classroom routines lacked content-area literacy instructions and practices. Dostal and Gabriel (2016) described middle and high school content teachers' new literacy requirements as "efforts to infuse, embed, or support literacy in content areas have often alienated secondary content teachers who identify conceptual and practical barriers" (p.29). Charubusp and Chinwonno (2014) concluded the goal of learning inside today's secondary classroom extended beyond students' ability to understand text and produce summaries. Instead, students need to become socially and culturally aware by learning how specific concepts and information fit into their own personal lives, community, and world by being taught how to apply, analyze, and evaluate a variety of facts and evidence using higher-level literacy skills.

Secondary content teachers must rethink literacy learning for their subject matter by asking themselves what are different types of texts students learn from in their

classroom, what is the specific purpose for reading each text, and what is the step-by-step process students master to read and understand the text. Asking these questions ensure students can engage with different types of text encountered throughout their school day. Open-ended questions promote inquiry and discussion, at the same time establishing effective literacy learning goals and targets (Dostal & Gabriel, 2016). Sargent et al. (2018) surveyed 154 secondary teachers and found 84% had a low to average Reading Teaching Outcome Expectancy Assessment (RTOE) score, which implied the majority could not impact students' literacy development in their secondary content-area classroom. Sargent et al. discovered none of the low RTOE scoring secondary teachers took any literacy/reading course as part of their undergraduate teacher preparational course work and all noted a lack of professional development offered by district or middle/high school administration to help develop these skills.

Collins (2014) study pointed out educational reformers were driven by the fear American schools were not producing a technologically literate workforce for the 21st century, so they started to focus on how to build content-area literacy skills in public education. The CCSS and other education policies required secondary teachers to set literacy goals, teach literacy strategies to accomplish set goals, and assess students' ability to reach the targeted literacy goals. Building content-area literacy reading teaches students how to anticipate, monitor, evaluate, reflect, synthesize, and recall information by learning how to compare text to text, text to self, and text to world. Rainey, Maher, Coupland, Franchi, and Moje (2017) and Sharkley (2013) suggested secondary elective, math, science, literacy, and social studies teachers had responsibilities to teach students

how to deeply engage with text and make personal observations using content knowledge. Collins and Rainey et al. found journal writing, conducting experiments, and answering open-ended research questions were successful literacy learning tools in secondary science and social studies classrooms.

Mitton-Kukner and Orr (2014) longitudinal study explored the gap between experienced and novice teachers' abilities to teach and assess literacy learning in different subject matters and why. During interview sessions, Mitton-Kukner and Orr found math, science, and other content preservice teachers discussed the use of literacy strategies as multi-faceted and serving multiple purposes in their classrooms. Preservice teachers felt content-area literacy instructions enabled them to better understand student learning, while making the invisible processes of thinking visible for students. Mitton-Kukner and Orr found younger teachers felt content-area literacy learning allowed students to combine personal values and beliefs with content knowledge, increased students' abilities to think more critically, engage with more challenging content-specific words, and students learned they could improve society by solving real-life problems using grade-level content knowledge.

Mitton-Kukner and Orr (2014), Rainey et al. (2017), and Sargent et al. (2018) studies pointed out many experienced teachers were never taught how to use higher-level questions or other literacy strategies to build a deeper understanding of content knowledge. Experienced teachers required specific and on-going professional development to learn how to incorporate critical thinking and embed higher-level literacy skills into their instructional practices and daily learning activities. Experienced teachers

also must be taught how to develop the metacognitive skills essential to learning challenging content-specific words and text. Mitton-Kukner and Orr, Rainey et al., and Sargent et al. findings identified a lack of time and support district and school administrators provided to experienced teachers to learn how to successfully insert 21 century content-area literacy learning into their sixth- through twelve-grade classrooms.

Digital Literacy

Manderino and Castek (2016) stated digital literacy was “the use of digital tools to consume and produce knowledge” (p. 79). Learning can no longer be isolated to a classroom textbook. Today’s learning is much broader because of the tremendous growth in technology (Jacobs, Castek, Pizzolato, Reder, & Pendell, 2014; Kühn, 2017, Manderino & Castek, 2016). Complex cognitive skills used to gather and process information from the Internet are not instinctively acquired by secondary students, despite their use of the Internet for leisure and school starting at a young age (Argelagós & Pifarré, 2017; Chen, 2017). Now, secondary teachers must design and use more meaningful digital literacy instructions for students to become self-directed learners. Digital literacy includes students being able to locate creditable sources, question biases, evaluate differing points of view, summarize multiple articles to answer personal hypothesis, and communicate researched findings in a cohesive manner (Argelagós & Pifarré, 2017; Castek & Coiro, 2015; Jacobs et al., 2014; Sharp, 2014). Kite and Park (2017) encouraged secondary teachers to create multistep projects where students answer real-world problems to gain digital literacy skills. Collecting and analyzing formative and summative data on a regular basis allows teachers to monitor students’ ability to use

digital literacy skills in each grade level and subject matter (Argelagós & Pifarré, 2017; Kite & Park, 2017, Kühn, 2017).

Chen (2017) asserted students cannot obtain a deeper understanding of content-specific knowledge without personal exploration of online sources. Secondary students need educational choices and freedom to explore the content in a personal way, at the same time building the digital literacy skills. Teachers need to provide direct instructions on how to locate and evaluate online resources, apply content knowledge to online text, use online resources to answer real-world problems. Embedding technology into classroom routines encourages students to understand different points of view by drawing insight not typically seen inside the classroom setting (Argelagós & Pifarré, 2017; Castek & Coiro, 2015; Kite & Park, 2017, Kühn, 2017). Castek and Coiro (2015) stated many content teachers have yet to start building or monitoring students' digital literacy skills because schools have yet to embed the numerous CCSS literacy standards into grade-level and content-specific curriculums.

Chen (2017) and Jacobs et al. (2014) studies found secondary teachers have oversimplified views of online resources and digital literacy skills and still do not understand how digital literacy promotes life-long learning, civic participation, personal empowerment, and creates professional and peer networks. Chen and Sharp (2014) stated educators had a responsibility to promote digital citizenship by instructing students on how to access information in the appropriate way. Secondary content teachers should have honest conversations about the different forms of plagiarism and by why it is important when producing academic and professional intellectual work. To discuss how

students can access and use an abundance of sources with integrity, instructional conversations should go beyond just talking about copy and pasting. Instead, explicit conversations with students, starting at a young age, must include how technology advances deepens students' content knowledge and teaches the higher-level literacy skills required in today's workforce (Chen, 2017; Jacobs et al., 2014; Kite & Park, 2017; Sharp, 2014).

According to Castek and Coiro (2015), Chen (2017), Jacobs et al. (2014), Manderino and Castek (2016) and Sharp (2016), digital literacy instruction needs to be included in secondary teachers' professional growth plans. Content teachers must develop activities, assessments, and rubrics assessing students' digital literacy skills for their discipline, which includes be able to collaborate with a team to create content-specific hypothesis to solve a local or world problem using a wide variety of online sources. Kite and Park (2017) and Kühn (2017) studies affirmed 21st century teachers must track students' abilities to communicate in a deeper, more collaborative way, rather than just measuring how well students gain and retain information from a textbook. To build complex digital literacy skills demanded by the world's business leaders, secondary content teachers must adopt a new mindset and move away from traditional forms of learning and assessments (Argelagós & Pifarré, 2017; Castek & Coiro, 2015; Chen, 2017; Jacobs et al., 2014; Kite & Park, 2017; Kühn, 2017; Sharp, 2014).

Disciplinary Literacy

Disciplinary literacy allows students to learn how to communicate to a specific audience using tools, knowledge, and skills needed to become modern-day historians,

scientists, artists, writers, and mathematicians (Manderino and Castek, 2016). Vaughan, Smith, and Cranston (2016) pointed out every discipline has a different purpose and lens to examine and evaluate artifacts and evidence. The goal of disciplinary literacy is to teach students how to handle information like experts, so they are better prepared for their future studies and careers. Secondary content teachers should work together to increase students' abilities to read more complex and difficult subject-focused text. By teaching students how to read, summarize, and interpret different texts and mediums, teachers are better preparing students to understand what skills and knowledge needed in the 21st century global workforce (Ippolito, Charner-Laird & Lawrence, 2016).

Goldman, Britt, Brown, Cribb, George, Greenleaf, Lee, and Shanahan (2016) investigated what specific skills, knowledge and beliefs literacy, science, and history teachers needed to design learning targets and implement an action plan that scaffolds disciplinary literacy skills between the school's content departments and grade levels. Each content-specific team must

“identified discipline-specific knowledge bands and classified them into “5 higher order categories of core constructs: (a) epistemology; (b) inquiry practices/strategies of reasoning; (c) overarching concepts, themes, and frameworks; (d) forms of information representation/types of texts; and (e) discourse and language structures” (Goldman et al., 2016, p 219).

Using these 5 categories, content teachers ensure students can read, understand, and summarize multiple text on the same subject, use reasoning and evidence to formulate content-specific arguments or hypothesizes, and communicate findings and different

points of view using precise and robust evidence by embedding these skills into lesson and unit learning targets, activities, and assessments (Goldman et al., 2016).

CCSS created a framework for adolescent students to become lifelong learners in the 21st century, but science, social studies, and history teachers have the responsibility to collectively build the specific learning standards, targets, outcomes, and goals for their grade level, school, and district. Goldman et al. (2016) asserted the “standards must be unpacked further in terms of what to teach, how to teach, what to expect from students, how those expectations progressively increase across years of schooling, and how to assess where students are relative to expectations” (p. 221). Vaughan et al. (2016) and Greenleaf and Brown (2017) stated secondary teachers need to teach students how technically think, read, and write for that particular discipline. History teachers needed educate students how to use direct quotes, locate and use creditable websites, identify biased information, and stress the importance of using primary sources when writing in that discipline. Science teachers must instruct students on how to complete inquiry-based and/or experimental learning using the technical language needed to communicate scientific concepts like a true scientist.

Secondary teachers cultivate the next generation of professionals by encouraging students to practice the higher-level skills needed in subject-specific careers. Secondary content teachers need to be able to see there is bigger picture of learning. Rather than racing to finish the textbook by the end of the year or focusing students’ high-stakes standardized tests preparation or results, teachers need integrate more inquiry-based learning projects aimed at increase students’ disciplinary literacy skills (Goldman et al.,

2016). Ippolito, Dobbs, Charner-Laird, and Lawrence (2016) and Moje (2015) reported many secondary teachers struggle to implement their subject matter's CCSS framework because they lack disciplinary literacy training. Teachers require regular and on-going professional development from experts to move from "what I used to know" to "what I know" about disciplinary literacy learning. Many times, professional development does not pay equal attention to both the "what" and "how" of disciplinary literacy instruction, which produces a separation between what students need to know and how teachers implement it inside the classroom. Ippolito et al. (2016) found professional development should instruct a school's teaching staff how to confront what problems lay ahead of them, how to solve each problem, and what motivates reluctant teachers to change their traditional instructional practices. Disciplinary literacy planning varies from classroom to classroom, building to building, and year to year. It is the school's leadership team's responsibility create and monitor the school's action plan, SIP. This document sets the school's yearly academic goals for each grade level and content department, outlines the time, professional development, and other resources the teaching staff needs to accomplish the SIP activities and goals collaboratively. Educators need to be held accountability for accomplishing specific grade-level and content-area learning activities and assessment during their yearly evaluation process (Goldman et al., 2016; Ippolito et al., 2016; Moje, 2015; Vaughan et al., 2016; Yacoubian, 2015).

Content Teachers' New Literacy Role

Fang (2014), Gillis (2014), Howard (2016), and McWilliams and Allan (2014) studies found informational literacy learning is essential to produce life-long learners.

Content teachers must interweave content knowledge with students' values, beliefs, and experiences to solve real-world problems. Teachers need to encourage students to think critically about the information being taught in their classroom (Howard, 2016). Lesley (2014) asserted starting a college-like cultural started in middle school allowed students to better understand the rigors expected in postsecondary education. Deep learning does not happen for students. Instead, the learning process must be facilitated by teachers. This process starts at surface level knowledge but progresses into a deeper exploration of content knowledge throughout the school year. Using students' prior and background knowledge, student-centered questioning, instructional strategies that intentionally requires students to combine content-specific knowledge and higher-level literacy skills leads to more exploration of more specific and complex information and concepts. Students need to be asked to solve real-life problems discovered inside of various units of study (Frey, Fisher, & Hattie, 2017). Educators, students, parents, community members all must understand why rigorous community-wide literacy programs are important inside today's middle schools. These stakeholders need to accept the literacy failures happening inside secondary schools before they can be replaced with new actions, values, and knowledge. It is important during this process the school's teaching staff is provided regularly and on-going trainings on how collaboratively increase students' literacy abilities aimed at building a community-wide literacy program (Gillis, 2014).

Evans and Clark (2015), Frey et al., (2017), Halladay and Moses (2013), Monto-Sano, De La Paz, Felton, Piantedosi, Yee, and Carey (2017) acknowledged the goal of the CCSS is to create inquiry-based learning environments that better prepared American

students for the 21st century workforce. Friedland et al. (2017) and Neugebauer (2017) recognized the CCSS brought new challenges for content teachers because now they have a responsibility to teach students to solve content-specific problems by gathering, analyzing, and evaluating multiple texts, while motivating students to learn at a higher, more rigorous level. Easton, Kite and Park (2018) and Hickey and Lewis (2013) stated the rigorous CCSS literacy standards required secondary teachers to instruct students how to apply prior, cultural, and personal knowledge by introducing new, more complex content-specific words. These skills help students tackle content-specific and challenging text students encounter starting in sixth-grade. Britt and Howe (2014), D'Alessandro, Sorenson, Homoelle and Hodun (2014), Guthrie and Klauda (2014), Hurd (2017), and Thompson and Lathey (2013) concluded teachers using multiple texts, instead of a single textbook, created more motivated adolescent learners. By allowing students to gain information from articles of their own choosing, students, not only take ownership of their learning, but learn the subject in a more personal way by gaining information they can understand and relate too. Bennett and Hart (2014), Draper and Wimmer (2015), Mitchell (2013), Monte-Sano et al. (2017) encouraged teachers to work together to scaffold higher-level thinking, reading, writing, and communication skills to ensure students are learning what they need to be successful in postsecondary education and future careers.

In the last 5 years, many educational researchers (Ciullo, Lembke, Carlisle, Thomas, Goodwin, & Judd, 2016; Cornelius, 2013; Daniels et al., 2015; Greenleaf & Brown, 2017; Neugebauer, 2017) provided models on how to create student-generated

assessments. Each stressed the importance for content teachers to move away from traditional textbook and publisher-created learning activities. Teachers needed to use more open-ended written assessments to measure students' learning of content knowledge. Middle school students are more engaged and motivated to read complex or challenging text when teachers let students explore content knowledge using technology to read a wider variety of sources (Neugebauer, 2017). According to Hurd (2017), today's educational system demands content teachers to instruct students how to combine personal opinions, content-specific knowledge, and research to solve real-world problems. A paradigm shift needed to take place in content-area pedagogy (Fang, 2014). Howard (2016) used a constant comparative data analyze method to discover the on-going professional development content teachers need include more questioning, classroom discussions, use of multiple texts, and writing into their instructional practices. Professional development should help teachers confront educational barriers that redesign preexisting teaching methods, beliefs, and literacy practices hindering students from acquiring content-specific literacy skills. Teachers must learn how to incorporate content-specific literacy-based instructional practices, trust other educators' expertise, and become more open to giving and receiving professional feedback (Fang, 2014; Greenleaf & Brown, 2017; Howard, 2016; Monte-Sano et al., 2017).

The Need for Community-Wide Literacy Learning

Bastalich et al. (2014), Dooley, Lewis Ellison, Welch, Allen, and Bauer (2016), Falk-Ross (2014), Hubert and Lewis (2014), and Mintrop and Charles (2017) outlined reasons content teachers must transition their instructional practices to better prepare

students for the 21st century workforce. Each study found American students are graduating from high school unprepared to read, write, and communicate for college-level work. Other educational articles published since the US Department of Education created the CCSS in 2009 (Ball & Christ, 2012; Carbone & Reynolds, 2013; Lawrence & Jefferson, 2015; Meyers et al., 2015; Redmond, 2015; Spear-Swerling & Zibulsky, 2014) asserted the importance of having common literacy language and expectation schoolwide. Charubusp and Chinwonno (2014), Dong (2014), Meyer, Coyle, Halbach, Schuck, and Ting, (2015), and Shaw, Lyon, Stoddart, Mosqueda, and Menon (2014) found students, especially ELL, Special Education, and academically struggling students, were more successful at gaining rigorous literacy skills when practiced throughout the whole school day, instead of isolated inside literacy classes. Dong (2013), Olin-Scheller and Tengberg (2017), and Reed et al. (2017) stated students needed explicit and direct instruction on how to solve multistep inquiry projects in every content-area classroom. Meyer et al. (2015) and Mintrop and Charles (2017) concluded students must be taught how to take academic risks and overcome challenges when reading, writing, and communicating at a higher-level in each subject matter.

According to Marion and Leathers (2015), Kite and Park (2018), Olin-Scheller and Tengberg (2017), metacognition skills are crucial components when building rigorous content-specific learning targets. Learners need to construct knowledge with a social context by communicating, not only what they learned, but be able to critically think and verbalize how specific content knowledge is seen or used in the world. CCSS framework aims to develop complex learning environments that focus on building

students' informational literacy skills by teaching them how to gather, evaluate, and combine credible online texts to create a personal hypothesis and communicate their findings using 21st century technology (Diehm & Lupton, 2014; Greenleaf & Brown, 2017, Wahyudin, 2015). Using clear grade-level learning targets allow teachers to include more inquiry-based learning. These targets should be adjusted to better fit the learning needs of a whole or targeted group of students. Well-defined learning targets outline the main focus of learning and illustrate the success criteria students must master by the end of a lesson or unit (Marion & Leather, 2015; Rosenquest, 2014; Townsley, 2014). Marion and Leathers found a coherent accountability system for learning included establishing rigorous grade-level learning targets that incorporate performance assessment. The assessments not only tests students' ability to gain content knowledge but their competence to use a certain professional skill set required in today's global workforce.

Effective Teacher Collaboration

Spurred by CCSS and RTTP, states, nationwide, created teacher-evaluation programs that increased both teachers' and students' accountability for learning. The majority of U.S. teachers are now evaluated on how well they work with their peers to unpack the rigorous learning standards for each grade level outlined by federal, state, and local educational reforms (Chan et al., 2014). Because CCSS grade-level standards do not include instructional practices needed to accomplish content-specific activities written into SIP goals, literacy, science, and social studies teachers must work together to decide how to break down each discipline's standards. Districtwide teachers must collaboratively map out the certain skills and knowledge grade-level students need to

master in each content-area before graduating from high school (Konrad, Keesey, Ressa, Alexeeff, Chan, & Peters, 2014).

Guise, Habib, Robbins, Hegg, Hoellwarth, and Starch (2016) case study investigating what actions were needed to successfully implement a collaborative teaching program and concluded teachers need to meet regularly to create a cohesive learning plan. Meeting regularly guarantees teachers have the time to establish and enact various learning standards, objectives, targets inside individual lessons, activities, and units. During these meetings, teachers must decide what content knowledge and literacy skills would be taught in each unit, craft academic goals and student outcomes, create formative and summative assessments to monitor students' academic performance, and use collected data to adjust teachers' instructional practices. Christ, Arya, and Chiu (2017) found successfully PLCs discussions included on how to implement learning targets in daily lessons, different ways teachers modify a lesson, standard, or objective for diverse learners, and teachers' asking clarifying questions about key concepts or targeted literacy skills. Daily reflection discussions help pinpoint and solve different problems encountered by teachers and/or students in a particular unit. Adams and Vescio (2015) found when teachers collectively used common literacy language, learning goals, and expectations less time was spent re-teaching concepts because every student is provided the same learning opportunities in every grade-level classroom. The grade-level literacy-based success criteria and goals become stepping-stones, or scaffolding, of learning for a rigorous schoolwide literacy program.

Inside successful PLCs, content teachers collectively design the department's overall teaching missions and goals, decide what specific content knowledge and literacy skills each grade-level teacher is responsible for teaching, and created a strategic action plan to fulfil the targeted academic goals (Easton, 2017; Mintrop & Charles (2017);). Department heads are responsible for creating open, safe, and concerted teacher dialogue, ensure resources and funding are provided to individual, grade-level, and department teachers, and advocate for professional development when necessary (Vanblaere & Devos, 2017). Massey and Gardner (2013) and Meyers, Cydis and Haria (2015) found operational PLCs enables teachers to establish and maintain a rigorous, student-centered, task-oriented learning environment that encouraged students to take the academic risks needed for postsecondary education.

Parsons, Parsons, Morewood, and Ankrum (2016) conducted a 3-school case study investigating barriers teachers experienced trying to establish operational PLCs. Across the 3 research sites, teachers felt a tremendous pressure with the amount of district and building mandates attached to their PLC meetings. Teacher participants felt leadership forced tasks or goals upon them, there was too much busy work, and the professional development provided to them was not specific to their grade level or subject matter. Many times, teachers felt PLC meetings were more "sit and get" trainings than productive work sessions with their teaching peers. Some teacher participants admitted they had negative feelings about PLC meetings. Others disclosed they lacked the confidence or knowledge needed to accomplish a specific PLC task. Some felt overwhelmed or stupid during PLC meetings because they did not have equal skills or

knowledge as others in their department or grade level. Some teachers noted feeling ignored or left out because the majority of teachers did not agree with their educational ideas or teaching strategies (Parson et al., 2016). Rotermund, DeRoche, and Ottem (2017) study discovered experienced teachers were less likely to participated in professional development, be observed by other teachers, or collaborate with their teaching peers to transition their instructional practices, values, and beliefs to meet the recent educational reforms compared to teachers with less experience.

Guise et al. (2016) study uncovered reasons why PLCs fail within a school. First, the lack of regular and on-going teacher meeting times or common planning periods to build frequent and informal collaboration. Second, teachers were overcommitted with coaching or other outside responsibility to have enough time to spend with their teaching peers. Easton (2017) pointed out some teachers just did not have enough knowledge, resources, or desire to get their content-specific PLC operational. Guise et al., Easton, and Mintrop and Charles (2017) found teachers lacked an understanding on how to collect and analyze formative or summative, as a group, to adjust individual, grade level, or whole department's teaching practices and/or classroom environments. Easton mentioned some district and building leadership teams did not construct strategic accountability plans to make sure district and school academic missions, goals, and actions were accomplished by stakeholders.

Vanblaere and Devos (2017) noted PLCs failed due to the lack of leadership provided by department heads. Many times, department heads were too busy to understand the needs of individual or grade-level teachers in the department. Nor did they

know the various resources and professional development needed to make their PLC operational. Guise et al. (2016) found PLCs also failed when individual, grade level and department teachers were not held accountable to accomplish the school's SIP goals. Principals were not regularly conducting informal observations to confirm teachers carried out the school's action plan. Finally, PLCs failed due to the lack of commitment, time, resources, money, and on-going professional needed to getting schools' PLCs operational. (Easton, 2017; Guise et al., 2016; Vanblaere & Devos, 2017).

Wells and Feun (2013) stated the key to community-wide literacy instructional practices was teachers adopting six characteristics into their instructional practices: equality, choice, voice, reflection, praxis, and reciprocity. Christ, Arya, and Chiu (2017) and Michelson and Bailey (2016) found most PLC conversations focused around curriculum, discipline, tardy policies, or failing grades because teachers were not taught how to focus on the specific skills students needed to critically read, write, think, and communicate inside each grade-level classroom. PLCs needed on-going professional development to learned how to collaboratively design instructional routines and practices, learning activities, and assessments students require to master grade-level literacy standards.

In order to scaffold higher-level literacy learning, outlined in the CCSS, inside their department, content teachers require guidance on how to incorporate explicit reading and writing instructions into each grade level. They need to be provided tools to know how and when to gradually, yet effectively, released learning over to students, while still monitoring students' academic performance and growth. Content PLCs must

be shown how to regularly collect and use formative student-generated data, discuss findings to adjust instructional practices, and collectively modify instructional practices to increase student engagement for their particular subject matter and grade level (Michelson & Bailey, 2016).

Teacher Evaluation Programs

Prompted by the U.S. Department of Education's monetary incentives, nationwide, state policymakers created evaluation systems to encourage and support teachers' instructional practices that better prepared students for 21st century learning. By 2012, the majority of states' legislatures adopted new evaluation procedures that held educators accountable for student academic growth in every subject matter by rating and combined teachers' student performance data and observational evidence using a districtwide rubric (Doherty & Jacobs, 2013; Hill & Grossman, 2013). These new teacher evaluation systems included potential consequences for poorly performing teachers, which forced states' superintendents to establish instructional frameworks, well-articulated performance level categories, for their school districts. Instructional frameworks aimed to hold teachers accountable for scaffolding content and literacy knowledge between grade levels. The new standard-setting teacher evaluation models outlined different degrees of mastery and knowledge teachers need to increase students' academic performance in each content-specific, grade-level classroom (Castellano & Ho, 2013; Goe, Wylie, Bosso, & Olson, 2017).

Lenhoff, Pogodzinski, Mayrowetz, Superfine, and Umpstead (2018) and Patrick (2016) stated student improvement was relative because there are many ways the new

teaching standards could be interpreted by educators. However, evaluators, districtwide, should not be measuring teachers' formal in-class evaluations, student-generated data, and performance goals differently. Goe et al. (2017) and Young et al. (2015) explained effective teacher evaluations should add to teachers' expertise and focus on outcome-oriented instructional practices, instruct teachers on how to use formative and summative student-generated data to monitor professional and student learning goals, and influence teachers to seek out critical and specific feedback from master teachers. Herlihy et al.'s (2014) and Mihaly, Schwartz, Opper, Grimm, Rodriguez, Mariano and SEDL's (2018) studies identified successful teacher evaluation programs developed strict instructional frameworks that included rubrics with built-in cohesive learning standards and outcomes, required teachers to monitor students' growth by using multiple pieces of evidence, not just high-stake test scores, require a large number of observable minutes by administrators, and provided on-going and specific professional development.

Forman and Markson (2015), Goe et al., and Lenhoff et al. studies discovered administrators, districtwide, required expert training to decide, or judge, which teachers were more effective than others and why using the state's rubric and district-adopted instructional framework. Teaching performance levels must be laid out clearly and specifically to guarantee every grade-level and content teacher was scored and rated the exact same way. At the same time, districtwide administrators must provide teachers the same feedback aimed to improve instructional practices based around the district-adopted instructional framework and rubric. Once every administrator inside the district effectively understands and uses the adopted instructional framework to measure

teachers' performance, they have an obligation to do the same for their teaching staff. By using experts, both inside and out of the district, administrators ensure stakeholders fully understand the well-articulated rating system exactly same (Forman & Markson, 2015; Goe et al., 2017; Mihaly et al., 2018).

Teachers must learn to interpret multiple forms of student or cohort data to develop professional and student growth goals for their particular grade level and subject matter. They must be taught how effectively use building or district data to work collaboratively with other grade-level and content teachers districtwide to improve students' academic performance (Hill & Grossman, 2013; Lenhoff et al., 2018; Patrick, 2016). Exemplary teachers use multiple forms of student data to shape their classroom environments, instructional practices, and student expectations, instead of just standardized test scores. They understand class size, curriculum materials, and students' home life, health, and attendance affect students' daily performances. Teachers must learn how to avoid making instructional decision by judgment or intuition. Less performing teachers kept the same teaching beliefs, lesson plans, activities, and tests for decades, despite knowing teaching requirements shifted with the adoption of the educational reforms including the CCSS and states' new teacher evaluation programs (Mihaly et al., 2018; Patrick, 2016; Roberson-Kraft & Zhang, 2018).

Castellano and Ho (2013) and Christ et al. (2017) found student growth models should be adjusted yearly to align with a school's ever-changing population. Robertson-Kraft and Zhang (2018) discovered lower performing teachers felt overwhelmed and/or more experienced teacher burned out at a higher rate due to increased expectations

associated with State's new evaluation requirements. Districts needed to retrain lower performing and more experienced teachers by providing on-going professional development based around the higher-level literacy skills, instructional practices, and performance tasks every grade-level, content-specific teacher is expected to embed in their classroom by states' new 4-tier evaluation programs. If not, districts experience a lower teacher retention rate (Hill & Grossman, 2013; Lenhoff et al., 2018; Patrick, 2016; Roberson-Kraft & Zhang, 2018).

Successful standard-setting teacher evaluation models provide regular feedback from both building administrators and teaching peers. Hill and Grossman (2013) and Mihaly et al. (2018) found during post-observation conferences administrators should challenge teachers' old teaching beliefs to maximize learning in a school. Evaluation conversations should encourage teachers to move away from simplified lessons to use more challenging learning activities and assessment fostering students' ability to think, read, and write critically in every content-area classroom. Struggling teachers need specific examples on how use their district-adopted instructional framework checklist to incorporate higher-order thinking into their instructional practices. Forman and Markson (2015) and Goe et al. (2017) encouraged using mentor teachers for struggling teachers; exemplary teachers modeled how to form positive relationship with students while holding them accountable inside a rigorous learning environment. Lash, Makkonen, Tran, Huang, Regional Educational Laboratory, and WestEd (2016) stated districts should identify master teachers early on and use their expertise to guarantee consistent academic standards are used schoolwide. Goe et al. and Lash et al. studies confirmed using master

teachers, with an exemplary evaluation rating, within each content department helped clarify issues for their department, ensured teachers used student data with more precision to adjust instructional practices, and all teachers consistently met the school's academic goals instead of a few each school year. The most troublesome issues still needing further examination is how to design and implement successful schoolwide instructional frameworks that produce high-quality state-mandated test scores while better preparing students for postsecondary education and future careers (Herlihy et. al., 2014).

Establishing Effective Professional Learning Communities

Building administrators have said PLCs are a waste of time, money, and resources because teachers use them to complain about students, administrator, or educational policies, instead of working collaboratively towards the district's or school's missions and goals (Easton, 2017). Teachers' openness to collaborate with peers fostering a sense of ownership in the school's improvement process depends on teachers' personality and willingness to openly trust, share, listen, and collaborate with their peers. Benoliel and Schechter (2017) described 5 unique personalities domains principals must value, foster, and hold accountable in professional learning communities: extraversion, agreeable, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and open to experience. Each personality brings both usefulness and challenges to PLCs, so principals must learn to respect and exploit each personality for genuine knowledge sharing to take place at a school. Establishing PLCs norms, operational guidelines, and seeking teachers' input on PLC meetings' agendas and goals were a few ways principals successfully managed PLCs' day-to-day work, while

recognizing how each personality impacted teachers' ability to collaborate together to fulfill the school's missions and goals (Benoliel & Schechter, 2017; Huguet, Farrell, Marsh, 2017).

Guise et al. (2016) and Young et al. (2015) stated principals needed to use more informal observational rounds to recognize the academic work of individual teachers, grade levels, and departments. Principal participants, from Kraft and Gilmour (2016) study, admitted they did not spend enough time observing teachers or felt the time spent was too brief or inconsistent to provide dependable and productive feedback to teachers. Huguet et al. (2017) noted principals needed to regularly observe teachers outside formal evaluations times to completely grasp how each teacher worked towards the PLC's and school's action plan on a day-to-day basis. Herlihy et al. (2014) asserted incorporating higher-level literacy skills inside many teachers' classroom routines was not a daily norm, instead they only included these skills during their formal observation days.

Kraft and Gilmour (2016) stated informal teacher observations guarantee students get the same rigorous learning environment in every subject matter or grade-level classroom, while ensuring teachers use the same literacy language, activities, and rubrics, schoolwide. By spending time observing teachers' actions and listening to conversations, principals realize how grade-level or department teachers work, or not, together to scaffold targeted content knowledge and literacy skills included in the school's SIP, which provided a more in-depth understanding their teaching staff's academic and instructional strengths and weaknesses. Informal observations allow principals to get a better understanding of how staff members' different personalities, values, and actions

affect the inner-workings of the school's missions and goals (Easton, 2017; Herlihy et al., 2014; Huguet et al., 2017; Young et al., 2015). Principals need to reflect on multiple observed actions, or lack of actions, then provide immediate and explicit feedback to teachers, grade levels, and departments using the tools embedded in the school's strategic accountability system (Easton, 2017; Huguet et al., 2017. Easton (2017) noted teachers require more than two post-observation meetings to help increase student's academic achievement.

Principals need to become experts on the expansive evaluation rubrics to provide honest and productive feedback to their teaching staff (Kraft & Gilmour, 2016). Many times, administrators lack a clear road map for their teaching staff. Nor are they providing the necessary professional development individual teachers, content-specific PLCs, or school's teaching staff require to fulfill the rigorous academic activities outlined in schools' SIP goals (Jones & Lee, 2014; Kostogriz & Doecke, 2013; Kruse & Johnson, 2017; Jones, Kim, La Russo, Kim, Snow, and Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness, 2015; Pomerantz & Ippolito, 2015). Principals need to spend more time inside each content-specific PLC to learn what teachers cares about. They need to find out what formative and summative data guides each PLC's conversations and work. Asking questions, doing informal evaluations, and listen to various staff members helps principals understand what hinders PLCs' work, what actions or reeducation is needed to overcome identified barriers, and how each PLC's missions, goals, and actions match leadership team's vision, beliefs, and goals (Easton, 2017). Principals must ensure their teaching staff has a clear understanding how to use the instructional framework, SIPs,

and student-generated data inside individual classrooms, grade levels, and content department to fulfill schools' missions and goals. Effective tools, like instructional frameworks and SIPs, help administrators set collaboration norms and routines and establish a strategic accountability system for the school's teaching staff. Then, principals must hold every educator accountable for using the new-standard based teaching evaluation model to create well-articulated learning standards, learning activities, and assessment (Huguet et al., 2017; Lash et al., 2016; Patrick, 2016).

Summary and Conclusions

Washington's teacher evaluation program, TPEP, was influenced by the educational ideas of Vygotsky (1978), Marzano and Arredondo (1986), Arredondo and Marzano (1986), and Marzano and Heflebower (2011). These studies laid the foundation for systemic changes schools needed to successfully establish a rigorous schoolwide literacy program. Marzano and Arredondo and Arredondo and Marzano educational frameworks restructured school cultures by scaffolding higher-level thinking skills between grade levels and departments. Vygotsky's ZPD theory suggested every student can gain higher-level thinking skills when teachers provide explicit, direct, and guided instructions and multiple practices. Vygotsky, Marzano and Arredondo, Arredondo and Marzano, and Marzano and Heflebower studies stressed systematic and gradual release of learning responsibility schoolwide for students to gain higher-level thinking, reading, writing, and communication skills needed in today's global workforce.

Dostal and Gabriel (2016), Lawrence and Jefferson (2015), Mitton-Kukner and Orr (2014), Rainey et al. (2017), Sargent et al. (2018) conducted studies about the

importance of secondary schools creating a rigorous schoolwide literacy language and expectations. Not only do middle and high schools need to adopt a common language and expectation for their students, secondary content teachers need to work together to scaffold the higher-level literacy skills between the school's grade levels. Bastalich et al. (2014), Chen (2017), Goldman et al. (2016), Friedland et al. (2017), Jacobs et al. (2017), Kite and Park (2017), and Sodiq (2015) took literacy learning a step further by giving reasons why the CCSS and other recent educational reforms has transitioned secondary teachers into content-specific literacy teachers. Students must practice literacy skills employers now seek from their workforce. The 21st century workforce demands students to think, read, write, and communicate beyond just remembering and understanding knowledge read from a textbook. Instead, students must critically think how grade-level content information applies to their own lives and the world around them. Secondary students need to learn how research creditable online sources and combine to solve real-life problems to be better prepared for their professional careers.

Easton (2017), Guise et al. (2016), Huguet et al., (2017), Kraft and Gilmour (2016), Moss et al. (2013), Pomerantz and Ippolito (2015), Patrick (2016), and Vanblaere and Devos (2017) emphasized how district and building leadership should hold teachers accountable building a rigorous schoolwide literacy culture. Brown-Smith et al. (2013) and Mendoza et al. (2015) helped identify the literacy gap many Washington school districts struggle to solve. Reports found, statewide, administrators and teachers understood the importance scaffolding content and knowledge between grade levels and subject matters, but neither knew what specific skills, values, and instructional practices

were needed to create a rigorous schoolwide literacy culture. This case study investigated why teachers from one Washington middle school struggled to meet the school's SIP reading and writing goals despite the adoption of Eight-CR, 5D, and added collaboration time. The next Chapter will outline the steps took to conduct this qualitative instrumental case study at the research site during the 2017–18 school year.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative instrumental case study was to examine how educators from one middle school used Eight-CR and 5D to implement the rigorous literacy-based curriculum outlined in its SIP. The results can provide some awareness to the barriers science, literacy, and social studies teacher teams experience trying to transition into their new content-specific literacy roles created by CCSS and other educational reforms adopted in the last decade. From this case study, I discovered some insight into the types of professional development district and building administrators needed to provide its teaching staff to incorporate Eight-CR and 5D into learning environments and collaboration meetings. Finally, in this instrumental case study, I systemically investigated reasons why this middle school's staff struggled to accomplish content-specific literacy activities and goals. Chapter 3 outlines the specific data collected and analyzed over a 4-month period at one Washington middle school during the 2017–18 school year.

Research Design and Rationale

Both Eight-CR and 5D were designed to help transition Washington educators' instructional practices and beliefs to better prepare students for the 21st century workforce. I designed the research questions of this qualitative instrumental case study to investigate why middle school teachers struggle to accomplish the reading and writing activities that would fulfill the goals in the school's yearly SIP.

To examine how Washington's TPEP influenced middle school educators' abilities to create a rigorous schoolwide literacy program, I focused this qualitative instrumental case study on one central question: Why are the middle school teachers, at the research site, still not meeting the SIP goals despite the use of TPEP's Eight-CR, adoption CEL's 5D, and added collaboration time?

To further investigate the research problem and support the central question, I formed 3 procedural subquestions: How are collaborative teams, at one middle school, using Eight-CR and 5D to scaffold literacy skills between departments and grade levels to establish the rigorous literacy expectations and language outlined in the school's SIP? How are specific departments and grade-level teams, at the research site, integrating CEL's 38 indicators of quality teaching and leading into their learning targets, instructional practices, learning activities, and common assessments to accomplish the reading and writing goals outlined in the school's SIP? What barriers do middle school teachers experience trying to regularly collect, analyze, and use student-generated data in content-specific PLCs and other collaborative groups to produce a more student-centered and goal/task-oriented curriculum for each grade level and entire middle school?

I chose an instrumental case study research design method to systemically investigate how science, literacy, and social studies PLCs and other collaboration groups, from one Washington middle school, incorporate CEL's 38 indicators of quality teaching and leading into individual classroom settings, literacy, science, and social studies PLCs, and other collaboration meetings. The qualitative instrumental design illuminated

particular issues that certain teachers, content areas, and the middle school staff experience trying to scaffold higher-level literacy skills between sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade and to create a schoolwide literacy language that embeds rigorous learning expectations in all curriculums (American Institute for Research, 2012; Mendoza et al., 2015).

Marzano and Heflebower (2011) recommended that content teachers work collaboratively to scaffold higher-level literacy skills into their instructional practices to better prepare students for the 21st century workforce. The purpose of conducting this study was to investigate why educators at one Washington middle school have not yet achieved the rigorous reading and writing goals written into the yearly SIP for the past 4 years. In this instrumental case study, I uncovered some middle school educators' perceptions Eight-CR and 5D. The results also shed some light on how CEL's 38 indicators of quality teaching and leading are used by different grade-level and content-area teachers and other collaborative groups at the research site. My study illustrated the decision-making process of the science, social studies, literacy PLCs encounter when planning units of study, establishing learning goals and targets, and creating instructional practices, activities, and assessments for students. I explored the types of student-generated data used by individual teachers, grade levels, and departments to measure teachers' student and professional growth goals. Finally, in this case study, I identified how student-generated data impacts individual teachers, grade levels, and content departments and educators' abilities to adjust instructional practices to accomplish their SIP's reading and writing goals (OSPI, 2015). In this study, I gathered evidence to

provide meaningful professional development opportunities for sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers, specific content-area departments, and middle school educators, including the school principal. The results could aid educators to collaboratively accomplish rigorous reading and writing activities and goals written into district and school SIPs (██████ & ██████, 2015; ██████ & ██████, 2016).

I used a qualitative instrumental case study approach to address the problem of secondary educators' inability to collaboratively create a rigorous schoolwide literacy learning community identified in recent empirical studies (Gilles et al., 2013; Larkin, 2012; Lenski & Thieman, 2013; Reidel & Draper, 2011). The nature of the qualitative instrumental case study was bound in one Washington middle school. I chose a qualitative instrumental case study design method because it offers some in-depth reasons certain teachers, grade levels, and departments at the research site, struggle to fulfill reading and writing activities outlined in its SIP goals. The qualitative instrumental case study methods I included were transcriptions of responses to 18-open ended teacher and administrator interview questionnaires (Appendix G and Appendix H). From September to December 2017, I conducted one-on-one sessions with one administrator and two teachers and one teacher focus group session at the research site. Teacher participants consisted of sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade science, social studies, and literacy teachers and varied in teaching experience and subjects taught, years teaching at the research site, and years being evaluated using the TPEP 4-tier, two-component process.

Role of Researcher

I have been a social studies teacher at the research site since 2002. I was head of the social studies department from 2003 to 2016. Starting in the 2015–16 school year, I gradually stepped down and declined any leadership or advisory role at the middle school to ensure no biases would be found inside this qualitative instrumental case study. There were some risks of bias involved using this middle school as the research site, but all were recognized before conducting the study, especially cultural, sponsor, and halo affects, which are defined in this chapter. I took the necessary steps to separate my role as a teacher from my role as a researcher at the research site. I was granted permission not to participate in social studies department or grade-level PLC meetings for the duration of this study. I was also excused from any staff meeting discussing the middle school's SIP or other variables examined in this qualitative instrumental case study.

There were never any discussions about the research topic or intentions of this study with anyone but the middle school principal and district superintendent. Those conversations were limited and brief because the principal's willingness to participate in this case study. I did not use any district-owned equipment to conduct or write this case study. Transcriptions of focus group and one-on-one interview sessions have only been viewed by me, and any records from them are located in a locked file cabinet inside my home. Participants only read and reviewed their own session's finding report to ensure I accurately portrayed and interpreted answers in an authentic manner. I have never discussed my qualitative instrumental case study's details with staff members, nor will I until it is published.

I limited my interactions with educators at the research site starting in spring 2015. I ensured to only have personal conversations with the educators at the research site because they could become participants of the study. If discussions about TPEP, Eight-CR, 5D, SIP, or any other variable found in this case study happened during school hours, I politely stepped away from the conversation. I also made clear to middle school's teaching staff that I could only discuss individual student's learning progress with special education and English language learner teachers until my case study was completed and published. By the start of the 2016–17 school year, I successfully created a strict division between my role as a teacher and researcher at this Washington middle school ensuring the data collected was valid, trustworthy, and ethical.

Methodology

Participant Selection

The research site's SIP influenced selecting the participants of this qualitative instrumental case study. Starting in 2013, science, social studies, and literacy teachers had specific reading and writing SIP activities and goals added to their teaching role aimed at creating a schoolwide literacy program. Along with reading and writing goals, these 3 departments' have collaboration goals written into the district's and school's SIP plans, which include increase ELA SBA score and student achievement in all core classes.

The educators recruited to participant in this case study help formulate the middle school's SIP reading and writing activities and goals every fall. During district-provided collaboration time, science, social studies and literacy PLCs are expected to create an

action plan that accomplishes grade-level, content-specific activities written into SIP's goals; then use student-generated data to adjust department's instructional practices to better serve the middle school's diverse student population. Teacher participants are evaluated using Eight-CR and 5D. Each teacher must write student and/or professional growth goals for their yearly TPEP evaluation. Any staff member teaching one or more sixth-, seventh-, or eighth-grade science, social studies, and literacy class in the 2017–18 fit the criteria of this case study. There was a total of 15 science, social studies, special education, ELL teachers who fit the descriptors and were recruited to participant in an afterschool focus-group session conducted in the research site's staff room.

The research site's principal and vice-principal were also asked to participant in this qualitative instrumental case study because they, along with the BLT, monitor the SIP to ensure the research site's teaching staff accomplishes the various reading and writing activities written into the school's SIP goals, yearly. The middle school's principals set and oversee the research site's SIP and PLC agendas, meetings, and actions each year. Both the principal and vice-principal use Eight-CR and 5D to evaluate, rate, and label the middle school's teaching staff during teachers' comprehension evaluations. Each has a responsibility to make certain the research site's teaching staff understands and effectively integrates 5D's 38 indicators of quality teaching and leading into their grade-level classroom curriculums and environments.

The middle school's principal oversees the school's yearly professional development, which might incorporate some variables of this study. The principal also collects, reads, and publishes the science, social studies, and literacy PLC notes and

records. He also publishes the middle school's BLT's bi-weekly meetings notes for the entire teaching staff to review. The principal is required to present the middle school's SIP progress and final outcome to the research site's district leadership team and school board. Each year, he must closely monitor the actions of literacy, science, and social teachers to ensure the reading and writing activities are met by every grade-level and department teacher.

Instrumentation

The instrumentation employed for this qualitative instrumental case study was an interview questionnaire for teacher and administrator participants during one-on-one or focus group sessions. The teacher (Appendix G) and administrator (Appendix H) questionnaires included 18-open ended questions and were created with permission from both the University of Washington and Dr. Marzano (Appendix E). Teacher sessions, whether one-on-one or focus group, used the same 18-open ended questionnaire. The interview questions are based around 5D's 38 indicators, which is used districtwide to evaluate and label its educators from unsatisfactory to distinguished. Each session was audio recorded for the transcription process to identify the merging themes and categories of this qualitative instrumental case study.

The 18-open ended questions were organized to answer the central research question and 3 procedural subquestions. The first 5 questions of questionnaire focused on how the educators at the research site viewed the school's SIP plan, its literacy activities and goals, and how middle school educators worked together to achieve what is written into the SIP every year (Appendix A). These questions examined what influenced

teachers' ability to create the schoolwide literacy program embedded into the school's SIP. Procedural subquestion one's 4 open-ended questions (Appendix B) explored how the different collaborative groups use Eight-CR and 5D language to scaffold literacy skills between grade levels, content areas, and the entire school (UW, 2012). Procedural subquestion one's questions helped gain insight to some of the beliefs and values middle school teachers had about building content-specific literacy skills, and understand how science, social studies, and literacy teachers have embedded Eight-CR and 5D into their grade-level instructional practices and curriculums.

This qualitative instrumental case study's procedural subquestion two's 5 questions (Appendix C) helped discover how the science, social studies, and literacy middle school teachers integrated 5D' 38 indicators of quality teaching and leading into their classroom, department, and PLC routines. These 5 questions also investigated how each PLC worked together to incorporate and scaffold higher-level literacy skills into the their sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade content-specific classrooms and entire middle school's academic culture. Procedural subquestion two sought to identified what specific academic expectations and literacy language science, social studies, and literacy teachers and PLCs included into classroom routines, grade level and department learning standards, and collaborative meetings.

Procedural subquestion three's 4 open-ended questions (Appendix D) pinpointed different barriers educators, grade levels, departments, and entire middle school staff encounter trying to collect and analyze student-generated data and provide a more student-centered and goal/task-oriented curriculum schoolwide. These 5 questions

focused on understanding the values, beliefs, and instructional practices middle school educators possess and how they influence middle school educators' ability to collectively accomplish the reading and writing activities and goals written into the school's SIP (UW, 2012).

Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Permission was granted by the research site's principal and district's superintendent to conduct a qualitative instrumental case study at this Washington middle school. The recruitment of the research site's principal and vice-principal took place in September 2017. I was also granted permission, by the middle school's principal, to review collaboration documents including Building Management Minutes (BLT), science, social studies, and literacy PLC meeting minutes, SIPs, his weekly staff emails, and any other documents, including districtwide content-specific assessments.

During both the principal and vice-principal's recruitment meetings, I explained the intent of this qualitative instrumental case study, the reason for including the research site principal, and the time required to participate in a one-on-one interview session. During the closing moments of each meeting, each were handed an Informed Consent Form. In the end, only one, the research site's principal, agreed to participate in the administration focus group session. Principal's 3 sessions, initial, follow-up, and exit sessions, were conducted before I recruited the middle school's teaching staff.

October 2017, the research site's principal allowed me to introduce my qualitative instrumental case study at a brief staff meeting on a Wednesday morning with the goal of starting the teacher recruitment process for the science, social studies, and literacy teacher

focus group sessions. During the recruitment meeting, the teaching staff was informed the school board, district superintendent, and middle school administration granted me permission to conduct this qualitative instrumental case study. I provided a brief explanation to why I wanted to conduct this qualitative instrumental case study. Then, the descriptors of my case study were outlined, and 15 of the 27 educators would be asked to take part in a content-specific focus group session. Teachers were informed I hoped to conduct 3 content-specific focus group sessions afterschool in the staff room starting at 2:35 pm, and participating teachers were required to attend a total of 3 1.5-hour meetings. During the first 2 meetings, teachers would be asked to answer 18-open ended questions, stressing there is no right or wrong answers, to help me explore the research questions posed in this case study. I explained the data collected from each teacher focus group session was confidential, and evidence gathered during the 4-month period would be held in a locked file cabinet in my home office for 5 years.

Finally, I reviewed the process of asking individual teachers to join a content-specific focus group session and how it would happen in the coming days. It was made clear only science, social studies, and literacy teachers would be recruited, participating was voluntary, and participants would stay anonymous. I emphasized administrator, nor other teachers, would have knowledge to whom participated in this study due to using pseudonymous names in the findings and results chapters. Teachers were advised possible participants needed to sign an Informed Consent Form (see Appendix H) before participating in their department's focus group session. I clearly emphasized how the outcome of this case study could lead to positive changes to both the middle school's and

district's academic culture because it aimed to pinpoint some of the barriers educators experience trying to embed Eight-CR and 5D into individual teacher's classroom routines, grade-level curriculums, and PLC, BLT, and other collaborative groups meetings, and the school's academic culture (Sarniak, 2015).

Individual recruitment of the English language learner teacher and special education teachers happened right after the whole staff recruitment meeting because I wanted to gauge how comfortable each teacher would be participating in the literacy focus group session. All special education and ELL teachers declined to participate in this instrumental case study due to afterschool responsibilities including IEP and PEG meetings. The science, social studies, and literacy teachers were individually asked before or after school hours about participating in their content-areas teacher focus group sessions. Any teacher showing interest in participating in the science, literacy, and social studies department's focus group sessions were provided an Informed Consent Form to review and sign. If after reading the consent form and declined to participate, I asked the teacher to please return the consent form. Within 3 days of conducting the teacher recruitment meeting, I had talked to all 15 teachers fitting the case study's descriptors. A total of 10 teachers initially agreed to participate and signed consent forms, but 5 dropped out due to afterschool coaching responsibilities that conflicted with their content-areas afterschool session's meeting times.

Participation

The middle school's principal granted permission to conduct this qualitative instrumental case study at the research site's staff room after teachers' working hours

during the 2017–18 school year. Participation was voluntary and participants were free to withdraw from the study any time before their session’s data collection was completed by contacting me at the email address provided. In a 2-hour afterschool session, in the middle school’s staff room, Principal answered 18-open ended questions (Appendix H) that were audio-recorded and transcribed within 2 weeks. I scheduled a follow-up session with Principal to ask an additional 28 questions created when transcribing his initial session’s answers. The follow-up session was broken into 2 parts and took place before school hours to fit into Principal’s work schedule. Both follow-up sessions lasted an hour and took place in the research site’s staff room.

The middle school principal and research site’s superintendent granted permission to collect and include any collaboration documents: the middle school’s BLT bi-weekly meeting minutes, the science, social studies, and literacy PLC meeting minutes, school’s 2015-16 and 2016–17 SIPs, Principal’s weekly emails and attachments, and any other documents consisting of districtwide content-specific assessments teacher used to measure students’ academic progress used to fulfilled SIP activities and/or goals, and teachers’ TPEP yearly student and professional growth goals. This permission included collecting at least 2 grade-level districtwide writing assessments sixth-, seventh-, and eighth grade science, social studies, and literacy teachers used to measure and track students’ content-specific literacy performance and any other district-adopted materials used to measure students’ yearly academic growth.

Principal provided 9 2016–17 BLT bimonthly meeting notes, science, social studies, and literacy monthly PLCs notes, and his weekly emails and attachments.

Because Principal records and publishes the BLT notes, reads and complies science, social studies, and literacy PLC meeting minutes, and writes his weekly email, he was asked to provide, at random, one PLC and BLT meeting minutes and his weekly emails for every month of the 2016–17 school year. Because Principal felt more comfortable asking science, social studies, and literacy PLCs to provide 3 districtwide assessments, one for each grade level, teachers use to accomplish SIP's reading and writing goals, instead of myself, he made plans to accomplish this collection task during one PLC meeting in mid-September 2017. Principal outlined this plan during his initial one-on-one interview session.

Two weeks after his follow-up session was completed and the majority of the written data of this case study was collected, Principal's exit session took place afterschool in the middle school's staff room. The principal reviewed his findings report, which combined the transcribed notes of his initial and follow-up sessions and a representative sample of the principal's 2016–17 weekly emails and BLT 2016–17 meeting notes. Once Principal's exit session was completed, I started to recruit and conduct the 3 teachers focus group sessions: social studies, literacy, and science departments.

Five of the 10 possible teacher participants, who initially signed consent forms, declined to partake in a content-specific teacher focus group session due to afterschool coaching responsibilities. None of the remaining 5 teacher participants' answers were excluded from the data because none contacted me to withdraw from this qualitative instrumental case study. The depth of the 18-open ended questions included in the teacher

questionnaires did cause some educators to get overwhelmed or feel rushed, so each initial data collection sessions was broken into 2 meeting times. Each session lasted no more than 1.5-hours, and only 9 questions were asked during each session. Dividing the 18 questions into 2 parts allowed teachers to provide more in-depth and thoughtful answers each day (Creswell, 2012; Sarniak, 2015)

One teacher focus group session and 2 one-on-one teacher sessions gathered the raw data from the teacher questionnaire (Appendix G) because science, social studies, and literacy grade-level teachers have specific literacy responsibilities written into the middle school's SIP. The 18-open ended questions were divided up to answer the central question and 3 subquestions I posed and explored during the data collection and analysis stages of this qualitative research study (Appendixes A-D).

During each department's session, teachers' answers included specific learning targets, learning activities, writing activities, unit tests, literacy focused assessments, and other student-generated data used to measure students' academic progress. Teachers were also asked how they formulate and track their yearly TPEP student and professional growth goals, and how those goals fulfill which SIP's reading and/or writing activity and/or goal. Participants were asked, during their session, if I could get a copy of documents discussed and include in my case study's findings and all agreed. Within 2 days of completing each interview session, I emailed each session's participants with a list of documents each agreed to provide for review.

Each initial focus group and one-on-one interviews audio-recorded sessions were transcribed in a 2-week period. An email was sent to teacher participants within 24 hours

of completing a session's write up to set a date for the exit session, which participants were required to attend. The exit session's main purpose was member checking of a draft of findings. Each participant was provided a draft of their session's finding report that combined their answers from the transcribed session, representative samples of their department's 2016–17 PLC notes, and student-generated data provided by participants or Principal.

During each exit session, participants were asked to review their department's finding report, ask questions, and make clarification statements to ensure teachers' and principal's session data was transcribed and analyzed accurately, authentically, without bias, and best represented each participants ideas and words in this instrumental case study. Once the social studies, science, and literacy teacher sessions were completed, I sent an email to every participant offering additional sessions for more depth, clarify answers, or if they felt peer pressure during any session, but none felt it was necessary (Creswell, 2012; Sarniak, 2015; Thomas, 2006). A total of 17 hours was spent conducting initial and exit sessions of the administrator and teacher one-on-one and focus group sessions and additional 32 hours were spent transcribing sessions' transcribed notes within a 4-month period, September to December 2017. One hundred and fifty-seven pages of transcribed administrator and teacher interview sessions notes were created and 47 pages of written data was collected and included in the analysis stage of this case study.

Data Analysis Plan

During the data analysis stage, I conducted a systematic investigation to search for the different barriers and facilitators science, social studies, and literacy teachers, the 3 departments' PLCs, Principal, and other collaborative groups experience trying to fulfill the reading and writing activities written into SIP goals each fall by the middle school's teaching staff. I analyzed one-on-one interview and focus group transcriptions and representative samples of written data, including PLC meeting minutes, BLT meeting minutes, Principal's weekly emails, and other grade-level, content-specific written data, helped identify how this Washington middle school's staff embeds Eight-CR and 5D (Appendixes A-D) into the school's learning culture. Analyzing the data also helped me discover how Washington's teacher evaluation system, TPEP, assists secondary science, social studies, and literacy teachers' capability to accomplish grade-level and content-specific literacy activities included the middle school's SIP goals.

During the data analysis stage, I examined what Eight-CR, 5D, and SIP expectations and language has been embedded into the middle school's collaborative meetings and academic culture. I used Eight-CR's and 5D's language to categorized this qualitative instrumental case study's central and 3 sub-procedural questions, which I then used to develop the six themes explored in Chapters 4 and 5. There was a limited investigation on the literacy activities and assessment used by grade-level teacher teams and department's PLCs because no districtwide grade-level science, social studies, or literacy writing assessments measuring students' academic progress existed at the research site. Nor were grade-level teacher teams or PLCs collaboratively tracking or

monitoring students' content-specific literacy gained in the science, social studies, and literacy departments using common assessments and measuring tools (Bastalich et al. 2014; Ciullo et al., 2016; Goldman, 2012; Evans & Clark, 2015; Moreau, 2014; Sodiq, 2015).

Memo writing was a tool used to record on-going dialogue emerging from the case study's themes and how each related to Eight-CR, 5D, and SIP language and expectations. Any hunches, ideas, and thoughts about the raw data, coding process, categories, and findings were including in my memo writing. Memo writing was first used in the initial stages to record and explore additional questions needed for more clarity from the participants, as well as make connections to how the raw data fit into and explained each research question. During the data analyzing process, memo writing was used to highlight emerging patterns and summarize raw data collected over the 4-month period at the research site (Boeije, 2002; Creswell, 2015).

A constant comparison inductive analysis approach interpreted raw written and oral data to form the qualitative instrumental case study's categories and themes (Creswell, 2012). I constantly compared and categorized Principal's and science, social studies, and literacy grade-level teachers' behaviors and actions to explore the central research question and 3 sub-procedural questions posed in this case study. I started by discovering and documenting the broader generalizations to investigate why the research site's collaborative groups struggled to accomplish the reading and writing activities outlined in the middle school's SIP goals. Constant comparative method, outlined by Creswell (2012), is "an inductive (from specific to broad) data analysis procedure in

grounded theory research generating and connecting categories by comparing incidents in data to other incidents, incidents to categories, and categories to other categories (p. 434).” Eight-CR and 5D’s 38 indicators of quality teaching and learning helped build the substantive theory of this case study by comparing and exploring specific behaviors, beliefs, and actions held by the Principal, individual sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers, science, social studies, and literacy PLCs, and BLT (Building Management Team) about how Washington’s TPEP’s 4-tier system. Comparing and categorizing how Eight-CR and 5D influenced individual educators’ and teacher teams’ ability to accomplish SIP activities and goals allowed me to explore and explain my case study’s research questions with great detail (Creswell, 2012; Glaser & Straus, 1967).

The 2-part coding system highlighted the emerging themes and patterns identified in the transcribed notes of the focus group and one-on-one interview sessions (Thomas, 2006). A priori codes were drawn from Eight-CR and 5D, which became the descriptors used to explore the central research question and 3 procedural subquestions (Creswell, 2012). Tables 1-4 outline the 2-part coding system used to analyze the collected oral and written data to answer each of the research questions posed in this study (OSPI, 2015; UW, 2012) First, I used Eight-CR to break down the raw data into eight different categories for each research question. Then, 5D’s 38 indicators of quality teaching and leading helped divide the data into smaller units to formulate the different codes of this case study (QDATRAINING, 2016).

Table 1

Central Question's 2-Part Coding System

Research question	TPEP criterion	CEL indicators
Why are the middle school teachers, at the research site, still not meeting the SIP goals despite the use of TPEP's Eight-CR, adoption CEL's 5D, and added collaboration time?	Criterion 1: Centering instruction on high expectations for student learning	Purpose: Connection to standards, broader purpose and transferable skills; communication of learning targets; success criteria and performance task(s). Student engagement: Work of high cognitive demand Classroom environment and culture: Student discussion, collaboration, and accountability

Note. Adapted from CEL 5D+ Teacher Evaluation Rubric at a Glance, by CEL, 2012, University of Washington, pp. 1–7.

Table 2

Subquestion One's 2-Part Coding System

Research question	TPEP criteria	CEL's indicators
How are collaborative teams, at one middle school, using Eight-CR and 5D to scaffold literacy skills between departments and grade levels to establish the rigorous literacy expectations and language outlined in the school's SIP?	<p>Criterion 6: Using multiple student data elements to modify instruction and improve learning</p> <p>Criterion 7: Communicating and collaborating with parents and the school community</p> <p>Criterion 8: Exhibiting collaborative and collegial practices focused on improving instructional practice and student learning</p>	<p>Assessment for student learning: Self-assessment of learning connected to the success criteria; demonstration of learning; formative assessment opportunities; collection system for formative assessment data; student use of assessment data</p> <p>Student growth: Establish student growth goal(s); achievement of student growth goal(s); establishing team student growth goal(s)</p> <p>Professional collaboration and communication: Parents and guardians; communication with the school community about student progress; collaboration with peers and administrators to improve student learning; professional and collegial relationships; supports school, district, state curriculum, policy and initiatives; ethics and advocacy</p>

Note. Adapted from CEL 5D+ Teacher Evaluation Rubric at a Glance, by CEL, 2012, University of Washington, pp. 1–7.

Table 3

Subquestion Two's 2-Part Coding System

Research question	TPEP criteria	CEL's indicators
How are specific departments and grade-level teams, at the research site, integrating CEL's 38 indicators of quality teaching and leading into their learning targets, instructional practices, learning activities, and common assessments to accomplish the reading and writing goals outlined in the school's SIP?	<p>Criterion 2: Demonstrating effective teaching practices</p> <p>Criterion 3: Recognizing individual students needs and developing strategies to address those needs</p>	<p>Student engagement: Quality of questioning; expectations, support, and opportunities for participation and meaning making; substance of student talk; ownership of learning; strategies that capitalize on learning needs of students</p> <p>Curriculum and pedagogy: Scaffold the tasks; gradual release of responsibility; differentiated instruction</p> <p>Purpose: Teaching point(s) are based on students learning needs</p> <p>Assessment for student learning: Teacher use of formative assessment data</p> <p>Student Growth: Establish student growth goal(s); achievement of student growth goal(s)</p>

Note. Adapted from CEL 5D+ Teacher Evaluation Rubric at a Glance, by CEL, 2012, University of Washington, pp. 1–7.

Table 4

Subquestion Three's 2-Part Coding System

Research question	TPEP criteria	CEL's indicators
What barriers do middle school teachers experience trying to regularly collect, analyze, and use student-generated data in content-specific PLCs and other collaborative groups to produce a more student-centered and goal/task-oriented curriculum for each grade level and entire middle school?	<p>Criterion 4: Providing clear and intentional focus on subject matter and curriculum</p> <p>Criterion 5: Fostering and managing a safe, positive learning environment</p>	<p>Purpose: Connection to previous and future lessons</p> <p>Curriculum and pedagogy: Alignment of instructional materials and tasks; discipline-specific conceptual understanding; pedagogical content knowledge; teacher knowledge of content</p> <p>Classroom environment and culture: Arrangement of classroom; accessibility and use of materials; use of learning time; managing student behavior; student status; norms for learning</p>

Note. Adapted from CEL 5D+ Teacher Evaluation Rubric at a Glance, by CEL, 2012, University of Washington, pp. 1–7.

Axial coding was the second part of this 2-part constant comparative analysis process, which highlighted the barriers, facilitators, and other contributions Eight-CR and 5D had on Principal, sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers, science, social studies, and literacy teachers and their department's PLC, and other collaborative groups' ability to meet the literacy activities the school's SIP goals required of them. The causal conditions of this case study were completed by categorizing the raw data using Eight-CR's and 5D's indicators of quality teaching and leading. Then, those causal conditions

helped me build the context of the study, which aimed to better understand specific attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge middle school educators held about Washington's TPEP system, as well as how Eight-CR's criteria and 5D's 38 indicators influenced a secondary teaching staff's ability to create the rigorous schoolwide literacy program outlined in its SIP.

Next, I investigated how Principal, 5 science, social studies, and literacy grade-level teachers, and the middle school's collaborative groups used Eight-CR criteria and 5D's 38 indicators of quality teaching and leading to accomplish the reading and writing activities outlined in the school's SIP goals. This part of the axial coding process helped me identify specific struggles, values, and beliefs teachers and collaborative groups experience trying to adopt Washington's TPEP language and expectations into individual classrooms, grade levels, science, social studies, and literacy departments, and the middle school's academic culture. The intervening conditions of this study was the raw data and collected from the Principal's weekly emails and middle school's BLT bi-weekly meeting minutes, which helped detect how the middle school's leadership team impacts, encourages, and hinders individual, grade-levels, content-area teachers use of Eight-CR and 5D to accomplish SIP's reading and writing activities and goals.

The goal of this research study was to uncover patterns middle school educators experience trying to create the rigorous literacy schoolwide culture outlined in its SIP. It also wanted to pinpoint specific barriers hindering one Washington middle school's teaching staff ability to embed Eight-CR's and 5D's language and expectations into its academic culture. Once the 2-part coding system was completed, the raw data was

divided up into smaller, more precise categories that me helped explore the central and 3 procedural subquestions in the next two chapters. Using an axial coding process helped me systematically and explicitly investigate how Washington's TPEP system influenced teacher teams' ability to accomplish reading and writing activities and goal outlined in this middle school's SIP (Boeije, 2002; Creswell, 2012; OSPI, 2015; UW, 2012).

Ninety-three initial codes were formed using Eight-CR and 5D's indicators of quality teaching and leading, which I broke down into 9 broad categories: SIP, PLCs, TPEP and CEL, curriculum and assessment, data collection and usage, common literacy learning targets and success criteria, common literacy language and expectation, barriers, and goals. Then, the 9 board categories were further broken down into more specific to examine this case study's 4 research questions.

SIP was divided up into 4 different categories: SBA activities, skills, students' scores, SIP activities and goals, writing SIP activities and goals, and student academic achievement. The broad category PLC was divided into 8 smaller parts: assessment, curriculum, interventions, enrichment, science, social studies, literacy, and entire middle school. TPEP and CEL formed 4 smaller components: evaluation model, barriers, grade level literacy benchmarks and language, collaboration goals. Curriculum, assessments, and culture were the 3 smaller groupings developed for the broad category of Curriculum and Assessment.

The broad category data collection and usage was not broken down into any subcategories because the limited raw districtwide assessment data collected at the research site. Common learning targets and assessments categories was divided up into 2

groupings: department literacy benchmarks, by grade level, and literacy learning. Literacy learning was sorted by sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade, science, social studies, and literacy teachers and PLCs, and middle school. The broad category of common literacy language and expectations got sorted by entire school and the departments included in this case study: science, social studies, and literacy. The barriers and goals broad category was split by whole school, grade levels, and departments included in this instrumental case study.

Excel software helped me organize 93 initial codes and 9 broad categories into different patterns and trend developed and explored in later chapters. The data collection and analyzing process continued until no new material, or raw data, could shed more light onto the central research and procedural subquestions results and findings. Saturation of data collected became evident when no additional reasons, behaviors, attitudes, perspectives, commonalties, differences could be uncovered, and all the patterns were discovered, highlighted, and coded (Boeije, 2002; Creswell, 2012).

Trustworthiness

A sound, consistent, and neutral case study must have confirmation the interpretation of the data is trustworthy. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), trustworthiness involves establishing creditability, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Using a thick description to describe the phenomenon ensured, I drew the conclusions that are relatable to other times, settings, situations, and people (Crabtree, 2006; Creswell, 2012)

Validity

A valid qualitative instrumental case study aims to create some awareness to how the phenomena and findings of a particular and appropriate setting are truthful. According to Leung (2015), it is important to use the appropriate tools, design, and data process to ensure participants fully answer the “who, what, when, and why” issues explored in a particular case study. First, I made ensured this case study’s validity by employing a purposeful sampling group (Leung, 2015). The middle school’s leadership and sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade science, social studies, literacy teachers were asked to participate in an interview session to answer 18-open ended questions because all had SIP literacy responsibilities. One of the 2 principals and at least 1 teacher from every grade level and content department were included in my case study’s sampling group; including various middle school educators’ voices were needed to establish my case study’s validity because all had specific literacy activities and goals written into the school’s SIP.

Using focus group and one-on-one teacher interviews helped identify the struggles individual, grade level, and department teachers experience trying to create the rigorous literacy culture the SIP designed. The principal’s participation examined the middle school administration’s ability to build, maintain, and monitor the rigorous community-wide literacy program outlined in the research site’s SIP, TPEP’s Eight-CR and CEL’s 5D. Principal’s involvement highlighted the relationship between a middle school’s teaching staff and its leadership. Not excluding any staff members having SIP literacy responsibilities drew attention to middle school educators’ ability to

collaboratively scaffold higher-level literacy skills between grade levels, departments, and school. Leaving out the school's administration or a certain grade level or department teacher would not fully explain the phenomena, nor would the finding of the central and sub-procedural research questions be valid (██████ et al., 2015; Leung, 2015; ██████ et al., 2016).

A 2-part coding system categorized and analyzed the raw data that was organized by the use of a priori code system. The a priori codes were drawn from Eight-CR and 5D's 38-descriptors of quality teaching and leading. Using the pre-existing data collection tools, Eight-CR and 5D, helped establish the validity of this instrumental case study. The language of the teacher and administrator questionnaires were based around the rigorous literacy values, beliefs, and expectations this Washington district adopted in 2012. Eight-CR and 5D were created to help Washington schools establish rigorous, student-centered, task-oriented expectations needed for high school graduates to be college and career ready in the 21st century. Using state and district mandated collected tools helped guarantee this research study is valid (Creswell, 2012; Stuckey, 2015).

Credibility

Drawing other studies (Brown-Smith et al., 2013; Harmon & Becker, 2014; and Mendoza et al., 2015) conducted to explore the effectiveness of Washington's 4-tier, 2-component teacher evaluation program, TPEP, helped establish a clear scope, or lens, to interpret my case study's data. These studies' findings outlined some of the problems Washington educators experienced tried to embed Eight-CR and district-adopted Instructional Framework into their schools. Brown-Smith et al., Harmon and Becker, and

Mendoza et al. examined TPEP's statewide effectiveness, like many other states created and implemented to receive federal educational grant money, RTTP. Building-off of these recent studies ensured my case study's findings are both comprehensive and inclusive, thus furthering its credibility. The findings presented in Chapter 5 can be transferred to other districts and schools, nationwide, where secondary educators continually struggle to embed their state's 4-tier evaluation program (Leung, 2015).

Using Eight-CR's, 5D's, and the middle school's SIP language and expectation provide a detailed scope and context to the different emerging categories of this case study (LaBanca, 2010). Employing both member checking and methodological triangulation ensured the case study's findings were sound, consistent, neutral, and creditable. The exit session procedures ensured the data collected was credible because participants verified their answers and written data accurately interpreted and showed no biases. Participants' additional comments or clarifications were audio recorded, transcribed, and, coded (Devault, 2016).

A peer reviewer and external auditor were recruited as other members of my instrumental case study's triangulation team and needed to sign confidentiality agreements before participating in this study. The peer reviewer, a current research site educator, and external auditor, a literacy teacher who recently retired from the middle school, independently validated the codes and themes that emerged during the methodological triangulation stage were precise and accurate. Including two independent educators, who did not participate in the study, but understood the school and data

collected, helped guarantee the collected oral and written raw data was interpreted and analyzed accurately and without bias (LaBanca, 2010; Leung, 2015).

Transferability

By clearly described categories or themes, this case study's context and my instrumental case study's findings can be easily transferred to any secondary school environment where the teaching staff struggles to embed their state's 4-tier evaluation system and/or district-adopted framework into its school culture. Transferability also requires transparency of the findings so other grade-level literacy, social studies, and science teachers can relate to the participants' struggles to fulfill research site's reading and writing SIP activities and goals. Secondary school administrators and educators can correlate to the barriers outlined in Chapters 4 and 5 to their own teaching staff experience trying to transition into 21st Century content-specific literacy teachers.

By using pre-existing tools, Eight-CR and 5D, in a systematic way to gather, organize, and analyze collected raw data, this case study investigated the barriers hindering secondary educator's ability to fulfill the reading and writing goals written SIPs. Washington educators using CEL's 5D Instructional Framework can connect to the different problems and issues individual, grade-level, subject-specific teachers, and school's collaborative groups, BLT and PLCs, experience in a more precise and personal way. Elements of this study can be transferred to any Washington district or school because every administrator uses TPEP's Eight-CR, a 4-tier rating system, to label their teaching staff from unsatisfactory to distinguished. Any district or building leadership team can apply the findings outlined Chapter 5 to their school because of the common

instruments used to analyze the data (Creswell, 2012; La Blanca, 2010; Leung, 2015).

Other districts struggling to accomplish the rigorous reading and writing activities written in school's yearly SIPs goals can read this study, find shared characteristics, identify with the barriers and/or facilitators outlined in this study, and transfer the results to their learning community (Larkin, 2012; Lenski & Thieman, 2013; Reidel & Draper, 2011).

Ethical Procedures

Permission was granted to use this Washington middle school as the research site. The school's principal granted approval to conduct teacher focus group and one-on-one interviews after the teachers' contracted day ended at 2:35 p.m. in the research site's staff room. I was also granted permission to collect a representative sample of written data from sixth, seventh, and eighth grade science, social studies, and literacy teachers and the collaborative groups found at the middle school. University of Washington's Center of Educational Leadership, Dr. Marzano's office and Washington's NWWSD 189 gave consent to use their instructional framework and guided questions to formulate the teaching and non-instructional staff questionnaires.

Precautions were taken to ensure the name of the research site and participants stay anonymous stays confidential. The only descriptors used to describe the school was "a district found in Washington and one middle school found in Washington." Great care was taken to ensure the names of the participants stayed private. First, during the recruitment stage of this case study, each teacher participant signed a consent form (Appendix J) and chose a pseudonym name I used when creating sessions' transcribed notes and exit reports (Creswell, 2012). Then, each teacher is described by a different

pseudonym name in Chapters 4 and 5 of this case study and were created according to the grade level and subject matter each represented in this case study. The same protocol was used to protect the anonymity of the research site's principal. This process allowed participants to feel important, while not devaluing participants' feelings, values, and beliefs (Allen & Wiles, 2016).

Also, safeguards were taken to preserve the confidentiality and privacy of the raw data collected over a 4-month period. Each session's audio recorded interview, typed, transcribed notes, and the documents provided by the principal and teacher participants are stored in a locked cabinet located in my home office. No emails or other forms of communications were used on the district's server, nor stored at the research site. Participants were told audiotapes, transcripts, and documents will be kept up to 5 years after conducting the interviews and the only people who have access to the information is myself, as well as the participants and college advisors when necessary (Creswell, 2012).

Respondent Bias and Risks

Respondent and researcher bias were the two main risks involved with conducting this case study at this Washington middle school. The four types of respondent risks that could have been included in this case study are acquiescence, social desirability, habituation, and sponsor. Because I have been a social studies teacher at this Washington middle school since 2002, participants and I have pre-established relationships causing some risks in this study. Acquiescence risk could have appeared during focus group sessions if some participants agreed with whatever the moderator or other participants presents because they thought those are the right answers (Sarniak, 2015). To avoid these

risks acquiescence bias created, all questions were opened and had no right answer or simple “yes or no” answers. None of the social studies teachers that I have or had a working relationship, since beginning my doctorate program, were included in this case study. Limiting these two teachers from participating in this study greatly lessened acquiescence bias.

Social desirability risks would have happened if participants provided answers I or other group members thought were right answers, instead of answering the 18-open ended questions honestly. Social desirability risks were heightened in the literacy focus group sessions because these 3 teacher participants might have been afraid their answers would not be liked or accepted by their peers or feared judgment or retribution if answers did not fit the norms of the school, grade level, or department (Sarniak, 2015).

During interview sessions, it was important questions were phrased to stress there were no right answers but honest answers, might not be socially acceptable, but was necessary to make the findings of this qualitative instrumental case study valid. To lessen the social desirability bias, every participant was offered a one-on-one session or follow-up interview. This allowed any participant who might have felt pressured to answer questions in a certain way a safe space to clear up answers or go into more depth they could not in their initial interview session (Sarniak, 2015).

The length of time of each session needed to answer 18-open ended questions and sessions needing to take place afterschool hours, habituation bias might have easily occurred. During each interview session, I had to be acutely awareness if the quality and depth of participants answers started to deteriorate. I had to be mindfully aware to

identify if any participant started to provide similar answers to multiple questions or answers became rushed or vague. To limit this risk, a minimum of two initial sessions were scheduled for each of the teacher focus groups. The goal of breaking up the 180-minute session into two 90-minute sessions was to ensure participant fatigue did not set in at the end of the school day. I kept an acute awareness of participants' energy level during each session. Breaks were taken and sessions ended early to obtain quality, detailed, and honest answers (Sarniak, 2015).

Sponsor bias may have happened because interview sessions took place on district grounds. Some participants might have felt they could not be honest in fear of leadership or other teachers may judge their actions, beliefs, or answers. Participants might have believed answering some of the questions honestly would go against the mission or purpose of the district or middle school. To limit this risk, every session took place after school in the research site's staff room. The room was kept locked and a bright yellow sign was posted on the outside of the staff room door letting the rest of the staff that they were not to enter the room to participation stayed confidential. No district leadership or research site's staff members were informed of the participants of the case study. Personal communication with participants were done before or after school. I took personal care to ensure to email participants from my home computer using my Walden email address. If asked questions about the case study by participants, I made sure there was no other staff member was in the room and was before or after school hours.

Researcher Bias and Risks

There are 5 types of researcher biases that might have been included in the risks of this case study. The first is confirmation bias, which happens when or if I had a preconceived hypothesis or beliefs that I believe to be true about this topic, research site, or participants. I mitigated this risk by using a qualitative instrumental case study design method that explored the research questions posed in Chapter 1 using the participants' answers and data collected with depth and accuracy. The case study's problems were identified in recent empirical study and investigated using preestablished tools used to measure and rate Washington teachers' effectiveness to better prepare students for the 21st century workforce (Sarniak, 2015).

To lessen the confirmation bias of this case study, the Washington's TPEP Eight-Criterion and CEL's 5D Instructional Framework was used as the grounding framework for this study. I created none of the questions; instead, the 18-open ended questions were formed using Eight-CR's self and formal evaluations guided questions educators from this research site answer, yearly, before their goal setting meeting each fall. I had no preconceived ideas or reasons why each teacher, grade level, and/or department struggle to incorporate the 5D's 38 indicators of quality teaching and leading inside the middle school's various learning environments and collaborative meetings. Memo writing, member checking, and employment of two impartial educators for the methodological triangulation were all used to lessen this risk. The goal of this qualitative instrumental case study was to create social change in the school, district, and educational community. I was not looking to prove why the problems identified in recent empirical studies and

explored in this case study happened. Instead, the objective was to provide some needed insight to the barriers and facilitators different secondary teachers, grade levels, and departments experience while trying to create and maintain the rigorous reading and writing goals included in a school's SIP (Sarniak, 2015).

Cultural bias could have occurred in this study because of my long-standing career in this Washington middle school. Being a social studies teacher and taking on leadership roles at the research site since 2002, I could have looked at the data collected through my own personal lens (Sarniak, 2015). There was care taken not to judge the answers of the participants. Instead, probing questions were asked to get a better understanding of the reasons why teachers, grade levels, departments, and administrators have the beliefs and practices they do. Member checking and follow-up interview sessions were both used to help reduce this risk (Sarniak, 2015). I did not read any BLT or PLC meeting minutes when sent out by Principal during the 2016–17 and 2017–18 school years. I also did not read any of Principal's weekly emails or attachments guaranteeing I was completely disconnected to any and all variables of this case study. I created a strict communication policy with potential participants of this case study starting in the spring of 2015 until the final write up of the case study is completed. I stayed out of the staff room during lunches or break times to ensure I was not overhearing teachers' discussion that may have dealt with the variables of this case study. I did not create any collaboration goals with the social studies department members. Nor did I discuss my learning targets, literacy instructions, or ways I tried to accomplish the reading and writing SIP activities and goals for this department. None of the social

studies teachers I had a direct working relationship with, especially the other eighth grade teacher, was asked to participate the social studies focus group. I did not include any eighth-grade social studies learning targets, success criteria, curriculum, student practice work or assessments used to measure students' literacy growth at the research site.

Question order and leading-question bias happens when participants are influenced by words and order of the questions presented. Some participants might have thought or assumed a certain answer or more information was needed so cautions were taken to make sure this bias did not happen. I took great care choosing my words, asking probing questions, transition, pauses between questions, or even perceived body language or non-verbal cues when I conducted this study (Sarniak, 2015).

It was important that I was careful during the staff recruitment meeting to make certain possible participants knew district or building administrators had no part in this study and there was no pressure by them, the district administration, or myself to participate in their department's teacher focus group session. Neutrality was formed by showing little to no emotions when conducting educators' one-on-one interview and focus group sessions (Sarniak, 2015). The same order of questioning was used in all four of the interview sessions conducted at the research site. I created a script to ensure I used the same words and phrases to start and finish every interview session.

Finally, halo effect bias can affect how the participants of this qualitative instrumental case study answer their questions because they might already have a preconceived impression of subjects of inquiry, SIP, TPEP, Eight-CR, 5D, or myself and intentions for conducting this qualitative instrumental case study. Halo effect bias could

have happened because myself or any participant might have seen something or someone in a certain light. It was important participants, nor myself, made assumptions about other participants, or themselves, other educators found at this Washington school district and middle school. The major halo effect that could have taken place was how some participants perceived my dual role, one as a teacher and the other a researcher, at the middle school because of my long-standing reputation at the district (Sarniak, 2015).

This risk was lessened by being aware of the pre-existing relationship I had with the district and building leadership and the middle school's teaching staff, I took every action I could to lessen this risk starting in September 2015. First, I stepped down from any leadership roles at the research site and continue to decline any leadership roles until my instrumental case study is published. Understanding the bias my participation in any collaboration meetings might have caused to the data collected at the research site, limits were set that I would attend during the duration of collecting and writing up the findings and results chapters. The research site's principal granted me permission not to attend or leave any meeting or decline to answer any question that may cause risk in this case study. Also, I have not engaged in any conversations dealing with any of the variables or areas of interest in this study. No staff member knows exactly what the purpose, research questions, or concepts explored in this case study. District and building administration were provided little knowledge on what exactly this case study intended to explore and the reason certain data was collected. All the confidentiality and other research standards outlined in the qualitative research guidelines established by IRB will be followed until the study is published.

The risks of this study were identified, and great care was taken to make sure this qualitative instrumental case study is valid, credible, and transferable. The benefits of this case study clearly outweighed the risks. The findings of this study pinpointed some barriers sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade science, social studies, literacy teachers experience trying to accomplish the rigorous reading and writing activities outlined the middle school's SIP goals. The professional development recommendations included in Chapter 5 can lead to more teachers effectively embedding Eight-CR and 5D into their collaborative groups, individual classrooms, and entire school's learning culture (██████t & ██████, 2015; ██████ & ██████n, 2016).

The social changes that the case study's findings could lead to are more secondary educators collaboratively scaffolding 21st century literacy learning between the school's grade levels and embracing their new content-specific literacy role created by recent educational reforms. The findings could possibly help more high school graduates read, write, think, and communicate at the rigorous levels business leaders demand in today's global economy (Halladay & Moses, 2013). Finally, the case study results can transfer to other districts or schools who's teaching experience similar problems attempting to establish and maintain a rigorous schoolwide literacy programs outlined in its SIP. It can also help other Washington educators struggling to embed TPEP's evaluation system language and instructional framework into their school's culture (American Institute for Research, 2012; Brown-Smith et al., 2013; Fowler, 2014; Harmon & Becker, 2014; Mendoza et al., 2015).

Summary

The purpose of conducting this case study was to systemically investigate why literacy, social studies, and science teachers from one middle school were not collaboratively working towards accomplish their grade-level, content-specific reading and writing they were writing into their yearly SIP goals, despite the use of Eight-CR, adoption 5D, and added collaboration time. During the data collection phase, one-on-one interview and focus group sessions were conducted, in the research site's staff room, with various educators that had literacy SIP responsibilities (██████t & ██████, 2015; ██████t & ██████, 2016). Document analysis included representative samples of PLC minutes, BLT minutes, grade-level, content-specific writings assessments, and the school SIP. A constant comparison inductive analysis approach was used to interpret the raw data and offer some awareness to the barriers and facilitators educators at this middle school experience trying to accomplish their department's grade-level reading and writing activities outlined in their SIP. Memo writing helped analyze and evaluate the raw data collected over 4 months at one Washington middle school. Using a 2-part coding system, I used both a priori and open-ended coding to find the emerging patterns and trends. Excel software helped expose and identify the emerging codes and categories outlined in Chapter 4 (Creswell, 2012; Devault, 2016; LaBanca, 2010).

Member checking and methodological triangulation were used throughout the data collection and analysis phases to ensure the findings outlined in Chapter 4 are valid, credible, and transferable. Both participant and researcher biases risks were recognized and minimized and will continue until this instrumental case study is published. By

stepping down from any leadership role, limiting my participation in collaborative meetings, not including seventh- and eighth-grade social studies teachers, nor not having any preconceived ideas or outcomes about the topic, I mitigated any risks associated with my dual roles, a social studies teacher and researcher, at the research site might cause (Sarniak, 2015).

The themes and codes outlined in Chapter 4 provided some insight to the barriers and facilitators teacher teams experience trying to embed the rigorous literacy standards outlined in the CCSS inside the science, literacy, and social studies departments and the middle school. It provides some awareness to how individual teachers, teacher teams, and collaborative groups use Washington's 2-component, 4-tier teacher evaluation system, TPEP, to set up and maintain the rigorous schoolwide literacy culture included inside SIP (Harmon & Becker, 2014; Mendoza et al., 2015). Finally, the case study's findings could help district and school leadership teams provide specific professional development opportunities for teachers, grade levels, and departments to learn how to effectively collaborate and scaffold rigorous literacy learning by content- and disciplinary-specific literacy targets and success criteria's by crafting learning activities and monitoring student academic growth using district-wide assessments, 4 times a year, as outlined in the school's SIP (Brandt et al., 2015; Redmond, 2015; Spear-Swerling & Zibulsky, 2014).

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of conducting this qualitative instrumental case study was to examine why educators from one middle school do not use Washington's 4-tier evaluation system, TPEP, to implement the rigorous schoolwide literacy program outlined in the school's yearly SIP. During the data collection stage, I conducted 3 1:1 sessions (one administrator, two teacher) and then one teacher focus group session. I gathered a sample of documents from the different collaborative groups and individual educators at the research site to help explore the case study's central question: Why science, social studies, and literacy middle school teachers at the research site still not accomplishing grade- and content-specific literacy activities written into the research site's yearly SIP, despite the use of Washington's TPEP Eight-CR, the adoption of CEL's 5D Instructional Framework, and added collaboration time?

Along with the central question, there were 3 procedural subquestions. The first examined how the collaborative teams at the research site used TPEP's Eight-CR and CEL's 5D Instructional Framework to scaffold literacy skills between grade levels, departments, and the entire school's academic culture. The second subquestion investigated how science, social studies, and literacy PLCs were influenced by TPEP's Eight-CR and CEL's 5D instructional framework. As well as, investigating how sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade science, social studies, and literacy teachers incorporate TPEP's 2-tier system into individual, grade-level, and each department's instructional practices. I also explored how these two frameworks, Eight-CR and 5D, influence grade-level teachers' ability to accomplish specific grade-level, content-specific reading and

writing activities written into the research site's SIP goals. Finally, this case study's third subquestion helped identify some of the different barriers this middle school staff experienced when trying to collect, analyze, and use student-generated data inside their content-specific PLCs and other collaborative groups to produce a more student-centered, goal/task-oriented curriculum for the students.

First, Chapter 4 describes the setting of the research site, which depicts the participants, research site's demographics, and any other characteristics relevant to the study. Next, the data collection process, consisting of the location, frequency, and duration explaining how the raw data, gathered over a 4-month period, was recorded, analyzed, and coded from larger categories into smaller more specific themes. This helps illustrate into how one middle school's educational staff currently uses Washington's evaluation system, TPEP, to create a rigorous schoolwide literacy community for its students. Then, I address the central and 3 procedural subquestions research question with great depth and details, which is followed by the trustworthiness of the evidence. Finally, in the summary I transition and introduce Chapter 5, which concludes this case study and makes recommendations by combining the findings of this qualitative instrumental case study.

Setting

Research Site

Starting in the fall of 2017, I conducted this qualitative instrumental case study over a 4-month period at a Washington middle school. District and building leadership teams made changes to the middle school's 2017–18 master schedule impacted the

findings of this case study. Being a teacher at the research site provided insider knowledge of how the master schedule impacted the educational staff of the research site. Teacher reassignments, due to the school's master schedule changes, were common knowledge by spring 2017 because reassigned teachers' and department heads, as well as PLCs members, voiced concerns starting in February 2017. The middle school's principal included specific master schedule and staff changes in his weekly emails; then discussed the reasons for the changes and why the changes were important both district's and middle school's academic cultures during Wednesday morning collaboration times.

Core 24, Washington's new graduation credit requirements, caused the curriculum and personnel made to the research site's 2017–18 master schedule. Washington increased the high school credit graduation requirement from 20.5 credits to 24 credits for the graduating class of 2020. District administrators worried Core 24 would negatively impact its high school's graduation rate because students could no longer afford to fail any classes, if they wanted to graduate on time. So, the district's administrative team created a plan to add high school accredited classes to the middle school's master schedule to increase academically struggling students' chances of graduating from high school on time.

To put the district's academic plan in action, Principal, working with the district leadership team, removed literacy blocks from the middle school's master schedule. Starting in 2012–2013, the middle school's master schedule included two periods of literacy, which meant every middle school student spent 104 minutes in a literacy classroom each day. Beginning in the 2017–2018 school year, sixth-, seventh-, and

eighth-grade students now only had one period of literacy, 52 minutes, per day. With that change, the science and social studies sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers were told, by the school principal, to include more informational text reading and writing learning activities and assessments into their classroom routines to make up for the loss of the literacy blocks, which was clearly outlined in CCSS. The research site's district leadership team also adopted READ 180 for a select number of sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students. This class is computer-based, with little to no direct literacy instructions or intentional practices from a grade-level literacy teacher. The goal of READ 180 is to get the higher achieving Level 2 students to gain enough skills to score a Level 3 on their SBA scores for ELA.

Along with adding high school accredited electives to the master schedule, Principal worked with high school and district administrators to make other classes—band, choir, art, Washington state history, and Algebra A (a slower paced eighth-grade math class)—high school accredited classes. This middle school already offered high school credit to students who passed algebra and/or geometry. Many science, social studies, and literacy teachers affected by the changes voiced concerns during the 2016–17 school year. In response, the district's leadership team found compromises that fit the middle school's teaching staff's endorsements, certifications, teaching experience, and seniority.

Participants Demographics and Characteristics

Years teaching in the district, years teaching a specific grade-level or content-specific class, and total teaching experience factored into this case study's demographics.

The teaching experience of participants ranged from a first-year teacher to over 25 years of teaching experience. Principal's career is broad and spans over 25 years. He started as an educational assistant before becoming a math teacher. Principal taught math for 15 years before getting his master's degree in Administration. He was a vice-principal in a large Washington district for 7 years before becoming the research site's principal in June 2015.

Two teacher participants taught in other district found in the state of Washington before teaching at the research site. One of these teachers has worked at the research site for 20 years, while the other 14 years. Three of the teacher participants have only taught in this district. Three of the participants have less than 10 years teaching experience which is limited to this district, with one a first-year teacher and another taught at one of the district's elementary schools before transferring to the middle school in fall of 2016. One teacher participant graduated from the district's high school and was a middle school student, at the research site, a little over a decade ago. This participant brought a different perspective to this case study because answers to the during the interview session included personal educational experiences and ability to find success with college-level work. All the various personal and professional experiences factored into answering the 18-opened ended questions of this case study.

Data Collection

Number of Participants

There was a total of 17 educators who fit the criteria of this case study, two principals, and 15 teachers, but only six agreed to participate in this qualitative

instrumental case study. Only the research site's principal participated in the administrator one-on-one session. Science, social studies, and literacy teachers were recruited because these departments had specific grade-level reading and writing activities written into the school's SIP. With only six teachers agreeing to participate in their departments' interview session, I was able to conduct two one-on-one interview sessions and one teacher focus group session.

Recruitment of social studies teachers was limited to only 3 sixth-grade teachers due to my own teaching position. Of the 3 teachers asked to participate, two initially agreed and signed consent forms, while the other declined to participate. One sixth-grade social studies teacher withdrew from participating due to afterschool coaching responsibilities. Four of the six literacy teachers agreed to participate in their department's focus group session and signed consent forms, but in the end, only 3 teachers participated in the case study. One literacy teacher, who signed a consent, withdrew because afterschool sports overlapped with the literacy department's interview sessions' times and dates. The literacy teacher focus group included one sixth-grade teacher, one seventh-grade teacher, and one eighth-grade teacher. One of these participants taught two seventh-grade and one eighth-grade literacy classes for the 2017–18 school year. Only one of the 5 science teachers, a sixth-grade teacher, agreed to participate in that department's focus group session. Many the research site's teachers fitting the case study's descriptors declined to participate because afterschool responsibilities.

Data Collection Process

Principal provided the majority of written data because the research site's BLT and department's PLC meeting minutes are stored on his computer. He provided, at random, a representative sample BLT, PLC, and other collaborative group notes from the 2016–17 school year, one for each month of school. Principal also provided random selective sample of his 2016–17 weekly emails and any attached articles or resources he sends to his staff to review. Principal indicated his weekly emails are in place of staff meetings because it was difficult to get the entire staff together, before or after school, so the emails become his mode of communication to the research site's educational staff.

To ensure the representative samples of written data did not have possible risk of bias, I was in the room when he copied and pasted a random selection of written data, stored on his work computer, and downloaded it onto a flash drive. Principal did not read the contents of any of the PLC and BLT minutes or his weekly emails. Instead, he randomly just picked one or two sample for the months of September 2016 through June 2017 and copied and pasted them into a folder, which was then download to a flash drive.

The middle school's principal could not provide any grade-level districtwide assessments from the literacy, social studies, and science departments because they currently do not exist. STAR, SBA, IABs test results are only student-generated data currently used at the research site to measure students' yearly academic progress for literacy. Principal did provide a schoolwide summary writing rubric he expected literacy, science, and social studies teachers to use at least once a quarter, which was written into the school's SIP. Principal admitted many grade-level content teachers had yet to

incorporate this SIP activity into their classroom routines. Written data collected was teacher participants because individual participants or their entire grade-level used it to guide and/or adjust instructional practices, assess, measure, and track students' academic performances, or goals.

I was granted permission to conduct four interview sessions, in the research site's staff room, starting at 2:35 pm. In 4 months, I conducted 3 1:1 educator interview sessions and 1 teacher focus group. First, in September 2017, I conducted Principal's 1:1 and follow-up sessions. Then Sixth-grade Social Studies Teacher was interviewed in October; followed by the literacy focus group session in November. Finally, Sixth-grade Science Teacher was interviewed in December 2017.

Each session took between 2 and 3 hours to conduct. Time variance depended on the number of participants, length and depth of participants' answers, and number of probing and clarifying questions asked during each session. Principal was the only participant who required a follow-up session. During transcribing his initial session, I formed 41 follow-up questions to get a better understanding of how his values, beliefs, training, and leadership role affected middle school educators' ability to collaboratively create the community-wide literacy program outlined in its SIP.

Each participant took time and care to answer the initial 18-open ended questions and additional probing questions because answers were precise and detailed. I recorded the four sessions' oral data on an old cell phone that was no longer in use. Once the audio recordings were transcribed onto my personal computer, using Microsoft Word, I downloaded each session onto a flash drive. I locked the flash drive, old cell phone, and

any written data collected in file cabinet in my home office to guarantee the raw data collected stays confidential.

Compared to the data collection plan outlined in Chapter 3, the only variances included the types of written data collected from Principal and teacher participants, number of participants, and amount of time it took to conduct the study. In September, when the majority written raw data, Principal stated he had yet to collect any districtwide writing assessments used by grade-level teacher in the science, social studies, and literacy departments but would have them soon. In October 2017, Principal mentioned his plan to gather sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade districtwide assessments from science, social studies, and literacy teachers during the next district-driven PLC day. In November, Principal stated he asked every department head to provide grade levels' writing assessments at the end of an October PLC day but did not receive any. Finally, in December 2017, the middle school's principal revealed there was no districtwide assessments at the research site but could provide copies of grade-level STAR and SBA test results.

The number of science teachers and sixth-grade social studies teachers recruited to participate in content-specific teacher focus group sessions was the next variance. Only one teacher from the science and social studies department agreed to participate in my case study. The raw data collected in the science and social studies departments' interview sessions lack any information or input from seventh- or eighth-grade teachers. These grade-level teachers' information and input are documented in the represented samples of each department's 2016–17 PLC meeting minutes.

I was granted verbal permission by each teacher participant to collect additional written data not mentioned in Chapter 3 to gain insight or understanding to participants answers to the 18-open ended teacher questionnaire exploring the case study's central research question and 3 subquestions. Additional written data included learning targets, daily assignments, unit tests, grade-level subject-knowledge post/pretests, unit test tracking forms, various sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade writing assignments and learning activities, science notebook directions, student writing samples, and various types of rubrics. The data helped the participant, their teaching peers or grade-level, or whole department to communicate, measure, and/ or track students' yearly academic growth or achievement. There were no unusual circumstances encountered in the data collection process of this case study.

Data Analysis

Data collected inside one principal one-on-one interview session, two teacher one-on-one interview sessions, and one teacher focus group session were transcribed and sorted using Washington's TPEP Eight-CR. Participants were asked 18-open ended questions about how their educational practices and beliefs are influenced by TPEP, CEL's 38 indicators of quality teaching and leading, and the middle school's SIP. I used a 2-part coding system, based around TPEP's Eight-CR and CEL's 5D's 38 indicators, (Tables 5-9) to categorize the raw data transcribed oral data to better understand how Washington's evaluation system influenced individual teachers and other collaborative groups at the research site.

First, I divided each session's transcribed answers to the 18-open ended questions to explore, with great depth, the central and 3 procedural subquestions of this case study (Tables 1-4). Next, using eight different colored highlighters, one for each TPEP criterion, I shifted through the four recorded sessions' transcribed notes looking for emerging broad themes and patterns. Then, with the help of Microsoft Excel, the color-coded TPEP raw data was broken into smaller more specific groups using CEL's 38 indicators of quality teaching and learning. The same method was used to sort and analyze the written data collected from Principal and the teacher participants.

Breaking down raw oral and written data using TPEP and CEL language provided a clear picture of how Washington's new evaluation system, TPEP, "helped, guided, or was ignored" by these middle school educators when attempting to accomplish the middle school's SIP literacy activities and goals. The process also identified the specific TPEP, CEL, and SIP language these Washington middle school educators currently used or lacked within individual classrooms, grade levels, departments, collaborative groups, and entire middle school. The 2-part coding system helped explore how one middle school principal and one science, one social studies, and 3 literacy teachers viewed Washington's 4-tier, 2-part teacher evaluation program and the school's SIP. Conducting this qualitative instrumental case study helped gain some insight to the barriers the research site staff experience trying to accomplish specific grade-level, content-specific or whole school reading and writing activities outlined in the school's SIP goals.

Memo writing helped shape the ideas of what was missing in the data and how specific participants and departments viewed the school's SIP and TPEP, Washington's

teacher evaluation process. My memo process was organized around four goals Principal wanted his staff to focus on during district-provided PLC time: “assessments, curriculum, interventions, and enrichment.” I felt the need to explore the question, “Did members of the literacy, social studies, and science PLCs know those were the school’s principal goals for their PLC’s meeting times and did those goals shape the school’s collaborative meetings’ agendas?” organizing the raw data into categories and themes. Then, I explored Principal’s four goals, or all, were the academic focus of the science, social studies, and literacy department’s PLC and why. Next, I wanted to know how Principal used his four PLCs goals to shape the school’s literacy and academic culture and how those goals were seen in BLT meeting minutes and his weekly emails. Finally, I investigated how Principal ensured his four PLC goals were accomplished by the middle school’s teaching staff.

First, I reviewed and sorted nine 2016–17 social studies, literacy, and science PLCs monthly meeting minutes looking for identifiable discussions and/or actions plans based around the four words “assessments, curriculum, interventions, and enrichment.” I documented how much “time” was spent on each one goal during an entire 2016–17 school year and what “barriers” were found in the science, social studies, and literacy PLCs. I used different highlighter to color code the raw data as patterns emerged. Next, I looked for common themes in the color-coded data and used Microsoft Excel to organize the data by research question. I followed the same process for the nine 2016–17 representative sample of BLT bi-weekly meeting minutes, science, social studies, and literacy PLC meeting minutes, and Principal’s weekly staff emails and attachments. The

last step was to combine the administrative, science, social studies, and literacy organized data together to formulate the themes discussed in the Results and Finding chapters of this case study.

The results of the central and 3 procedural subquestions provide some insight to why educators at this Washington middle school struggle to create the rigorous community-wide literacy program outlined in its yearly SIP. “The lack of consistency, accountability, knowledge, communication, time, and professional development” were the themes created when exploring why this staff struggles to embed TPEP and CEL language and expectations into the collaborative groups of this middle school. Other coded themes include “isolation, standardized test results, and high school graduation rates.”

Results

The purpose of conducting this qualitative instrumental case study was to investigate how middle school educators worked together to accomplish reading and writing SIP goals written yearly by the research site’s teaching staff. The case study’s themes were formed by combining transcribed notes from 3 1:1 and 1 focus group interview sessions and 9 representative samples of the literacy, social studies, and science 2016–17 PLC monthly meeting minutes, BLT bi-weekly meeting minutes, and Principal’s weekly emails, and a variety of content-specific learning targets, writing assignments, assessments, and other written data provided by the participants of this research study. The 147 pages of transcribed notes and 47 pages of written data was broken down using a 2-part coding system using Washington’s TPEP Eight-CR and

CEL's 5D Instructional Framework's 38 indicators of quality teaching and leading to identify how educators at one Washington middle school used Washington's 2-part, 4-tier evaluation system to fulfill grade-level and content-specific reading and writing activities embedded into the school's SIP goals. The results of this qualitative instrumental case study will be presented by research question and organized by the six themes developed when analyzing the collected raw data.

The themes that emerged from the data:

- The middle school's SIP and Washington's TPEP system are both isolated from the individual and collaborative work taking place at the research site.
- The building principal has yet to established plans to hold teachers accountable for using SIP, TPEP, or CEL language to create the rigorous schoolwide literacy program outlined in the middle school's SIP.
- Educators at the research site spend little time collaboratively working to accomplish the activities written into the SIPs reading and writing goals SIP or to embed TPEP Eight-CR and CEL's 5D Instructional Framework into the school's academic culture.
- Common Core State Standards (2009) influenced teachers' learning targets, instructional practices, and assessments more than the school's SIPs literacy goals, Washington TPEP Eight-CR, or CEL's Instructional Framework.
- State and district-mandated tests results, SBA and STARS, and high school graduation rates are more of a priority than creating rigorous schoolwide literacy program.

- The middle school staff lacks on-going and specific professional development to integrate Washington's TPEP's Eight-CR, University of Washington's CEL's 5D Instructional Framework, and the 21st Century learning standards outlined in the CCSS into the school's academic learning culture.

The six themes emerged from the 2-part coding process are the identified barriers contributing to the educators' inability create the rigorous schoolwide literacy program outlined in the middle school's yearly SIP plan.

Central Research Question's Findings

The central question why are the middle school teachers at the research site still not meeting the SIP goals despite the use of Washington's TPEP Eight-CR, adoption of CEL's 5D Instructional Framework, and added collaboration time was analyzed using Washington TPEP's 5D indicators classroom environment and purpose. TPEP's 5D Purpose indicator was broken down further using CEL's quality teaching and leading characteristics connection to standards, broader purpose of learning, transferable skills, communication of learning targets, success criteria and performance task(s), and work of high cognitive demand. TPEP's 5D indicator Classroom Environment and Culture used CEL's student discussion, collaboration, and accountability standards (Table 5). Both oral and written data collected over 4 months exposed some attitudes and actions hindering sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade literacy, science, and social studies teachers from accomplishing specific activities written into the school's reading and writing SIP goals.

Table 5

Central Research Question's 2-Part Coding Results

		TPEP Criterion 1: Centering instruction on high expectations for student learning
CEL 5D's Subdimensions	CEL's 38 indicators for Quality Teaching & Leading	Evidence of How Teachers Accomplish Criterion
Purpose	Connection to Standards, Broader Purpose, and Transferable Skills	Close Reading Skills: finding evidence to answer questions about text IQIA sentence writing Research projects in Science and Social Studies classes that focus on summarization skills
	Communication of Learning Targets	Written on whiteboards at front or side of classrooms Students write learning targets as 5-part heading in two ELA classrooms
	Success Criteria and Performance Task(s)	Common Core State Standards STAR Test Scores: fall and spring in ELA classes only. No usage of these scores in all classes or conversations in PLCs around these scores IABs: Practice testing for spring SBA testing in all ELA classes and only 6th grade SS SBA: spring Testing Window for Entire School: helped identify READ 180 students Middle School's Summary Writing Rubric
	Work of High Cognitive Demand	Summary Writing that includes textual evidence Close Reading Activities IQIA Sentences "Quote sandwich" Paragraphs
Classroom Environment & Culture	Student Discussion, Collaboration, and Accountability	Group work and Discussions that focus on Summarization Skills "What did I learn from this text I just read?" Science Notebooks "How organized a notebook is directly correlated to students' grades." Tracking of Tests Scores in Social Studies, Science and Language Arts Classes: multiple choice, true/false, and fill in blank Unit, root word, and vocabulary tests.

Note. Adapted from CEL 5D+ Teacher Evaluation Rubric at a Glance, by CEL, 2012, University of Washington, pp. 1–7.

Isolation

The case study's raw data illustrated how SIP activities and goals were not being reviewed by neither the middle school's leadership team nor teaching staff throughout the 2016–17 school year. It was apparent none of the participants felt the reading and writing SIP activities and goals played a significant role in the work being done inside grade-level science, social studies, or literacy classrooms, content-specific PLCs meetings, nor BLT meetings.

Principal was asked how teachers, teachers, grade levels, and content departments use the middle school's SIP and its outlined activities to scaffold literacy skills and knowledge between grade levels. He responded by saying, "I think they (SIP activities and goals) are rarely being used. I think that it is a twice a year conversation we have and they (teachers) are engaged in writing and planning but they (teachers) do not reference them again until the end of the year."

Every teacher participant was asked "what role does the SIP plan play in your PLC times? If none, why not?" The literacy focus group stated, "We rarely ever looked at the SIP plan passed the meeting where the administration requires educators to review and rewrite new ones for the particular school year." Sixth-Grade Science Teacher, a first-year teacher, mentioned,

We went over it (the SIP) as a staff but the Science department wasn't together for that activity. We looked at them as a group (multiple grade level and department teachers) but as a Science Department we haven't sat down and gone over them. They (SIP goals and activities) are not a priority during our PLC time.

We tend to focus on how to get students prepared for the eighth-grade science test.

The only participant to mention how the sixth-grade teachers, not entire department, used SIP goals to guide instructional practices was the Sixth-Grade Social Studies Teacher, who is also the head of that department.

All the sixth-grade teachers meet every Tuesday morning in my classroom and we work together to create common learning targets that our textbook, *History Alive*, provides for us. We review the curriculum and decide together what literacy skills we will target during this lesson. We review each lesson's packets and unit tests and see how they relate to our learning targets and adjust them according the goals of the SIP. After all classes have finished the test, we (the 3 sixth grade teachers) try to stay within a day or two together so we can review the students' scores to see where the weaknesses are and then design the next unit around it.

The oral data confirmed the written data collected from the science, social studies, and literacy PLC meeting minutes, BLT meeting minutes, and the Principal's Friday emails. Only twice did Principal's 2016–17 weekly emails mentioned the school's SIP plan. On September 18, 2016, he wrote, "I observed you (teachers) engaging in solid and important conversations during the SIP writing process on Wednesday. The multi-disciplinary grouping created a collaborative environment in which our strategies and activities were created for staff schoolwide."

No details on what specific actions and conversations were observed and how the conversations could lead to the schoolwide environment he described in this weekly

email. It also did not list any learning strategies or activities created by the multi-disciplinary teacher groups, the reason or goal using multi-disciplinary groups instead of content-specific PLCs to create the school's SIP, nor how he was going to ensure the SIPs activities and goals were fulfilled by the teaching staff during the 2016–17 school year. Principal did not attach the newly revised SIP plan nor encouraged each teacher, grade level, or department to develop content-specific reading and writing instructional practices and assessments aimed to fulfill a specific SIP goals, by a certain date. None of the 2016–17 BLT meeting minutes included department heads describing a plan of action that included specific dates grade-level literacy, science, or social studies teachers would accomplish each grade-level literacy activity written into the school's SIP goals.

The only other time Principal mentioned the middle school's SIP plan in his weekly emails was Friday, December 2, 2016. This was just an update on how he and the vice-principal presented the school's SIP to district's board members and cabinet. STAR and SBA student test result data was attached to this email and Principal encouraged his teaching staff to review their grade-level students test results to understand students' academic progress, which could help accomplish the middle school's SIPs reading, writing, and math goals. Principal stated,

Student performance at LMS is measured by the SBA. Much of the plan we created revolved around structures for reading and writing, looking critically at our alignment to standards, providing intentional and planned opportunities in our instructions to prepare our students for the SBA. It is time for us to think about our next step, providing the best education that students can get at the middle

school level and creating a schoolwide academic/elective/intervention program that engages and motivates even more of our students.

Reviewing December, January, and February 2017 BLT meeting minutes, the middle school's leadership group did not set any PLC agendas for the literacy, science, and social studies departments to create the schoolwide academic/elective/intervention program. Nor were there any written records about how the science, social studies, and literacy teachers actively worked to accomplish the reading and writing activities outlined in the school's SIP. There were no written updates on what reading and writing activities have or will be accomplished found in the science, social studies, or literacy PLC meeting minutes for the rest of the 2016–17 school year, nor in the research site's BLT meeting minutes or Principal's weekly emails.

Lack of Accountability

The lack of accountability was a common theme formed during the data analysis stage for why educators at this research site struggled to accomplish SIP yearly reading and writing activities and goals. Every teacher participant mentioned being unaware of the learning targets, activities, and assessments their teaching peers designed to accomplish the SIPs reading and writing goals. Sixth-Grade Literacy Teacher illuminated the lack of accountability and consistency with his answer to how department teachers worked together within a school year to accomplish both grade-level and department literacy activities written into the reading and writing SIP goals.

Many of the goals are far reaching and the problem we (literacy department) has is that we are kind of on our own page. There is no common curriculum, per say,

so meeting it through activities, in my opinion, is up to the teacher and we aren't. No one is making sure, we work towards any of the reading and writing goals, so we don't.

Seventh-Grade Literacy Teacher added,

And the SIP plan isn't what we (teachers) are thinking about every time we (literacy department) need to get together and talk about something. The SIP plan is something they (administrators) are telling us to accomplish at the beginning of the year. It is almost like a forged goal, pretend goal, so that the district can say 'here is what we accomplished' or 'here we gave them (teachers) something we want them to work on.' So really the SIP plan is only something the administration talks about at the beginning and end of the year and that is it.

Sixth-Grade Science Teacher had a similar answer to the same question.

Other than the rubric we (science department) created to grade short answers, probably not a lot. I think as a department; we don't find the SIP to be that important. I am not sure, how any of the work we do, as grade levels or our entire department, matches the SIP. We haven't sat down, as a department, and looked at the reading and writing goals and how they match our grade-level curriculums because no one is asking us to do that.

Name _____

Evidence Based Constructed Response Rubric

<i>Context</i>	Student	Teacher
State text title and author (In Bud, not Buddy by Chris,)	/1	/1
Use IQIA (include question in answer)	/1	/1
Summarize events leading up to the quote	/1	/1
<i>Quote</i>		
Lead into the quote Curtis writes, " ."	/1	/1
Correctly cited " ." (Curtis 104).	/1	/1
The quote helps answer the question	/1	/1
<i>Explanation</i>		
CLEARLY explains how the quote answers the question	/4	/4

Student Total _____ /10
 Teacher Total _____ /10

Figure 1. Example of science department's evidence-based constructed response rubric used to assess and measure sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students' content-specific literacy skills. Reprinted from the science department SIP activities tracking system, by ■. ■■■■, 2017, ■■■■, WA: ■■■■ School District. Reprinted by permission.

Sixth-Grade Social Studies Teacher was the only teacher participant to mention his PLC did try to accomplish the reading and writing goals outlined in the 2016–17 school year SIP.

Our PLC tried to accomplish the SIPs goals. Looking over the SIP recently, we noticed that we accomplished the first half of it because we all have to do CBAs (classroom-based assessments) but we lacked in using the data to help our department understand what literacy skills students lacked or how we could improve our instructional practices to ensure more students are successful writing their CBAs in all grade levels. We executed most of everything but the second

half. That was pretty spotty due to the lack of training our department needed on informational text writing. We just didn't get the training we were wanting. No one ensured we got it. It was mentioned in our PLC notes a few times.

Learning targets collected and analyzed showed sixth, seventh and eighth-grade literacy, science, and social studies teachers consistently used and assessed the same literacy skills, but the language varied. Seventh-Grade Literacy Teacher's learning target for the first half of the novel *A Long Walk to Water* stated, "summarizing with details." While Eighth-Grade Literacy Teacher's stated, "to close read the first have of the novel to find 3 pieces of evidence that supports your claim to the theme of the novel" for his seventh-grade learning target for *A Long Walk to Water*.

Goes w/ theme paper

Theme paper format for *A Long Walk to Water* and *Running for My Life*

Opening paragraph is a short three sentence summary of the book:

In the book, *A Long Walk to Water* a young boy flees his country of Southern Sudan when there is a civil war.....

Then state the theme:

The theme of this book is that hope and resilience can create perseverance and help that person and others to achieve their goals.

In this same paragraph add your first piece of evidence (remember page numbers and quotation marks) and your analysis of why it fits the theme:

This is shown in the story when...
(Hope/resilience/perseverance) is evident...

In this same paragraph add a TRANSITION and your second piece of evidence and your analysis of why it fits the theme:

This is shown in the story when...
(Hope/resilience/perseverance) is evident...

In this same paragraph add a TRANSITION and your third piece of evidence and your analysis of why it fits the theme:

This is shown in the story when...
(Hope/resilience/perseverance) is evident...

Write a conclusion statement that summarizes or restates your first statement of the theme:

In conclusion, perseverance is a strong theme in this story that was fuelled by hope and resilience on the part of the young people from Sudan in the story.

Figure 2. Seventh-Grade Literacy Teacher's *Long Walk to Water* First Half of Novel Summarizing with Details Assessment Directions for first half of novel theme paper. Reprinted from the novel *A long Walk to Water and Running for my Life* Unit, by [REDACTED], 2017, [REDACTED], WA: [REDACTED] School District. Reprinted with permission.

Teacher participants were asked about crafting learning targets, which included if and how grade level teachers shared learning targets with grade level or department peers, and the majority only shared learning targets with a few teachers 'here or there' but not in any meaningful way. They were not sharing common language or expectations designed to build higher-level literacy language, nor designing grade-level learning target to scaffold higher-level literacy skills between the 3 grade levels of the middle school. Seventh-Grade Literacy Teacher mentioned,

I craft mine with the Ms. X (another seventh-grade literacy teacher). Being across the hall, we can work together and even switch classes if we want too because we have the same targets, assignments, and tests. But Eighth-Grade Literacy uses a different curriculum than we do, and I don't know what his targets are for his kids.

When asked how teachers communicate learning targets to students, 4 out of 5 responded the same way as Sixth-Grade Social Studies Teacher, "On my white board." Only Seventh-Grade Literacy Teacher said, "I make my students include it in their five-part heading: first last name, period, date, assignment name, and target." No teacher participant mentioned discussing learning targets with other grade-level teachers from their department. None could verbalize how each department, by grade level, worked together to accomplish SIPs reading and writing activities and goals. Sixth-Grade Science Teacher said,

We don't. I don't think I have ever had them (science teachers) share their learning targets with me. If I go into another classroom, I could read them off the white board because they are up and some could read mine. But I don't think we (science department) have ever said, during a PLC meeting 'this is my learning target for the unit. This is the literacy skills I included this week. Here is how I am going to assess them. Our department doesn't talk about learning targets or writing and how they match the SIP goal during PLC times because no one makes us.

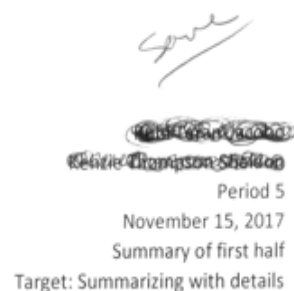


Figure 3. Example of a seventh-grade literacy teachers' five-piece heading that includes a literacy leaning target for *a long walk to water and running for my life* first half of novel theme paper. Reprinted from the novel *A long Walk to Water and Running for my Life* Unit, by L. [REDACTED], 2017, [REDACTED], WA: [REDACTED] School District. Reprinted with permission.

Sixth-Grade Social Studies Teacher stated,

I assume we (social studies teachers) all use the same basic learning targets because they are provided for us through the curriculum. We all use the same ones in sixth grade. I would assume that everyone's learning targets come from *History Alive* but I don't know what the seventh or eighth grade teachers are using. I have never asked nor have they (seventh and eighth grade teachers) ever told me. We never have had to have that conversation during our PLC times.

Ancient Sumer

Why do historians classify ancient Sumer as a civilization?

Figure 4. Sixth-grade history teachers' publisher-created learning target for unit 1: lesson 5: ancient summer. Reprinted from *History Alive! The Ancient World: Interactive Student Notebook* (p. 31), by S. Isaacs, L. Kent, B. Lasser, T. Pendgraft, & A. White, 2017, Brimfield, OH: Hess Print Solutions. Copyright 2017 by Teachers' Curriculum Institute. Reprinted with permission.

Sixth-Grade Literacy Teacher stated, "I don't know what others (literacy teachers) are doing in their classroom, so none that I can think of off the top of my head. But in my opinion, honestly, our PLCs are dysfunctional. They don't work or operate like a PLC should." When asked to expand on that idea, Sixth-Grade Literacy Teacher continued with,

Well in my opinion, in a PLC you have a common curriculum, common assessment to where you can go back to certain assessments or skills and discuss the outcomes and ask, 'What can we do here?' There are certain literacy strands our students are struggling with and we should be discussing during PLC time, 'What can we do in a common way to address that?' But I have no idea what the other sixth-, seventh-, or eighth-grade literacy teachers learning targets or success criteria are, so how do I know how I am helping our students or if I am working towards accomplishing the SIP goals. No one is making us do this, so it doesn't

happen. Everyone does what they (literacy teachers) want to do, instead of working together.

Principal's answers about SIP were similar to the teacher participants', which reinforced the lack of accountability needed establish the rigorous community-wide literacy program outlined in the school's SIP. When asked how Principal ensured PLCs used common literacy targets, instructional practices, and activities to accomplish the reading and writing SIP goals, he responded by saying,

I am not having them (teachers) share their learning targets with their peers. We (teaching staff) are not ready right now to do that. I am not sure if I could hold them (teachers) accountable for including literacy learning in learning targets.

History and literacy should but science is a long way from doing that and I don't have a plan to ensure this happens yet but maybe in the future I really don't know.

When asked how Principal holds teachers accountable for scaffolding literacy skills included in the SIP by using TPEP's Eight-CRs' vertical alignment, he responded with,

I require them (department heads) to submit their notes to me. I go to meetings or the vice-principal does and asks questions, then I review the notes provided to me.

But I can't hold them (teachers) accountable. It is too hard to ensure they are going to work on the reading and writing goals on a certain day or in a certain lesson. Whenever it is present within an observation, I would use that opportunity to reflect with a certain teacher.

Principal was asked in his follow-up session, "What happens if you read the PLCs notes and don't like the answers?" He answered by saying,

I have had that. Usually what I will do is go back to the group the next time and try to clarify what happened. There are times, especially with science, that they have gone in a direction I am not fond of or not a particular good use of PLC time, so I have to correct them on that.

Principal explained he had no plans to hold any teacher accountable, at this moment, for including reading and writing into grade-level curriculums. But he was aware little to no individual or grade-level teacher nor content-specific PLCs even tried to accomplish the SIP goals.

Little oral or written data illustrated the science, social studies, or literacy departments had broader purpose of learning that went beyond summary writing, using IQIA sentences, and 'quote sandwich' writing. Student work, provided for review, mostly required students to use direct quotes from a text, not paraphrase, to answer content specific questions or summarize a unit of study's content knowledge. The written data collected from teacher participants indicated the majority of grade-level science, literacy, and social studies teachers rarely assigned open-ended, multiple-paragraph essays. Nor were the science, social studies, and literacy teachers assessing students' writing using the schoolwide writing rubric, which was a majority writing activity included in the research site's SIP.

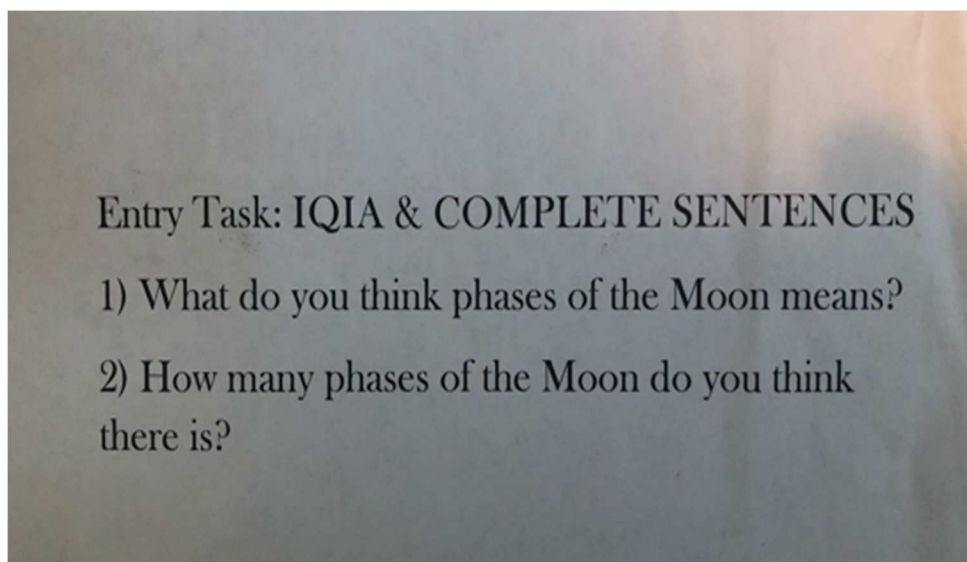


Figure 5. Sixth-grade science teacher’s entry task used to measure students’ understanding of the moon phases. Reprinted from Moon Phases Unit, by ■. ■■■■■, 2017, ■■■■■, WA: ■■■■■ School District. Reprinted with permission.

Common Core State Standards

Each participant stated Common Core State Standards (2009), not the school’s SIP, influenced the research site’s learning culture. Principal said,

There are no specific expectations outside the Common Core State Standards. I expect that any of the SIP actions we have written, they (the teachers) will accomplish but I am not sure what scaffolding of knowledge means in this question. The CCSS already includes a vertical alignment so I just expect my staff to follow those. That is what STAR and SBA test so that is what we (research site teaching staff) should focus learning around.

The majority of teachers said their grade level or department mostly used publisher-created curriculum because it included CCSS learning targets, activities, and assessments. Sixth-Grade Social Studies Teacher said, “Everyone’s, in our department,

learning targets are based around the Common Core State Standards because the *History Alive* curriculum includes the standards for each of the lessons in all the textbooks.”

Eighth-Grade Literacy Teacher and Seventh-Grade Literacy Teacher said, at the same time, “We follow the Common Core when planning our units. Seventh-Grade Literacy Teacher continued by saying, “Common Core is what we (literacy teachers) need to accomplish.”

Teacher participants were asked, “What specific standards from CCSS relate to the school’s SIP reading and writing activities and goals your department is working on this year?” Sixth-Grade Literacy Teacher answered, without hesitation, “None, that I can think of, but the *Engage New York* curriculum includes all the standards. So, teachers using it already knows it’s aligned to the standards, but I don’t know which ones they are right now or how they relate to the SIP.” Eight-Grade Literacy Teacher added,

Informational text. It’s really big right now because the majority of writing in the SBA, each spring, is usually science or history articles. I would say seventy percent of the writing and reading, we do, is part of the informational text strand of Common Core because we know they (students) will be tested on it.

End of Unit 1 Assessment

Drawing Evidence from Text: Written Analysis of How Percy's Experiences Align with "The Hero's Journey"

This assessment centers on standards NYS ELA CCLS RL.6.1, RL.6.3, R.I. 6.1, and W.6.9. How do Percy's experiences in Chapter 8 align with the hero's journey? After reading Chapter 8 of *The Lightning Thief*, students will complete a graphic organizer and write a short analytical response that answers the question and supports their position with evidence from the novel and from the informational text "The Hero's Journey."

Content Connections

This module is designed to address English Language Arts standards. However, the module intentionally incorporates Social Studies content that many teachers may be teaching during other parts of the day. These intentional connections are described below.

NYS Social Studies Core Curriculum

- 6.6 Classical civilizations developed and grew into large empires characterized by powerful centralized governments, advanced commerce and trade systems, and complex social hierarchies. The scientific and cultural achievements of these civilizations continue to impact the world today.
 - * 6.6.a The classical era was marked by an increase in the number and size of civilizations.
 - * 6.6.b Classical civilizations maintained social order through various political systems that corresponded to the values of their citizens.
 - * 6.6.f Ancient civilizations made scientific, cultural, and political discoveries that have shaped our understanding of the world today.
- 6.7 Major religions and belief systems developed as civilizations grew, which unified societies, but also became a major source of tension and conflict.
 - * 6.7.a Belief systems and religions are sets of mutual values that help to explain the way the world and humanity work.
 - * 6.7.b Over time, civilizations developed belief systems and religions that differed across place but shared similar themes.
 - * 6.7.c Belief systems and religions unify groups of people and are woven into the social organization of societies.

Figure 6. Sixth-grade literacy teacher's publisher-created end of unit 1 assessment question and informational text learning targets. Reprinted from Grade 6: Module: 1: Unit 1 Overview (p. 2), by Engage NY, 2014, Albany, NY: New York State Education Department. Copyright 2014 by the Creative Commons. Reprinted with permission.

No participant verbalized how the CCSS related to the school's SIP nor felt accomplishing SIP reading and writing activities were important to their department or the entire middle school's teaching staff. The participants, including Principal, felt district

and building administrative teams were more concerned with students' SBA test scores and high school graduation rates than the teaching staff accomplishing the middle school's SIP reading and writing goals.

State and Local Mandated Tests

Participants felt getting kids ready for the SBA, the once a year high-stake state-mandated test, or improve students' STAR scores, a twice a year test required by the research site's district administration, were the drivers of individual, grade-level or department teachers' instructional practices. Because of this attitude, sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers focused on the exact same literacy skills, IQIA sentences, including 3 pieces of evidence in writing assignments, and close reading skills when designing lesson and unit learning targets, student practice activities, and assessments. The science, social studies, and literacy departments' 2016–17 PLC meeting minutes stated those skills sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students needed to master before taking the state-mandated ELA SBA and district-mandated STAR tests in the spring of 2017.

Score	Description
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> gives sufficient evidence (3 or more) of the ability to determine the central idea, OR to summarize what happens during or after a key event. Includes specific examples/details that make clear reference to the text Adequately explains the central idea, OR summarizes with relevant information based on the text. Includes IQIA Includes transitions Includes a concluding sentence
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> gives limited evidence (2 or less) of the ability to determine the central idea, OR to summarize what happens during or after a key event. Includes vague/limited examples/details that make reference to the text Provides a limited explanation of the central idea, OR summarizes with vague/limited information based on the text.
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> gives no evidence of the ability to determine the central idea, OR to summarize what happens during or after a key event. gives the central idea OR summarizes, but includes no examples/details that make reference to the text. gives the central idea or summary, but includes no explanation, OR relevant information from the text.

Figure 7. ██████ middle school’s schoolwide summary writing rubric used in science, social studies, and literacy grade level classrooms to assess students writing 4 times a year. Reprinted from ██████ Middle School’s Schoolwide Reading and Writing Resources, by █. ██████ & █ ██████ 2016, ██████, WA: ██████ ██████. Reprinted with permission.

During the literacy teacher focus group session, Sixth-Grade Literacy Teacher discussed why the literacy teachers felt so much pressure to ensure the middle school students had gained those skills by spring.

Unfortunately for us (literacy teachers), a lot of the SBA scoring is based on the ability to decipher informational text, so when it come down it the ELA SBA scores are a direct reflection on ELA teachers, so we focus on getting students ready for that test.

Sixth-Grade Science Teacher stated,

We (the science department) doesn’t focus on the SIP because we are more concerned with getting our kids ready for the end of the year test that happens in eighth grade. I know, the sixth-grade level, our overall goal, together is for

students to be prepared to take this test at the end of their eighth-grade year. We (science teachers) in sixth, seventh, and eighth grade want them (students) to feel prepared for this test. That is our TPEP goal as a department. That test is more important to my department than teaching them how to read and write informational text.

Seventh-Grade Literacy Teacher said,

The seventh-grade writing SBA focuses on at least two pieces of evidence when they (students) answer questions and so does STAR. IQIA, include the questions in the answer, and comma usage is what Ms. X and I work heavily on because we use students' STAR scores for our TPEP goals. I use STAR scores to help me prepare students for the ELA SBA test in the spring.

Eighth-Grade Science Teacher also mentioned these two tests, SBA and STAR, influenced his classroom routines and instructional practices.

I use STAR scores to cluster students, starting in January, to work on the literacy skills they (students) lack before SBA testing begins in April. Some students can't write an evidence-based sentence using two pieces of evidence, so they focus on that. Some can't find evidence from a textbook, so they focus on close reading skills. Some need help with grammar, so they get packets and work on that. I want to ensure all students will improve their spring STAR scores, so then I can predict how well they will do on the SBA.

Sixth-Grade Social Studies Teacher mentioned his PLC focused on supporting the literacy teachers in preparing students for the SBA test. He expanded his answer with,

We (social Studies teachers) do this in several ways. We work on text-based evidence, finding text-based evidence using different forms of informational text, like charts, maps, pictures, that students could possibly see in SBA. We use evidence-based construction responses that include two direct quotes. We (social studies teachers) ensure students can write a summary of what they read using direct quotes; we call that “quote sandwich” writing.’ ELA and social studies teachers should have a poster in their classroom for kids to follow that format.”

Exploring the Essential Question: Why do historians classify ancient Sumer as a civilization?
Follow the directions to complete the item below.

20. Historians call Sumer one of the world's first civilizations. Support this argument. Near each line extending from one of the seven outer circles in this diagram, write one sentence giving specific information—such as a description or an example—about that characteristic in Sumer.



Score	Description
3	Student completes accurate, specific sentences for all seven characteristics. Sentences are clearly stated, provide relevant details, and demonstrate command of standard English conventions.
2	Student responds to most or all parts of the task, but sentences may lack details or not be clearly stated.
1	Student responds to at least one part of the task. Sentences may lack details or not be clearly stated.

Figure 8. Sixth-grade social studies teacher’s publisher-created essay question and grading rubric for unit 1: lesson 5: ancient summer. Reprinted from History Alive! The Ancient World: Lesson 5 Unit Test (p. 5), by S. Isaacs, L. Kent, B. Lasser, T. Pendgraft, & A. White, 2017, Brimfield, OH: Hess Print Solutions. Copyright 2017 by Teachers’ Curriculum Institute. Reprinted with permission.

Every 2016–17 BLT meeting minutes had a line item for SBA and STAR testing.

There were notes about how science, social studies, and literacy teachers instructed

students, at every grade level, how to close read informational text, write IQIA sentences, and use a ‘quote sandwich’ format for extended written responses or summary writing.

Every 2016–17 science PLC meeting minute included how teachers were concerned with Comprehensive Assessment of Science (WCAS) given only to the research site’s eighth-grade students. The science department’s January 2017 PLC notes stated,

We needed new curriculum better aligned with the Next Gen. Science Standards to make sure students pass on the WCAS. We are concerned the current sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade curriculums are so outdated and lack the knowledge and skills students needed to be successful on the WCAS.

None of the 2016–17 PLC meeting minutes reviewed mentioned how the science, social studies, or literacy teachers worked together to accomplish SIP reading and writing activities for each grade level. Literacy and social studies PLC meeting notes mentioned teachers’ concerns about preparing students for STAR and SBA testing. In 2016–17, the two departments adopted IABs, a 3-day SBA-focused learning activity, to predict how well sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students will do on the ELA SBA test each spring.

The social studies department’s December 2016 PLC meeting notes outlined how each grade-level teacher attempted to accomplish the reading and writing activities included in the SIP. Sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade social studies teachers provided updates on their progress for 3 months: January, February, and March. January 2016’s meeting minutes stated, “teachers will assign one open-ended assessment to their students, which is the state-mandated CBA” and the notes went to list which premade CBA each grade level would use and when the following month, February. Social

studies department's March 2016 PLC meeting minutes stated how teachers discussed the grade-level results, tried to pinpoint how or why students failed at each grade level. Then, using their students' results identified each grade-level students' literacy weaknesses and strengths. The minutes also included a discussion about the percentage of students that did not complete at each grade-level. Finally, the social studies PLC collaboratively formulated an action plan to solve the identified literacy problems by the school's SBA testing period using the grade-level, district-adopted curriculum, *History Alive*.

Middle School Recommended for 7th Grade

Causes of Conflict CBA

A conflict¹ can have many causes. To avoid and resolve conflicts, it helps to understand these causes. You will develop a position in which you explain the causes of a conflict.

Directions to students²

In a cohesive paper or presentation³, you will:

- State a position on the main causes of a conflict
- Provide background on the conflict by describing three or more of the following:
 - who was involved in the conflict,
 - what the conflict was,
 - when the conflict took place, and
 - where the conflict took place.
- Provide background on the causes of the conflict by explaining two or more factors that helped cause the conflict.
- Provide reason(s) for your position that include:
 - An analysis of how the conflict may not have occurred if not for one or more of the main causal factors to support the position
 - OR
 - An evaluation of why at least one factor is more important than others.
- Make explicit references within the paper or presentation to three or more credible sources that provide relevant information AND cite sources within the paper, presentation, or bibliography.

¹ Conflict can be defined as the struggle between opposing forces.
² This directions page guides students towards the "proficient" level (level "3") for this CBA. To help students reach "excellent" (level "4"), please refer to the rubric or, if available, the graphic organizer.
³ Students may do a paper or presentation in response to the CBA provided that for either format, there is documentation of this response that someone outside their classroom could easily understand and review using the rubric (e.g., a videotaped presentation, an electronic written document).

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction – July 2008

Figure 9. Seventh-grade geography classes state-mandated classroom-based assessment on causes of conflict. Adapted from OSPI-Developed Assessments for Social Studies, 2008, Retrieved from <http://www.k12.wa.us/SocialStudies/Assessments/default.aspx>. Copyright 2008 by Washington's Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. Reprinted with permission.

Procedural Subquestion One's Findings

“How the collaborative teams at research site are using Washington's TPEP Eight-CR and CEL's 5D Instructional Framework to scaffold literacy skills between departments and grade levels to establish the rigorous literacy expectations and language

outlined in the school's SIP?" was the first procedural subquestion explored in this case study. It was analyzed and coded using TPEP's Criterion 6: Using multiple student data elements to modify instruction and improve learning, Criterion 7: Communicating and collaborating with parents and the school community, and Criterion 8: Exhibiting collaborative and collegial practices focused on improving instructional practice and student learning. There were 3 CEL's 5D indicators used for assessment of student learning (Table 6), student growth, (Table 7) and professional collaboration and community (Table 8). Fourteen of the 38 indicators of quality teaching and leading were used to break down the data raw oral and written data collect, which included demonstration of student learning, formative assessment opportunities, establish student growth goals, establishing team student growth goals, achievement of student growth goal(s), and communication with parents, guardians, and the school's community about student progress (Tables 6-8).

Table 6

Subquestion One's Results: Assessment of Learning

		TPEP Criterion 6: Using multiple student data elements to modify instruction and improve learning	TPEP Criterion 7: Communicating and collaborating with parents and the school community	TPEP Criterion 8: Exhibiting collaborative and collegial practices focused on improving instructional practice and student learning
CEL 5D's Subdimensions	CEL's 38 indicators for Quality Teaching & Leading	Evidence of How Teachers Accomplish Criterion	Evidence of How Teachers Accomplish Criterion	Evidence of How Teachers Accomplish Criterion
Assessment for Student Learning	Self-assessment of learning connected to success criteria	Summary Rubric Science Notebooks Tracked Unit Test Scores	Skyward Grading System SBA and STAR Test Scores	Assessment Curriculum Intervention Enrichment
	Demonstration of learning	STAR Test Scores Premade Curriculum formulated Tests Multiple/choice, True/False/Fill-in- Blank Questions Short Answer (1-3 Sentences) Social Studies CBA	SBA and STAR Test Scores	Learning Targets Schoolwide Summary Writing Rubric STAR and SBA Test Scores
	Formative assessment opportunities	STAR Test Pre/Post Tests IAB Test Scores Social Studies CBA	STAR Test Pre/Post Tests IAB Test Scores	STAR Test Pre/Post Tests IAB Test Scores Social Studies CBA
	Collection system for formative assessment data	Publisher Unit Tests Pre/Post Tests of Content Knowledge End of Unit Test Scores STAR Test Scores Social Studies CBA	SBA and STAR Test Scores	Publisher Unit Tests Pre/Post Tests of Content Knowledge STAR and SBA Test Scores Core Classes Failure Rate
	Student use of assessment data	Tracking Unit Test Scores	STAR and SBA Test Scores	STAR and SBA Test Scores

Note. Adapted from CEL 5D+ Teacher Evaluation Rubric at a Glance, by CEL, 2012, University of Washington, pp. 1–7.

Table 7

Subquestion One's Results: Student Growth

		TPEP Criterion 6: Using multiple student data elements to modify instruction and improve learning	TPEP Criterion 7: Communicating and collaborating with parents and the school community	TPEP Criterion 8: Exhibiting collaborative and collegial practices focused on improving instructional practice and student learning
CEL 5D's Subdimensions	CEL's 38 indicators for Quality Teaching & Leading	Evidence of How Teachers Accomplish Criterion	Evidence of How Teachers Accomplish Criterion	Evidence of How Teachers Accomplish Criterion
Student Growth	Established student growth goal(s)	CCSS STAR Test Scores	STAR Test Scores Pre/Post Content Skills Tests	STAR and SBA Test Scores Pre/Post Content Skills Tests Failure Rate in Core Classes
	Achievement of student growth goal(s)	STAR Test Scores	STAR Test Scores Pre/Post Content Skills Tests End of Unit Skills Test	STAR and SBA Test Scores Pre/Post Content Skills Tests Failure Rate in Core Classes
	Establishing team student growth goal(s)	STAR Test Scores Pre/Post Content Knowledge Tests	STAR Test Scores	STAR Test Scores Pre/Post Content Knowledge Tests

Note. Adapted from CEL 5D+ Teacher Evaluation Rubric at a Glance, by CEL, 2012, University of Washington, pp. 1–7.

Table 8

Subquestion One's Results: Professional Collaboration and Communication

		TPEP Criterion 6: Using multiple student data elements to modify instruction and improve learning	TPEP Criterion 7: Communicating and collaborating with parents and the school community	TPEP Criterion 8: Exhibiting collaborative and collegial practices focused on improving instructional practice and student learning
CEL 5D's Subdimensions	CEL's 38 indicators for Quality Teaching & Leading	Evidence of How Teachers Accomplish Criterion	Evidence of How Teachers Accomplish Criterion	Evidence of How Teachers Accomplish Criterion
Professional Collaboration & Communication	Parents and guardians	STAR and SBA Test Scores	SBA and STAR Test Scores	STAR and SBA Test Scores Failure Rate in Core Classes
	Communication with the school community about student process	STAR and SBA Test Scores Pre/Post Content Skills Tests Failure Rate in Core Classes	STAR and SBA Test Scores Content Skills Tests Failure Rate in Core Classes	STAR and SBA Test Scores Content Skills Tests Failure Rate in Core Classes
	Collaboration with peers and administrators to improve student learning	STAR and SBA Test Scores Pre/Post Content Skills Tests Failure Rate in Core Class End of Unit Tests Scores	End of Unit Test Scores STAR and SBA Test Scores Failure Rate in Core Classes HS Graduation Requirements	IQIA and Complete Sentences Close Reading Skills Summary Writing Schoolwide Rubric Content Knowledge Focused
	Professional and collegial relationships	Isolated Due to Time, Prep Period Schedules, and Teachers teaching multiple grade levels, subjects, and classes.	STAR and SBA Test Scores Failure Rate in Core Classes	HS Graduation Requirements Isolated Due to Time and Prep Periods
	Supports school, district, state curriculum, policy, and initiatives	STAR and SBA Testing Core 24 CCSS	STAR and SBA Testing Core 24 CCSS	STAR and SBA Testing Core 24 CCSS
	Ethics and advocacy	STAR and SBA Testing Core 24 CCSS	STAR and SBA Testing Core 24 CCSS	STAR and SBA Testing Core 24 CCSS

Note. Adapted from CEL 5D+ Teacher Evaluation Rubric at a Glance, by CEL, 2012, University of Washington, pp. 1–7.

Isolation

SIP, TPEP and CEL expectations and language are isolated from the daily and on-going work done by the middle school's individual educators, grade-level and department

teaching teams, and other collaborative groups. This isolation stems from an idea Principal expressed during his initial session. When asked, “What were his expectations for both grade levels and content-area PLCs to refer to and use TPEP and CEL language when make curriculum decisions that accomplish reading and writing activities for each SIP goal?” Principal responded with, “I don’t.” He was then asked, “How does the TPEP’s evaluation model and district provided PLC time work to accomplish the reading and writing goals and activities your staff is writing into its yearly SIP plan?” Principal said, “They don’t. But do you want me to elaborate on those statements?” I responded with, “Yes, please.” Principal stated,

I would say those two (TPEP and SIP) have been traditionally disconnected: the evaluation model and the content work presented in the classroom. The evaluation model and the work that is happening with the SIP all depends on the department. So, it depends on the department, and the person, but I have not witnessed PLCs working together using TPEP or CEL language. The SIP is a public document while TPEP is private.

The teacher participants admitted science, social studies, and literacy PLCs did not discuss nor use any TPEP or CEL language unless crafting yearly TPEP collaborative goals. Becoming more self-reflective and documenting daily, weekly, or monthly teacher and student actions were the only changes teacher made since Washington’s new teacher evaluation system and district adopt CEL's Instructional Framework in 2012. Teachers are required to document specific instructional practices and provide student work to justify formal observed actions to evaluating principals. This evidence, along with two

formal classroom evaluations, make up teachers' targeted or focused evaluation score to label the research site's teachers using Washington's 2-part, 4-tier rating evaluation system. Science, social studies, and literacy teacher participants had very similar answers to the question "What role does TPEP's Eight-CR and CEL's 5D Instructional Framework language play in establishing grade-level benchmarks that would accomplish the reading and writing SIP goals for your department?" Sixth-Grade Science Teacher stated,

None. I don't. The science department hasn't really talked about it. Other than one meeting, one meeting we kind of talked about TPEP but really it was about goals. But really pulling out the TPEP rubric and communication them, we haven't. We (the science department) have never sat down as a group and looked over them (TPEP and CEL). It just not that important to us. The only time I talked to my partner teacher about TPEP was to craft our collaborative goal for sixth grade.

Sixth-Grade Social Studies Teacher answered by saying,

My department (social studies) hasn't discussed it yet. But it will come, I think, especially when writing our TPEP goals. But that is the only time I talk to sixth-grade teachers about TPEP. I don't talk to the seventh- or eighth-grade teachers because they write their own collaborative goals, I think. TPEP has made me more reflective as a teacher because I have to record student data and justify what I am doing in my class.

Seventh-Grade Literacy Teacher mentioned, “Ms. X and I write the same TPEP goals for our seventh-grade literacy classes, but other than that, I don’t talk to other teachers about TPEP.” Eighth-Grade Literacy Teacher said,

I can’t say I have shifted my practice or even discussed TPEP or CELs with my partner teachers. It is not something I even think I need to discuss with them. The only thing TPEP has force me to become is more reflective. I now have to record what I am doing in my classroom. That is really it.

No teacher participants could specifically state what literacy skills were taught at the various grade levels for each department. Nor did any know the literacy skills included in other departments’ curriculums. Eighth-Grade Literacy Teacher stated,

We (teachers) haven’t started the building process to get to a point to ask each other ‘What are you teaching students in this subject or unit?’ There are no set meetings where sixth-grade teachers go to a seventh-grade teacher and say, ‘these kids need to work on these skills or they were weak in these, how do you think you can build them in your subject matter?’

Sixth-Grade Literacy Teacher added,

Many times, I am isolated from the other sixth-grade literacy teacher. He is always in the social studies PLC group so to be able to know what he is doing in is just not happening right now. We (teachers) never meet with just sixth-grade teachers either. We never sit with the social studies or science departments to find out what literacy skills they teach in their curriculums at the different grade levels. No one ever makes time for that.

Seventh-Grade Literacy Teacher concluded the group's response with, "We don't even share preps with our partner teachers. We all too many preps this year, I have four myself. When do I have time to go and spend with the other teachers in my department or any others?"

Isolation between grade-level and department teachers, at the research site, lead to teachers working on the same literacy skills in every grade-level, content-specific classroom. Sixth-Grade Social Studies Teacher said his instructional focus, for both his sixth-grade literacy and social studies classes, was "close reading informational text to make a claim then back it up with two pieces of evidence for the textbook." Eighth-Grade Literacy Teacher stated, "Making a claim from a novel or informational text article then backing it up using two pieces of evidence is what I expect from my seventh and eighth-grade students." Sixth-grade Science Teacher said, "to read the textbook, summarize what they read, and prove it using direct quotes, at least two from the textbook."

The written raw data demanded students to focus on the same literacy skills in all 3 grade levels for the science, social studies, and literacy departments: IQIA sentences, close reading skills, summary writing, and 'quote sandwich' evidence-based responses. Sixth-Grade Social Studies Teacher's learning target stated, "I can answer how the different social classes from Sumer interact using direct evidence from the textbook."

The science department's Evidence-based Constructed Response Rubric evaluated sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students' ability to "use IQIA sentences to summarize events leading up to a quote that answers a scientific claim." Seventh-grade Geography's Reading Notes, provided by Principal, had students read a Latin America

chapter of the Geography textbook. Students answer basic reading comprehension questions using IQIA, which included “what challenges do farmers face in Mexico’s countryside?” And “listen to the interview carefully and complete as much of the neighborhood’s survey as you can including the population density, green space per person, number of police officers?” There were few assignments making student move beyond reading comprehension or summarization submitted for review.

INFORMATION MASTER Ctrl + Alt + S

Writing an Article About Life in Mexico City

As part of your exchange program with a university in Mexico City, you will write an article for your own school’s newspaper. In the article, you will describe life in Mexico City. Draw on what you learned from your readings, your neighborhood visits, your surveys, and your discussions at the cafe. (class)

Your article must include

- an appropriate and appealing title.
- an introduction with background information about Mexico City. Include geographic and historical details.
- two or three paragraphs describing life in Mexico City. Use at least three of these terms: *rural decline, spatial inequality, standard of living, urbanization*. Also, share the survey results from at least two of your neighborhood visits.
- a conclusion with some of your thoughts about your experiences in Mexico City.
- two “photographs” from your visits. These can be drawings you make or copies of photographs from a book or the Internet. Make sure they show something you wrote about in the article. Write a brief caption for each.
- writing that is free of grammar and spelling mistakes.
- clever and creative touches that will make your article more realistic.

Figure 10. Seventh-grade history teachers’ adapted publisher-created directions for writing an article about life in Mexico city that combines content-knowledge and personal opinions. Reprinted from Geography Alive! Regions and People: Unit 3: Latin American: Lesson 9: Teacher Resources, 2017. Retrieved from <https://subscriptions.teachtc.com/teacher/lessons/1126/studenthandouts?programid=6>. Copyright 2017 by Teachers’ Curriculum Institute. Reprinted with permission.

NON-FICTION BOOK VERIFICATION FORMAT

BOOK NAME
AUTHOR
CALL NUMBER ON THE SPINE OF THE BOOK (298.32 for example)

You will:

A. Introduce the book with a short overview of what the reader can expect from this book; including the length, organization, reading level, amount of pictures, and a brief summary similar to a book "jacket" summary.

B. Tell what you liked and didn't like about the book.

C. Include an excerpt from the book and comment/analyze/explain this portion.
Drawing or Oragami books will have an example you made attached.

D. Give a personal story about your own experience related to this book or topic of the book. Maybe you could tell why you chose to read this particular book, or talk about future plans for yourself because of this book. Maybe discuss how this book helped you to grow in a certain area. For example, if it is a book about the beach, talk about your experience with going to the beach.

Check List

- + The call number is a number you need to fill a space on your grid
- + Paper is typed in 12 pt font with a full heading
- + Paper is about 5 paragraphs long
- + Complete sentences in full paragraphs
- + Specific details are supporting your answers
- + There is an excerpt from the book with commentary from you about it
- + YOU HAVE A HEADING INCLUDING YOUR FIRST AND LAST NAME AND P. #

Figure 11. Seventh-grade literacy teacher's directions for monthly non-fiction book report used with seventh and eighth grade students. Reprinted from [REDACTED] Middle School Literacy Department Writing Resources, by [REDACTED], 2008, [REDACTED], WA: [REDACTED] School District. Reprinted with permission.

No mention of TPEP or CEL language or expectations were found in any of the 2016–17 social studies, science, and literacy department's monthly PLC minutes. Nor was there any mention to how science, social studies, literacy PLCs worked together to scaffolded higher-level literacy skill between the middle school's 3 grades levels. None of the 3 departments PLC monthly meetings mentioned how teachers collaborated together to design specific grade-level literacy benchmarks or activities aimed at fulfilling the middle school's SIP reading and writing goals. Nor were these ideas found in any of the 2016–17 BLT monthly meeting minutes or Principal's Friday emails. The

school's leadership team never discussed what literacy skills science, social studies, and literacy grade-level teachers needed to embed into curriculums nor how the 3 departments, by grade level, should embed TPEP and CEL language to fulfill the reading and writing activities outlined in school's SIP goals.

Common Core State Standards

The principal and teacher participants mentioned CCSS were the literacy benchmarks used by teachers at the research site, not the school's SIP plan or the expectations found in Washington's TPEP evaluation system. When Principal was asked what are his expectations for content-specific PLCs to establish grade-level benchmarks for literacy learning in each grade level in each grade level, he stated, "The CCSS establish the benchmarks for the different content areas. It's a vertical alignment for sixth, seventh, and eighth grade teachers. If it is in the CCSS, they (content teachers) should have it as a grade level benchmark."

Unclear on his answer so I asked Principal, "What is the percentage of teachers who teach social studies, science, and literacy that actually know the CCSS are meant to integrate literacy skills into their classrooms?" Principal needed clarification so asked, "When you say, know them, what do you mean?" I responded with "know the standards and benchmarks you were just referring too? Knowing that their teaching role has changed because of them? Know that they need to teach content-specific literacy skills to their students?" Principal taking a long pause before he stated, "I mean, if I had to throw out a number, I would say half. Half of each of the 3 departments. I think there still

teachers in ELA that are struggling to understand the CCSS. But they (teachers) are struggling with all of it.”

I responded with, “Can you clarify your answer a little bit? Expand, so I understand what you are trying to explain why teachers are struggling to grasp how the Common Core and TPEP have changed their teaching roles.” Principal took off his glasses, rubbed his eyes, sighed, then after a long pause stated,

So, at the (long pause) at the middle school level, we have some teachers that do not feel that teaching reading and writing is their job. Their role is to teach specific content-area information and that is it. They (teachers) haven’t grasped how TPEP and the CCSS changed their teaching role. Some haven’t even looked at the standards but just say what they (teachers) have been before I got here are aligned with the Common Core Standards. But these teachers know the CCSS is a good buzz word with it comes to benchmarks.

Sixth-Grade Literacy Teacher said, “Our learning targets all come from the Common Core. *Engage New York’s* curriculum is aligned to the Common Core.”

Seventh-Grade Literacy Teacher added, “So is the literacy textbook. The publishers do it for us.” Eighth-Grade Literacy Teacher, “I know that all the ‘buzz’ words for TPEP is found in Common Core like ‘rigor, analyze, and evaluate’ so I know that what I am using is best for kids.” Sixth-Grade Literacy Teacher ended the discussion with, “That is why Ms. W started using *Engage New York* 5 years ago, and we (pointing at Eighth-Grade Literacy Teacher) use it too.

Lesson	Lesson Title	Long-Term Targets	Supporting Targets	Ongoing Assessment	Anchor Charts and Protocols
Lesson 1	Engaging the Reader: Close Reading Part 1 of “Shrouded in Myth”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can cite text-based evidence to support an analysis of literary text. (RL.6.1) I can effectively engage in discussions with diverse partners about sixth-grade topics, texts, and issues. (SL.6.1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can get the gist of the text “Shrouded in Myth.” I can identify unfamiliar vocabulary in “Shrouded in Myth.” I can collaborate effectively with my peers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> QuickWrite: Response to Quote and Picture Students’ annotated texts “Shrouded in Myth” Exit Ticket: Reflecting on the Learning Targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Think-Pair-Share protocol Fist-to-Five protocol
Lesson 2	Building Background Knowledge: Close Reading Part 2 of “Shrouded in Myth”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can cite text-based evidence to support an analysis of literary text. (RL.6.1) I can use a variety of strategies to determine the meaning of unknown words and phrases. (L.6.4) I can effectively engage in discussions with diverse partners about sixth-grade topics, texts, and issues. (SL.6.1) I can express my own ideas clearly during discussions. (SL.6.1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can cite evidence from the text when answering questions and discussing “Shrouded in Myth.” I can use context clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words in “Shrouded in Myth.” I can collaborate effectively with my peers. I can express myself clearly in a group discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students’ annotated texts “Shrouded in Myth” (from Lesson 1 homework) Exit Ticket: Reflecting on the Learning Targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Things Close Readers Do Triad Talk Expectations Think-Pair-Share protocol
Lesson 3	Meeting the Main Character: Launching <i>the Lightning Thief</i> (Chapter 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can cite text-based evidence to support an analysis of literary text. (RL.6.1) I can analyze how an author develops a narrator or speaker’s point of view. (RL.6.6) I can effectively engage in discussions with diverse partners about sixth-grade topics, texts, and issues. (SL.6.1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can make inferences about Percy in order to understand him as the narrator of this story. I can cite evidence from the text when answering questions and discussing Percy’s character in <i>The Lightning Thief</i>. I can follow our Triad Talk Expectations when I participate in a discussion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions from the Text: Chapter 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making Inferences About Percy Carousel Brainstorm protocol

Figure 12. Sixth-grade literacy teacher’s publisher-created lessons for the novel *Lightning Thief*. Reprinted from *Grade 6: Module 1: Unit 1 Overview* (p. 3-4), by Engage NY, 2014, Albany, NY: New York State Education Department. Copyright [2014] by the Creative Commons. Reprinted with permission.

Sixth-Grade Social Studies Teacher mentioned how the CCSS was already embedded into each unit's learning targets and benchmarks by the textbook's publisher, which was the main reason both the middle school and high school adopted *History Alive*. "*History Alive* curriculum is aligned to the Common Core State Standards so those are our benchmarks. You can go to the online textbook and see how every Lesson is aligned to the standards. It makes it easy for us (history teachers)."

None of the written data showed how teachers used the CCSS to accomplish the school's SIP goals and activities or how TPEP or CEL language related to the CCSS.

State and Local Mandated Tests

Wanting to explore why Principal did not have any expectations for teachers to embed TPEP and CEL expectations and language into their PLC meetings, I asked in his follow-up session, "In question six, you mentioned you do not have any expectations for teachers to use TPEP to make curriculum decisions, why not?" Principal answered, "Curriculum decisions? Curriculum decisions within their PLCs using TPEP and CEL's language?" I responded by saying, "That was one of the questions in the interview session and you said, 'none' so I wanted to know why you have none?" Principal took his glasses off his face, rubbed his eyes, and took a long thinking pause. His nonverbal cues led me to ask, "How does TPEP relate to the school's SIP plan? What are the different indicators of quality teaching and learning you expect departments, by grade levels, to focus on during PLC time that would help accomplish the reading and writing SIP activities and goals?" Principal let out an audible sigh, put his glasses back on his face, then stated,

TPEP and SIP are two isolated documents. Our (middle school educators) hands are tied when it comes to SIP goals. The goals are tied to SBA scores. That is what the district wants to see. The other parts are not that important to the board. They want to see visual results, which are STAR and SBA scores. I expect history to support ELA directly to increase informational text SBA scores. Using IAB, and ICA gives us (educators) feedback on whether they (students) can use those higher-level skills measured by SBA. SBA is good at measuring those skills and so are STAR Tests.

Three of the 5 teacher participants mentioned using STAR data when formulating their student growth goals each year. Seventh-Grade Literacy Teacher explained,

Many in our department, including myself, based our Criterion 3 and Criterion 6 student growth goals around a certain percentage of our whole group or targets student group improving ELA STAR test scores from the fall to spring each year. Using these scores, Ms. X and I guarantee we will meet our TPEP goals for the year.

Sixth-Grade Social Studies Teacher admitted using STAR test score results to measure both students' academic progress for both history and literacy.

For the past 2 years, I have used the ELA STAR tests to measure my students' academic progress and growth for my TPEP goals. I usually am looking for a certain percentage to improve from September to March. This year, my targeted group of students are in my READ 180 class because all of their scores will definitely improve within this school year.

Eighth-Grade Literacy Teacher stated,

It's a guarantee that the majority of my students will improve from their fall to spring on the STAR test scores. I want students to do poorly on their fall, so I can ensure I met my student growth goal at the end of each school year. The nice thing about STAR testing it is two tests that are done on a computer and the results are sent to ELA teachers instantly, which helps coaches like me fulfill our TPEP goals without a lot of work.

Currently, there are no districtwide writing assessments for the science, social studies, and literacy departments, despite being a quarterly SIP activity. Principal acknowledged few teachers demand students to gain higher-level literacy skills at the research site. Instead, the majority of literacy, science, and social studies grade-level teachers focus on the same skills, close reading skills, IQIA sentence completion, and including textual evidence to write a paragraph. These middle school teachers believed those few literacy skills were necessary literacy skills students needed to master to score a Level 3 or higher on SBA and STAR tests. Reviewing the 2016–17 literacy and science PLC meeting minutes, the majority of conversations revolved around SBA, STAR, and WCAS and how to ensure students gain the skills assessed on these 3 tests. In February 2017, PLCs were asked by the administrator to create a plan of action for each grade level and department to give students SBA and WCAS practice in the coming months before the spring SBA test took place at the research site.

The research site's 2016–17 BLT monthly agendas included SBA and STAR line items, updates the tests, and conversations on how to ensure the middle school's students

were prepared to take the SBA and WCAS in the spring. Five of the 9 Principal's weekly emails mentioned these tests, test schedules, and how to increase student scores.

According to Principal, the middle school's success criteria are based on students' STAR and SBA test results. Parents are provided written updates on their child's progress on STAR and SBA testing. The school's BLT spent a considerable amount of meeting time during the 2016–17 school year trying to decide the best way to provide parents their child's scores. They debated if it worth to pay for postage or robocall parents to look on the school's website for the results.

Besides SBA and STAR tests, Core 24, Washington's new high school graduation requirements, was the major topic for the middle school's leadership team focused on for the 2016–17 school year. The research site's BLT spent a considerable amount of time trying to figure out the best way to offer high school credits at the middle school to guarantee the majority of academically struggling students graduated on time, at the same time discussing ways decrease the failure rate of core classes at this middle school. None of the 2016–17 BLT meeting minutes indicated leadership cared about the higher-level literacy skills middle school students needed in postsecondary education or future careers. Currently, the only schoolwide reading and writing requirements include close reading skills, IQIA sentence completion, and including textual evidence to write a paragraph, which are needed for a Level 3 on SBA or STAR tests.

Lack of Accountability

None of the 2016–17 science, social studies, or literacy PLC meeting minutes mentioned ways grade-level teachers tried to accomplish the reading and writing

activities written into the school's SIP goals. Nor did these 3 department's PLCs meeting minutes include instructional practices, students work, and assessments each grade-level teacher used to scaffold the higher-level reading and writing activities outlined in the school's SIP. No mention of scaffolding of literacy skills inside any of the 2016–17 BLT minutes reviewed. The department heads and the school's administration did not craft action plans to guarantee grade-level or departments' literacy learning activities went beyond IQIA sentence, summary writing, close reading skills, and making claims using two pieces of evidence.

Principal was asked to describe how PLCs work together to scaffold the higher-level literacy skills embedded in the research site's SIP.

There is no systematic way. In terms that we (middle school educators) on how we are going to accomplish the SIP goals. And I certainly don't have one. This year's plan, which was started on the second day, was to have people (teachers) commit on what they will do to improve reading and writing in their content-area this year. But it is very broad, and I have no plan to hold any teacher accountable for fulfilling the commitment they made. My style is to expect the teacher understands the skills and I am just there to observe them leading kids through learning the skills targeted. I don't have a background in literacy, so I have to allow outside people or our team help target those skills. But I have no expectations for teachers to use TPEP, CEL, SIP language during PLC meetings. I am just happy if I observe teachers using reading and writing in their classroom, right now.

Teacher participants were asked what specific literacy skills do they expect students to have when entering each grade level at the middle school and the role TPEP's Eight-CR and CEL's 5D Instructional Framework play in accomplishing these benchmarks. Sixth-Grade Science Teacher responded by saying,

I don't think, as a grade level or department, we (science teachers) have talked about skills. We expect them to write in complete sentences and things like that. But not across the board. TPEP and CELs is not something we talk about during PLC meetings. Our department has not really talked, other than, one meeting about TPEP or CELs but that was about our goals. But really pulling out TPEP's Rubric and communicating how they affect the science department, we haven't.

Sixth-Grade Teacher stated,

We (literacy teachers) don't spend enough time looking or talking about SIP plan. It is a 1-day meeting. But we don't have any grade level benchmarks, so if you don't have any, you can't talk about any, or measure anything.

Eighth-Grade Literacy Teacher added,

I think TPEP language used would be data, analyze, rigor. All of those apply whether they are used or not in this department. But we don't really talk about TPEP or use CEL language during PLC time. No one is making us pull out our TPEP rubric and match it with what we are doing in our classroom or grade levels. We are all over the board in our department. Half the teachers use one curriculum and the other half use a different one. No one is making us just use one or compromise in the skills we teach our students.

The two teachers continued to discuss the lack of accountability seen in the literacy department. As the two literacy teachers continued to talk, each realized there could not be any scaffolding of knowledge in the department with the current climate. Principal confirmed these teachers' answers during his one-on-one interview session.

I have no expectations outside what was here before I got here. I have no plans to hold teachers accountable for scaffolding knowledge. I realize there are teachers in the literacy, social studies, and science department that are doing their own thing, but I have no plans to hold them accountable, yet. The literacy department is the worst example of this, for sure, then science. Social studies are the most functional PLC. There is only one, maybe two teachers, in that department that do their own thing. I am not even sure how I would go about holding these teachers accountable. I have no plans to do it, right now.

Sixth-Grade Literacy Teacher stated,

Many middle school students might have a gap in their literacy learning because of the turmoil found within the literacy department, our inability to compromise with the other 3 teachers, and the inability for this department find common ground on what curriculum is best for our students.

Eighth-Grade Literacy Teacher added,

Half the department wants to use the textbook, but it just has kids read a story and answer comprehension questions. We (3 literacy teachers) don't want that. It's not what is best for kids. So, during our PLC time this becomes a battle, and no one (building leadership) is making us compromise or demanding any of us change.

Procedural Subquestion Two's Findings

The goal of this case study was to explore how educators at one Washington middle school use TPEP and CEL language to accomplish the rigorous reading and writing goals written into the school's SIP plan. Starting in 2012, the research site's district administration provided teachers with collaboration time Wednesday mornings. The goal for this new schedule was to better meet the needs of diverse student population found in the district and individual schools. Science, social studies, and literacy PLCs are expected to work together to create a yearly plan of action that accomplishes the reading and writing activities written into the district and school SIP goals. The goals consist of adding more reading and writing into each grade level and content department, develop literacy-based activities aimed to increase the academic rigor, increase SBA scores at each grade level, and decrease failure rates in students' core classes. SIP reading and writing activities include sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade science, social studies, and literacy teachers assigning one writing assignment that is assessed using the middle school's schoolwide summary writing rubric at least once a quarter. Then content-specific PLC members use the results to adjust individual, grade-level, and department's instructional practices to create the rigorous schoolwide literacy program outlined yearly in the middle school's SIP.

Procedural two subquestion, "How are specific departments and grade level teams at the research site integrating CEL's 38 indicators of quality teaching and leading to incorporate higher-level literacy skills into their learning targets, instructional practices, and common assessments that would fulfill the reading and writing goals outlined in the

school's SIP," investigated why these middle school educators struggle to create the schoolwide literacy program outlined in their SIP after almost 6 years of district provide collaboration time. Procedural two subquestion raw data, first, was analyzed using TPEP's Criterion 2: Demonstrating effective teaching practices and Criterion 3: Recognizing individual student's needs and developing strategies to address those needs. Oral and written raw data collected was then broken down into smaller parts to investigate this research question with depth used CEL's subdimensions student engagement (Table 9), curriculum and pedagogy, purpose (Table 10), assessment of student learning, and student growth (Table 11).

Table 9

Subquestion Two's Results: Student Engagement

		TPEP Criterion 2: Demonstrating effective Teaching practices	TPEP Criterion 3: Recognizing individual students needs and developing strategies to address those needs
CEL 5D's Subdimensions	CEL's 38 indicators for Quality Teaching & Leading	Evidence on How Teachers Accomplish Criterion	Evidence on How Teachers Accomplish Criterion
Student Engagement	Quality of Questioning	Finding and Using Evidence to Answer Content Questions	Struggles with Special Education, ELL, and low Achieving Students Student Apathy
	Expectations, support, and opportunities for participation and meaning making	Finding Evidence to Support Claim Summary Writing Social Studies CBA's Science Research Projects	Social Studies CBA Science Research Project Add More or Lessen Reading/Writing to Assignments
	Substance of student talk	Summarization of Text Processing of Information	Exit Tickets Ask questions: Whole and Small group Pair/Share Models
	Ownership of learning	Tracking Test Scores Tracking of STAR Test Results SBA & IAB Tests	Exit Tickets Summary Writing Rubric End of Unit Tests Pre/Post Tests SBA & IAB Tests
	Strategies that capitalize on learning needs of students	STAR Test Results Pre/Post Tests End of Unit Tests	Exit Tickets Summary Writing Rubric End of Unit Tests Pre/Post Tests SBA & IAB Tests

Note. Adapted from CEL 5D+ Teacher Evaluation Rubric at a Glance, by CEL, 2012, University of Washington, pp. 1–7.

Table 1

Subquestion Two's Results: Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Purpose

		TPEP Criterion 2: Demonstrating effective Teaching practices	TPEP Criterion 3: Recognizing individual students needs and developing strategies to address those needs
CEL 5D's Subdimensions	CEL's 38 indicators for Quality Teaching & Leading	Evidence on How Teacher Accomplish Criterion	Evidence on How Teacher Accomplish Criterion
Curriculum & Pedagogy	Scaffold of Tasks	TCI Curriculum in Social Studies 8th Grade SBA Test in Science CCSS	None
	Gradual release of responsibility	Tracking of Test Scores Science Notebooks	Exit Tickets Unit Tests Summary Writing Rubric
	Differentiated Instruction	Pre-Made Publisher Curriculum More Work to Challenge Students STAR Test Results	ELA Highly Capable Class Special Education ELA Classes Added Work Hi Cap Kids Added Novels in ELA Building-Wide Struggle to Deal with Special Education, ELL, and low Achieving Students
Purpose	Teaching point(s) are based on student learning needs	Publisher-created Curriculum and Learning Targets STAR Test Results	Publisher-created Curriculum and Learning Targets

Note. Adapted from CEL 5D+ Teacher Evaluation Rubric at a Glance, by CEL, 2012, University of Washington, pp. 1–7.

Table 11

Subquestion Two's Results: Assessment for Student Learning and Student Growth

		TPEP Criterion 2: Demonstrating effective Teaching practices	TPEP Criterion 3: Recognizing individual students needs and developing strategies to address those needs
CEL 5D's Subdimensions	CEL's 38 indicators for Quality Teaching & Leading	Evidence on How Teachers Accomplish Criterion	Evidence on How Teachers Accomplish Criterion
Assessment for Student Learning	Teacher use of formative assessment data	End of Unit/Chapter Tests Pre/Post Curriculum Tests STAR and SBA Results Summary Writing Rubric	STAR Test Results Pre/Post Test Results End of Unit Test Results STAR and SBA Results
Student Growth	Establish student growth goal(s)	STAR Test Results Pre/Post Curriculum Tests Common Core State Standards STAR and SBA Results	STAR Test Results Pre/Post Test Results End of Unit Test Results STAR and SBA Results Failure Rate in Core Classes

Note. Adapted from CEL 5D+ Teacher Evaluation Rubric at a Glance, by CEL, 2012, University of Washington, pp. 1–7.

Lack of Time

Lack of time was the main theme found when analyzing the raw data collected for this question. Teachers do not meet every Wednesday morning with their PLCs from 7:05 to 9:00. There are no collaboration days for any week shortened by holidays or parent-

teacher conferences. Once or twice a month, teachers are provided a late start Wednesday to work independently. The district leadership team is provided 4 late start Wednesdays every school year. Finally, 5 Wednesday mornings, Principal and the vice principal sets the agenda, not the research site's BLT or teachers. In a given school year, content-specific PLCs only meet 10-12 times. All 5 teacher participants agreed their PLCs do not spend enough time together to create and monitor SIP action plans in any given school year.

The lack of time grade-level and department teachers spent together was most evident in the literacy focus group session. When asked "what are the major themes being discussed inside your PLCs? How do those relate to TPEP's Eight-CR?" Seventh-Grade Literacy Teacher responded without hesitation, "No, it's not happening. We (ELA teachers) don't even meet with our PLCs enough." "Yeah." chimed in Sixth-Grade Literacy Teacher. "And when we do, its dictated acts," said Eighth-Grade Literacy Teacher. "When we get done discussing what they (administrators) want us (teachers) to discuss, we (ELA teachers) discuss how we get this (ELA PLC) to function without conflict."

Both science and social studies participants mentioned lack of time as the major reason their department lacked fulfilling SIP activities and goals. Sixth-Grade Social Studies Teacher stated, "We (social studies) don't really spend a whole lot of time talking about the SIP in our PLC meetings. There is never enough time when we meet as a whole department." Sixth-Grade Science Teacher said, "It's not something we (science teachers) talk about. Our science PLC has barely met this year, maybe one or two times,

total. It's just not enough time to have really deep discussions." Principal made similar comment during his follow-up session.

There just isn't enough time in the school year for teachers to really get any work done. There is probably 7 maybe 8 PLC days in a given school year. That just isn't enough time for teachers to have serious conversations about the SIP.

Three of the 5 teacher participants mentioned the difficulties of collaborating with other grade-level or department teachers due to lack of common planning periods. Sixth-Grade Science Teacher stated,

I don't have the same prep period as my partner teacher. She also coaches so many times, afterschool she is not there. In the mornings, it is hard enough trying to get ready for the kids. There is just not enough time in the day for us to talk about what we are going to do the next week, month, or unit. I don't think we even talked about TPEP and how it relates to the sixth-grade curriculum and she is my mentor this year.

Sixth-Grade Literacy Teacher said,

There is never time built into PLC times for me and the other sixth-grade teacher to meet. He is always in the social studies' PLC meetings. We don't have a common prep period, so when we meet in the hallway or the copy room, we spend a few minutes talking, but that is the extent of our collaboration. That limited amount of time is not spend on discussing TPEP, SIP, or anything really, but just trying to stay within a couple of days with the curriculum. We are not having discussions about how our students did on a certain writing assignment or

the weakness seen; let alone talk about how we can work together to increase sixth-grade students literacy skills. I never meet with the sixth-grade history or science department. I don't know what literacy skills they focus on or how they are trying to fulfill SIP goals. There is just no time built into our schedules to have serious conversations about student learning.

Sixth-Grade Social Studies Teacher replied with,

As a history PLC, we meet whenever they (administration) lets us. We try to share what we are doing as an entire department, but that rarely happens. The lack of time makes it hard for me to know what skills the seventh- and eighth-grade history teachers are working on. I don't even think the teachers in those grade levels even know what each other are teaching. We (teachers) just have to trust each other and hope we are all on the same page.

Three teachers mentioned the lack of time and how they have to meet outside school hours to collaborate with other grade-level and department teachers, but it is limited and a select group of teachers when it happens. Sixth-Grade Social Studies Teacher said, "As a sixth-grade, we meet every Tuesday morning at 6:30. At those meeting, we decide our learning targets for a unit, what tests, writing assignments, and skills we are focusing on. But that is only with one-third of our department."

Eight-Grade Literacy Teacher stated, "I am lucky my neighbor, Ms. W, is the other seventh-grade teacher. So, afterschool a couple of times a week, we meet in one of our classes and Sixth-Grade Literacy Teacher joins us. We talk about learning targets, how our students did on a writing assignment, and what skills we noticed are low."

Sixth-Grade Literacy Teacher added to the conversation,

That helps me decide what to focus on in my sixth-grade classes. If seventh graders are struggling to write using the “quote sandwich” or find textual evidence, I will make a mental note and put that into my lessons and ensure I am working on those skills with my students.

Eighth-Grade Literacy Teacher stated,

Let me make this clear, it is only happening because we (the 3 teachers) chose to do this on our own time. I don’t have the same conversations with the other eighth-grade teachers. I don’t get to discuss how to help eighth-graders in my seventh-grade class, they (other literacy teachers) just don’t want to make the time. Sometimes, I feel it is ‘us’ against ‘them’ attitude because of the lack of time we spend together.

Isolation between TPEP and SIP language was also found at the research site because no time has been set aside for PLCs or other collaborative groups to discuss how TPEP and CEL language could help accomplish the research site’s SIP. None of the 2016–17 science, social studies, or literacy PLC minutes recorded teachers discussing grade-level instructional purpose and effective teaching practices for the diverse student needs of this middle school. There was little to no discussions focused around how grade-level curriculums helped scaffold higher-level literacy skills inside the 3 departments or the PLCs developed grade-level and/or department districtwide assessments to pin-point and measure individual students’ or whole groups’ literacy needs at each grade level quarterly, as written in the school’s SIP writing goals.

The 2016–17 BLT meeting minutes lacked TPEP or CEL language. The school’s department heads and administrators did not try to create action plans using TPEP, CEL, or SIP expectations to better meet the literacy needs of research site’s diverse student population. There were no documented discussions on how Washington’s TPEP language and expectations could scaffold higher-level literacy skills between grade levels, departments, and the entire school aimed to accomplish reading and writing SIP goals. No written communications were found on how the research site’s BLT worked together to create an action plan to ensure educators worked together to scaffold higher-level literacy learning throughout students’ entire school day, which was another activity written into the school’s SIP.

Principal acknowledge he lacked the time to hold teachers and PLCs accountable for integrating TPEP, CEL, and SIP language into the research site’s academic culture.

I don’t think we (teaching staff) fully agree on what our teaching roles are and how they have changed with TPEP. I think that people (staff) has tolerated it, accepted it, that it is here. I am not sure if they are using it. We also attempted, last year, to provide ELA time to learn how to adapt it (TPEP’s Rubric) to their specific grade levels but it just wasn’t very successful. I think it was too much, too fast. I think TPEP is demanding more experienced teachers to change everything but not given enough time. And I don’t have time to sit in every classroom and wait to see literacy skills being taught. I need more time to be in classrooms and PLC meetings, but I haven’t figure that out yet.

State and District Mandated Testing

The research site's educators did not see the need to use TPEP, CEL or SIP language to guide the school's collaboration time. Instead, they focused on CCSS and STAR or SBA test results to guide individual, grade-level, department, and the school's instructional practices. Five teacher participants were asked, "what are the major themes being discussed inside your PLCs?" Sixth-Grade Science Teacher stated,

Our (science PLC) end of the year goal, which is all the same, to get kids ready for the SBA test at the end of their eighth-grade year. Also, how can we meet the new STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) and Next Generation Science Standards with the curriculum we have that is pretty old. We want to ensure our students are ready for the big eighth grade test (WCAS). That is what we spend most of our PLC time discussing. If TPEP or CEL language is included, it is by accident. We have never brought out the TPEP rubric and discussed any of the CELs expectations as a group.

Sixth-Grade Social Studies Teacher said,

The major themes are how do we (social studies teachers) get these kids to pass the state test (SBA) and how do we support Language Arts teachers. We talk a lot about this issue. 'What can we do, what can we do to help, what types of activities can we do to do that?' We hope what we are doing improves students' reading and writing skills. We hope it also improves their knowledge of the content, obviously. We hope the extra help will improve their language arts skills by providing more practice, but we (social studies teachers) don't know for sure

because we never meet with the literacy teachers during PLC times. We (social studies and literacy teachers) don't have conversations to discuss what we (social studies) can do to help them (literacy), what skills we focus on in each content-area and grade level. We (social studies teachers) have asked for that but Principal has never set aside the time. It would be nice to know if our additional practice with informational text is making a difference.

The Literacy focus group admitted not using or even thinking about TPEP or CEL's language during their PLC meeting times. The literacy focus group members all agreed "it is not happening in our department at all." Seventh-Grade Literacy Teacher added,

ELA teachers are focused on how to get students ready to take the SBA reading and writing test because many in the Literacy department feel that the social studies and science teachers are not doing enough to prepare students for the informational text parts of the SBA test.

Eighth-Grade Literacy Teacher takes the group's answer a step forward.

ELA teachers have a big responsibility to make sure all our students pass the state test, so we focus on the skills to get them there. It is our jobs on the line, it is our names on the kids' scores not the science or social studies teachers, so we focus on those scores.

Seventh-Grade Literacy Teacher continued the group's answer with,

We (literacy teachers) are the ones that have to do STAR testing in our classes. It seems like every PLC meeting; we are talking about STAR or SBA testing not the

SIP or TPEP or CEL. The administration is focused on STAR and SBA testing, and we feel a huge pressure from them to get the kids ready. I start in early December working on SBA test-taking skills. We (literacy teachers) now have those interim tests, so that is more PLC time we are discussing test scores. That seems to be the only thing the district cares about. Not if our kids are prepared to go to college or can read and write at a higher-level.

Principal was asked how he encouraged his teaching staff to use the higher-level literacy standards to increase the rigor in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade social studies, literacy, and science classrooms and how does his expectations match TPEP's and CEL's instructional standards. He stated,

So, I think the main way is to expose them (teachers) to IABs, ICAs, and the SBA and model their own assessments after that. Making the case, that is how our students will be measured so we should measure our students the exact same way. Which leads to a lot of conversations about should we (teachers) be teaching towards a test or teaching the skills on the test. But these are good skills so there is nothing to lose teaching these skills to our students. The level of questions found in the SBA is higher, I think, so we lose nothing teaching our student how to answer SBA test questions.

Reviewing Principal's 2016–17 weekly emails, no mention of TPEP, CEL, or SIP language were found. He did not provide articles to the teaching staff on how to incorporate TPEP or CEL language into district provided collaboration time because Principal believes SIP and TPEP are two isolated documents. He did not encourage

teachers to share literacy learning or what specific activities individual, grade-level, or department teachers use to meet the reading and writing activities written into the SIP for the literacy, social studies, and science departments. Principal was asked during his follow-up session how SBA and its preparation relates to TPEP, CEL, and SIP language. He stated, “None.” I then asked what higher-level literacy skills does STAR and SBA tests focus on. Principal answered by saying,

I don’t know the specifics. I know, first, there needs to be some training around how TPEP and SBA relate, but I haven’t done it yet. It would be worth-while to explore those 2 documents, but I don’t have a set plan for it, yet. Honestly, this is the first time I have ever thought about it.

The focus on state and district mandated testing inside the research site made me ask Principal during his follow-up interview session, “Do you think teachers understand the difference between teaching towards a test and teaching skills measured on a test?” With a long pause, he replied, “Yes, yes, I think they do. But some don’t necessarily care.” Digging a little deeper to understand this idea I probed, “If not, how can you, or will you, create a PD opportunity for teacher to start to understand the difference?” Principal said,

I am not worried about whether they (teachers) get that or not. I think that the curriculum is set by the state (Washington) and we (educators) should follow that whether they (teachers) want to or not. The SBA is how the state rates our school, so doing well on a test is what matters to me. Teaching to a test or focus on teaching literacy skills needed to take any test, it doesn’t matter to me.

Wanting to explore that answer I asked, “What is the specific evidence you use to monitor the scaffolding of higher-level literacy skills into individual classrooms, grade levels, departments, and the entire school that SBA assesses?” Before answering the question, Principal took another deep breath, moved his chair and glasses on his head.

Well, that would be the assessments the teachers are using and any data from those assessments, IAB, ICA, STAR, SBA, would give us (administrators) good feedback on whether they (teachers) are using higher-level skills because they (SBA and STAR) are very good at measuring those skills. When it comes to science and math, I am just happy there is something (reading and writing) there. I expect history to be at the second level, which is dialing in on what it looks like to support ELA SBA directly, and further trying to narrow down exactly what we (educators) want to do here, especially informational text. Although we (teaching staff) haven’t explored it yet, but we could start to talk about introducing some fictional text into history and science. That would help bridge test testing to TPEP and CEL language. I am not sure when that is going to happen. I have not set plans, but I would like to see that happen within the next 5 year.

The BLT 2016–17 meetings minutes included no written records of science, social studies, or literacy department heads updating the research site’s leadership team on each department works together to accomplish the various reading and writing activities for the school’s SIP goals. There was little to no written records of science, social studies, or literacy PLCs meeting minutes even discussing SIP activities and goals during district provided collaboration times. But there is a considerable amount of written

data on SBA testing and how to get more students prepared to pass this high-stake, once a year state-mandated test in the 2016–17 BLT and PLC meeting minutes.

Isolation

Principal was asked, “What are your expectations for both grade-level and content-area PLCs to refer to and use TPEP language to make curriculum decisions that would lead to accomplishing the reading and writing activities and goals outlined in the school’s SIP?” After a ten second pause, he stated,

None. I would say those two (TPEP and CEL) have traditionally been disconnected, the evaluation model and the content work presented in the classroom. PLCs are public and TPEP is traditional private. I can’t discuss TPEP scores with other staff members.

I went back to this answer during Principal’s follow-up session to explore the disconnect he felt Washington’s TPEP evaluation system and research site’s PLC collaborative work. I asked, “If you noticed TPEP trends with the staff, what do you do with that information?” I asked, “What professional development plans were developed, if any, focused around the teaching staff’s consistent TPEP Eight-CR and CEL’s 38 indicators of quality teaching and leading weaknesses?” Principal, after taking a moment to think, stated,

That is an interesting question. I have never thought about that. I have always looked at that document, like others (principals) as an isolated document meant to discuss with individual teachers. That is a great idea. I am not sure how I would do something like that, but it gives me something to think about.

The isolation of TPEP and CEL language and expectations found at the research site became apparent when participants were asked about how their department scaffold content knowledge and literacy skills into the 3 grade-levels, incorporated literacy skills into grade-level learning targets, and their PLCs used TPEP and CEL language to create the schoolwide higher-level literacy program outlined in the middle school's SIP. Sixth-Grade Social Studies Teacher stated,

Our (social studies) PLC doesn't have those discussions. I only talk with other sixth-grade teachers to craft our collaboration goals. At most, it is a 1- or 2-day conversation. One to set the goal and one to discuss how we accomplished the goal. It happens only at the beginning and end of the year.

Sixth-Grade Science Teacher said,

Like I said, before, our (science) PLC has never taken out the TPEP rubric and discussed how it matches to grade level or department learning targets. It is not something that is really important to us, I think. I only have conversations with the other sixth-grade teacher to formulate my TPEP goals. Other than that, it is just not happening.

Seventh-Grade Literacy Teacher said,

We (literacy teachers) don't really talk about that (TPEP) at all or how to integrate it into our curriculums. Even when we do have PLC time, it is super prescribed. I think they (district and building leadership) gives us these 22-minute assignments because they are fearful of what we (teachers) could talk about, if we got a chance to talk about what we wanted too.

Eighth-Grade Literacy Teacher added to the conversation by saying,

The buzz words, like rigor, data, analyze. All of those apply to TPEP, right?

Those are what we focus on in our PLCs. I don't know what else to say. TPEP is a document we (teachers) use to prove we are teaching, but it really doesn't affect the work we do in our PLCs or really in our classrooms, if I want to be honest. It is a check the box kind of document. That is how it is looked at here (research site).

Sixth-Grade Literacy Teacher ended the discussion with,

As for the SIP plan and TPEP. This is a tough question. They seem to be so disconnected here. We just don't ever pull out our TPEP rubric and see how it relates to the SIP goals or what we (literacy teachers) are doing in our classroom. We (teachers) are not talking about scaffolding of knowledge or skills. We are not talking about purpose, student engagement, or broader purpose of learning when we (PLCs) get together. We are talking about what they (leadership) wants us too, and that is it.

Participants, including the school principal, had a challenging time answering how the research site used TPEP, CEL, and SIP language inside the school's setting to make students read, write, think, and communicate at the higher-level needed to be college and career ready in the 21st century. The science and literacy teachers had very similar answers to Sixth-Grade Social Studies Teacher's answer.

The Common Core does the scaffolding for us, but TPEP has made me more reflective. I have to think now about what and how I am teaching. And how I am

going to record it. I now write my learning targets on the whiteboard and review them daily. I never did that before. But as for how TPEP and CELs has changed how I teach my students, it hasn't. But how it has made us (social studies) teachers incorporate higher-level literacy skills, well, we all demand students to write in complete IQIA sentences, include direct quotes to back up a claim. But higher-level skills, I don't think we (social studies teachers) have ever talked about that as a PLC.

Each department provided grade-level writing assignments teachers currently used to assess students' content knowledge. None of the science lab write-up reviewed made students create their own sentences or apply a lab's findings to the real world. Instead, science teachers provided students with fill-in-the blank style sentences and pre-bulleted charts to fill out. The literacy department's grade-level paragraph and essay formatting illustrated the lack of scaffolding of higher-level literacy skills and rigor as students moved from sixth to eighth grade. The sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade writing assignments tested students on the exact same skills: creating a thesis statement, stating a claim to prove the thesis statement was correct, provided 3 pieces of textual evidence, and writing a conclusion statement. The eighth-grade paragraph format was the exact same format used inside two of the 3 seventh-grade classrooms. There were no other literacy skills added to student writing as they moved up grade levels at the research site inside any of these 3 departments. Sixth-Grade Science Teacher stated,

I honestly don't know. This is my first year here and so I know that I have to write my learning targets on the white board. Our (science) whole department

does that. I think, the whole school has to do it. It helps kids. But I know, TPEP makes me record what and how I teach kids, but it doesn't really affect my teaching practices. But how to incorporate higher-level level learning into our science classes. We (science teachers) now demand IQIA sentences. Lab write-ups have to be in complete sentences. No more one-word answers.

Class: _____ Date: _____

Lab report: Impact Craters Investigation

Question we were trying to answer:
How does the height at which the marble is dropped into a basin of flour affect the diameter and ray length of the craters formed in the surface?

What we thought would happen:

1: I think when _____, then _____ because _____.

2: I think when _____, then _____ because _____.

<p>Materials we used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - _____ - _____ - _____ - _____ - _____ 	<p>Procedures we used:</p> <p>1: _____</p> <p>2: _____</p> <p>3: _____</p> <p>4: _____</p>
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

What we kept the same when comparing the different craters:

- _____
- _____

What we measured:

- _____
- _____

What happened:

1: When _____, then _____.

2: When _____, then _____.

Why we think it happened:
 I think this happened because _____

Figure 13. Sixth-grade science teacher's lab write-up for the moon phases experiment. Reprinted from Moon Phases Unit, by _____, 2017, _____, WA: _____. School District. Reprinted with permission.

Eighth-Grade literacy Teacher stated, “They (students) need to cite and to move away from prescribed writing starting in seventh-grade. So, the higher-level expectations include length of answer details of answer.” Seventh-Grade Literacy Teacher said,

By eighth-grade, students have to write an 11-sentence paragraph. Include evidence to support a claim. But we have never sat down as a group and discussed benchmarks. But TPEP includes having students to not just state a claim, pick evidence, but tell my why they (students) that evidence and how it supplies evidence for that claim. They (students) have to think about what they are writing, not just write.

Sixth-Grade Literacy Teacher continued the literacy focus group discussion by stating, “In sixth grade, we (teachers) just want them to write in a complete sentence, find evidence, and use the ‘quote sandwich’ it writes a paragraph. That is the difference between sixth and eighth grade.”

Formal Paragraph Outline

Topic Sentence: _____

Transition: _____
Concrete Detail #1: _____

Quote w/page # OR
Commentary: _____

Commentary: _____

Transition: _____
Concrete Detail #2: _____

Quote w/page # OR Commentary: _____

Commentary: _____

Transition: _____
Concrete Detail #3: _____

Quote w/page # OR Commentary: _____

Commentary: _____

Conclusion transition and final sentence: _____

Figure 14. Seventh and eighth grade students' 8-sentence paragraph formatting graphic organizer using in many literacy classes at research site. Adapted from *Teaching the Multiparagraph Essay: A Sequential Nine-Week Unit* by ■. ■■■■■ & ■. ■■■■■, 2010, ■■■■■, WA: ■■■■■ School District. Copyright 1999 by the Jane Schaffer Writing Program. Reprinted with permission.

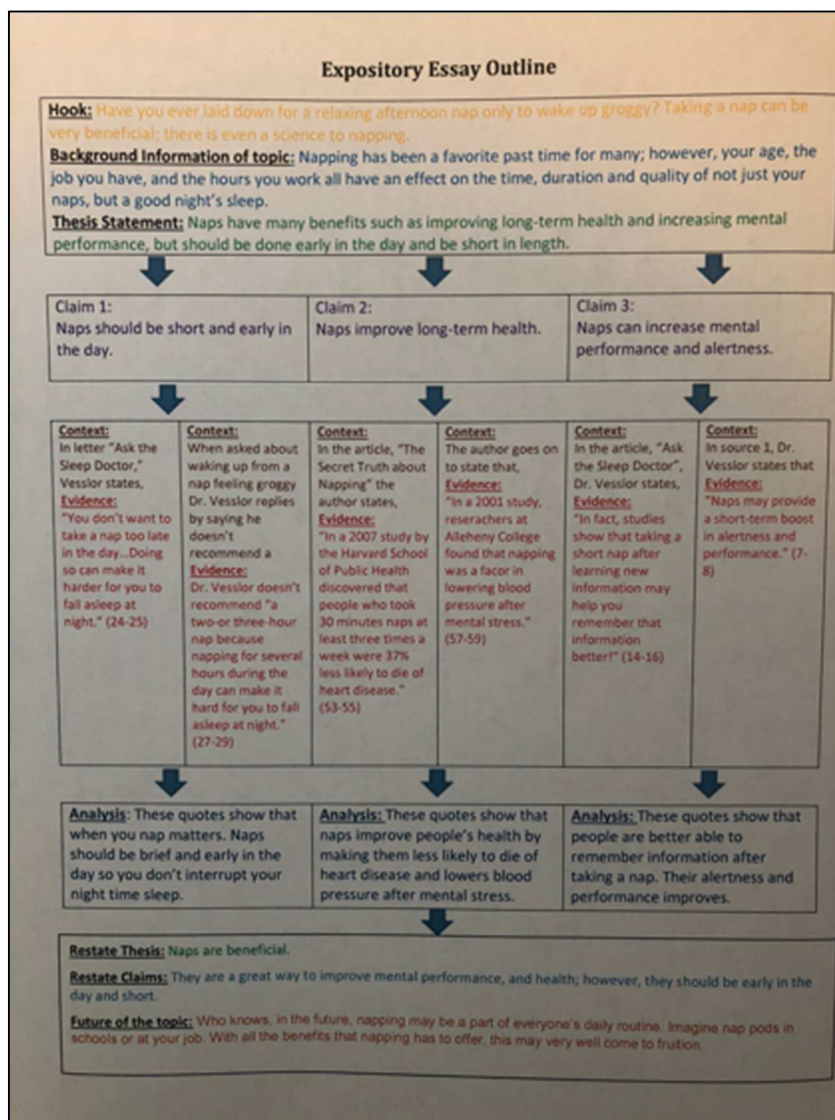


Figure 15. Sixth-grade literacy teacher's written directions for an expository essay on taking a nap. Reprinted from ██████████ Middle School Sixth-Grade Literacy Department, by ██████████, 2017, ██████████, WA: ██████████ School District. Reprinted with permission.

Principal admitted many teachers used very low-level practice work and assessments inside their content-specific, grade-level classrooms. He could not list any higher-level literacy skills specific individual teachers, grade-levels, or departments used to assess their students' academic performance and growth. Nor did he know which TPEP language and expectations his staff adopted into their classrooms, grade-levels, and

departments. Principal was asked, “Do you feel individual teachers, grade levels, and departments are incorporating higher-level literacy skills into their instructional practices?” He took a big breath before answering the question.

So, the direct answer would be no, but the indirect answer is there are some [teachers] including more literacy skills into their instructional practices. I am not sure if they are higher-level skills, though. We are going from, in some cases, from zero to some, so I just can’t say exactly which skills or which teachers. Just having some is better than zero, right now. We [teaching staff] have a long way to go to incorporate TPEP into our collaborative groups’ norms.

None of the collected 2016–17 science, social studies, or literacy PLC meeting minutes recorded teachers discussing scaffolding of knowledge and literacy skills using TPEP language. There were no documented TPEP or CEL words like ‘purpose’ or ‘effective teaching practices’ in any of the PLCs meeting minutes. There were more conversations recorded on the lack of engagement students had in all the core classes. Literacy, science, and social studies teachers were concerned “with the number of failing students in each of the grade. The amount of missing work and absences students at each grade level had.” In the April 2017 science PLC meeting minutes, a teacher mentioned, “I have students who have missed over half of the school year and nothing is being done.” The meeting’s minutes included posed a question asking what the school counselor, Principal, and the district administration were doing to solve these problems.

The social studies and literacy teachers wrote similar comments about student attendance and apathy issues and wanted the administrative team to create a plan of

action to increase student motivation in their core classes inside their 2016–17 PLC meeting minutes. None of the 3 departments PLC meeting minutes mentioned using more open-end and student-directed learning to engage students inside grade-level classrooms. There were no solutions to the problems raised or discussion on how to PLCs could utilize TPEP or CEL expectations or language to increase student rigor and scaffold higher-level literacy skills into the school’s academic culture.

Lack of Knowledge

The science, social studies, and literacy teachers stated they depend on SBA, STAR, and CCSS to isolate and target specific literacy skills, if any, to incorporate into grade-level classroom activities. Teacher participants were asked how they knew students successfully gained gain content knowledge using higher-level literacy skills. Four of the 5 teacher participants’ answers were very similar. All depended on publisher-created worksheets, tests, and writing activities to use with their students. To monitor student academic growth, 3 of the 5 teachers had students track publisher-created unit test scores. None of the teachers mentioned how they tracked content and disciplinary literacy skills. Sixth-Grade Literacy Teacher said,

I look at their assessments to see if they have met the success criteria *Engage New York* curriculum targeted for that quiz or test. If they (students) didn’t meet the standard, I use STAR to put into groups. If I have students struggling to make a claim or find evidence, you sit down with that person or small group and work on that.

Eighth-Grade Literacy Teacher stated,

STAR has built in activities that target certain literacy strands. I think, that it (STAR) is based around Common Core. And it tells you what students need to master be the end of sixth, seventh, and eighth grade. So, does *Engage New York's* curriculum, it's all laid out for you (teachers). It provided the learning targets, vocabulary, writing activities, worksheets, and all the other resources needed to teach a novel.

Sixth-Grade Social Studies Teacher answered the question with,

History Alive already scaffolds higher-level literacy skills into each unit. It also has how to adjust the learning standards for IEP kids. It is all online. All you (teacher) have to do is go under resources, as it lists out all of the standards and literacy skills found in each unit. Each unit ends with a processing activity targeting a higher-level literacy skill using primary sources or additional evidence provided at the end of every lesson in the textbook. Not all of us (social studies teachers) do them, but they are there.

INVESTIGATING PRIMARY SOURCES

Identifying and Evaluating Evidence

Use the reading to create a claim to answer this question: *How did the different social classes of Sumer interact with one another?*

Claim:

What evidence from the primary sources documents support your claim? Fill out the chart below. Circle the two strongest pieces of evidence.

Source	Evidence	How does this support the claim?

You can use this evidence to strengthen your claim. Write your revised claim below.

Figure 16. Sixth-grade history teacher's publisher-created graphic organizer to create a claim and support it using primary source evidence for Lesson 5: ancient Sumer. Reprinted from *History Alive! The Ancient World: Interactive Student Notebook* (p. 31), by S. Isaacs, L. Kent, B. Lasser, T. Pendgraft, & A. White, 2017, Brimfield, OH: Hess Print Solutions. Copyright 2017 by Teachers' Curriculum Institute. Reprinted with permission.

INTERACTIVE STUDENT NOTEBOOK

Constructing an Argument

Create an argument to answer the question: *How did the different social classes of Sumer interact with one another?* Your argument should:

- clearly state your claim.
- include evidence from multiple sources.
- provide explanations for how the sources support the claim.

Use this rubric to evaluate your argument. Make changes as needed.

Score	Description
3	The claim clearly answers the question. The argument uses evidence from two or more primary sources that strongly support the claim. The explanations accurately connect to the evidence and claim.
2	The claim answers the question. The argument uses evidence from one or more primary sources that support the claim. Some of the explanations connect to the evidence and claim.
1	The claim fails to answer the question. The argument lacks evidence from primary sources. Explanations are missing or are unrelated to the evidence and claim.

Figure 17. Sixth-grade history teacher's publisher-created constructing an argument using primary source evidence for Lesson 5: ancient summer. Reprinted from *History Alive! The Ancient World: Interactive Student Notebook* (p. 32), by S. Isaacs, L. Kent, B. Lasser, T. Pendgraft, & A. White, 2017, Brimfield, OH: Hess Print Solutions. Copyright 2017 by Teachers' Curriculum Institute. Reprinted with permission.

Reviewing tests teacher participants or Principal provided included mostly multiple choice, true/false, and fill-in-the blanks questions. The majority of grade-level

unit tests demanded little to no essay writing but when included students were only required to write, at the most, a paragraph and use evidence from a piece of text to summarize what they read. None of the departments' tests made students connect what they learned from a unit to their own lives, solve a real-world problem, or to think critically about what they learned inside a unit of study and communicate their findings by combining textual evidence and their own personal thoughts on any given subject.

COMMON CORE

Assessment Practice

DIRECTIONS Read the following selections and then answer the questions.

Teen Reading Survey

by SmartGirl.org online magazine

Reading Habits: Respondent Behavior and Opinion

- The survey showed that
 - Many teens enjoy reading and often do read for pleasure; 43% of teens surveyed said that most often they read for the fun of it.
 - There was a significant difference, however, between boys and girls; 50% of girls said they read for pleasure, while only 32% of boys did.
- While teens appear to enjoy reading, they find that they often do not have the time to do so. Other reasons given for not reading or not reading more: they found reading boring and prefer watching television or movies; they lack good reading materials.

Survey Results
SmartGirl asked: Which statement below do you agree with most?

Statement	Total	Girls	Boys
I read constantly for my own satisfaction, and I love it.	26%	31%	18%
I don't have much time to read for pleasure, but I like to when I get a chance.	46%	49%	40%
I only read what I'm supposed to for school.	16%	12%	22%
I don't read books much at all.	7%	4%	11%
No answer	6%	4%	9%

SmartGirl asked: Most often, the reason I read is ... (Please choose the best answer from this selection).

Statement	Total	Girls	Boys
Just for the fun of it	43%	50%	32%
Because I have to for school	19%	17%	22%
Because I get bored and have nothing else to do	12%	13%	11%
To learn new things on my own	12%	10%	15%
I don't really read much	5%	3%	8%
Because my parents encourage me to	4%	3%	4%

ASSESS
Taking this practice test will help you assess your knowledge of these skills and determine your readiness for the Unit Test.

REVIEW
After you take the practice test, your teacher can help you identify any standards you need to review.

COMMON CORE

RI.2 Determine central ideas in a text. **RI.5** Analyze the structure an author uses to organize a text. **RI.8** Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text. **L.2** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English punctuation. **L.4b** Use the common grade-appropriate Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word. **L.5** Demonstrate understanding of nuances in word meaning.

Practice Test **THINK CENTRAL**
 Take it at thinkcentral.com.
 KEYWORD: HML7N-1000

1000 UNIT 8: INFORMATION, ARGUMENT, AND PERSUASION

Figure 18. Seventh-grade literacy teacher's publisher-created practice assessment on understanding informational test based around the common core state standards. page 1. Reprinted from Literature: Grade 7, (p. 1000), by J. Allen, A. N. Applebee, J. Burke, D. Carnine, Y. Jackson, C. Jago, R. T. Jimenez, J. A. Langer, R. J. Marzano, M. L. McCloskey, C. M. Olson, L. Stack, C. A. Tomlinson, 2012, Orlando, FL: Holt McDougal. Copyright 2012 by Houghton Mifflin Publishing Company.

Assessment Practice

Revising and Editing

DIRECTIONS Read this passage and answer the questions that follow.

Dear Student

(1) This Friday is the last day of school. (2) As a result we will be having a small party. (3) The party a hot dog lunch will be held in the cafeteria. (4) However, when school lets out at 3:35 p.m., please behave. (5) Do not run, push, or yell. (6) Students who violate these rules are subject to the following a call to parents a meeting with the principal or other disciplinary action.

- Choose the correct way to punctuate the formal greeting.
 - Dear Student!
 - Dear Student;
 - Dear Student:
 - Dear Student.
- Choose the correct way to add a comma to sentence 2.
 - As a result we will be having a small party.
 - As a result we will, be having a small party.
 - As a result we will be having a small party.
 - As a result, we will be having a small party.
- Choose the correct way to add commas to the appositive phrase in sentence 3.
 - The party a hot, dog lunch, will be held in the cafeteria.
 - The party, a hot dog lunch, will be held in the cafeteria.
 - The party a hot dog lunch will be held, in the cafeteria.
 - The party a hot dog lunch, will be held in the cafeteria.
- Choose the correct place to insert a colon in sentence 4.
 - 3:35 p.m.;
 - 3:35 p.m.:
 - please;
 - However:
- Choose the correct way to add a colon and commas to sentence 6.
 - Students who violate these rules are subject to the following: a call, to parents, a meeting with the principal or other disciplinary action.
 - Students who violate these rules are subject to: the following a call to parents, a meeting with the principal, or other disciplinary action.
 - Students who violate these rules are subject to the following, a call to parents, a meeting with the principal, or other disciplinary action.
 - Students who violate these rules are subject to the following: a call to parents, a meeting with the principal, or other disciplinary action.

STOP

1005

Figure 19. Seventh-grade literacy teacher's publisher-created practice assessment on understanding informational test based around the common core state standards, page 5. Reprinted from *Literature: Grade 7*, (p. 1005), by J. Allen, A. N. Applebee, J. Burke, D. Carnine, Y. Jackson, C. Jago, R. T. Jimenez, J. A. Langer, R. J. Marzano, M. L. McCloskey, C. M. Olson, L. Stack, C. A. Tomlinson, 2012, Orlando, FL: Holt McDougal. Copyright 2012 by Houghton Mifflin Publishing Company.

7. Which Sumerian belief about the king helped strengthen the social order?
 A. He was supported by the gods.
 B. He cared most about the poor.
 C. He consulted with wise advisers.
8. Why were scribes important in Sumerian government?
 A. to entertain the rulers
 B. to write down the laws
 C. to collect people's taxes
9. The building in the picture was most closely related to which of these features of Sumerian civilization?

Ziggurat



- A. food
 B. writing
 C. religion
10. Which evidence shows that the Sumerians lived after the Stone Age?
 A. brick houses
 B. wooden plows
 C. copper jewelry
11. What was the main use of the items listed here?
- * Drums
 - * Pipes
 - * Lyres
- B. irrigation
 C. construction
 D. entertainment
12. Which invention made it possible for Sumerian armies to use chariots?
 A. wheels
 B. swords
 C. sledges

Figure 20. Sixth-grade social studies teacher's end of lesson 5: ancient summer test, page 2. Reprinted from *History Alive! The Ancient World: Interactive Student Notebook* (p. 2), by S. Isaacs, L. Kent, B. Lasser, T. Pendgraft, & A. White, 2017, Retrieved from <https://subscriptions.teachtc.com/teacher/programs>. Copyright 2017 by Teachers' Curriculum Institute. Reprinted with permission.

Applying Social Studies Skills

Look at the three scenes below from the Standard of Ur. They show wealthy people at a banquet, workers bringing fish and animals to the banquet, and armies in battle.

Also, remember the seven characteristics of a civilization:

- stable food supply
- social structure
- government
- religion
- arts
- technology
- written language

Use the scenes, the list, and your knowledge of history to answer the questions in the space provided.

17. Which of the seven characteristics of civilization does this image show? Explain your answer.



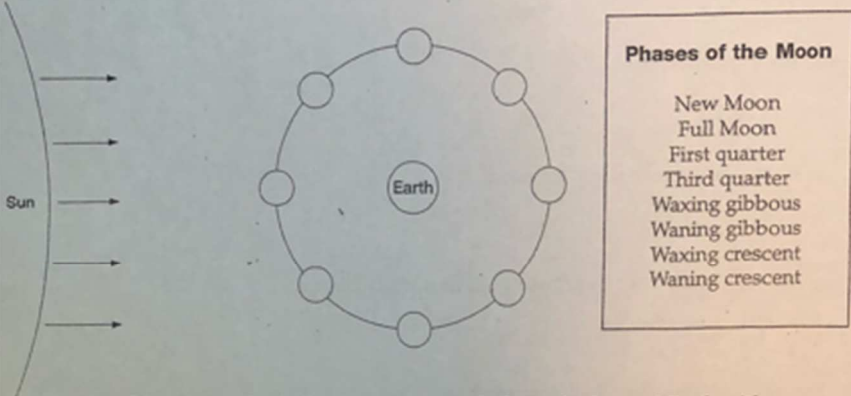
Answer: _____

Explanation:

Figure 21. Sixth-grade social studies teacher's end of lesson 5: ancient summer test. Adapted from *History Alive! The Ancient World: Interactive Student Notebook* (p.4), by [REDACTED], 2017, Retrieved from <https://subscriptions.teachtci.com/teacher/programs>. Copyright 2017 by Teachers' Curriculum Institute. Reprinted with permission.

NAME _____
CLASS PERIOD _____

Planetary Science Quiz #4 – Moon Phases




Phases of the Moon

New Moon
Full Moon
First quarter
Third quarter
Waxing gibbous
Waning gibbous
Waxing crescent
Waning crescent

Directions: Study the diagram above. It shows the Sun and Earth with several possible positions for the Moon as it orbits Earth. You are looking down on the system from above Earth's North Pole.


1. Draw an arrow on the diagram to show which way the Moon is revolving around Earth.
2. Look at the pictures below that show different phases of the Moon. Below each picture, write the name of the phase it shows.

A




Phase name _____

B



Phase name _____

C



Phase name _____

3. Label the diagram at the top of the page with the letters A, B, and C to show where the Moon would be in its orbit when it is showing the phase shown in photos A, B, and C.

Figure 22. Sixth-grade science teacher's planetary science quiz #4- moon phases. Reprinted from Moon Phases Unit, by [REDACTED], 2017, [REDACTED], WA: [REDACTED] School District. Reprinted with permission.

Educators, at the research site, lack the knowledge on how to integrate literacy skills into learning targets to encourage middle school students to think, read, write, and

communicate at a higher-level. Teacher participants had a difficult time explaining how each department (social studies, science, and literacy) worked together to scaffold content knowledge and literacy skills between grade levels. Many depended on the district-adopted curriculum to do it for them.

Teacher participants were asked how they monitor students' academic progress inside a unit of study. Seventh-Grade Literacy Teacher, Sixth-Grade Science Teacher, Sixth-Grade Literacy Teacher, and Sixth-Grade Social Studies Teacher mentioned, "I walk around the room and monitor their work. If I see problems, I stop and help." Each also stated, "I have students track their end of unit scores to see how they (students) improved from one-unit test to the next."

Test #3 Week 15 Score _____/20 MIDYEAR TEST

*Reflect on how you improved from test #2. Did you improve in the area you focused on since test #2?
How can you improve or what will you do differently?*

What are 2 or 3 question areas you will focus on for the next 4 weeks to show improvement on your final test? Are you on track?

Figure 23. Seventh-grade literacy teacher's midyear reflect and goal setting worksheet: test #3 week 15. Reprinted from [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] TPEP goal record and evidence resources, by [REDACTED], 2017, [REDACTED], WA: [REDACTED] School District. Reprinted with permission.

Sixth-Grade Social Studies Teacher mentioned,

I make my students make a new goal after each lesson using the unit test. I want to know how will they improve their test score for the next lesson. If I notice a dip in a student's test scores, I would discuss this with a student, contact parents, or the school counselor.

Student Assessment Data Record Name _____

Lesson #	Date	Score	%	Area of Improvement	Goal For Next Lesson	Did You Reach Your Goal? Why or Why Not?
1 Early Humans						
2						
3						
4 Mesopotamia						
5						
6						
8 Egypt						
9						
10						

Figure 24. Sixth-grade social studies teachers' student year-long unit test recording and goal setting worksheet used in both his literacy and social studies classes. Reprinted from [REDACTED] TPEP record and evidence resources, by [REDACTED], 2017, [REDACTED], WA: [REDACTED] School District. Reprinted with permission.

None of the students' growth goals embedded TPEP, CEL, or SIP language and/or expectations. None of the goals focused on fulfilling the school's reading or writing goals. Instead, goals just had students track how they improved from test to test or period to period. None mentioned tracking students' academic progress of gaining higher-level content-specific literacy skills. Principal was asked if he witnessed many of the teachers use TPEP and CEL language to help design, monitor, and assess student work and if he is seeing increase in the rigor inside the different grade-level, content-specific classrooms. Principal stated,

Not many. I think that many of our teachers are not expecting our students to go into that much depth to create their own learning. Yeah, it is that simple. At the middle school level, we are still building skills. We can't just let that part go. We are still teaching them how to write- how to a paragraph.

When questioned about his expectations for grade-levels and department teachers to use common classroom-based assessment to measure students' literacy progress and academic achievement in each department and grade level Principal stated,

That is the ultimate expectation that I have, but we (middle school teaching staff) aren't there yet. I think that there are certain pairs of teachers who do a good job, but overall I can't give you any specific examples of who and what they are doing. My strategy is I tend to ignore the reluctant teacher or department. The SIP plan has set expectations and so, does TPEP. I just haven't come up with a plan yet. Honestly, I am not sure what that plan will look like, but I would like to see it happen someday.

Procedural Subquestion Three's Findings

“What are the barriers middle school teachers experience when trying to regularly collect, analyze, and use more student-generated data inside PLCs and other collaborative groups to produce more student-centered and goal/task-oriented curriculum in all grade levels, departments, and the entire school?” is the third and final procedural subquestion of this qualitative instrumental case study. This question explored the reasons why this middle school staff struggles to create a rigorous schoolwide literacy program, despite being provided late start Wednesdays and Washington’s evaluation system, TPEP, that includes specific qualities, actions, and beliefs state educators need to possess to ensure students received the education needed to be college and career-ready in the 21st century.

The oral and written data collected was analyzed using a 2-part coding system to help discover the barriers educators at the research site experience trying to collect and monitor student literacy achievements. First, this question’s raw data was broken down using TPEP’s Criterion 4: providing clear and intentional focus on subject matter and curriculum and TPEP’s Criterion 5: Fostering a meaningful safe and positive learning environment. CEL’s 5D subdimensions’ purpose, curriculum and pedagogy (Table 12) and classroom environment and culture (Table 13). The specific CEL indicator of quality teaching and leading helped break down the data created the specific themes of the final research question of this case study, which were state and district mandated tests, along with the lack of accountability, knowledge, professional development, and time. Every participant mentioned these barriers as the reasons why the research site’s collaborative

groups continually struggled to accomplish the SIP reading and writing activities and goals created by teaching staff and monitored by the middle school's leadership teams.

Table 12

Subquestion Three's Results: Purpose, Curriculum, and Pedagogy

		TPEP Criterion 4: Providing clear and intentional focus subject matter and curriculum	TPEP Criterion 5: Fostering and managing a safe, positive learning environment
CEL 5D's Subdimensions	CEL's 38 indicators for Quality Teaching & Leading	Evidence of How Teachers Accomplish Criterion	Evidence of How Teachers Accomplish Criterion
Purpose	Connection to previous and future lessons	Publisher-created Lessons/Units CCSS STAR and SBA Results	Premade Publisher Activities Monitoring Student Academic Progress Use of Daily and/or Unit Learning Targets "I can" Statements STAR and SBA Results
Curriculum & Pedagogy	Alignment of instructional materials and tasks	Publisher-created Lessons/Units CCSS Next Generation Science Standards STAR and SBA Results	Publisher-created Lessons/Units CCSS Next Generation Science Standards STAR and SBA Results
	Discipline-specific conceptual understanding	Publisher-created Lessons/Units CCSS Next Generation Science Standards STAR and SBA Results	Publisher-created Lessons/Units CCSS Next Generation Science Standards STAR and SBA Results Monitoring Student Academic Progress
	Pedagogical content of knowledge	Publisher-created Lessons/Units CCSS Next Generation Science Standards STAR and SBA Results	CCSS Next Generation Science Standards STAR and SBA Results Monitoring Student Academic Progress
	Teacher knowledge of content	Publisher-created Lessons/Units CCSS Next Generation Science Standards STAR and SBA Results	CCSS Next Generation Science Standards STAR and SBA Results

Note. Adapted from CEL 5D+ Teacher Evaluation Rubric at a Glance, by CEL, 2012, University of Washington, pp. 1–7.

Table 13

Subquestion Three's Results: Classroom Environment and Culture

		TPEP Criterion 4: Providing clear and intentional focus subject matter and curriculum	TPEP Criterion 5: Fostering and managing a safe, positive learning environment
CEL 5D's Subdimensions	CEL 38 indicators for Quality Teaching & Leading	Evidence of How Teachers Accomplish Criterion	Evidence of How Teachers Accomplish Criterion
Classroom Environment & Culture	Arrangement of classroom	STAR Test Results Skill Based Grouping	Skill Based Grouping Diverse Student Population
	Accessibility and use of materials	Outdated Materials, Textbooks, and Learning Activities Social Studies Online Textbook <i>Engage New York Curriculum</i>	Spanish Texts available in Social Studies Classes READ 180 Outdated Materials, Textbooks, and Learning Activities
	Use of learning time	Close Reading Skills Informational Text Reading Evidence Based Claims Summary Writing SBA and STAR Testing Content Knowledge Comprehension Questions Social Studies CBA Science Labs and Write Ups Science Research Reports Non-Fiction/Fiction Book Reports Science Current Events in ELA	Close Reading Skills Pair/Share Discussions Partner/Group Work Content Knowledge Comprehension Questions SBA and STAR Tests Results Science Notebooks Pre/Post Content Knowledge Tests
	Managing student behavior	Parent/Student Apathy Homework Completion Diverse Student Population	Parent/Student Apathy Homework Completion Diverse Student Population
	Student Status	Many Fail due to Apathy STAR Test Results Unit Test Tracking System Science Notebooks	Student Failure Rates Apathy Diverse Student Population
	Norms of learning	Close Reading Skills Summary Writing Evidence Based Claims STAR Test Results Pre/Post Content Knowledge Tests CCSS SBA and STAR Tests	SBA and STAR Test Results Schoolwide Summary Rubric Unit Test Tracking System Science Notebooks CCSS Student Failure Rate

Note. Adapted from CEL 5D+ Teacher Evaluation Rubric at a Glance, by CEL, 2012, University of Washington, pp. 1–7.

State and District Mandated Tests

The 5 teacher participants use only summative data to guide their instructional practices and establish their classroom's culture. Each mentioned STAR, pre/post content-knowledge tests, and end of unit test when crafting their collaboration and student growth goals, instead of the school's SIP plan. STAR is given to every sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students in their literacy and math classes 3 times a year at the research site: September, January, and May. Eighth-Grade Literacy Teacher stated,

I use the STAR scores to create my seating charts and student learning groups. I break them up group according to the STAR strands. Some are working on finding evidence, some are working on paragraph formation, some are working on reading comprehension.

Sixth-Grade Social Studies Teacher also mentioned using STAR data to guide students' learning activities and establish his classroom's culture.

STAR is a great tool to track my students' academic progress. In sixth grade, it is given 3 times a year, and I like to track them (students' scores). Then, see what trends I see. If there are kids flat-lining in the middle of the year, or if they are getting better or not getting better, I take the appropriate actions. STAR has great tools to help me with that.

Seventh-Grade Literacy Teacher and her partner teacher used students' STAR test results to craft their student and professional TPEP goals.

Ms. X and I use STAR scores because the majority of students grow on that test from fall to spring. Kids take it the first couple of weeks of school, and they

forgot everything they learned over the summer, so this ensure I will meet my student and collaborative growth goal each year.

Sixth-Grade Literacy Teacher and Eighth-Grade Literacy Teacher mentioned some teachers in the literacy department, including themselves, used STAR or pre/post test results data to craft their TPEP goals because how easy it was to track, as well as, those kinds of test results were designed for the whole and target group of students performance to increase within a school year, hence guaranteeing the teacher met all their TPEP goals each year. All 5 teachers were more concerned about reaching their TPEP goals by the end of the year, then crafting students' goals focused on measuring the literacy skills students included in the middle school's SIP. Eighth-Grade Literacy Teacher stated,

It is easier to use STAR and post/pre-test knowledge to track student growth than using open-ended writing assignments. It takes a lot of time and a good system to use student writing samples on TPEP goals. Using pre/post tests and STAR tests for my TPEP goals makes my life easier, especially being a coach year-round. I don't have time to grade 150 5-paragraph essays, 4 or more times a year.

Three teacher participants admitted to using only grade-level content knowledge to form their student and professional TPEP goals. Sixth-Grade Science Teacher mentioned science teachers used pre and post-test to measure students' academic growth. She explained sixth-grade teachers used pre/post-tests because they (science teachers) "are just wanting to measure how much science knowledge did each student gain from the first day of school to the last week of school."

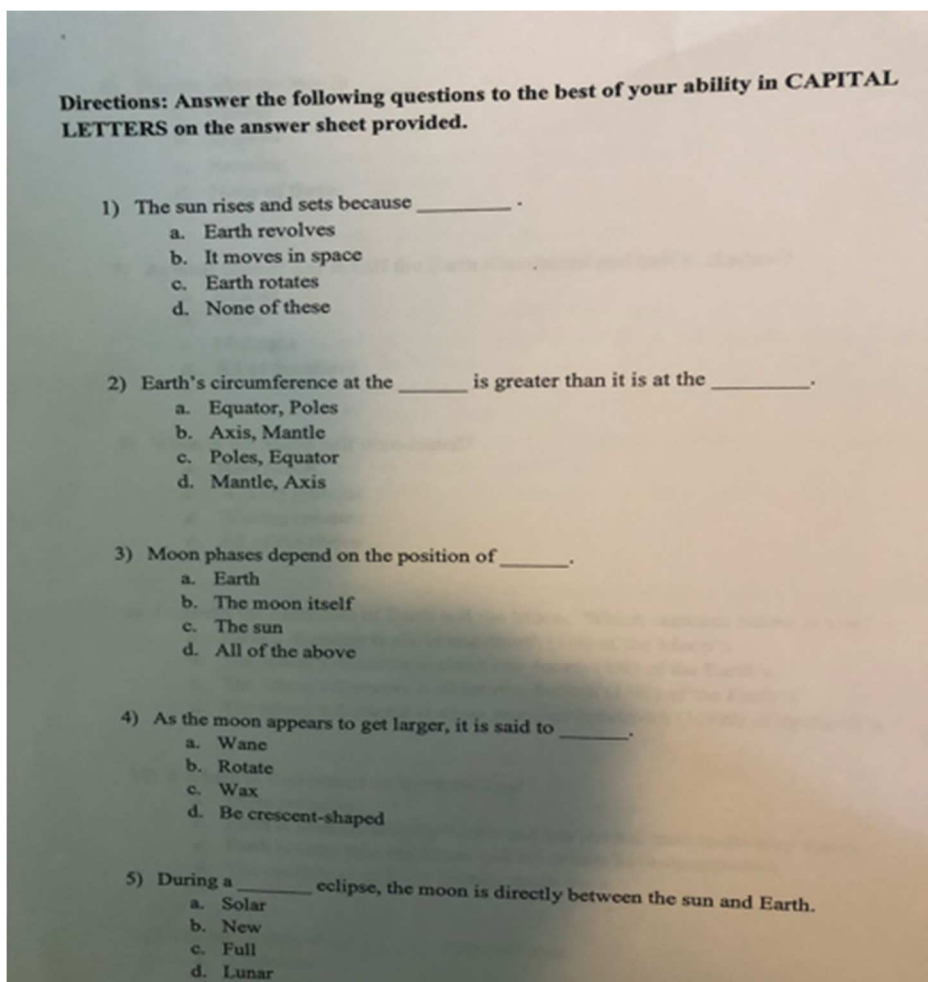


Figure 25. Sixth-grade science teacher's pre/post tests on planetary science test (p. 1). Reprinted from Moon Phases Unit, by ■. ■■■■ & ■. ■■■■, 2017, ■■■■, WA: ■■■■ School District. Reprinted with permission.

Sixth-Grade Social Studies Teacher said,

Students record each test they take. Students record, not only their score, but their Percentages. Then, they have to reflect on did they meet their previous goal. If yes, why and if not, why not. Students then have to set a goal for their next assessment. They keep it (goal tracking sheet) in their daily binder. That is

something I will use, last year I used it for TPEP. This year I am going to use it at parent-teacher conferences.

Student Assessment Data Record Name _____

Lesson #	Date	Score	%	Area of Improvement	Goal For Next Lesson	Did You Reach Your Goal? Why or Why Not?
1 Early Humans						
2						
3						
4 Mesopotamia						
5						
6						
8 Egypt						
9						
10						

Figure 26. Sixth-Grade social studies teacher’s student academic progress tracking sheet worksheet used for TPEP’s student growth goal evidence. Reprinted from [redacted] in TPEP record and evidence resources, by [redacted], 2017, [redacted], WA: [redacted] School District. Reprinted with permission.

Principal was asked, “What are your expectations for teachers to monitor literacy learning by using student-generated data? What types of data do you encourage teachers

to use?” He stated, “They (teachers) have SBA and STAR, which is a good form of summative data we have to use. That is my only expectation right now.”

None of the collected written data indicated science, social studies, and literacy teachers, by grade-level or department, gathered nor analyzed formative content-specific student-generated literacy data. Instead, educators of this research site focused on state and district-mandated test scores to guide their instructional practices and classroom environments. None of the literacy, science, or social studies PLC meeting minutes included content or disciplinary specific literacy skills discussions that went beyond “writing complete sentences, using IQIA, or being able to state a claim in and include specific textual evidence to justify it.” Sixth-Grade Social Studies Teacher said,

The major themes being discussed inside our (social studies) PLC are how do we get our kids to pass the state test (SBA), how do we (social studies teachers) support ELA teachers in preparing them (students) for the test (SBA) each spring. We (social studies teachers) talk a lot about what we can do, what can we help, and what types of activities can so that.

Sixth-Grade Science Teacher stated,

We (science teachers) don’t discuss that during PLC times. We discuss Next Generation Standards and how we can use our outdated curriculum. The sixth-grade curriculum was published before I was born and does not meet the new science learning standards. We spend the majority of PLC time talking about how to prepare our students for the state science test that only happens at the eighth-grade level.

The 2016–17 BLT meeting minutes focused on STAR, IAB, and SBA testing scores, practices, and schedules, and how to deal with the high failure rates found inside every department, grade level, and the entire school. There were no districtwide assessments for every grade level, which has been written into the research site’s SIP for the past 2 years. In January 2018, Principal finally explained “at this time none of the departments are using any writing assessments to test students’ academic growth for literacy, science, or social studies” but he could provide me that year’s STAR data to review.

Lack of Accountability

The lack of accountability around TPEP, SIP, and literacy learning, at the research site, hinders the teaching staff to create a schoolwide literacy program for middle school students. Each teacher participant was asked, “How do you use TPEP language and expectations to gradually release the educational learning responsibility to your students?”

After a long group pause, Sixth-Grade Literacy Teacher, finally, responded by saying, “I necessarily don’t use TPEP language. If I do, it’s accidental. I use the standards (CCSS) instead. They are all written into the program (*Engage New York*) we (4 of the 7 teachers) use with our kids. The curriculum we use has them built in.”

Sixth-Grade Science Teacher and Sixth-Grade Social Studies Teacher answered the question in similar ways to Sixth-Grade Literacy Teacher. All were focused on the Common Core State Standards language provided by their department’s textbook publishers. Sixth-Grade Social Studies Teacher stated,

All the social studies' learning targets and success criteria should be the same because of our newly adopted textbook, *History Alive*. Scaffolding of learning is also taken care of too, with using the same textbooks, at all grade levels. I would assume the publishers built in scaffolding of knowledge between the sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade textbooks. We (social studies teachers) just assume that is done for us.

Principal has no plan to hold the teaching staff accountability for accomplishing the middle school's SIP plan. During his follow-up session, I asked, "when asked about your expectations on staff fulfilling SIP reading and writing activities and goals, you said, 'You just expect them to do it.' Do you have any plans to add more value to the SIP plan for staff that would allow each department, by grade level, to actually accomplish the activities and goals this school year?" during his follow-up session.

Principal very quickly said, "No." So, I then asked, "What are your plans to make SIP a regular conversation inside PLC meeting times, so it's not just worked on or looked at twice a year?" And again, he said, "I don't." My final question, "what are your plans to ensure your expectations, using formative student-generated data inside PLCs that would overcome the fears you mentioned your staff has?" He paused for a moment, then asked, "What do you mean by that?" I answered, "You said, many times, that what is in the SIP plan you just expect them (teachers) to get it done. So, what is the plan to ensure each department is doing this?" He responded, "I don't have one."

Principal admitted the middle school staff struggled to work together to incorporate literacy learning inside each grade level, department, and school. He

mentioned teachers feared changing their instructional practices to fit 21st Century learning standards because of their lack of knowledge, but no plans are being formulated to fix the identified barriers. Each teacher participant mentioned the lack of accountability provided by building and district administration to effectively collaborate, as a staff, to fulfill the reading and writing activities found in the school's SIP goals. The 5 teacher participants were asked, "What are the barriers that you, your grade level, and department experience trying to accomplish the reading and writing goals found in the school's SIP?" Sixth-Grade Literacy Teacher answered, without hesitation,

We discussed buy-in from other departments. That is a big one. Not all science and social studies teachers think it is their job to teach students how to read and write inside their classrooms. No one is forcing them to change. Many still do not demand students to write in complete sentences or write essays. We (literacy department) had to incorporate more informational text because it is so important to SBA testing.

Sixth-Grade Science Teacher said,

TPEP and SIP goals. I don't think we (science teachers) have every sat down as a department and discussed them. I am not sure, as a department, we have any.

There are many teachers in my department that have a negative attitude when it comes to reading and writing, like the older, more experienced teachers. They have said, 'we don't' need to do this.' And 'this is not important.'

Sixth-Grade Social Studies Teacher answered with,

We (social studies PLC) have a teacher that is reluctant to change. He feels that his only job is to teach history. He teaches both seventh and eighth grade classes, so, it makes it hard to talk about higher-level reading and writing skills as a whole department. The administration is aware of this problem, but they know he is moving on to the high school in a couple of years, so they don't do anything about it.

During his follow-up session, Principal confirmed teacher participants' answers to why some teachers were willing to incorporate more high-level literacy skills into their grade-level curriculum compared to others.

Well, I think there is a presence for those (teachers) that are not willing. So, in sixth grade, everyone (teachers) in social studies is willing to use literacy skills, but when you get to seventh and eighth grade, not everyone is willing to do that. I realize that, but I am not willing to deal with it, now. This not literacy but a higher-level instructional practices and assessments problem, period. Literacy is the subset of the problem we have here. You should see the types of learning activities and tests teachers are using here. The majority of the tests and assessments given to students are very low-level thinking and measurement of student learning.

Wanting to better understand those comments I asked, why he thought teachers were not demanding higher-level literacy skills inside their grade-level classrooms, despite being writing into the school's SIP plan each year? Principal, first pausing to think, finally said,

There are a couple of whys. They haven't been asked to, period. Two, there are very few staff members who are trained to do that. There are way too many standards at each grade level for staff, so they are continually being asked to pick between content and process. And content is way easier to teach than process.

When asked, what did he plan to do to solve this problem he just described, Principal, paused again, before stating,

I don't have a plan, right now, on how to deal with it. Right now, I just ignore them. They (reluctant) teachers don't have the courage to say it to my face, so it's not something I really have had to deal with, just yet.

Five of the 9 Principal's weekly emails reviewed included attachments of articles for the teaching staff to read. Some of the articles Principal included did mention having students think, read, write, and commutate at a higher-level, but there was never any follow-up ensuring his staff read these articles or training on how to embed those characteristics, actions, or beliefs targeted in the articles into the middle school's culture. No written agendas showed how Principal had grade levels, departments, or other collaborative groups read the articles together, then come up with a plan of action to incorporate the targeted knowledge or actions inside the different learning environments or school's culture.

Emails and articles are being presented to staff in an isolated way. Principal does not pose questions to his staff about the content of his emails or attached articles, nor does he ensure his staff actually read any of his emails or articles attached. When asked how many teachers he thought read his weekly emails he said, "One. Maybe two."

Laughed, then continued his answer, “I don’t really know how many read my email. I said, that number because the only person who ever response is Ms. X. So, I just assume she is the only one that is reading them each week.”

Lack of Knowledge

The lack of knowledge about how TPEP, CEL, CCSS expectations changed content teachers’ instructional role to better prepare students for the 21st Century workforce was a barrier found at the research site. Teachers have not been properly trained on how to embed TPEP and CEL language and expectations into the middle school’s learning culture. Sixth-Grade Science Teacher gave some insight to this barrier because not only is she a staff member, but was also a student, at the research site, almost a decade ago.

I went to school year here (research site) and graduated for the high school in 2013. The science teachers are using the exact same textbook and doing the exact same labs, write-ups and tests, I did when I was their student. Even the science notebook checks are exactly the same ones I did when eighth grade. I laughed, the other day, because the seventh-grade teacher is having his kids do the exact same disease poster I when I was his student. They (older science teachers) just say their work is based on the Common Core, but it’s not. It can’t be. They just don’t know how or what to teach students, how to change what they are doing, or to add more scientific reading and writing in their class. I know when I went to college, and being a biology major, I was not prepared to do college level work because of my teachers here and the high school. I was not even close to being prepared. I

tried to bring that up at one PLC but they (older science teachers) didn't want to listen. Instead, they complained it was the textbook and curriculum. But it is not. I pull my science curriculum from everywhere; I know my students need to read and write more scientifically than we are demanding right now in most of the science classes.

Research site teachers depend on publisher-created curriculum and assume learning targets, worksheets, tests, and writing assessments are aligned with both TPEP and CCSS. Many participants admitted they have not changed how or what they teach to match district-adopted instructional framework or Washington's 4-tier, eight-component TPEP rubric. Sixth-Grade Literacy Teacher stated,

I follow the curriculum. It is fully aligned and written by professional that know what they are doing. It has TPEP language in it, like 'self-reflection, student choices,' and it scaffolds the literacy knowledge into each unit.

Eighth-Grade Literacy Teacher added,

When it's laid out, you (students) are literally practicing higher-level skills and the assessments test those skills, so as you (teachers) go through *Engage New York's* curriculum, it's a tool for both the teacher and students. The explicit directions are written around Common Core Standards and puts at the top of every assignment and assessment.

Seventh-Grade Literacy Teacher,

The literature book does the same thing. It states exactly what standard each reading and learning activity is targeting so the 3 teachers (literacy) using the

district-adopted curriculum also have TPEP language embedded into their work.

We pick out stories that are higher-level so TPEP language like ‘rigor’ is taken care of by the textbooks.

Three out of the 5 teacher participants mentioned becoming more self-reflective was the only way TPEP changed their instructional practices and beliefs. Sixth-Grade Literacy Teacher stated,

TPEP has made me a more reflective teacher. I still teach the same way and do the same activities, but now I think I have conversations with Principal discussing why I do those activities, what do I want students to learn, how will I know when students learn those skills, and what do I do if students don’t.

Seventh-Grade Literacy Teacher said,

TPEP has made me think, why I am assigned this work for students and how does it meet my professional or student growth goal. I can’t say I changed how I teach because of TPEP, I haven’t. I can’t say I have more rigor in my classroom or think about TPEP, CELs, or SIP because I don’t.

Sixth-Grade Literacy Teacher admitted, “I haven’t changed how I teach since the district-adopted TPEP. I just now record what I do, in order, to show it to Principal during my observations.”

Principal, when asked what are your specific expectations for staff and PLCs to use TPEP language to guide their instructional practices, quickly answered with, “None.” I followed up with the question, “Do you think TPEP language can be beneficial for your staff to accomplish the reading and writing SIP goals?” He answered with,

Yes, but I can't say specifically how that would work. I could go through TPEP and CELs language to look specifically, and then let you know. But, like I said, before TPEP is a private document and SIP is a public one. I have never seen or heard about how an administration has bridged these two documents together at their school.

Then I asked, "Well, then how are you holding teachers accountable for using TPEP inside their classrooms, PLCs, and entire school?" "I am not," he said. "Do you have any plans to do that, bridge TPEP language to PLCs and the school culture?" I asked. "No. No, not right now. I really never thought about it before now," Principal quickly answered, which concluded our conversation about the topic.

The teacher participants lacked understanding of TPEP and CEL language and expectations. None could describe how TPEP guided their ability to collaborate or create a schoolwide literacy community. Teacher participants were asked "how has TPEP shaped the way you do things now in your classroom when it comes to reading and writing?" Seventh-Grade Literacy Teacher quickly said, "No, it hasn't changed a thing." Sixth-Grade Literacy Teacher said, "I don't think TPEP has affected anything in my practice or how I collaborate with my grade level or department teachers." Seventh-Grade Literacy Teacher adds, "We are still teaching what we need too and how we do it hasn't changed either. We are just recording it now." Sixth-Grade Social Studies Teacher thinks of TPEP as "just getting students to care, study, track, and reflect on test results."

Sixth-Grade Science Teacher articulated a reason educators might struggle to incorporate TPEP and CEL language into their instructional practices. When asked "how

CEL's 38 indicators of quality teaching and leading has impacted your literacy instructional practices? If not, why not?"

I actually feel it (TPEP) has pretty good guidelines. In the sense of showing what we (teachers) are graded on and showing what are the expectations for each of them (TPEP criterion and CEL's indicators). It has been nice as a first-year teacher, but I do think they (CEL's 38 indicators of quality teaching and leading) are very overwhelming because there are so many of them. Too many, and it might be I am going at it a different way, but it took hours to fully understand it. I went to the class they (district administrators) offered, but I still didn't understand it all. I still don't feel fully comfortable with it. It still seems overwhelming to me when I see it all together. It's a lot.

In previous questions, Sixth-Grade Science Teacher mentioned her mentor teacher was not helping her understand the TPEP evaluation system.

We just discussed what we will be teaching on any given day. We plan out our month or unit together, but that is it. No one was helping me create learning targets that included literacy learning, nor did my department (PLC) ever have conversations about TPEP.

Lack of Professional Development

The lack of professional development around TPEP, PLCs, SIP, and community-wide literacy learning was also a barrier found this Washington middle school. Four of the 5 teachers mentioned their department requested additional literacy and PLC training from the school's administrative team. Sixth-Grade Social Studies Teacher stated,

Well, according to our SIP goals, we (social studies teachers) planned on having training on student discussions. But we didn't get that yet. We are hoping to get that this year. So, I use a lot of partner talk, pair-shares, and whole class. I also have done Socratic seminars, but I think we need to do a lot more than that. I also think it can be chaotic, if teachers don't know how to do it (Socratic Seminars) properly. So, I think, we need training on that. I think, it's very valuable.

Sixth-Grade Literacy Teacher said,

We mentioned last year in our PLC notes, we (literacy teachers) needed more training on effective ways to work together to get these kids up to standards. It seems like every PLC group is doing the same thing and that is not helping our kids or school. All teachers would benefit from this kind of training, but we (literacy teachers) need to get on the same page and learn how to work together.

Eighth-Grade Literacy Teacher added,

We keep asking for it (training) but we never get it. It's like the administration doesn't read our (PLC) notes or if they do, they are not acting on them. I don't know what it is but we have asked for all kinds of training to be provided to us to better support our students, but we only have received training on close reading skills. We (research staff) needs more than that to incorporate TPEP, CELs, and SIP language into our PLCs.

Seventh-Grade Literacy Teacher stated,

And the training they (district administrators) gave us (middle and high school content teachers) on TPEP was through movies. All the movies we saw had

nothing to do with what we (research site PLCs) are doing in our meetings. The teachers in the movie sat around a table and said, 'look at this questions, number five, these kids didn't know how to do it, and so we (teachers) need to focus on these skills in this grade level, while the other grade levels added to students knowledge.' We (literacy PLC) has not been able to do that because they never taught us how. Those movies were a joke in training and there was no follow-up training. They (administration) expected us (teachers) to get how to run functional PLCs by watching to movies.

Sixth-Grade Literacy Teacher added to Seventh-Grade Literacy Teacher's comments with,

We couldn't do that in our PLCs. As a sixth-grade teacher, I can't sit with an eighth-grade teacher because it is completely different steps and stuff we focus on. And I can't sit with other sixth grade teachers, like science and social studies, because they don't know how to teach literacy skills to their kids. The science teachers are always demanding training in staff meetings since I started here 4 years ago, and they still haven't been provided it.

Sixth-Grade Science Teacher was the only participant that mentioned her department currently receiving on-going and specific professional development, which focused on understanding the new science standards. She also mentioned not all of the science teachers were willing to participate in these district provided trainings.

We (science teachers) got an email we are all going to another training, again.

This time with the Teaching and Learning Director, which will be nice because

she will see where we are at and where the state (Washington) is at and see that gap. But I think that is a big gap in thought process between the young and old teachers. Last time, we went all as a group, both middle and high school science teachers. We all went together, and it was nice, but normally it is just me and Mr. S.

Sixth-Grade Science Teacher mentioned both STEM and Next Generation Science Standards demanded students to think deeper. Students not only needed to absorb what they learned but use the content-specific information and scientific language to solve real-world problems. This comment led me to ask, “why the more experienced teachers were reluctant to go to these trainings offered to the science department by the district administrative team?” Sixth-Grade Science Teacher, paused before finding the right words,

I don't think, the older science teachers want too, and no one is making them. They (experienced science teachers) feel they have already been to dozens of trainings, and they come back to the same problems, curriculum, and end up doing what is comfortable or maybe easier for them. No one is forcing them to change, so why should they.

Principal, when asked what type of professional development he was going to provide to his staff to overcome the barriers he has identified with accomplishing the SIP activity and goals, mentioned he not only did not believe in whole staff professional development. Principal stated, “skeptical of the person presenting the information to staff

members and their experience, knowledge, and expertise on literacy learning for all content-areas.” When asked why Principal felt this way, he answered with,

Teachers have different needs and levels, just like our students, so we are modeling a non-differentiated teaching model for our staff. I get concerned that this will reinforce to them (teachers) that we (research site) do not need to value differentiated instruction to their classroom.”

I followed up with,

But you mentioned the low level of assessments and the focus on content in the majority of the classrooms at this middle school. So, do you think all teachers would need this training? You also mentioned that your staff is struggling to build learning targets for grade levels and scaffolding higher-level literacy skills into each department. So, why not focus on whole staff trainings to get our (middle school) to meet the state standards in literacy? How can you fix the problems you mentioned without whole staff training, so all educators are on the same page?

Principal paused before stating,

Yeah, that is different though. When I was talking about whole staff development, I was talking about specific skills that staff members do not have. I absolutely have specific expectations models for them. But to have a person come and talk about literacy instruction to Language Arts teachers can be frustrating.

That answer led me to ask,

So, you believe in PD for you staff, but it just needs to be broken up for the specific needs of teachers and where they are at personally. But at the same time

there are skills that your whole staff is lacking, so how are you going to bridge those two needs to ensure your staff as a whole, by department or grade level, or specific teachers to get the professional development they need to create the rigorous community-wide literacy program outlined in school's SIP?

"Yeah, and we are horrible at doing that," said Principal. That led me to ask, "Do you or the district administrators have any plans to fix this problem around providing whole and specific professional development to your staff?" "No, not at this time," he stated.

Professional development opportunity found in isolated pockets does not focus on the barrier mentioned by case study participants. Reviewing the representative samples of the 2016–17 BLT and PLC meeting minutes, some research site teachers, individually or as a group, are sent to various trainings by building and district administrators. There were no recorded debriefings or discussions on the purpose of sending teachers to specific trainings, what knowledge and skills were gained, and how to incorporate the gained knowledge or skills into grade-level teacher's routines or departments' instructional practices to create the SIP's rigorous schoolwide literacy program. No BLT or PLC meeting minutes illustrated how teachers shared newly gained knowledge with their department, other grade-level teachers, leadership team, or school's teaching staff. No teacher, during the district directed PLC meeting times, mentioned how a specific training or class changed their teaching practices or beliefs.

The only rewritten record of professional development debriefing was found in the February 2017 Principal's weekly email. He stated, after the whole staff close reading training provided one Wednesday morning from 7:05-8:30,

There now is a common understanding on how to instruct students on how to read at a deeper level in all grade levels and departments. I noticed, during TPEP observations, the majority of the staff were using similar language and expectations for instructing their students how to read content knowledge, which is a step forward in accomplishing our SIP goals.

Lack of Time

Time is the last barrier hindering the research site's teaching staff's ability school's SIP reading and writing activities and establishing a rigorous schoolwide literacy program designed yearly in the school's SIP. Principal was asked, "What was the biggest barrier he saw at the school that is stopping teachers from fulfilling the SIP activities and goal?" He stated,

I try to bridge TPEP, CELs, and SIP through the evaluation process. I want secondary teachers to educate the whole kid, instead of focusing just on curriculum, but it is the lack of time. I know, I need to give more feedback, be in more classes more often, and have more specific conversations with teachers. It would be, like, just giving students feedback 2 or 3 times a year, that is all I can do right now. I have, like, 30 teachers this year I am observing and supervising. I can't go into their classrooms regularly unless, starting to laugh, I let crap fall apart in the school, and just go to classrooms more. I mean, when I want to go

into a class, someone (teacher) wants me to reset a STAR password or a kid gets in trouble. I am trying to force myself to be in classrooms more, but often times there just isn't enough time.

Principal mentioned how hard it was for him to attend each department's PLCs meetings during late start Wednesdays.

It requires me to be at 3 or four PLCs, at the same time, to have on-going and strategic conversations with each department. It is hard to create and monitor an action plan based around our SIP goals because that would require me to be at 2 or 3 places at once. I know I need too, in order to change the reluctant teachers' attitudes, but time is what I struggle with. The last few years, I have focused on math. Now, I want to focus on science, but will the other PLCs fall apart, sure.

But what can I do?

Principal felt he could not hold afterschool meetings with his staff because sports, PEG and IEP meetings, and clubs that take place daily at the research site. He revealed content-specific PLCs do not meeting enough nor is there ever enough time in the school year to really focus and solve the problems identified in this case study.

The teacher participants mentioned time was the biggest barrier for fulfilling the SIP goals and transforming teaching practices to better serve the student population.

Seventh-Grade Literacy Teacher mentioned,

I am lucky the other seventh grade literacy teacher, Ms. X, is across the hall from me, so we can talk regularly before or after school, at lunch or between breaks.

But when I taught eighth-grade, it was a struggle to talk to Ms. E because we had

different lunches, our classrooms are in different buildings, and we had different prep periods.

Sixth-Grade Literacy Teacher, continuing on the theme of lack of time, stated,

There is no time built into the school's schedule to talk with my partner. Sixth-Grade Social Studies Teacher never attends the Literacy PLC meetings because he is always with social studies. We don't have common preps. We have the same lunch time, but we are both so busy that we don't talk during that time because I don't go into the staff room to eat my lunch. If we are lucky, one or two times a week, will talk if we happen to see each other in the copy room or if we pass each other in the hallway. But that is not enough time to really have serious conversations about student growth and achievement.

The lack of common prep periods for grade-level or department teaching partners was one of the major factors in the lack of time theme for the 5 teacher participants. The other was the amount of preps each teacher had starting in the 2017–18 school year.

Seventh-Grade Literacy Teacher stated,

I have to plan for 3 different classes this year: seventh-grade Literacy, Drama, and Yearbook. Yearbook, I have a deadline to meet with my students. I spend a lot of my prep and afterschool time ensuring that the school's yearbook is getting done and editing students' work. There are lots of mistakes with their writing and downloading of pictures onto the program; I get little support from administration on this. On top of that, I have like 60 papers to read for my literacy classes and

plays to organize. When do I have time to focus on TPEP or the SIP? I am just trying to stay ahead of my students.

Sixth-Grade Literacy Teacher mentioned,

I had to create a brand-new elective this year with little to no support from the administration. It took up the majority of my summer planning this and now takes a majority of my planning period. Mrs. W, (his wife), is teaching a whole new eighth-grade curriculum, Office Tech, and had little or no help to ensure the computers and programs are working. Every eighth-grader at the research site is in that class. She feels so overwhelmed with the lack of time she has to focus on anything else. Not only that, she has the READ 180 class for seventh graders. We talk all the time how these new elective classes take so much of our free time. I don't think the administrators thought of those things when they built the new master schedule.

Four of the 5 teacher participants mentioned teaching more than one subject and/or had taken on a new subject this year. Seventh-Grade Literacy Teacher mentioned, "By the time a teacher figures out how to teach a subject, the administration changes their teaching assignment." Reviewing the research site's 2017–18 master schedule, of the 27 teachers only 3 taught consistently taught one subject/grade-level class all day. While, 6 teachers taught 2 different subject matters classes per day and 14 teachers had 3 or more different subject/grade level classes each day. Nine of the middle school teachers were teaching a new subject and/or grade level for the first time at year. For example, Sixth-Grade Social Studies Teacher stated,

This year I am two sixth-grade history classes, two sixth-grade language arts classes, and one semester-long Read 180, for the sixth grade SBA Level 2 students. That is a lot of classes to prep for. I am lucky that only one of them is new and computer based.

This is a typical teaching assignment for the staff at research site for the 2017–18 school year.

One of the major themes found the 2016–17 science, literacy, and social studies PLC meeting minutes was the lack of time being provide by the district for collaboration. Science PLC February 2017 meeting minutes stated, “Why can’t the grade-level teachers have the same prep schedule? This would allow us to have the time we need to collaborate effectively with each other daily, if needed. We have a lot of new staff members and it is important we are all on the same page with our curriculums.” Both literacy and social studies PLC meeting minutes also had similar statements wanting to ensure grade-level teachers had the same prep periods for the 2017–18 school year, especially with the changes being made to the master schedule. The science, social studies, and literacy PLC meeting minutes stated a concern with all of the preps teachers were being assigned for the 2017–18 school year. Both the literacy and social studies PLC notes document this problem. Social studies PLC March 2017 meeting minutes stated,

Can you (administration) change it to limit the amount of preps we (social studies teachers) are being asked to do on next years (2017–18) master schedule? Is there

a way to limit the number of classes you will require teachers to do? We are afraid of getting burned out by the end of the year.

Literacy PLC March 2017 meeting minutes stated,

Why the administration wanting to make so many changes to master schedule for our department? Seventh-Grade Literacy Teacher and Ms. X have been teaching eighth-grade for almost a decade and we don't see why Principal has switch them from this grade level on next year's master schedule. Why is Ms. X now assigned to teach Health, why doesn't a PE teacher do that elective?

Again, the literacy department brought the subject back up in their April PLC minutes notes:

Many teachers are feeling overwhelmed with the amount of preps they are forced to have in the coming year. Is there a way that can change? Do all the teachers need to be reassigned to different grade levels or teach a new class? Can you (administration) please explain why this is happening?

Two departments, social studies and literacy, documented teachers being reassigned to another grade level. The literacy PLC April 2017 meeting minutes stated, Teachers are always having to learn a new curriculum each year and they do not understand why the administrator keeps switch what they (literacy teachers) are going to be teaching each year. We stated our concerns a month ago and still did not get an answer.

Literacy PLC 2016–17 meeting minutes documented how sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers were “concerned about losing time with their students if the

administration took away the block schedule as well as being reassigned to a subject or class they were not trained to teach or provided time or resources to successfully teach.”

In May 2017, the literacy PLC meeting minutes again stated, “we are concerns with a number of our (literacy) teacher having enough time or experience to teach a new elective by fall.” Many of the literacy PLC meeting minutes stated how the administration focused more on ensuring middle school students leave with high school credits than ensuring teachers in teaching positions they are qualified to teach. The minutes also stated administration was not providing necessary tools and professional development reassigned teachers needed to feel comfortable teaching a new grade level or class. Social Studies and Literacy teachers felt they were being asked to create a whole new elective without the knowledge, time, or resources needed to make it successful because the district administration wanted to add high-school accredited classes at the middle school. Sixth-Grade Literacy Teacher mentioned this concern during his focus group session.

I was asked to come up with an elective I will be teaching next year, but only had 1 week to find it. The administration gave me no help, just said, ‘find an elective you want to teach next year and let me know so it can be passed through the curriculum council.’

The social studies PLC meeting minutes had similar recorded comments as the school created the 2017–18 master schedule.

Starting in January 2017, the research site’s BLT meeting minutes focused on this issue at great length. The science, social studies, and literacy department heads, each month, voiced their concerns to Principal and wanted answers to why the schedule was

changing. Principal always mentioned Core 24 and the different ways the middle school could help academically struggling students graduate on time as his reasons for the 2017–18 master schedule changes. Principal’s weekly emails expressed this as a factor every time he attached a new version of the master schedule for his staff to review between February and June of 2017.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

A variety of research methods were employed to collect and analyze the raw data gathered at one Washington middle school over 4-months. A 2-part decoding system developed the six themes to accurately summarize the raw data by research question. Breaking down the raw data until it was saturated ensured great care was taken to develop sound, consistent, and neutral interpretations of the written and oral data. I knew saturation was hit when all raw oral and written data collected started to repeat itself and no new themes were discovered according to the case study’s central and 3 procedural subquestions. Saturation was also met when the case study’s findings and results could be transferred to other secondary schools experiencing the same types of barriers, or themes, as this Washington middle school according to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2.

Creditability

Using Member checking and methodological triangulation confirmed my qualitative instrumental case study’s results were creditable. Four exit sessions were held to ensure oral and written data collected at the research site was transcribed, analyzed, and coded correctly. During each hour-long exit session, which were recorded and transcribed, administration, social studies, science, or literacy participants read their

session's finding report, which combined the transcribed oral data and written data organized by research question. Participants were never allowed to see the case study's research questions but were informed the data was broken up into 4 parts using Eight-CR and CEL's 38 indicators of quality teaching and leading.

Before starting an exit session, I encouraged participants to ask questions about the different categories developed and how their raw data was interpreted according the case study's six themes. The 6 participants were asked to make any corrections to their answers, thoughts, or words they might have felt I misinterpreted when formulating their exit report. Reading exit reports together, participants identified typos of certain words or acronyms used to answer the case study's initial 18-open ended questionnaire. No additional data was added during any of the 4 exit sessions. All 6 participants agreed with my findings, signed they were accurately represented, and felt there was no biased found in their exit reports.

A peer reviewer and external auditor were both used to independently guarantee the data collected at the research site was accurately represented and no bias were found in the analysis and results stages of this study. The peer reviewer, who works that the research site, and the external auditor, a retired teacher from research site, independently validated the codes and themes that emerged from each of the 4 interview sessions. Their own personal experiences, training, usage of Washington's TPEP evaluation system and University of Washington's CEL's 5D Instructional Framework, and personal awareness of the innerworkings of this research site helped establish the case study's findings were

credibility, accurate, and truthful. Each signed a confidentiality agreement before reviewing the case study's finding.

The peer reviewer and external auditor independently reviewed the 4 finding reports and tables used to categories and analyze the raw data. Each asked clarifying questions to better understand my coding of the administrator, science, social studies, and literacy department's oral and written raw data, how it led to the development of the case study's six themes, and central and 3 sub-procedural research question's tables. Each were asked to read Chapter 4 to guarantee I did not include any personal biased, while confirming the case study's setting and results were accurately combined to create a thick description of the phenomenon. In the end, both peer reviewer and external auditor confirmed the interpretations of the school's culture was accurate and credible, the research questions were clearly and robustly explained, and the findings clearly supported the codes and themes developed during the collection and analysis stages of this case study.

The clear scope, or lens, established by other studies research studies conducted (Brown-Smith et al., 2013; Harmon & Becker, 2014; and Mendoza et al., 2015) about Washington's TPEP evaluation systems helped interpret the data collected at the research site starting in September and ending in December 2017. I explored, with depth, the specific problems these Washington educators experienced, as this middle school, trying to embed TPEP's Eight-CR and district-adopted instructional framework, CEL's 5D, into its academic culture. Building off of past empirical studies, not only ensures the case

study's findings are creditable, but are comprehensive, inclusive, and transferable to other schools with similar problems identified and explored in this case study.

Transferability

The case study's results were coded and themed to guarantee other middle and high schools, not just in Washington, could relate to the problems outlined in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 is presented by research question, which allows educators, especially district and school administrators, to relate the different problems and issues presented in Chapters 4 and 5 to their own school and teaching staff. District and building administrators, secondary content teachers, or department heads could transfer the themes, problems, or ideas included in this case study to their own classroom, grade level, departments, or school's culture. Including literacy, science, and social studies teachers allows district and school administrators to get a better understanding of the specific problems and issues each content department, and the whole school, encounters trying to accomplish SIP's reading and writing activities and goals. It also identifies the barriers a secondary staff confronts attempting to regularly collect and collaboratively use formative student-generated data to build a rigorous schoolwide literacy culture that incorporates higher-level literacy skills throughout the students' entire school day. This case study also illustrates the impact local, state, and national educational reforms have on a school setting and climate, including changes made to a school's master schedule.

Reading this case study, educators can understand the different, specific, and necessary professional development opportunities administrators, teachers, grade levels, and departments need to fully integrate a state's teacher evaluation system and district-

adopted instructional framework into a school's academic culture, as well as create a community-wide literacy program for their students. It provides district and building administrators reasons why and how SIP activities and goals are isolated from school or district academic culture. This case study illustrates some of the barriers educators must overcome to create the rigorous schoolwide literacy programs the 21st Century professional workforce demands.

Summary

This qualitative instrumental case study's central question, investigated why are the middle school teachers at the research site still not meeting SIP goals despite the use of Washington's TPEP Eight-CR, adoption of CEL's 5D Instructional Framework, 38 indicators of quality teaching and leading required in 21st century classrooms, and added collaboration time. The first procedural subquestion explored how educators at the research site, use Washington's TPEP evaluation system to better prepare students for postsecondary education and future careers: how middle school collaborative teams using Washington's TPEP Eight-CR, CEL's 5D Instructional Framework to scaffold literacy knowledge between departments and grade levels and establish the rigorous school-wide literacy expectations and language outlined its SIP. Second procedural subquestion examined how middle school science, social studies, and literacy teachers integrate CEL's 38 indicators of quality teaching and leading to incorporate higher-level literacy skills into their sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade learning targets, instructional practices, and assessments that fulfill the reading and writing activities outlined the school's SIP goals. The findings highlight various barriers middle school teachers experience trying to

regularly collect, analyze, and use more student-generated data inside content-specific PLCs and other collaborative groups to design a school-wide learning culture that is student-centered and goal/task-oriented.

Over 4 months, starting in September 2017, I collected both oral and written data at the research site to explore, with depth, these 4 questions. Six participants, the school principal, 1 sixth-grade social studies teacher, 1 sixth-grade science teacher, and 3 literacy teachers (one from each grade level) answered an 18-open ended questionnaire. The literacy teachers were the only members to answer as a group while other 3 middle school participants had one-on-one sessions. Only the middle school's principal had an additional follow-up session to get clarification and insight to his first session's answers.

All 6 participants answered 18-open ended questions that delved into why the educators at the research site continually struggle to fulfill the writing and reading activities created every fall by the educators at the research site. September 2017, Principal provided 9 of the literacy, social studies, and science 2016–17 PLC meeting minutes: 1 per month, September to June. He also provided a representative sample of the 2016–17 Building Management Team (BLT) meeting minutes and his weekly staff emails and any attached article or information. Currently, no districtwide writing assessments are used at this middle school, but 4 of the 5 teacher participants provided some specific grade-level, content-specific assignments, tests, and writing assignments currently used inside their classroom, grade level, or department. These 4 teacher participants also provided learning targets and success criteria along with any tools used to measure students' academic progress.

A 2-part coding system, starting with Washington's TPEP Eight-CR then moving to CEL's 5D Instructional Framework helped explore each research question illuminated in findings section of Chapter 4. Six main reasons, or themes, were developed to better understand why are the middle school teachers at the research site continually not accomplishing the school's literacy SIP goals, despite the use Eight-CR, adoption 5D, and added collaboration time. These themes include isolation of TPEP and SIP language and expectations, lack of accountability, knowledge, time and ability to scaffold knowledge between grade levels, departments, and school. The research site's administration and leadership team focused little to no time ensuring literacy, social studies, and science teachers worked together to accomplish SIP activities and goals. Instead, the research site's leadership and staff focused on increasing students' state and district-mandated tests results, SBA and STAR. District and building administrators were also focused on make sure academically struggling students gained enough high school credits to graduate on time but had little to no concerns about if high school graduates were college and career ready.

Finally, there was a lack of professional development offered to the administrators and teaching staff to better understand how TPEP and CEL expectations and language helped build the rigorous schoolwide literacy community outlined in the district and middle school SIP. Each of the 6 themes must be addressed for educators to accomplish the reading and writing activities embedded into SIP goals and create the schoolwide literacy program students need to be college and career ready in the 21st century. Each

theme will be discussed in Chapter 5 and recommendations will be made according conceptual framework and peer-reviewed literature found in Chapter 2.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of conducting this qualitative instrumental case study was to investigate how educators from one middle school used Washington's Teacher Principal Evaluation System (TPEP) to implement the higher-level literacy program outlined yearly in its SIP. Starting in 2012, middle school educators, at the research site, have been provided weekly collaboration time, Wednesday mornings, to collaboratively plan and accomplish specific literacy activities outlined in SIP reading and writing goals. Despite added collaboration time, sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade science, social studies, and literacy teachers struggle to incorporate grade-level, content-specific reading and writing activities into the school's learning culture, thus not accomplishing the school's SIP literacy goals. This case study provided an understanding of how 6 teachers, 1 principal, and various collaborative groups integrate Washington's evaluation system, TPEP, into the middle school's various learning environments.

This case study provides a better understanding of how middle school educators use its state-mandated teacher evaluation program and district-adopted instructional framework to build the rigorous school-wide literacy program outlined in its SIP. The qualitative instrumental case study design method was based around Eight-CR and 5D's Instructional Framework. Six research site's educators answered 18 open-ended, in-depth questionnaire to help build awareness to how various middle school teachers and content-specific PLCs incorporated Eight-CR and 5D build a student-centered rigor, goal-oriented literacy program recent federal, state, and local mandates require in the 21st century.

A 2-part coding system helped determine the main barriers preventing a middle school staff from accomplishing the reading and writing goals they collaboratively create every fall. There were 6 major themes developed to describe the central and 3 procedural subquestions' results. First, SIP, TPEP, and CEL are isolated at the research site. Next, these middle school educators lack knowledge, accountability, and time needed to fulfill the literacy-based SIP activities and goals using Eight-CR and 5D language and expectations. Finally, federal, state, and local educational mandates are viewed as more important than establishing the community-wide literacy program secondary students need to be college and career ready in the 21st century.

The research site's 2017–18 master schedule focused on increasing the district's high school graduation rates and SBA tests results, instead of creating the rigorous schoolwide literacy program designed in their SIP. The 5 teacher participants confessed they felt pressured, by district and building leadership, to create instructional practices aimed to increase SBA and graduation rates. Few written records provided by Principal illustrated how the middle school's different collaborative groups focused on incorporating the higher-level reading, writing, communication, and thinking skills needed to be college and career. Teacher participants felt district-provided collaboration time was not used effectively. Teacher participants admitted they had yet to be provided the skills or knowledge to begin a student-generated data cycle process, during PLC meeting times, which is the main reason district leadership's established late start Wednesdays.

Research site educators struggled to understand how TPEP and CEL language transitions individual, grade-level, or content teachers' instructional practices and beliefs to provide the higher-level thinking, reading, writing, and communication skills colleges and employers now demand. The majority of middle school educators have yet to establish any literacy language or expectations going beyond the basics of remembering and understanding information taught in each unit of study. Nor was Principal willing to hold teachers accountable for ensuring middle school's students could critically explore, connect, and communicate how grade-level, content-specific information and knowledge affects their lives, community, and world, which are the main goals of TPEP, Washington's 4-tier teacher evaluation program.

Interpretation of the Findings

The central research question explored why middle school teachers are not accomplish the research site's reading and writing SIP goals, despite the use of Eight-CR, adoption 5D, and added collaboration time. The first procedural subquestion probed delved into the research site's PLCs and BLT use Eight-CR's and 5D's to scaffold literacy skills between grade levels and departments to establish rigorous community-wide literacy program 21st Century educational reforms required of secondary educators. The second procedural subquestion investigated how sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers incorporated 5D's 38 indicators of quality teaching and leading to develop and integrated higher-level literacy skills into their grade-level's or department's learning targets, instructional practices, and common assessments and how each literacy activity helped accomplish a SIP reading and writing activity or goal. Finally, the third procedural

subquestion asked what barriers middle school teachers experience trying to regularly collect, analyze, and use student-generated data inside PLCs and other collaborative groups to produce more student-generated and goal/task-oriented curriculum in all grade levels, departments, and entire school.

The results of the central and 3 procedural subquestions illuminated the challenges educators across Washington face trying to embed TPEP and district-adopted instructional framework into their school's culture. Research site's building and district administrators have yet to create meaningful and/or on-going professional development for themselves or its secondary teaching staff that would embed Eight-CR and 5D language and expectations into its academic culture (American Institute of Research, 2012, Brown-Smith et al., 2013; Fowler, 2014; Marmon & Becker, 2014; Mendoza et al., 2015). It was clear, research site's administration, like others found in Washington, struggle to fulfill the goals outlined in its RTTP (2011) application (Brown-Smith, et al., 2013; Mendoza et. al, 2015).

Vygotsky (1978), Marzano and Arredondo (1986), Arredondo and Marzano (1986), and Marzano and Heflebower (2011) laid the foundation for University of Washington's CEL's (2011) Instructional Framework. CEL's 5D Instructional Framework includes 38 indicators of quality teaching and leading used to evaluate the research sites' educational staff. Vygotsky, Marzano and Arredondo, Arredondo and Marzano, Marzano and Heflebower, and CEL mandate school educators must work collaboratively and systematic to successfully establish a rigorous community-wide literacy program. Vygotsky's ZPD encouraged scaffolding of knowledge and skills from

one grade level to the next to deepen students' learning capacity. Vygotsky's hypothesis stated students can develop higher-level thinking skills when provided explicit, direct, and guided instructions along with multiple practice opportunities from adults. Marzano and Arredondo created six specific phases allowing teacher teams to gradually release learning responsibilities to students by using student-generated data to measure students' ability to gain higher-level literacy skills at each grade level and entire school to be college and career ready after graduating from high school.

In 2012, University of Washington's CELs created 5D, which contains 38 indicators of quality teaching and leading, to help guarantee more high school graduates are college and career ready for the 21st Century workforce. Washington educators are rated on their ability to:

1. Center instruction on high expectations for student achievement
2. Demonstrate effective teaching practices
3. Recognize individual student learning needs and develop strategies to address those needs
4. Provide clear and intentional focus on subject matter content and curriculum
5. Foster and managing safe, positive learning environment
6. Use multiple student data elements to modify instruction and improve student learning
7. Communicate and collaborate with parents and school community

8. Exhibit collaborative and collegial practices focused on improving instructional practices and student learning (UW CEL, 2012, p. 2)

None of these educational foundational ideas were found at the research site, despite the adoption 5D by district administrators in 2012. 5D is used in conjunction with Eight-CR to evaluate every educator at the research site. Washington teachers are required to show evidence of their ability to individually and collaboratively create a rigorous learning environment, which is assessed during both a comprehensive and a focused evaluation cycle, as mandated by Washington's OSPI. American Institution for Research (2012), Brown et al. (2013), Fowler (2014), Harmon and Becker (2014), and Mendoza et al. (2015) found Washington teachers and principals were still unsure of how to integrate Eight-CR and district-adapted instructional framework into district-provided collaboration time. These studies indicated time, lack of knowledge, and professional development were some of the barriers districts, statewide, faced trying to incorporate TPEP's language and expectations into their educational setting. Each study indicated district leadership teams were still uncertain of the what specific skills, beliefs, and values had to transformed districtwide to better meet the needs of the 21st century learner. The findings of this case study confirmed these barriers, along with the important role state and district-mandated tests, SBA and STAR, play inside PLCs and the other collaborative groups meeting times at the research site.

Lack of Knowledge

This case study systematically investigated how teacher teams and other collaborative groups at one Washington middle school used Eight-CR and 5D to target and scaffold higher-level reading and writing skills written yearly into the research site's SIP by the teaching staff. Arredondo and Marzano's (1986) educational study highlighted the need for literacy learning to be scaffold between grade levels, departments, and schoolwide. It is the teaching staff responsibility decide what literacy skills would be taught at each grade level, but once decided grade-level science, social studies, and literacy teachers must use, review, and reteach these skills until student mastery was evident.

The finding of this study indicated research site educators have yet to be provided the necessary and on-going professional development to systematically embed higher-level literacy skills outlined in the school's SIP into its academic culture. Sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade science, social studies, and literacy teachers are not held accountable to incorporate SIPs higher-level literacy activities and goals into their unit's learning targets, activities, or assessments. Nor are content department teachers held accountable to work together to identify what literacy skills should target by each grade level or department according to the CCSS to even begin to accomplish the school's SIP reading and writing goals. Sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade science, social studies, and science lacked knowledge on how to incorporate common, direct, or explicit literacy language to deepen students' understanding of grade-level, subject-specific content knowledge. The majority of the literacy language established by the school's SIP has been repeatedly ignored by

the teaching staff. Case study participants mentioned there were little to no discussions or planning to encourage students to have a more complex and deeper exploration of grade-level science, social studies, and literacy knowledge using higher-level literacy skills during district-provided collaboration times. Instead, most collaborative conversations focused around curriculum, local and state-mandated test scores, student and parent apathy, and failure rates occurring in sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade science, social studies, and science classes.

Isolation of SIP, TPEP, and CEL

No participant understood how TPEP or CEL language and expectations could be used to create the community-wide literacy program outlined in the research site's SIP. Principal acknowledged integrating Eight-CR and 5D language and expectations into the school's learning culture would be beneficial and be helpful this process. Principal believes "TPEP is a private while PLCs are public," and had never thought about holding teachers accountable for using TPEP language inside their classroom setting. Nor considered ensuring PLCs were collaboratively working to create grade-level literacy activities aimed accomplish the SIP goals and establish schoolwide literacy language.

Principal had yet to take any steps to change any teacher's instructional beliefs, values, or expectations he noticed hindered his staff's ability to create the community-wide literacy program, outlined in both district and school SIP, since taking this position in June 2015. Principal stated only a third to maybe a half of the middle school teaching staff even understood how TPEP and CCSS changed educators' roles and focus in the 21st century secondary classroom. Principal stated, "No, not right now. I really never

thought about it before,” when asked about if he had any plans to bridge this identified gap, or barriers.

Teacher participants viewed Washington’s TPEP evaluation system in a very broad and isolated way. None could express how TPEP or CEL language directly related to SIPs reading and writing activities or goals. Nor how and if CEL’s indicators directly related to their learning environments. None felt CELs indicators help transform their department’s teaching practices to be more student-centered and task/goal oriented. All but 1 participant, Sixth-Grade Science Teacher, admitted SIP was a document only looked at only once or twice a year by individual teachers or PLCs. Being a first-year teacher, Sixth-Grade Science Teacher did not have enough teaching experience to answer this question. None of the 5 teacher participants felt SIP’s reading and writing activities or goals played an important role in the collaborative work happening at this middle school. Seventh-Grade Literacy Teacher stated,

The SIP is almost like forged goals, or pretend goals, so that the district can say ‘here, we (leadership) gave them (teachers) something to work on.’ But there is no discussion throughout the year ensuring our department (literacy), or any other, are doing the activities we decide on as a staff. It is all fake.

Every participant felt a rigorous schoolwide literacy culture was needed at the research site to improve students’ academic success but were unsure how the TPEP system and 5D’s 38 indicators influenced the needed cultural changes demanded by CCSS and other educational reforms.

Starting in 2012, districts adopted CEL's 5D Instructional Framework, which laid out strict instructional framework administrators were to use with TPEP's Eight-CR rubric. Washington's new 2-part, 4-teir evaluation model provides cohesive learning standards and outcomes for K-12 public school teachers. Goe et al. (2017), Lenhoff et al. (2018), Mihaly et al. (2018), and Patrick (2016) stated without strict outcome-oriented learning standards and guides that influenced teachers' instructional practices, beliefs, and values students' academic improvement was relative. The research site's SIP outlines a rigorous, student-centered literacy-learning culture that includes clear student growth standards for sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students. Teachers created specific SIP reading and writing activities to better monitor student yearly academic achievement using formative student-generated data. Grade-level or content-specific literacy learning was not a focus of discussion at the research site. Instead, state and district-mandated standardized tests scores influenced teachers' instructional decisions. Science, social studies, and literacy PLCs and other collaborative groups' discussions tended to focus around improving students' SBA, state-mandated, standardized test's scores (Castello & Ho, 2013; Goe et. al., 2017; Wylie et al., 2017).

Science, social studies, and literacy PLCs have yet to establish cohesive literacy focused learning standards, objectives, and targets outlined its SIP and CCSS. None of the 5 teacher participants knew what literacy skills were targeted or taught in other grade-levels or subject matter. Participants struggled to verbalize how they worked with their teaching peers to fulfill the school's reading and writing SIP goals (Guise et al., 2016) Instead, participants admitted using publisher-created curriculum and preformulated unit

learning targets and assessments. Little to no student-generated data was found that targeted and assessed students' ability to gather textual evidence, then evaluate, analyze, and apply own lives, or solve local and/or world problems using a wide range of creditable sources, which included are all included in TPEP, CEL, and SIP expectations (Christ et al., 2017; Konrad et al., 2014; Christ et al., 2017; OSPI, 2015).

Lack of Accountability

Lack of accountability was another barrier to why this middle school's staff struggle to accomplish grade- and content-specific activities embedded into its reading and writing SIP's goals. No participant felt the need to embed TPEP, CEL, or SIP language and expectations into the school's academic culture. Principal expected his teaching staff to "get done what was written into the SIP plan." When asked, "What his specific plans are on doing that, knowing teachers struggled with literacy instructions that demanded students to think, read, write, and communicate at a deeper level," Principal quickly disclosed "I don't have one." This was a common answer provided by Principal for the questions asked on his plans to help the various collaborative teams embed TPEP, CEL, or SIP language and expectations into the middle school's learning culture.

Principal admitted he was happy to see some reading and writing happening in all grade-level classrooms, but his literacy demands for the majority of teachers are very low. There is no strategic accountability system using federal, state, and local educational mandates to help guide the teaching staff's ability to accomplish the grade-level, content-specific literacy activities that accomplish SIP goals.

Principal described a few reasons why the science, social studies, and literacy PLCs fail to create the community-wide literacy program outlined in the SIP, despite the added collaboration time every Wednesday morning. First, teachers have not been asked to change or held accountable by district or building administrators. Second, the middle school's teaching staff has not been trained to do that, yet. Principal stated, "There are too many standards at each grade level. Teachers are continually being asked to pick between content and process, and content is way easier than teaching process to students." Principals need to become experts on the expansive evaluation rubrics to give honest and productive that holds each staff member accountable for fulfilling the school's educational mission (Easton, 2017; Jones & Less, 2014; Huguet et al., 2017)

Four of the 5 teacher participants did not feel the need to adjust or adopt new teaching strategies aimed to accomplish district or middle school SIP goals. No teacher participant could illuminate how TPEP changed personal changed their instructional practices or the work being done inside their PLC. Instead, 4 of the 5 participants stated TPEP just demanded them to be more reflective and record students' content-knowledge gained throughout a school year. Herlihy et al. (2014) study found some teachers only incorporated higher-level thinking, reading, writing, or communicating skills during their formal observations, but it was not a daily norm or built into their classroom routines. Principals must use more informational observational rounds to gage how individual teachers, grade levels, and departments incorporate SIP's academic goals set by the teaching staff, yearly (Guise et al., 2016; Kraft & Gilmour, 2016; Young et al., 2015).

Teacher participants mentioned 1 or 2 teachers in the science, social studies, and literacy departments who were unwilling to incorporate grade-level content-literacy skills inside their grade-level classroom routines. Principal acknowledged many teachers continually used outdated curriculums that demanded very little from students but had no plans to re-educate them using Eight-CR's or 5D's instructional expectations. Instead, Principal hoped post-observations conversations could change these reluctant teachers' instructional beliefs, values, and attitudes, but did not conduct any informal observations to ensure teachers incorporated TPEP and CEL expectations into their classroom environments more than twice a year. Kraft and Gilmour (2016) stated 2 problems new teacher-evaluation systems faced were the amount of time principals spend inside individual classrooms and administrative teams lacked clear and consistent understanding of how each evaluated standard was seen in every grade-level classroom. Both of these barriers were found at the research site. Principal disclosed he struggled to spend any quality time with any one PLC group or in any individual teacher's classroom without his school falling apart for the day. His educational background was in mathematics, so he depends on certain teachers or outside help to set the middle school's literacy learning standards and instructional expectations.

Lack of Time

2016–17 science, social studies, and literacy PLC and BLT meeting minutes showed little to no time was spent discussing how to increase the rigor inside any individual or grade-level classroom. Nor did these PLCs create content-specific literacy activities to be used to fulfill any of the specific activities written into the middle school's

SIP reading and writing goals. No mention of TPEP or CEL expectations or language was found any of the collaborative teams' minutes. Instead, the majority of district-provided collaboration time was spent discussing outdated curriculum, state and district-mandated tests, SBA and STAR, student apathy and failure rates. Districtwide writing assessments were not being used to monitor students' literacy growth, despite a SIP activity for the past 5 years. Teacher participants admitted the majority of their PLC time was spent discussing ways increase the number of students meeting SBA standards.

Easton (2017), Guise et al. (2016) and Vanblaere and Devos (2017) identified simple reasons why PLCs fail in schools. First, lack of regular and on-going established meeting times. Second, more experienced teachers lacked dedication, commitment, and hard work needed to incorporate literacy teaching practices and beliefs outlined in Eight-CR and 5D. Every participant, including Principal, stated research site educators clearly lacked the knowledge, experience, and time to fully understand, integrate, and apply Eight-CR and 5D into their learning environment, PLCs meetings, or even how integrating TPEP's or CEL's language into the school's academic culture could help fulfill the school's SIP literacy goals.

No time was designated for science, social studies, and literacy PLCs to map out the higher-level skills embedded into Eight-CR and 5D and how to ensure literacy learning happened within the students' entire school day. Science, social studies, and literacy PLC groups did not regularly review the school's SIP plan nor ensure grade-level teachers scaffold the rigorous SIP literacy activities into their content-specific classroom. The various collaborative groups, at the middle school, did not use meetings to establish

specific literacy skills sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students needed to master at each grade level, nor discussed how and why these literacy skills looked differently inside the various disciplines and school-wide. Nor were grade-level science, social studies, and literacy teachers collectively creating learning targets, lessons, activities, and assessments to monitor students' content and disciplinary literacy skills. No time or on-going training has been provided to the more experienced middle school teaching staff to better understand how to incorporate and teach content-specific literacy skills outlined in recent federal, state, and local educational reforms. Many times, the more experienced teacher participants felt students should already possess content-specific literacy skills when entering their grade-level learning environments, while the less experienced participant acknowledged teachers were not doing enough to prepare students for the rigorous content-specific reading and writing required in today's colleges (Michelson & Bailey, 2016).

Parson et al. (2016) found PLCs were not provided on-going professional development and time needed to begin the data collection process during district-provided collaboration time. Instead, teachers felt building and district administration gave PLCs too much busy work. Both barriers were expressed in the literacy department's focus group session. All 3 participants complained about pointless and time-consuming assignments building and district leadership required during district- or BLT-directed collaboration mornings. They felt administrators, both district and building, did not trust teachers to use district-provided PLC effectively, so they created time-consuming and pointless tasks to complete. This idea was confirmed during Principal's

one-on-one session. Principal believed content departments should not spend too much time on one specific concept or area of focus, so he posed a new question for the PLCs to discuss and document each meeting time.

The 3 literacy teacher participants also complained about the lack of time administrators provided to train its secondary staff on how to create grade-level or content-specific data cycles. All admitted, after the 1-day PLC data cycle training day, none walked away knowing any specific skills, actions, language, or beliefs needed for their PLC to set in motion a student-generated data cycle, or even knew how to start the conversations shown in training videos. Eighth-Grade Teacher Literacy, chuckled when stating,

Experienced staff members are not provided any specific or on-going reeducation, by their administrative teams, to effectively understand how literacy learning looks in classroom to even begin to create, let alone maintain, student-generated data cycle process in our PLC.

Goldman et al. (2016), Ippolito et al. (2016) and Moje (2015) found secondary teachers struggled to implement rigorous literacy-based instructional practices because not being properly trained to educate 21st Century learners. Teachers require on-going training to realize the “what” and “how” students learn are equally important. Educators must be provided the necessary time to confront the school’s literacy problems, then learn how to collaboratively solve them and monitor if the interventions are working and adjust as needed. Reluctant or more experienced teachers need more time to understand “why” and “how” traditional teaching methods changed because of Eight-CR and 5D. Districts

need to create on-going and specific disciplinary-literacy training to ensure students are well-prepared to enter the 21st century global workforce.

Common Core State Standard

No case study participant understood how TPEP, CEL, or SIP language or expectations create a rigorous community-wide literacy program by encouraging educators to collaboratively scaffold higher-level literacy knowledge between grade levels. Principal said, “The CCSS has outlined those (grade-level benchmarks) for each department, but none of the departments have sat down together to break them up, yet.” Every teacher participant mentioned CCSS were the academic benchmarks for their grade level or content area. No teacher participant could verbalize specific CCSS learning targets or outcomes for their particular grade-level or subject matter. Instead, teacher participants stated textbook- or publisher-created curriculums provided learning targets, instructional practices, and tests for their grade-level students, which Principal disclosed demanded very little from students.

Diving deeper into how the middle school’s academic benchmarks are based around CCSS, I asked Principal to provide specific CCSS standard he expected to see in all sixth-grade classrooms and how those differ from seventh- or eighth-grade standards. Principal admitted “the CCSS are very general and many teachers have a hard time understanding how each standard actually fits into their grade level content area classroom.” I asked the same question to the teacher participants. Seventh-Grade Literacy Teacher said, “I expect my eighth-grade students to write an 11-sentence paragraph, while I expect my seventh-graders to only write a 6-sentence paragraph.” Sixth-Grade

Literacy Teacher added, “sixth-grade students were just working on how to write a paragraph.”

No teacher participant explained how their grade-level standards and expectations fulfilled SIP goal, nor directedly pinpoint what CCSS grade-level benchmark’s or goals they targeted with their grade-level students and how those differed from other grade-level classrooms. Principal had no set expectations or plans to require grade levels, departments, or entire research site’s teaching staff to create common language or expectations to insert specific literacy expectations into every learning environment at this middle school. Despite stating, “Well, that would be something TPEP or CEL rubrics would help with,” when asked about creating a schoolwide literacy program, Principal admitted he never thought about creating a school-wide action plan to embed SIP, TPEP or CEL language into grade-level, content-specific classroom.

Research site’s staff members have not been provided an instructional support system from its leadership team, which makes it difficult for them to create, gather, and analyze student-generated data as written into the middle school’s SIP. Ippolito et al. (2016) described a need for school leadership teams to develop an instructional support system that provides a step-by-step process for grade-level literacy, science, and social studies teachers to unpack the CCSS without feeling overwhelmed or stressed. Ippolito et al. noted more experienced teachers were not provided the necessary and on-going disciplinary literacy training when getting trained. Nor are district or building leadership, currently, doing enough to educate these teachers to understand how globalization and technology has changed ‘what,’ ‘how’ and ‘why’ of teaching in the 21st century. Fang

(2014) and Young et al. (2015) stated more experienced teachers struggle to understand how their teaching roles have changed and needed assistance to redesign teaching practices to better prepare students for the 21st century workforce. All factors were mentioned in every interview session as why this middle school struggled to embed TPEP, CEL, CCSS, and SIP language and expectations into its academic culture.

State and Local Mandated Tests Result

The results of this study found science, social studies, and literacy PLC teams are more focused on how to increase students' state-mandated test scores, instead of accomplishing the reading and writing grade-level activities teachers include each year inside SIP goals. Currently, the research site's educational staff only targets a few literacy skills: close reading, use of evidence to support a claim, IQIA sentences, and summarization skills. These middle school educators believe these targeted literacy skills are important for students to master before taking the state-mandated high-stake ELA SBA test every spring.

The 3 literacy teacher participants verbalized how they did not trust social studies or science teachers to incorporate any informational literacy learning into their grade-level curriculums. Seventh-Grade literacy teacher stated, "70% of the ELA SBA test is informational text, so we have added more informational based text reading and writing activities to ensure the student population gains these targeted skills in every grade level literacy class before spring SBA testing begins in May," as the other 2 teachers shook their heads in agreement. Eighth-Grade Literacy teacher added,

Our department feels the most pressure from ELA's SBA results, so we have to ensure we push more and more informational text onto our students. I don't think science or social studies care about ELA results, so most aren't doing it at all. I've seen some of the work social studies and science teachers demand-no complete sentences, no use of IQIA, no real evidence- see why we don't trust them.

Principal confirmed the research site's leadership is also more focused on district and state-mandated test scores to monitor students' yearly academic growth instead of using more content-specific, formative, student-generated data, "IAB, ICA, STAR, and SBA give the best feedback on whether teachers are teaching, using, and assessing higher-level literacy skills because those tests are good at measuring those skills." Principal stated he not care if teachers taught to a test or teaching students the needed higher-level, content-specific literacy skills demanded by 21st century colleges and careers, as long as more sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students were meeting standards on SBA each year.

Research site educators lacked knowledge and training to monitor students' yearly academic growth using formative, grade-level and disciplinary specific student-generated data. Teacher participants acknowledged using more summative or high-stake tests, given once or twice a year, to measure how much students learned from the beginning to end of the school year. Three of the 5 teacher participants admitted STAR or SBA test results or pre/post tests were easier to use and/or guaranteed they met TPEP's yearly student growth goal, compared to using grade-level content-specific writing assignment that targeted higher-level literacy skills embedded into the school's SIP.

Hill and Grossman (2013), Lenhoff et al. (2018) and Patrick (2016) found lower performing teachers were more comfortable with using standardized test scores because they lacked knowledge to understand how to incorporate the federal, state, and local educational standards into their classroom routines, instructional practices, tests, and assessments. The research site's mentor program was not designed to help first and second-year or struggling teachers incorporate SIP, TPEP, or CEL language into grade-level teaching practices and beliefs. Instead, it was used to help new teachers understand how to use district-adopted curriculum or stay on pace with partner teachers (Goe et al., 2017; Young et al., 2015).

Rarely did SIP's reading and writing activities and goals or Washington's TPEP evaluation system impact the middle school's learning culture. None of the cohesive literacy learning standards and outcomes embedded into these documents were embedded into any sixth, seventh, and eighth grade science, social studies, and literacy classroom or the various collaborative group's meetings. No educator participant verbalized how Eight-CR, 5D, and SIP language and expectations have been embedded into individual, grade-level's departments, and school's instructional practices, learning activities, and assessments. None thought TPEP or CELs language could help their PLC accomplish SIP activity or goals, nor thought SIP and TPEP was even related. District and building administration has yet to provide clear and specific training to individual, grade-level, or department teachers on how to embed and use SIP, TPEP or CEL language inside sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade literacy science, and social studies learning environments,

PLC meetings, and other collaborative groups (Forman & Marson, 2015; Goe et al., 2017; Lenhoff et al., 2018).

Lack of Professional Development

Principal mentioned only a few staff members fully understood their content-area and disciplinary literacy roles or even realized their teaching role has shifted since the district adopted CEL's 5D Instructional Framework in 2012. Principal believes “secondary content-teachers usually focused on the content instead of educating the whole child,” so he tried not to hire certified secondary teachers. Principal prefers to hire teachers who held a general elementary education teaching certificate. This philosophy has put teachers in the science, social studies, and literacy departments having little to no training in the subject matter they currently teach.

Sixth-Grade Literacy Teacher liked the idea of teaching middle school because the content he would teach but did not possess a whole lot of knowledge on how to teach higher-level reading and writing skills. He taught fourth-grade for 4 years before coming to the middle school and admitted he possess little knowledge on how to include or instruct higher-level literacy skills into his sixth-grade literacy classes. Sixth-Grade Social Studies Teacher, who is the department's head, recognized some teachers in his department did not understand how to incorporate higher-level content-specific literacy skills their grade-level curriculum because they lacked the content-area knowledge or disciplinary literacy skills. Sixth-Grade Social Studies Teacher admitted, currently, only 1 of the 4 sixth-grade social studies teachers held a social studies endorsement, and acknowledged it was not him.

Charubusp and Chinwonno (2014), Evans and Clark (2015), Frey et al. (2017), Howard (2016), and Lesley (2014) stated to extend beyond students' ability to understand text and produce summarize was the goal of learning in 21st Century secondary education. Other empirical studies (Dostal & Gabriel, 2016; Mitton-Kukner & Orr, 2014; Rainey et al., 2017; Sargent et al., 2018) explained today's workforce demands more from students than just learning how to read and write. Instead, students must become more socially and culturally aware of how specific information and concepts fit into their own lives, community, and world. They need to be taught how to apply, analyze, and evaluate facts at a deeper, more personal level. Secondary students need to be able to solve personalized problems by learning how to infuse and embed literacy skills to content knowledge. Dostal and Gabriel (2016) and Goldman et al. (2016) illustrated the need for content teachers to start rethinking literacy learning into their subject matter so students can build academic endurance, while taking the necessary risks to gain academic confidence needed read a wider range of challenging text, learn to question author's biased, and critically thinking why learning this information is important and how it directly impacts their own lives and the world around them.

The research site's teaching staff has not been provided the necessary professional development to scaffold higher-level literacy skills between grade levels and content departments using TPEP, CEL, and SIP language and expectations. All 5 teacher participants mentioned the many difficulties grade-level and department teachers, including themselves, experience trying to incorporate higher-level literacy skills into

their classroom routines and collaborative groups meetings, especially the science and literacy PLCs.

Principal admitted “many times teachers will use their old materials and just say it includes CCSS inside of them.” This thought was confirmed by the teacher participants. The majority of the research site teachers use premade curriculums that do not demand sixth-, seventh-, or eighth-grade students to read a wide range of challenging or complex text, especially science and social studies teachers. teachers teaching the middle school students how to gather, combine, and use evidence from multiple text with their own personal beliefs and knowledge, which are SIP activities, in each. Mitton-Kukner and Orr (2014) pointed out professional development needed to focus on metacognitive skills so more experienced teachers can recognize literacy skills help students learn and apply challenging content-knowledge and text beyond the classroom’s walls.

No teacher participant mentioned being provided effective, on-going, or explicit professional development to go beyond teaching the basic meaning of the text. Falk-Ross and Evans (2014), Friedland et al. (2017), and Mont-Santo et al. (2017) found content teachers needed help to revise teaching pedagogy to understand why it is important for students to have a more personal and critical relationship with content-specific knowledge. Sixth-Grade Social Studies Teacher mentioned his department has asked for professional development focused on quality classroom discussions but has yet to received it. Science, social studies, and literacy PLC meeting minutes reviewed included a request for more intense and complex retraining for the whole department, grade-level teachers, and the more experienced teachers to unpack the CCSS and learn how to

scaffold the content-specific literacy requirements the SIP expected them to embed into the school's academic culture. Many teachers each department admitted not possess the content and disciplinary literacy knowledge or skills needed to incorporate more complex reading and writing assignments into their instructional practices (Frey et al., 2017; Gang, 2014; Howard, 2016; Neugebauer, 2017).

Principal repeatedly stated he had no action plan to provide individual, grade-levels, and content-specific teachers with the specific and on-going training needed to transition their teaching values, actions, and beliefs and incorporate the educational demands outlined in Washington's TPEP 4-tier evaluation program and the CCSS. The case study's findings affirmed there is a wide gap in knowledge experienced content teachers have about 21st century learning, which was identified in Easton et al. (2018), Frey et al. (2017), Mitton-Kukner and Orr (2014), and Neugebauer (2017) studies. Each study, including this one, found more experienced teachers lacked content, disciplinary, and digital literacy education, which are necessary elements to 21st century content-specific literacy learning.

The more experienced teacher participants admitted their college training did not prepare them for the disciplinary literacy requirements CCSS and TPEP demand. Nor has district-lead trainings been effective in changing their instructional practices to incorporate the higher-level literacy learning required by federal and state educational initiatives. Principal admitted the more experienced teachers have reused the same learning targets, instructional practices, and assessments for decades, but he had no plans to confront their actions and behaviors. Principal realized he was just ignoring the

problem, not solving it. But district leadership was more concerned with SBA scores and high school graduate rates, so things he focused on with his staff.

Limitations of the Study

According to Leung (2015) appropriate tools should be used to valid a case study, confirm data collected, and provided a clear picture on the “who, what, when, and why” of the phenomena being examined at a research site. Employing a purposeful sample of sixth, seventh, and eighth grade science, social studies, literacy teachers and the middle school’s principal, then collecting a wide range of representation of the written work done, at the research site, in a given year, created a clear picture of this qualitative instrumental case study’s results and interpretations.

The small number of educators that agreed to participate in this a content-specific focus group or one-on-one session, conducted in the research site’s staff room at 2:35, was the first limitation. Of the 17 educators that meet the case study’s descriptors, only 6 agreed to participate: 1 administrator and 5 teachers. This case study is missing seventh and eighth grade science and social studies teachers’ answers to the 18-open-ended questions. To mitigate this limitation, 3 of the 5 teacher participants have taught 1 of these grade-levels or subject matters missing from this case study, which were then included in some of their interview answers. Sixth-Grade Social Studies Teacher has taught both seventh-grade social studies and seventh-grade literacy classes. He also has taught sixth-grade literacy since being hired at this district 11 years ago. Eighth-Grade Literacy Teacher currently teaches 2 seventh-grade literacy classes, taught a sixth-grade social studies for 1 year, sixth-grade literacy for 2 years, and a multi-grade elective,

leadership, for 3 years. Seventh-Grade Literacy Teacher has taught sixth-grade and eighth-grade science, eighth-grade literacy, and sixth-grade math, and many other core and elective classes her 23-year teaching career at the research site.

Many of the participants could not answer some of the 18-open ended questions formulated using Eight-CR and 5D's Instructional Framework was the case study's second limitation. Some questions I had to skip because participants did not understand how CEL's 38 indicators of quality teaching and leading related to the collaborative work happening at the research site or how Eight-CR and 5D directly related to accomplishing reading and writing activities embedded into SIP goals. Other times, these 6 participants struggled to find answers, with great-depth or clarity, to some of the 18-open ended questions. These limitations left some unanswered questions. But including a representative sample of the 2016–17 science, social studies, and literacy department PLC meeting notes filled in the some of the gaps created by not having a larger sample size or participants' lack of answers.

Finally, not having district or schoolwide grade-level writing samples limited my ability to accurately assess the higher-level literacy skills targeted sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers in their science, social studies, and literacy classrooms. Despite being writing activities on both SIP plans reviewed, Principal stated, in January 2018, the science, social studies, and literacy departments currently did not use districtwide writing assessments, 4 times a year, to measure students' literacy academic growth. I was able to mitigate this limitation by collecting a representative sample of the learning targets, activities, written assignments, and assessments from 4 of the 5 teacher participants, as

well as some student-generated data Principal collect from one seventh-grade social studies teacher. This was the only teacher who responded to his request made during a December 2017 PLC meeting.

As an eighth-grade history teacher at the research site, I paid extra attention not to be biased in the data collection progress Both an internal and external auditor reviewed the results and findings of this case study top ensure respondent bias and risks outlined in Chapter 1 were kept to a minimum. In addition, to lessen any of my personal risks and biased, which were pre-identified, raw oral and written data was collected until saturation was hit. One follow-up session was scheduled with the middle school's principal to make sure no there I had no unanswered questions. Starting in the fall of 2017, o new limitations occurred as I conducted this case study at the research site over 4-month.

Recommendations

Research Site Recommendations

Build a Schoolwide Accountability System

The research site's district and building leadership teams need to establish a strategic accountability system for its teaching staff to integrate TPEP, CEL, and SIP language and expectations into its learning culture. The research site's teaching staff must learn how to take ownership of the school's improvement process, then have a willingness to openly share, listen, and trust other grade-level content teachers with incorporating higher-level literacy learning into their classroom routines. PLC norms and operational guidelines must be built around Eight-CR and 5D language and expectations. Teachers need to understand how CEL's 38 indicators influence today's instructional

beliefs and practices. At the same time, the middle school's principals must hold their teaching staff accountable for integrating CEL's 38 indicators of quality teaching and learning into the school's academic culture and fulfilling the school's SIP goals (Benoiel & Schechter, 2017; Easton, 2017; Huguet et al., 2017).

Create Common Literacy Language to Scaffold Literacy Learning

District and building leadership teams must design a clear road map for its secondary teaching staff. Then provide on-going and specific professional development to help teachers effectively collaborate to embed the state's evaluation system, TPEP, into the school's culture aimed at accomplishing the school's SIP goals (Jones & Lee, 2014; Kruse & Johnson, 2017; Jones et al., 2015; Marzano & Arredondo, 1986; Vygotsky, 1978). Professional development opportunities are necessary for the research site's PLCs to collaboratively produce and maintain a literacy action plan. Literacy, science, and social studies teachers must learn how to design literacy infused learning targets, success criteria, instructional practices, and assessments that scaffolds the higher-level literacy skills students must master to be college and career ready. Grade-level science, social studies and, literacy teachers need training to be able to divide-up specific reading and writing skills so students can to move beyond learning only close reading skills, writing using IQIA sentences, and writing paragraphs using direct quotes at the research site.

Create More Professional Development Opportunities

More professional development and time must be provided for science, social studies, and literacy teachers to invent an inquiry-based learning environment that

includes clear and rigorous literacy-based learning targets, practice opportunities, and schoolwide writing assessments. Science, social studies, and literacy PLCs must learn how to use data cycles to monitor the targeted literacy skills, where grade-level and department teachers regularly collect and analyze formative data to make instructional decisions. District and building administrators need to move beyond caring only about state-mandated test scores and focus on what skills and knowledge students need to be college and career ready in the 21st century. Then retrain teachers how to embed TPEP, CEL, and SIP language and expectations into the district's learning culture (Diehm & Lupton, 2014; Greenleaf & Brown, 2017; Marzano & Heflebower, 2011; Wahyudin, 2015). Training must be provided to the research site educators so they no longer feel district-provided PLC time is filled with busy, point-less work that has no impact on the work they do in their classrooms. Finally, time must be provided for teachers to analyze the data and adjust their action plans. Teachers need to be allowed to spend several PLC meeting times on a particular subject or topic to understand it with more depth, which in turn will create a more committed teaching staff. Administration needs to give grade-level teachers common planning periods so more informal collaboration can happen (Meyer et al., 2015; Olin-Scheller & Tengberg, 2017; Reed et al., 2017; Vygotsky, 1978). Nor can professional development opportunities function as "sit and gets" or teachers feel they are conducted by unqualified presenters (Easton, 2017; Parsons et al., 2016). Finally, time must be provided for teachers to analyze the data and adjust their action plans (Meyer et al., 2015; Olin-Scheller & Tengberg, 2017; Reed et al., 2017; Vygotsky, 1978).

Leadership Must Build a Schoolwide Literacy Program

The middle school's principals need to spend more time inside teachers' classrooms to conduct informal observations to better understand and pinpoint the teaching staff's instructional weaknesses. Principals need to create a list of the skills, knowledge, and values hindering individual, grade-level, department teachers' ability to accomplish the reading and writing activities written into school's SIP goals. Then create more opportunities for teachers to be given specific training and feedback to learn how to effectively embed disciplinary and content literacy skills their sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade science, social studies, and literacy classrooms. Then, the leadership team needs to hold teachers accountable for carry out the school's action plan collectively written into their SIP. An action plan must ensure the reluctant teachers transform their instructional practices, beliefs, and values to better prepare students for postsecondary education and future careers. The research site's principal cannot continue to ignore the academic problems this research site faces in trying to create the rigorous schoolwide literacy program described in its SIP (Guise et al., 2016; Kraft & Gilmour, 2016; Young et al., 2015)

Recommendations for Practice

Lack of Disciplinary, Content, and Digital Literacy Learning

Today, re-education of secondary content teachers is essential for 21st century students, and requires a paradigm shift to take place in content-area pedagogy to ensure more high school graduates are prepared to read, write, and communicate at the level demanded by the world's business leaders (Dooley et al., 2016; Falk-Ross, 2014; Fang,

2014; Spear-Swerling & Zibulsky, 2014). There needs to be a college-like culture established starting in middle school that includes students being taught how to combine personal knowledge and experiences, content knowledge, credible sources, and personal knowledge and experiences to formulate hypotheses that solve local, state, and world problems (Frey et al., 2017).

The first step in accomplishing this college-like culture is to help teachers create an inquiry-based learning environment where a secondary teaching staff understands they are all there for the same purpose: to promote life-long learners, increase civic participation, and empower students to question what and how information is presented to them in today's society (Chen, 2017; Jacobs et al., 2014). Literacy leaders must retrain secondary content teachers on how instruct students to use more complex cognitive skills to gather and process information found on the Internet. Secondary content teachers need to be shown how to have students locate and question different online sources and news outlets, recognize and question bias, and understand different points of views on the same topic using grade-level content-knowledge (Argelagós & Pifarré, 2017; Castek & Coiro, 2015; Jacobs et al., 2014; Sharp, 2014). Teachers have to be taught how to move away from publisher and curriculums-based learning targets, worksheets, and tests that do not allow students to gain a deeper, more personal understanding of grade-level content-knowledge (Chen, 2017; Kite & Park, 2017).

Content-Specific Literacy Training Embedding State's Evaluation System

Literacy leaders must train leadership teams, department heads, and mentor teachers how to establish a cohesive action plan using the state's teacher evaluation

program, district's adopted instructional framework, and district and school SIPs.

Today's educators must figure out how break down, understand, and use the CCSS grade-level and content-specific benchmarks, teacher-evaluation rubrics, and district-adopted instructional frameworks for every grade-level and content-specific classroom. Literacy leaders must instruct science, social studies, and literacy teachers how to write literacy-based learning targets, implement a lesson or key concept using higher-level literacy skills, and create open-ended, multistep assessments that better monitor students' academic progress. Then, educators need to learn how to collaboratively analyze targeted literacy skills and adjust individual, grade-level, and content departments instructional practices during district-provided collaboration time. Principals, department heads, and mentor teachers must ask clarifying questions and seek out outside experts to fill in educational gaps when necessary (Arredondo & Marzano, 1986; Christ et al., 2017; Guise et al., 2016; Konrad et al., 2014; Marzano & Arredondo, 1986; Vygotsky, 1978).

Finally, literacy leaders must provide professional development to secondary school's teaching staff to learn how to design and implement successful PLCs where teachers work together to fulfill the reading and writing activities outlined school's SIP goals. Department heads must learn how to advocate for grade-level teachers when it comes to funding, supplies, and professional development (Vanblaere & Devos, 2017). Training principals to understand PLC meetings should not be packed with busy work is also very important. Secondary educators need specific and on-going professional development to learn how to decide what higher-level literacy skills and content knowledge will be scaffolded into the school's grade-level and subject-specific

classrooms. Teachers need to have conversations to ensure these literacy skills are being reinforced and built upon by other grade-level teachers and literacy learning happens throughout students' entire school day. This is a very necessary step to any strategic action plan (Arredondo & Marzano, 1986; Marzano & Arredondo, 1986; Marzano & Heflebower, 2011; Vygotsky, 1978). Principals and other leadership teams need training on how to hold grade-level teachers and content-specific PLC groups accountability for fulfilling SIP activities and goals using the state-mandated teacher evaluation program, especially with more experienced or reluctant teachers (Parson et al., 2016; Rotermund et al., 2017). Administrators need to discuss the common results found in each building and district-wide to better tailor professional development for its teaching staff. TPEP results should not be a looked at as private because state rubrics and district-adopted instructional framework were created to give schools' teaching staff the needed language and expectations to successfully collaborative an action plan. Leadership teams should use the results to see what and how too training teachers to accomplish the school's missions and SIP goals (Easton, 2017). Principals need to learn how to adjust and tailor professional development opportunities according to the teaching staff's yearly evaluation results. Then provide a step-by-step process where PLCs can regularly review and modify instructional practices that will enable teachers to accomplish the reading and writing activities found in the school's SIP goals (Jones & Lee, 2014; Kraft & Gilmour, 2016). Literacy leaders need to help PLCs make a community-wide literacy program that is SIP-focused, student-centered, and task-oriented. Both teachers and students must feel

comfortable taking the academic risks needed for the 21st century global economy (Massey & Gardner, 2013; Meyer et al., 2015).

Recommendations for Future Research

This qualitative research study gathered and summarized different perceptions of middle school educators on why this Washington middle school struggles to accomplish the rigorous reading and writing goals included inside this school's SIP. The case study's results and findings adds further understanding to recent studies (American Institute for Research, 2012; Brown-Smith et al., 2013; Fowler, 2014; Harmon & Becker, 2014; Mendoza et al., 2015) about Washington's 4-tier evaluation system, TPEP. Each study, including this one, identified principals and teachers are still unsure how to incorporate Washington's TPEP Eight-CR and district's adopted instructional framework into district-provided collaboration time. This study confirmed the lack of professional development provided to educators by both district and building administrative teams to effectively embed TPEP and CEL's language into a middle school's academic culture. Further studies should concentrate on the specific professional development school principals and grade-level science, social studies, and literacy teachers must receive to integrate State's new two-component, 4-tier evaluation system language into district and schools academic culture.

More empirical studies are needed to systematically explore why secondary literacy, social studies, and science teachers continue to struggle to incorporate school's SIP activities and goals into content-specific PLCs and the other collaborative groups' work. Specific research needs to be conducted on what on-going and specific re-

education is needed for a more experienced secondary staff to collectively, by grade-level or subject matter, break down the CCSS standards and formulate a step-by-step process integrating targeted higher-level skills and content-knowledge students need to master before graduating from high school (Chan et al., 2014; Guise et al., 2016; Konrad et al., 2014). More educational research studies need to be performed on why educators still do not have a full understanding of how States' 4-tier evaluation system and adopted instructional framework has changed their job description, actions, beliefs, and values. These studies should pin-point what on-going and explicit professional development educators need to incorporate their State's 4-tier evaluation rubric and district-adopted instructional framework language and expectations into their individual classroom routines, grade levels, content departments, and school's culture. Finally, more research can be conducted on the six themes included in this case study's findings and why and how to solve each of the identified barriers inside today's middle and high schools (American Institute for Research, 2012; Brown-Smith et al., 2013; Fowler, 2014; Harmon & Becker, 2014; Mendoza et al., 2015).

Implications

The social implications of this case study helped identify barriers educators at one middle school experience using Washington's 4-tier evaluation system, TPEP, to full its SIP literacy goals. It also illustrates the vital need for specific, extensive, and continuous professional development building-wide for secondary educators that have SIP literacy responsibilities. Science, social studies, and literacy teachers need to learn how to transition from using traditional educational practices to focusing on embedding higher-

level digital literacy, content-area, and disciplinary literacy skills inside their grade-level classroom. District and building leadership teams need training on how to create, implement, and monitor a strategic accountability plan to ensure schools' teaching staff are meeting the district and school's missions and goals yearly. There needs to be pedagogical shift inside secondary schools' learning culture to move away from focusing on high-stake state and district-mandated test results to providing students the necessary literacy skills to have a deeper, more personal understanding of content knowledge. A college-like culture must begin in middle schools to ensure high school graduates can read, write, and communicate at the rigorous levels demanded by the 21st century global business leaders. Educators must work together to scaffold content-knowledge and literacy skills throughout secondary students' entire school-day, instead of isolating it inside literacy classrooms (American Institute for Research, 2012; Brown-Smith et al., 2013; Chan et al., 2014; Castellano & Ho, 2013; Dostal & Gabriel, 2016; Guise et al., 2016; Hill & Grossman, 2013; Konrad et al., 2014; Mendoza et al., 2015).

Collaborative teams, including PLCs and BLT, at the research site have yet to embed Eight-CR or 5D language and expectations into its academic culture. Grade-level nor department teaching teams use formative student-generated data to ensure sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade science, social studies, science, and literacy teachers scaffold the complex literacy skills targeted in the school's SIP plan or unpack their subject matter's grade-level benchmarks. The research site's content teachers have not been properly trained to replace traditional teaching values and actions needed to create an inquiry-based literacy learning inside their classroom environments. The teacher

participants admitted not knowing how to set up data cycles or what types of formative data should be collected by grade-levels or subject matter that directly relates to SIP goals. Building administrator have not been properly trained on TPEP, CEL, or CCSS to hold their teaching staff accountability for transitions their practices for the 21st learning. Because of the lack of accountability found at the research site, teacher teams have not created the rigorous literacy-based literacy learning environments described in the school's SIP (Mitton-Kukner & Or, 2014; Rainey et al., 2017; Sargent et. al., 2018).

The science, social studies, and literacy PLCs have not been given the proper time needed to unpack grade-level and subject matter standards embedded in Eight-CR and 5D. PLCs are not collaboratively designing content and disciplinary specific literacy learning targets, activities, or assessment to accomplish the reading and writing activities at each grade level. Teacher participants they have never spent any PLC meeting times on collectively reviewing and integrating 5D's 38 indicators of quality teaching and leading into their grade-level and subject matter learning targets, instructional practices, and common assessments. Principal admitted to posing a new question for the science, social studies, and social studies PLCs to answer every time they met. There needs to be time set aside for secondary teachers to create a step-by-step process to scaffold higher-level reading, writing, and communication skills through students' school day. They also need to spend time designing district-wide assessments to monitor and measure students' ability to engage with content-specific text at a deeper and more personally using digital literacy, disciplinary, and content-area literacy skills. The research site's stakeholders must understand learning content-knowledge is not just isolated inside subject-specific, grade-

level classrooms, but is needed to civic-minded, life-long learners in today's globalized world. Teachers need be given more time to work together to encourage secondary students to think critically about the world they live in, learn how to use content-knowledge to solve real-life problems, and be prepared for the 21st Century global workforce (Castel & Coiro, 2015; Chen, 2017; Dostal & Gabriel, 2016; Howard, 2016; Lesley, 2014; Neugebauer, 2017; Sargent et al., 2018; Sharp, 2016).

Conclusion

This qualitative instrumental case study explored why one Washington middle school 's teaching staff struggles to accomplish SIP goals, despite the use of TPEP's 8-CR, adoption CEL's 5D, and added collaboration time. The research site's principal believed TPEP, Washington's 4-tier evaluation system, and the school's SIP are isolated from teaching staff's yearly collaborative work. Principal has not held any teacher, grade level, or department accountable for accomplishing the rigorous reading and writing activities educational includes each year into its SIP goals. Instead, SBA and STAR test results and high school graduation rates are the main focus of the collaborative work done at this research site, which the principal admits are the two main focuses of the district administrative team. The teachers expressed the same attitudes as Principal about student academic performance and preparing students for the once a year state-mandated test.

Principal's lack of accountability of individual teachers, grade levels, and content departments is a barrier identified and described in the findings and results of this case study. Principal admitted level of rigor most teachers demand from their middle school students is very low and the more experienced staff members are hesitant to include

content, disciplinary, and digital literacy learning into their classroom cultures. Despite knowing these facts, Principal continued to state he had no strategic action plan to re-educate, or change, the attitude and actions of his teaching staff. Also, no plans were made to provide the specific or on-going professional development each content department PLC and department head requested during PLC and BLT meetings.

The science, social studies, and science participants agreed they needed more training to incorporate content, disciplinary, and digital literacy skills into the school's academic culture. The literacy department focus group admitted without professional development opportunities the department could accomplish the rigorous reading and writing activities embedded into its SIP goals. Principal stated he had no plans to ensure grade-level teachers create and use districtwide literacy writing, despite written into the school's SIP yearly. Nor was Principal ready to deal with the identified problems hindering the teaching staff's ability integrate TPEP, CEL, and SIP language to create a rigorous community-wide literacy program 21st Century educational reforms now demand.

Recent empirical studies (Castellano & Ho, 2013; Forman & Markson, 2015; Hill & Grossman, 2013; Lash et al., 2016; Patrick, 2016) identified district and building leadership have a responsibility to create well-defined strategic action plan for individual, grade-level, and department teachers using the State's 4-tier evaluation system and district-adopted instructional framework language and expectations. The research site's more experienced teaching staff has yet to be provided the professional development needed to understand why traditional teaching methods and practices and publisher-

created learning targets, student practice, and assessments are not effective in 21st century learning. District or building administrators must train science, social studies, or literacy PLCs have a responsibility ensure PLCs create data cycles that monitor students' students' ability to complete subject- and grade specific literacy-focused performance tasks using the skills demanded in 21st century postsecondary education and future careers. The research site's more experienced teaching staff has yet to be provided the professional development needed to understand why traditional teaching methods and practices and publisher-created learning targets, student practice, and assessments are not effective in 21st century learning.

Currently, science, social studies, or literacy PLCs are not required to track or monitor how the department, by grade-level, tries to fulfill the school's SIP plan each year, nor does the research site's BLT. Science, social studies, and literacy PLCs are not compelled to create specific student-generated activities designed to accomplish the grade-level and content-specific reading and writing goals. Instead, grade-level teachers continue to use the same literacy skills in every sixth, seventh, and eighth grade classroom. These middle school teachers are still unsure how to scaffold higher-level literacy skills inside the research site using CCSS benchmark. These middle school educators still do not know why or how the school's SIP plan, Washington's evaluation program, TPEP, and district-adopted instructional framework, CEL's 5D, should influence their work because a lack of effective professional development focused around these 3 educational reforms.

Creating a community-wide program requires systematic changes that include provided on-going and specific professional development and a considerable amount of time given to individual, grade-level, and department teachers. Leadership teams need to be trained on how create a strategic accountability plan to learn how to Eight-CR and 5D language to hold their teaching staff accountable. This plan needs grade-level and department teachers work collaboratively to fulfill the school's missions and goals outlined the district and school SIPs. The research site's SIP can no longer be looked at as an isolated document by the school's stakeholders.

Educators must learn to incorporate SIP activities when formulating their TPEP student and professional growth goals. The school's SIP needs to be reviewed by staff members more than twice a year by the middle school's principal embedding TPEP, CELs, and SIP language and expectations into every PLCs and BLT meeting's agenda. The language needs to be recorded in the collaborative groups meeting minutes so the leadership can better monitor the staff's usage of SIP, TPEP, and CEL language and expectations. Principals must spend more time in teachers' classrooms identifying how and what literacy skills are targeted, taught, practiced, and assessed each grade level classrooms the school's literacy culture to move beyond teaching only a few literacy skills schoolwide. The school's staff needs to be trained on how to make grade-level and department decisions based around SIP activities and goals, how to use student-generated data, and adjust grade-level or department instructional practices thus filling the school's literacy SIP goals. Science, social studies, and literacy PLCs collectively generate a list of the higher-level literacy skills sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade teachers

are responsible scaffolding at this middle school. Then, principals must hold individual teachers and PLCs accountable for monitor students' literacy learning using 5D's 38 indicators of quality teaching and learning. Educators can no longer think TPEP and SIP documents are isolated from the daily work done individual and collaboratively at this middle school. Until this happens, the teaching staff will continue to struggle to meet the reading and writing goals outlined in the its SIP.

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Appendix A

Central Research Question's Teacher Focus Group and Administrator Interview

Questions

Why are the middle school teachers at the research site still not meeting the SIP goals despite the use of Washington TPEP Eight-Criterion Rubric, adoption of CEL's 5D Instructional Framework, and added collaboration time?

Teacher Focus Group Questions

1. What are the different ways you, your grade level, and department try to accomplish the reading and writing activities and goals outlined in the SIP in your classroom setting? What role does the SIP plan play in your PLC times? If none, why not?
2. In your department and grade level meetings, what are the different types of discussions you have to establish common literacy learning, expectations, and activities?
3. How does your PLC incorporate the school's reading and writing SIP goals into your grade level learning targets?
4. What are the different specific activities you, your grade level, and entire department have included in your classroom setting that would accomplish the SIP reading and writing goals?
5. What are the specific literacy skills your department expects all students to have as they enter each grade level at this middle school?

Administrator One-on-One Questions

1. What are your specific expectations for PLC departments to accomplish the reading and writing goals outlined in the school's SIP plan?
 2. In department and grade level meeting, what are your expectations for PLC's to create common language, expectations, and activities all students must possess to be ready for postsecondary education using the school's SIP activities and goals?
 3. What are your SIP expectations within PLC time when it comes to creating common learning targets, instructional practices, and assessments that incorporate higher-level literacy skills into all grade levels per department and entire school?
 4. How are you ensuring that specific teachers use the common learning targets, instructional practices, and activities that PLCs decided to try to accomplish the SIP reading and writing goals?
 5. What are your expectations for PLCs to establish grade level benchmarks for literacy learning in each subject matter? Describe what you know about how teachers are working together with their PLCs to ensure all students are gaining specific literacy skills in each department by grade level.
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Note. Adapted from "5 dimensions of teaching and learning: instructional Framework version 4.0. Improving Student Learning through Improved Teaching and Leadership," by Center for Educational Leadership, University of Washington, pp. 1–41.

Appendix B

Procedural Question One's Teacher Focus Group and Administrator Interview Questions

How are collaborative teams at the research site using Washington's TPEP Eight-Criterion rubric and CEL's 5D Instructional Framework to scaffold literacy skills between departments and grade levels to establish the rigorous literacy expectations and language outlined in the school's SIP?

Teacher Focus Group Questions

1. What are the different types of TPEP language your department has adopted to establish the rigorous literacy expectations and languages outlined in the school's SIP?
2. How do you, your grade level, and PLC design work that deepens students' knowledge that goes past remembering, understanding, and applying the information and focuses on analyzing and evaluating the author's purpose or relating it to real world problems?
3. What are the common assessments your grade level and department use to assess these higher-level literacy skills?
4. How do you monitor the literacy skills targeted in each lesson or unit? How do you share those results with your grade level, department, and entire staff?

Administrator One-on-One Questions

1. What are your expectations for both grade level and content-area PLCs to refer and use TPEP language to make curriculum decisions that would accomplish the reading and writing activities and goals outlined in the school's SIP? How do you share those expectations with the different PLCs and entire staff?
 2. How does each department (science, social studies, and literacy) scaffold literacy knowledge to build higher-level literacy skills into its instructional practices?
 3. How are you ensuring department PLCs design and use common assessments that deepens students' knowledge and goes past just remembering, understanding, and applying information and focuses on analyzing and evaluating the author's purpose or relating it to real world problems?
 4. What are your expectations for scaffolding literacy language with content knowledge for each department and grade level?
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Note. Adapted from "5 dimensions of teaching and learning: instructional Framework version 4.0. Improving Student Learning through Improved Teaching and Leadership," by Center for Educational Leadership, University of Washington, pp. 1–41.

Appendix C

Procedural Question Two's Teacher Focus Group and Administrator Interview

Questions

How are specific departments and grade-level teams at the research site integrating CEL's 38 indicators of quality teaching and leading to incorporate higher-level literacy skills into their learning targets, instructional practices, learning activities, and common assessments that would fulfill the reading and writing goals outlined in the school's SIP?

Teacher Focus Group Questions

1. What are the major themes being discussed inside your PLCs?
2. How do you communicate your higher literacy expectations to all students?
3. Where do you post your learning targets so all students can see them?
4. Do you communicate your TPEP student and professional goals to your students, grade level, department, and other staff members?
5. How do you have your students track individual progress to reach your TPEP growth goals?

Administrator One-on-One Questions

1. What are the major themes being discussed inside the science, social studies, and literacy PLCs? How are literacy learning and SIP goals being integrated into all subject matter curriculums?
 2. What are your expectations for higher-level literacy learning inside the different grade levels, departments, and entire school? How do you communicate your higher literacy expectations to your staff, parents, and students?
 3. What are your expectations for all teachers to post their learning targets so all students can see them? How similar do you think each grade level, department, and entire school is at integrating literacy skills and content knowledge into their learning targets and instructional practices?
 4. What are your expectations for teachers sharing their TPEP student and professional goals with their students, grade level, departments, and other staff members? How do you ensure teachers are doing this?
 5. What are your expectations for teachers monitoring literacy learning by using student-generated data? What types of data do you encourage teachers to use?
-

Note. Adapted from "5 dimensions of teaching and learning: instructional Framework version 4.0. Improving Student Learning through Improved Teaching and Leadership," by Center for Educational Leadership, University of Washington, pp. 1–41.

Appendix D

Procedural Question 3 Teacher Focus Group and Administrator Interview Questions

What are the barriers middle school teachers' experience when trying to regularly collect, analyze, and use student-generated data inside PLCs and other collaborative groups to produce a more student-centered and goal/task-oriented curriculum in all grade levels, departments, and the entire school?

Teacher Focus Group Questions

1. What are the barriers that you experience trying to fulfill your 3 TPEP goals yearly?
2. How important is community-wide literacy that establishes consistent language, expectations, and values within the school to you and your PLC?
3. How often does your PLC refer and/or use TPEP language and expectations to make curriculum decisions?
4. What are the skills, knowledge, and beliefs you and/or your PLC lack in teaching more literacy-based curriculum outlined in both TPEP and the school's SIP?

Administrator One-on-One Questions

1. What are the barriers you feel teachers are experiencing as try to release student ownership of their education? What specific directions, guidance, or professional development are you providing each PLC to accomplish the reading and writing SIP activities and goals?
2. How important is community-wide literacy that establishes consistent language, expectations, and values with the school year to you? What are you doing to ensure this is happening inside this middle school?
3. What are your specific expectations for PLCs to refer and/or use TPEP language and expectations to make curriculum decisions? How do you hold teachers accountable for these expectations?
4. What are the skills, knowledge, and beliefs you have noticed each PLC lacks in teaching more literacy-based curriculum outlined in both TPEP and the school's SIP? How have you used that information to build professional development opportunities for specific staff members, grade level, departments, and the entire school?

Note. Adapted from “5 dimensions of teaching and learning: instructional Framework version 4.0. Improving Student Learning through Improved Teaching and Leadership,” by Center for Educational Leadership, University of Washington, pp. 1–41.

Appendix E

Permission to Use Copyright Material

From the University of Washington, Center of Educational Leadership

Center For Educational Leadership <edlead@uw.edu>

12/4/15 ☆

to me ▾

Dear Valynda,

Good afternoon, our communications director has reviewed your request and you are granted permission to utilize our 5D+ Framework for the purposes of your case study. However, you need to retain all of our copyright and trademark information.

Please let me know if you have any additional questions. Have a pleasant weekend.

Regards,

Jessie

From Dr. Marzano's Office

Beth Watson <beth.watson@marzanoresearch.com>

12/7/15 ☆

to me ▾

Valynda,

Hello! I spoke with Dr. Marzano and he said you do have permission to use the guided questions found on the website listed below.

Best of luck in your work!

Beth

Beth Watson
Marzano Research
[303-766-9199, ext. 324](tel:303-766-9199)

Textbook Publishers Permission

Permission to use *History Alive* Curriculum inside EdD case study
noreply@salesforce.com info@teachtci.com

Tue 2/26, 9:14 AM

Yes, we grant you permission to use this information for your case studies. Please do just make sure TCI is listed as the source.

Enjoy,

Jodi Forrest

Operations, Project Manager

TCI

t: 650-390-6600

info@teachtci.com

www.teachtci.com

Appendix F
Permission to Use TPEP Summative Comprehensive Evaluation Form

Representative from NW EDS: Creator of Evaluation Program

From: Pam Estvold [<mailto:PEstvold@nwesd.org>]
Sent: Tuesday, November 22, 2016 9:46 AM
To: Valynda Thompson <vtompson@lwsd.wednet.edu>
Subject: RE: Written Permission for Doctorate Study

To Whom It May Concern:

I grant Valynda Thompson permission to use the TPEP Evaluation form that was created by NWESD 189 in her study to fulfill the requirement. We request that the format and language not be changed in the study.
November 22, 2016

Pam Estvold
Assistant Superintendent
Teaching & Learning
Northwest Educational Service District 189
Anacortes, WA 98221
(360)299-4036
pestvold@nwesd.org

www.nwesd.org
Together We Can...

Appendix G

Teacher Focus Group Questionnaire

1. What are the different ways you, your grade level, and department try to accomplish the reading and writing activities and goals outlined in the SIP in your classroom setting? What role does the SIP plan play in your PLC times? If none, why not?
2. In your department and grade-level meetings, what are the different types of discussions you have to establish common literacy learning, expectations, and activities? What are the specific literacy skills your department focuses for each grade level and as a whole department? How do those match the activities and goals writing into the SIP plan?
3. How does your PLC incorporate the school's reading and writing SIP goals into your grade-level learning targets? How do you share your learning targets within your grade level, department and the other departments to ensure the SIP goals are being accomplished yearly?
4. What are the different specific activities you, your grade level, and entire department have included in your classroom setting that would accomplish the SIP reading and writing goals? What are the different types of instructions and practice you provide for students to gain those specific skills? How do you ensure all students are successfully using the literacy skills to gain content knowledge? What happens when students do not show mastery of that literacy skills in a unit?

5. What are the specific literacy skills your department expects all students to have as they enter each grade level at this middle school? Can you describe the different literacy performance benchmarks your PLC has established to ensure all students are moving to the next grade with these specific literacy skills? How does your department measure these skills for each grade level? What role does TPEP's Eight-CR and CEL's 5D Instructional Framework language play of these benchmarks? What role does the school's SIP activities and goals play into these benchmarks? What specific changes have you made to your instructional practices and literacy expectations because of TPEP? How do you communicate those changes with your grade level and department inside PLC times?

6. What are the different types of TPEP language your department has adopted to establish the rigorous literacy expectations and languages outlined in the school's SIP? What are the different ways your department, by grade level, scaffolds these literacy skills into your curriculums to build higher-level reading, writing, thinking, and communication skills?

7. How do you, your grade level, and PLC design work that deepens students' knowledge that goes past remembering, understanding, and applying the information and focuses on analyzing and evaluating the author's purpose or relating it to real world problems?

8. What are the common assessments your grade level and department use to assess these high-level literacy skills? How does the outcomes of those assessments help

your grade level and department adjust content and literacy learning practices that would accomplish the school's SIP activities and/or goals?

9. How do you monitor the literacy skills targeted in each lesson or unit?

How do you share those results with your grade level, department, and entire staff? What are the different actions you, your grade level, and department have done with the results that would accomplish SIP activities or goals? Which ones? Why is your department targeting those specific SIP goals and activities?

10. What are the major themes being discussed inside your PLCs? How do

those relate to TPEP's Eight-CR? What specific indicators found in CEL's 5D does your department tend to focus their discussions around? Why those? How do they improve student achievement inside your classroom setting, grade level, department, or entire school? How do those help accomplish the reading and writing SIP goals?

11. How do you communicate your higher literacy expectations to all

students? How similar are you to your grade level and/or department? How do you work as a team to scaffold content and literacy knowledge between grade levels? What is the specific language, directions, practices, and assessments you provide to your students to gain higher-level literacy skills?

12. Where do you post your learning targets and objectives so all students can

see them? How do you integrate higher-level literacy skills into these targets for each unit of study? If not, why? How similar are your learning targets and objectives to the others in your grade level, department, and entire school? Do you feel similar learning targets and objectives are important to accomplish the school's SIP goals?

13. How do you communicate your TPEP student and professional goals to your students, grade level, department, and other staff members? How does the reading and writing SIP goals influence both your student and professional goals you craft yearly? How does other teachers from your grade level and content-area communicate their goals to you? How do you collaborate as a team to accomplish these student and professional goals yearly?

14. What is the student-generated data you use to monitor and measure student achievement? How do you have your students track individual progress to reach your TPEP growth goals? What do you do with these results? What specific ways have you adjusted your instructional practices because of student-generated data? How has student ownership impacted student achievement in your classroom? How do you share your results with your PLC, school, and leadership?

15. What are the different tools you integrated into your curriculum to provide explicit and direction instructions and practices that integrate higher-level literacy skills into your curriculum? What are the barriers you experience trying to add more literacy practices into your curriculum? How has TPEP and the SIP reading and writing goals shaped those practices? If it has not, why?

16. How do you use TPEP language and expectations gradually release of educational responsibilities to your students? What data do you use monitor all students are taking ownership of their education and working towards your grade level's and department's academic targets and goals? What barriers do you, your grade level, and department experience trying to increase student ownership?

17. What are the barriers that you, your grade level, and department experience trying to accomplish the reading and writing goals found in the SIP plan? What kinds of training or reeducate do you and your PLC need to incorporate the reading and writing goals into your curriculum?

18. How important is community-wide literacy that establishes consistent language, expectations, and values within the school to you and your PLC? What specific and direct instructional practices have you adopted to better integrate literacy learning into your instructional practices? How has CEL's 38 indicators of quality teaching and leading impacted your literacy instructional practices? If not, why not?

Questions were designed, with permission (Appendix E), using the Elements of the Marzano's (2013) Teachers Evaluation Models Domains 1-4 and University of Washington's (2012) 5D Framework. All of the essential elements were retained; only the wording was changed to create questions that better fit the intent of the study.

Appendix H

Administration One-on-One Questionnaire

1. What are your specific expectations for PLC departments to accomplish the reading and writing goals outlined in the school's SIP plan? How do you communicate those expectations to each department?
2. In department and grade-level meeting, what are your expectations for PLC's to create common language, expectations, and activities all students must possess to be ready for postsecondary education using the school's SIP activities and goals? How do you hold teachers and PLCs accountable for accomplishing those expectations?
3. What are your SIP expectations within PLC time when it comes to creating common learning targets, instructional practices, and assessments that incorporate higher-level literacy skills into all grade levels per department and entire school? How do you ensure each PLC is accomplishing your expectations?
4. How are you ensuring that specific teachers use the common learning targets, instructional practices, and activities that PLCs decided to try to accomplish the SIP reading and writing goals? Do you notice during observations that teachers are using literary skills to build content knowledge? What are the different types of activities, instructional practices and assessments have you witnessed by different teachers, grade levels, and departments? Do you feel these activities are helping the school accomplish the reading and writing goals found on the SIP plan? Why/why not? How do you encourage more literacy instruction and learning inside each grade level, content-area, and the entire school?

5. What are your expectations for PLCs to establish grade-level benchmarks for literacy learning in each subject matter? Describe what you know about how teachers are working together with their PLCs to ensure all students are gaining specific literacy skills in each department by grade level. What role does TPEP's Eight-CR and CEL's 5D Instructional Framework language influence the benchmarks? How should the reading and writing goals of the SIP plan influence content department's benchmarks? How do you communicate these benchmark expectations to the staff? How do you hold teachers accountable for fulfilling these expectations? If departments do not have literacy and content skills benchmarks, how do you encourage them to create and use them for scaffolding of learning?

6. What are your expectations for both grade level and content-area PLCs to refer and use TPEP language to make curriculum decisions that would accomplish the reading and writing activities and goals outlined in the school's SIP? How do you share those expectations with the different PLCs and entire staff? How do you hold teachers, grade levels, and department accountable for integrating TPEP language and SIP goals into their PLC times and curriculums?

7. How does each department (science, social studies, and literacy) scaffold literacy knowledge to build higher-level literacy skills into its instructional practices? What is the different evidence you use to monitor the scaffolding of higher-level skills into the individual classrooms, grade levels, departments, and entire school?

8. How are you ensuring department PLCs design and use common assessments that deepens students' knowledge and goes past just remembering,

understanding, and applying information and focuses on analyzing and evaluating the author's purpose or relating it to real world problems? If not, why? Do you feel these skills are important to student learning and higher education?

9. What are your expectations for scaffolding literacy language with content knowledge for each department and grade level? What are your expectations of teachers, grade levels, and departments' use of common classroom- based assessments to measure students' literacy progress inside each department and grade level? How are you holding teachers, grade levels, and departments accountable for this expectation?

10. How are you encouraging and/or supporting PLCs to use more student-generated assessments and LMS's writing rubric to monitor's students' ability to use higher-level literacy skills throughout the entire school?

11. What are the major themes being discussed inside the science, social studies, and literacy PLCs? How literacy learning and SIP goals being integrated into all subject matter curriculums? If not, how are you encouraging departments to include SIP activities and goals into their curriculums and instructional practices?

12. What are your expectations for higher-level literacy learning inside the different grade levels, departments, and entire school? How do you communicate your higher literacy expectations to your staff, parents, and students? How does these expectations enable scaffolding of literacy learning throughout the entire school day instead of isolated inside literacy classes?

13. What are your expectations for all teachers to post their learning targets so all students can see them? How similar do you think each grade level, department, and

entire school is at integrating literacy skills and content knowledge into their learning targets and instructional practices?

14. What are your expectations for teachers sharing their TPEP student and professional goals with their students, grade level, departments, and other staff members? How do you ensure teachers are doing this?

15. What are your expectations for teachers monitoring literacy learning by using student-generated data? What types of data do you encourage teachers to use? How do you communicate these expectations to your staff? How do you hold all teachers accountable for regularly using student-generated data to adjust their instructional practice in order to accomplish the reading and writing goals outlined in the SIP?

16. What are the barriers you feel teachers are experiencing as try to release student ownership of their education? What specific directions, guidance, or professional development are you providing each PLC to accomplish the reading and writing SIP activities and goals to accomplish the reading and writing SIP activities and goals?

17. How important is community-wide literacy that establishes consistent language, expectations, and values with the school year to you? What are you doing to ensure this is happening inside this middle school? What are your specific expectations for PLCs to refer and/or use TPEP language and expectations to make curriculum decisions? How do you hold teachers accountable for these expectations?

18. What are the skills, knowledge, and beliefs you have noticed each PLC lacks in teaching more literacy-based curriculum outlined in both TPEP and the school's

SIP? How have you used that information to build professional development opportunities for specific staff members, grade level, departments, and the entire school?

All questions were designed, with permission (Appendix E), using the Elements of the Marzano's (2013) Teachers Evaluation Models Domains 1-4 and University of Washington's (2012) 5D Framework. All of the essential elements were retained; only the wording was changed to create questions that better fit the intent of the study.