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Teachers' Perceptions of the Impact of Standardized Testing and Remediation on Students with Disabilities

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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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MS, Hood College, 2009

MEd, University of Incarnate Word, 2002

BA, University of Incarnate Word, 1998

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

At ABCD High School, students with disabilities (SWDs) pass state-mandated English High School Assessments (HSA) at a lower rate than do their nondisabled peers, even with remediation. The purpose of this study was to investigate teachers' perceptions of appropriate remediation for preparing SWDs for the English HSA. The theoretical foundation for the study was based on social constructivism with an emphasis on individual experiences. The 3 key research questions investigated how teachers perceive their role in the delivery of remediation, how they describe the remediation program, and what factors they say influence their ability to remediate SWDs effectively. Data were collected from observations of remediation instruction ($n = 12$), individual interviews of English teachers ($n = 6$), and school documents pertaining to remediation. A qualitative data analysis was conducted with constant comparison and open, axial, and selective coding in order to identify emergent themes and sub-themes. Findings indicated inadequacies in instructional materials, teachers' poor understanding of student disabilities, a lack of formal teacher training, scheduling problems, difficulty motivating students, and a lack of collaboration among colleagues. The creation of teacher professional development workshops was recommended to study various disabilities and to share strategies for improving remediation of SWDs. Implications of positive social change include improved teacher buy-in regarding SWDs, a more cohesive learning community, and an openness to innovative strategies of remediation, leading to greater instructional effectiveness.

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Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate teachers' perceptions of appropriate remediation for preparing students with disabilities (SWDs) for the English High School Assessment (HSA). No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Race to the Top (RTT) are federal programs designed to help states to pursue higher standards, to use data to improve teaching, and to assist struggling schools to meet effective teaching standards. Forty-five states and three territories have adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2012). With more rigorous expectations of CCSS, increased academic expectations will be reflected in classroom instruction and standardized testing, making graduation more difficult for SWDs. Maryland's adoption of these mandates has created pressure on school districts to develop supplemental educational resources to support SWDs. Data on Maryland high school SWDs display a trend of much poorer performance than that of their nondisabled peers on state mandated HSAs rrequired for graduation (Maryland State Department of Education [MSDE], 2012).

Maryland State Department of Education provided information on HSA passing rate for ABCD High School; a pseudonym developed in order to represent the school anonymously. The data for 2011–2012 showed results for the English HSA indicating that, of the 12th grade population, 86.1% of all students passed while 68.8% of SWDs passed (MSDE, 2012). Of the 11th grade total student population, 80.7% passed while 30.0% SWDs passed. Of all 10th grade students, 77.8% passed while only 18.2% of

SWDs passed (MSDE, 2012). This information indicated very poor performance by SWDs on the English HSA on the first take in the 10th grade year when students received instruction and preparation for the HSA in the general education classroom. The passage rate improved by the end of 11th and 12th grades after SWDs received further classroom instruction and remediation. The gap in practice became apparent in the 10th grade when the general education preparation for the assessments was not sufficient to meet the SWDs' needs to pass the HAS

The following section includes a definition of the problem, rationale for the problem and purpose of study, definition of terms, significance of the problem, research question, review of literature, implications, and summary

Definition of the Problem

The local problem is the gap in teaching practices that leads to differences in the HSA passing rate for SWDs compared to their nondisabled peers. Teachers are using a variety of techniques and materials to implement remediation to SWDs (L. Madden, personal communication, September 9, 2010). This problem is related to the mandated English assessment taken by SWDs who are included in the general education curriculum at ABCD High School in Maryland. In the 2011 school year, 60% of the SWDs who took the English HSA passed; however, this percentage does not show the number of SWDs who have taken the assessment two or more times since they entered 10th grade (MSDE, 2011). At this high school, remediating SWDs who have failed the state English HSA presents an ongoing challenge. Students are assigned to teachers based on either teachers' planning schedule or students' elective schedules. Students are not pulled out

of core courses. Remediating teachers use a variety of methods, and, as a result, it is

difficult to determine which methods are successful

In the fall of 2009, school administrators at ABCD High School including the

school principal, two assistant principals, and department leaders together with the

special education department leader scrutinized the number of takes and retakes of the

students taking the English HSA (H. Bohlander, personal communication, September 9,

2009). First time test takers for the district during the 2008-2009 school year were at

44% English passing rate (Maryland State Archives, 2013). For ABCD High School, the

percentage of first time takers in 2008-2009 was 77%. During of the 2009-2010 school

year, the English and special education department leaders and the administrative team

reviewed the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) results and decided there was a need to

implement intense remediation sessions for all students who had taken the English HSA

once and failed. The passing rate became a major consideration because of NCLB and

the potential for not meeting AYP. For the October, 2009 English HSA, 33 seniors were

scheduled to take the English HSA (ABCD High School guidance center archives,

October, 2009). Of these 33, 14 were senior SWDs. Of these SWDs, 11 failed in

October and had to retake the English HSA in January, 2010. After reviewing HSA

scores, the special education department team found that overall, SWDs' scores had

improved very little or not at all with each retake. A review of the 2010-2011 HSA

results indicated a greater need for remediation. There was almost an 11% passing rate

for drop in first time takers from the 2009-2010 school year. Though a variety of data

has been collected to determine the need for intense remediation, there was a need to

explore teachers' perceptions of the implementations of the English HSA remediation and factors that influence their ability to instruct effectively. An investigation of these opinions would contribute to knowledge needed to understand the factors that affect delivery of remediation to SWDs taking and retaking the mandated English standardized testing.

For remediation purposes, L. Madden, special education English content specialist, reported regularly to the special education department that teachers for the most part used the state HSA practice site developed specifically by the MSDE for detailed HSA review and supplemented with teacher made materials to reinforce the teaching of concepts within the assessment strands (L. Madden, personal communication, September 9, 2010). Maryland State Department of Education as a website which contains actual exams from 2005 to 2009 for all four assessed subjects (English, biology, government, and algebra/data analysis). These tests can be organized by core learning goals (CLG) as well as substrands. The disaggregated data from previous tests help track students' mastery of the four English content strands: reading and responding to literature, evaluating language use, composing skills, and controlling written language. A student may master one strand, but not the others. Passing the assessment is based on a composite score, not on passing individual sections.

Students with disabilities are not exempt from taking the HSAs. For the 2011-2012 school year, 118 special education students were enrolled at ABCD High School (ABCD registrar, January 16, 2013). Eleven did not take part at all in any of the HSAs because, as students earning a certificate of completion, they were exempt. These

students belonged to the Life Skills Program, and they did not meet the usual graduation requirements; instead, after four years of high school, they earned a high school certificate of completion or went on to a job training program. A total of 159 students took the January English HSA; 52 were retakes, and 26 were SWDs of whom 20 failed. Students who did not complete an English II course were not required to take the English HSA.

The schedule for English HSA remediation for SWDs had an unintended negative effect on both students and teachers as a result of scheduling conflicts because students' schedules did not coincide with teacher availability. The daily schedule for students at ABCD High School did not allow for a study hall that would free students from direct academic instruction during the school day, so they were pulled from a class for remediation for any HSA assessment they were taking (H. Bohlander, personal communication, September 9, 2009). Pulling these students from core courses such as mathematics and science caused frustration because students missed important instructional time that had to be made up (L. Madden & R. Doggett, personal communication, November 12, 2010). In addition, students were pulled from classes needed to meet graduation requirements such as technology, foreign language, health, music, art, or other classes which provided them with vocational or academic content.

As part of this remediation program, students at ABCD High School were given many opportunities to familiarize themselves with the online testing procedure while using their accommodations (M. Stake, A. Snowden & L. Madden, personal communication, November 8, 2010). Students spent considerable time learning and

understanding the format of questions. The students examined the prompts and analyzed

their instructions in order to make a connection to the possible selected responses (M.

Stake, A. Snowden & L. Madden, personal communication, November 8, 2010). Federal

law mandates that teachers follow SWDs' Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) during the

remediation sessions; teachers implemented any testing accommodation the students had

according to their IEP (Individuals with Disability Education Act [IDEA], 2004). Farrall

(2012) and Luke and Schwartz (2007) noted that it is important to provide SWDs with

higher expectations, to monitor their understanding, and to provide accommodations prior

to testing situations. Munoz (2011) noted frequent practice tests help students improve

their test taking abilities over time.

Although instruction and testing accommodations as well as remediation for the

state English HSA were provided, SWDs continued to fail on the second and third

attempts as seen in 2009-2010 English HSA results. Information attained by from ABCD

High School HSA archives indicated that in October of 2009, 33 seniors were scheduled

to take the English HSA. Of these 33, 14 were senior SWDs. Of these SWDs, 11 failed

in October and had to retake the English HSA in January, 2010. Of those 11, eight failed

and had to take it again in April of 2010. After each round of testing, failing SWDs were

scheduled for more remediation. Although generally, students did make progress in each

round, they had not all passed and needed more remediation (C. Downs, personal

communication, February 22, 2011).

Providing remediation led to an increased demand for such resources as funding,

space, and willingness of teachers to take on extra work (H. Bohlander, personal

communication, February 22, 2011). Administrators asked teachers to volunteer to

provide remediation beyond their contract time, during teacher planning, or before and

after school hours. Funds to pay the teachers came from money outside of the board

approved budget. Finding available space during a regular school day was a problem

because most classrooms were in use for instruction. Some remediation took place in the

library, cafeteria, or quiet corners of the hallways. Though all English teachers were

asked to volunteer, some did not commit wholeheartedly to working with a more difficult

schedule. During the period of remediation, the administration and department leaders

reviewed the schedule continually.

Local Setting

The ABCD High School had a population of approximately 970 students in 2011-

2012. The racial distribution was White 85.1%, African American 10.1%, Hispanic

2.8%, Asian 1.9%, and American Indian 0.1% (Washington County Public School

[WCPS], 2012). The special education population made up 12.37% of the school

population (WCPS, 2012). According to the ABCD High School attendance records, the

special education population included 11 students enrolled in a self-contained program

called life skills. The life skills students do not work toward a high school diploma, but

rather toward a certificate of completion. This is awarded at graduation to verify

successful completion of a program of individualized goals and objectives over a four

year period of high school in an alternative program such as a life skills program (IDEA,

2004). These students are not included in the standardized HSA testing but are required

to participate in an alternative portfolio assessment in 10th grade called the Alternate

Maryland State Assessment (Alt-MSA). This leaves a total of 118 SWDs mainstreamed into the general education population. The SWDs in the general education population have been identified with a variety of disabilities including 23.7 % with emotional disability (ED), 0.8% intellectual disability (ID), 64.4% specific learning disabilities (SLD), 1.7% autism, and 9.4% other health impairment (OHI) including Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disability (ADHD or ADD) (MSDE, 2012). Other health impairment can impact areas of reading comprehension, reading vocabulary, basic reading skills, basic written language skills, and written language content and expression. Reed and Vaughn (2012) noted almost all of the SWDs have difficulty with organization and study habits across the content areas

For the total number of students at ABDC High School who took the English HSA in 2009, the passing rate was 85%; in 2010, 86%; and in 2011, 86% (MSDE, 2012). For the state of Maryland, the average passing rate was 82% in 2011 (MSDE, 2012). Students with disabilities' results affect the Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) of the school because the scores are of equal weight as of nondisabled students, so it is important that SWDs participate and pass just as any other student must. October 2010 English HSA data of first time takers of the English HSA show that out of the 13 SWDs, four scored comparatively well in the strand Reading and Responding to Literature; the remaining nine did not. In the strand Evaluating Language Use, only one showed mastery. In Composing Skills in Controlling Written Language, all 13 lacked skills (MSDE, 2012). According to MSDE, 2012 HSA results, for the January 2011 assessment, one student

passed and two made combined scores of 1602 (not passing English, but using a passing combination of math, biology, English, and government).

ABCD High School policy is that failing students must continue to retake the assessment until they pass or until they are in their second semester of their senior year, at which time they are offered an additional method to meet the state graduation requirement (WCPS Handbook & Guide, August 27, 2012). This additional method is called the Bridge Project; it consists of packets of exercises designed to reteach concepts in a systematic manner which culminates in an original student work demonstrating mastery of multiple concepts. It focuses on the area of weakness demonstrated through the student's history of retakes as required by MSDE. Even while working on the Bridge Project, students are not exempt from retaking the English HSA. For the 2011-2012 school year, the ABCD High School HSA test results for SWDs showed they continued to perform more poorly than their nondisabled peers. According to the 2012 MSDE Report Card at a Glance, SWDs at ABCD High School performed more poorly on all tests when averaged together as well as on the English test taken in isolation. Students with disabilities 12th grade population showed 68.8%% passed compared to the 86.1% of all students who passed. Of the SWD 11th grade population, 30.0% passed compared to 80.7% of the general population who passed. Of the SWD 10th grade population, 18.2% passed compared to 77.8% of the general population who passed (MSDE, 2012). When comparing this data to all students in same school, same grade, and same test, the SWDs performed more poorly. Aron and Loprest (2012) noted that a substantial gap does exist between SWDs' and nondisabled peers' academic performance on standardized tests.

Schools across the country are struggling with federal mandates requiring assessment of students in English and mathematics. In the United States 5% of schools are failing; that is approximately 5,000 schools (McEachin & Polikoff, 2012; Wong, 2013). Brown and Clift (2010) conducted a study of 19 different schools in three states regarding the unequal effects of annual yearly progress (AYP) which is measured by the students fail and pass percentage rate on state academic standardized assessments. Brown and Clift's study included California, Georgia, and Pennsylvania schools. They found that for the 2003 to 2005 school years 22% of California schools did not make AYP and 34% are in improvement plans within the last three years. In Georgia 7% did not make AYP and 29% are in improvement plans within the last three years. In Pennsylvania 9% did not make AYP and 30% are in improvement plans within the last three years. According to MSDE (2012), Baltimore, Maryland, had 136 schools which did not make AYP in 2009. Like Baltimore schools, there are others that are impacted by the pressure of getting students to pass the state assessments and by how this reflects on teachers' abilities to prepare students to pass them. Cohen-Vogel (2011) conducted a study involving five Florida school districts and found that administration leadership is increasingly instructing teachers to teach to the test. Federal law under NCLB and Race to the Top (RTT) mandate that all students including SWDs participate in state testing (MSDE, 2012). Luke and Schwartz (2007) reiterated that federal laws (both the IDEA and NCLB) give special education students rights to participate in the general education curriculum and in testing programs to the maximum extent possible for each student. Under IDEA, both federal and state laws require that all students with disabilities be

administered assessments intended to hold schools accountable for the academic

performance of students (IDEA, 2004).

As a result of IDEA and NCLB legislation, schools no longer exclude SWDs from

the general educational setting (Dee, 2011). Teachers are expected to close the gaps in

student learning (Balfanz, 2009; Dee, 2011;Vaughn et al., 2009). Maryland follows the

federal guidelines which consider the classroom teacher to be the most qualified

individual to provide the accommodations, modifications, and assistance to SWDs.

According to NCLB, "[a] 'highly qualified teacher' has full State certification (no

waivers), holds a license to teach, and meets the State's requirements" (IDEA, 2004).

The current schedule at ABDC High School does not provide adequate time for English

teachers to both teach their content and provide one-on-one individual remediation. The

administration has resorted to paying teachers extra for time outside their contract to

remediate. Teachers usually use part of their lesson planning time or after-school hours.

Maryland State Department of Education reported that for the 2011-2012 school year, an

estimated $1.15 trillion was spent on education across the country with 87.7% of the

funds coming from nonfederal sources (MSDE, 2012).   According to administration of

ABCD High School, teachers were paid from nonfederal sources through grant money

(H. Bohlander, personal communication, June 12, 2013). Teachers received

approximately $25.00 dollars an hour to provide HSA remediation beyond their contract

hours

ABCD High School's district office is restricting expenses for its central office

staff and offices in order to put more money into the schools. At a March 2012 meeting,

special education case managers received notification of the new restructuring and budget

cuts (M. Gray, personal communication, March 30, 2012). In this case, budget cuts affect

the amount of funds available for remediation. Examination of the 2010 school year

budget showed that the 21,407 students in this high school's local district are in 48

schools. Twelve percent of the population has IEPs (MSDE, 2011). The annual expense

for each student is $10,708, out of which 59% goes to instruction, 36% to support

services, and 5% to other expenditures. For the 2011 school year, the average cost per

student was $10,657, with 51.9% going to student instruction services and 8.2% going to

instruction and special education. The fiscal year (FY) 2013 budget indicates that $63.48

dollars a day is the average cost per student (WCPS FY budget report, 2013).

Students with disabilities' low academic and test scores are indicators that

academic needs are not being met in the classroom. Edmonds et al. (2009) noted that

increasing demands are placed on students to learn more complex content at a rapid pace

in order to meet state standards and to pass state required assessments. Hawley and

Rollie (2007) shared that when teachers have higher expectations for students, students'

scores on standardized tests rise. However, even with higher expectations, not all

students are successful. Kim, Capotosto, Hartry, and Fitzgerald (2010) argued that there

is limited evidence to support the effectiveness of intense intervention program

instruction. Students with disabilities have a greater challenge than other students. Many

need extra assistance just to get through their classes. Luke and Schwartz (2007) noted

that lower scores result when SWDs have not had sufficient opportunity to practice using

accommodations in day to day settings prior to testing situations. Voughn and Fletcher

(2012) argued that students with reading difficulties at the secondary level do not improve their reading skills because they have already been exposed to research based interventions in earlier grades which were inadequate or did not adequately address their needs. There can be a greater focus on students passing the state assessments than on their course work. It is evident that today's classroom teachers are confused by demands to comply with curriculum while, at the same time, they are pushed to ensure that students pass the state assessments. Students with disabilities' needs often place an extra burden on the general education teacher, and because of this extra burden, teachers may not be providing the best possible remediation. McIntosh, MacKay, Andreou, Brown, Mathews, Gietz, and Bennett (2011) pointed out that poor implementation of intervention affects student success on standardized tests.

Rationale of the Problem and Purpose of Study

The problem is the gap in teaching practices that leads to differences in the English HSA passing rate between SWDs and their nondisabled peers. This researcher investigated teachers' perceptions of interventions and implementations of the current remediation, as well as their beliefs regarding factors that influence their ability to remediate SWDs effectively. The delivery of remediation varies from teacher to teacher. This remediation was one on one pullout, small group pullout, independent practice on a computer without a teacher, or a combination of these methods. There was not consistency in the method used to deliver remediation. Teachers showed no consistency in the choice of method they used to deliver remediation from one day to another and from teacher to teacher. This problem concerned administrators, teachers, parents, and

students for two major reasons. First, stakeholders were concerned that the school would

not make AYP. Secondly, they worried that students would not graduate on time or with

their cohort.

ABCD High School special education SWDs had a trend of performing more

poorly than their nondisabled peers in passing the state mandated HSA required for

graduation. At ABCD High School all students in the general education population take

the English HSA for the first time after they have completed English 10. At the time of

this study, nondisabled students consistently outperformed SWDs. For example, the

HSA results for 2012 show that less than half of the 10th grade SDWs passed the

assessment on the first take compared to the a little more than three-fourths of

nondisabled students who did pass on the first take (MSDE,2012). In the ABCD High

School district, only 25.3% of SWDs passed the first take; 13.6% did not take the test at

all, and 61.0% needed to be remediated before they can retake the assessment.

Evidence the Problem Exists

There is a low passing rate on the state English high school assessment for SWDs

taking the exam for the first time. Even after they have received intense remediation,

SWDs failed the exam more frequently than their nondisabled peers (Performance

Matters, 2011). As a result, administration and teachers created a school based

remediation program. In the English department, seven teachers focused on remediation

of all students scheduled to take the English HSA (M. Stake, personal communication,

February, 22, 2011). These teachers were considered highly qualified. *Highly qualified*

teacher: according to NCLB Act, "[a] 'highly qualified teacher' has full State

certification (no waivers), holds a license to teach, and meets the State's requirements"

(IDEA, 2004, p. 68). According to U.S. Department of Education it is national priority

that teachers be highly qualified (Manning, Bullock, and Gable, 2009). The highly

qualified English content specialist special education teacher who focused on SWDs

assisted these teachers. According to the ABCD High School test coordinator's archived

documents, 340 students were scheduled to take the English HSA in January 2012

(archived HSA test scheduled documents, January 18, 2012). Out of that number, 32

were SWDs. In January, these 32 SWDs received remediation from five highly qualified

teachers. However, scheduling the remediation was a challenge because these teachers

were in class three out of four available teaching periods. In addition, students did not

have a free period. In this case, the five English teachers generally held their remediation

after school; three of them worked with both general education and SWD students. The

English teachers assigned to work with SWDs after school reported that, in general, after

school remediation did not benefit SWDs because SWDs were often unable to stay after

school. The special education content specialist worked solely with SWDs during the

school day and pulled students from classes. The English content specialist created a

schedule of 25 intervals per week to make contact with students. A schedule was created

for the English content specialist including only students who were thought to have more

potential to pass. They received two or three weekly remediation sessions. The special

education content specialist was able to remediate up to five students a day. In order to

determine which students would be targeted, English HSA scores were examined and

those who were 15 or fewer points from the passing score of 396 were selected for

intense remediation. The special education case manager provided scheduling support.

Teachers shared directly with the English and special education department leaders that

pulling students out of core courses (English, math, science, and government) to receive

remediation caused frustration for the students and teachers. In one day, depending on

remediation schedules, up to 20 sessions of English, math, or biology could be held. The

inevitable overlapping caused conflicts and frustration. At this time of this writing, there

is no thorough analysis of data that proves the remediation provided has positively

impacted SWDs' performance on the English HSA

The reason for addressing this problem was the ongoing challenge for all

stakeholders of remediating SWDs who have failed the state HSA at least once. It was

school policy that remediation was required before a student was allowed to retake the

high school assessment. Students with disabilities' who began taking the English HSA in

10th grade could potentially fail it up to five times before their senior year. Students

faced enormous pressure to pass the state assessments for several reasons. First it is part

of the graduation requirements. Secondly it was a measurement used for AYP. In

addition, student performance reflected on teachers' abilities to prepare students to pass

the tests. In order to achieve AYP, students must pass the state assessment. United

States Secretary of Education Arne Duncan argued that in order to transform schools,

district officials must ensure that classroom teachers meet professional standards to

prepare students; therefore, teacher evaluations will be used to make teachers more

accountable (Wong, 2013). Addressing the question of how teachers perceive

remediation will lead to a better understanding of the gap in teaching practices that leads

to differences in the English HSA passing rate between SWDs and their nondisabled peers. In addition, this study could lead to changes in educational setting regarding remediation delivery.

Kozik, Cooney, Vinciguerra, Gradel, and Black (2009) indicated that the problem identified in this study does exist. Students with disabilities demonstrate a trend of performing far below their nondisabled peers in state mandated high school assessments required for graduation (MSDE, 2012). Students with disabilities in general education curriculum at the high school level pose significant obstacles to full inclusion because of the need for teacher collaboration, SWDs' trend of low standardized testing scores, gaps in student skill levels, and scheduling conflicts (Kozik et al., 2009). Additionally, many times SWDs are held to lower expectations in the classroom due to their disability and limitations (Aron & Loprest, 2012). As a result SWDs are falling farther behind and may never catch up (Edmonds, et al. 2009). This is evident from the examination of their scores of standardized test. The literature delineates two main areas that are factors in the lack of SWDs' success. Many researchers focus on the difficulty that SWDs have in participating in the general education classroom with traditional instructional practices (Edmonds et al., 2009; Kozik et al., 2009; McIntosh et al., 2011). A second group of researchers examine the additional support these students need to be successful (Aaron & Loprest, 2012; Polychronie, Economou, Printezi, & Koutlidi, 2011; Walker, 2013). Both of these groups believe that teachers and the strategies used are key factors to SWDs' success.

Several researchers have concluded that SWDs have difficulty participating in the general education classroom without a change in instructional practice. Polychronie et al., (2011) found that students with disabilities have difficulty learning material and need more repetitions than usually provided in the general education class. Solis et al. (2012) noted that educators believe the goal for reading is understanding written language, but reading comprehension is a conspicuous difficulty for many learning disabled (LD) students. Chad and Thompson (2008) reviewed a series of studies conducted by the United States Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) on multitier instructional models. The research was conducted over a 10 year period to determine if multitier models of intervention and prevention are more beneficial to students than traditional strategies (Chad & Thompson, 2008). Multitier instructional models and the response to interventions (RTI) model differ in that, if systemically implemented, students selected to participate in multitier instruction were assumed to have a reading difficulty and not traditionally assessed to determine that one existed. Though the multitier reading intervention and RTI programs were helpful, the data in this study did not provide evidence that they are the best to address students' needs across all grade levels. Walker (2013) argued that standardized testing has taken true learning opportunities from students because the standardized tests may not align with instruction and curriculum. These authors suggested that more research is needed in the area of intervention models that support students with reading difficulties. Head-Dylla (2012) opined that it is incomprehensible that students receiving special education services and accommodations would not graduate because they do not pass standardized tests.

A second group of researchers found that, in addition to interventions, SWDs need more support to be successful. Reed and Vaughn (2012) shared that students with learning disabilities (LD) and reading disabilities (RD) are in need of more support in order to learn content being taught in classrooms. Reed and Vaughn (2012) concluded that teachers sacrifice the content of a study area in order to enhance reading skills for students with reading or learning disabilities. They added that there is a need to change current instructional practices to a more comprehension instruction. The National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (NJCLD) reported that adolescents in the United States do not read or write at the level needed to meet the demands of the 21st century (The National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities [NJCLD], 2008). Indeed, 27% of eighth graders score below level of proficiency in reading, and 26% of 12th graders do not have the fundamental written communication skills. Additionally, NJCLD argued that secondary schools are not designed to provide a continuum of instructional services such as interventions and intensive instruction required to adequately address the literacy needs of students with LD.

In addition to the previously mentioned researchers Grigorenko (2008); and Wright, Conlon, Wright, and Dyck (2011); and Solis et al. (2012) found that more studies need to be conducted on the best way to remediate struggling SWDs in order to improve reading skills and to achieve in the general education setting. The purpose for this study was to gain insight of teachers' beliefs about the processes and outcomes of the remediation provided to students with a cognitive and/or learning disability. Findings of

this study will be presented to stakeholders in the local district of the ABCD High

School.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are utilized within the context of the study:

Accommodation: according to Maryland State Department of Education Division

of Special Education/Early Intervention Services, 2009, accommodations are provided to

students with disabilities to provide equitable access to daily instruction. This includes

such services as changes in implementation and presentation of instruction, different

student response methods, scheduling adjustments, and even changes to the educational

setting.

Annual Yearly Progress (AYP): annual state, school district, and school

improvements that must be made each year, as measured though academic assessment to

ensure public school academic standards (IDEA, 2004).

Attention deficit/hyperactivity disability (ADD/ADHD): according to American

Psychiatric Association DSM5, an individual with ADHD demonstrates six or more

symptoms of inattention and or hyperactivity-impulsivity for six months or more to a

degree that it is maladaptive and inconsistent with developmental level. This disorder

affects focusing, attention to task, ability to finish schoolwork or chores, poor

organizational skills, and ability to sustain attention. There are students who do not have

hyperactivity-impulsivity but do have other symptoms of ADD.

Bridge Projects: according to Code of Maryland Regulations Code of Maryland

Regulations [COMAR] 13A.03.02.09B (3), if a student is unable to meet the High School

Assessments (English, biology, algebra/data analysis, and government), the student may

then satisfactorily complete the requirements of the Bridge Plan for Academic

Validations to complete graduation requirements.

Common Core State Standards (CCSS): this is an initiative to establish similar

educational standards for English language areas and mathematics among states. The

standards are designed to ensure students graduating from high school are ready for

college and are competitive in the emerging global marketplace (Common Core State

Standards Initiative, 2012).

Cohort: according to the USDE ED *Facts*, this is a group who from the beginning

of 9th grade (or the earliest high school grade) are entering that grade for the first time to

form a cohort that is "adjusted" by adding any students who subsequently transfer into

the cohort and subtracting any students who subsequently transfer out, emigrate to

another country, or die.

Core Learning Goals (CLG): according to the Maryland State Department of

Education, CLGs are the indicators/objectives of the curriculum contained in certain

course content areas. These are used to determine the assessment limits of the HSAs.

Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA): The reauthorization of IDEA

was signed into law on Dec. 3, 2004, by President George W. Bush. IDEA ensures that

all children with disabilities have available a free, appropriate public education (FAPE)

that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique

needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living

(IDEA,2004).

Emotional disability (ED): according to Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR 13A.05.01.03.B (22)], this is "a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree, that adversely affects a student's educational performance: an inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors; an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances; a general, pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems. ED includes schizophrenia" (COMAR, 2009).

High School Assessment (HSA): according to Maryland State Department of Education Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services, 2009, HSAs are a series of end of course tests in core course (English, biology, algebra/data analysis, and government).

Highly qualified teacher: according to NCLB Act, "[a] 'highly qualified teacher' has full State certification (no waivers), holds a license to teach, and meets the State's requirements" (IDEA, 2004, p. 68).

Individual Educational Plan (IEP): this is a written plan for each individual child with a disability that indicates the student's present level of academic progress and functional abilities (IDEA, 2004).

Intellectual disability (ID): according to Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR 13A.05.01.03.B (42), this refers to general intellectual functioning adversely affecting a student's educational performance which is significantly sub average, existing

concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior, and manifested during the developmental period.

Intervention: according to Faggella-Luby, Ware, and Capozzoli, (2009) and for the purpose of this study, intervention is supplemental instruction for struggling students in all core areas provided for improved academic outcomes.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB): the principal federal law affecting education from Kindergarten through12 that is designed to improve student achievement and focused on improving the academic achievement of the disadvantaged (NCLB, 2001).

Other health impairment (OHI): according to Maryland State Department of Education Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services, 2009, this refers to "having limited strength, vitality, or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment that is adversely affecting a student's educational performance, due to chronic or acute health problems such as: asthma; attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder; diabetes; epilepsy; a heart condition; hemophilia; lead poisoning; leukemia; nephritis; rheumatic fever; sickle cell anemia, or Tourette syndrome."

Performance Matters, Inc. (PMI): A county wide data management system for individual student data which includes detailed student information, periodic benchmark assessments, and HSA results.

Race to the Top (RTT): according to ED.gov (2011), Race to the Top legislation requires participating states to adopt standards and assessments that prepare students for

college and careers. It requires the creation of data systems that measure students'

growth and success so that teachers and administration can use this information to

improve instruction. Schools should also recruit, reward, and retain effective teachers,

especially in areas of need.

Remediation: at ABCD High School, remediation is a form of intervention.

Remediation occurs after students have failed the State High School Assessments (HSA).

It specifically addresses the weaknesses exposed in assessment results.

Special education: according to IDEA, 2004, special education is special

instruction designed to meet the needs of a child with a disability (IDEA, 2004).

Students with disabilities (SWDs): as defined by IDEA, 2004, SWDs are children

with disabilities of mental retardation, hearing and visual impairments, specific learning

disabilities, and other health impairments, attention defiant with or without hyperactivity,

emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairment, autism, or traumatic brain injury.

Specific learning disability (SLD): according IDEA 2004, this refers to " a

disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or

in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to

listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations" (IDEA, 2004, p.

41).

Significance of the Problem

Gaining insight of teachers' beliefs about the delivery of remediation and other

factors associated with remediation was critical. It was important to understand the

connection between research and practice, particularly for intense, challenging settings,

which can involve students with reading difficulties (Duchaine, Jolivette, & McDoniel, 2010). Research on reading remediation/interventions at the secondary level is limited (Fisher & Frey, 2011; Tedford, 2008; Vaughn & Fletcher, 2012). By studying the remediation at the secondary level, dialog can be stimulated among decision makers based on new research results.

It is vital to understand the best ways to implement remediation in order to improve teacher practices. At the local, state, and national level, suggestions for remediation/intervention vary (Greenfield, Rinaldi, Proctor & Cardarelli, 2010). Duchaine, Jolivette, & McDaniel, (2010) argued that without effective intervention, secondary students with academic deficits often experience problems in all academic areas. Duchaine et al.,(2010) noted interventions are not always implemented effectively for a variety of reason including limited resources, lack of administrative support, teacher buy in, competing curriculum from state mandates, and student behavior. It is important for teachers to have a more active role in organizing the remediation and improving their implementation of instruction based on sound research and thoughtful reflection.

Research Question

The local problem indicated a gap in success in passing the English HSA between first time SWDs test takers and general education students. Performance Matters, Inc. (2011) data results showed that SWDs failed the retakes of the English HSA exams more frequently than their nondisabled peers, even after they received intense remediation. Edmonds et al. (2009) and Scruggs, Mastropieri, Berkeley, and Graetz (2009) indicated that traditional instruction is frequently ineffective with SWDs, and Faggella-Luby et al.

(2009) noted that SWDs need more support. Students learn in a variety of ways and require the use of different learning resources (Assar & Franzoni, 2009). The local problem conformed to this research. The gap in practice came in the two years of possible remediation in which the delivery of remediation varied from teacher to teacher. This remediation was one on one pullout, small group pullout, independent practice on a computer without a teacher, or a combination of these. Thus, there was not consistency in the method used to deliver remediation. A detailed description of factors necessary for a successful remediation program from the perspective of the participants emerged from this study. The following qualitative questions were included to guide the study:

1. How do teachers perceive their role in the delivery of English remediation?

2. How do teachers describe the English remediation program?

3. What factors do teachers say influence their ability to remediate SWDs effectively?

Review of Literature

The review of literature contains primary, peer reviewed journal articles within the Walden University Library database along with scholarly books regarding teacher perception, high stake testing, and qualitative methodology. Search terms utilized for the review of literature included combinations of the following words: *special education student, high school, secondary level, graduation requirement, high stakes testing, reading disabilities, intervention, remediation, struggling students, qualitative approach, grounded theory, change theory, and teaching practices. Terms excluded were math and commercial interventions*. No literature older than five years was utilized. The current

review of literature includes over 40 primary sources that were used to extend the knowledge base involving issues impacting delivery of remediation to SWDs in the area of reading. Sources were gathered until saturation was reached. All sources met established Walden University guidelines for a literature review with the exception of some older sources that provide a critical foundation of the study.

Conceptual Framework

The framework used in conducting this study was social constructivism. Social constructivists seek to understand social phenomena from a context specific perspective (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010). Lodico et al., (2010) stated that the process of inquiry is influenced by the researcher and by the context under study. In social constructivism, the researcher is interested in understanding how individuals' experiences influence their perception of particular situations. The goal of social constructivism is interpreting the perspectives of members of a similar group (Glesne, 2011). The use of interviewing as a form of data collection brings the researcher closer to the participants in order to understand how they perceive a particular situation. Using the social constructivism framework to examine the problem identified at this high school contributed to an understanding of how teachers perceived the remediation program and how factors influenced their ability to remediate struggling SWDs effectively for the federally mandated high school English assessment.

Social constructivism focuses on processes. The use of this framework could explain the processes used by each individual teacher delivering remediation to SWDs. Other than tracking actual HSA scores, there has been no investigation of how teachers perceive

remediation and what factors influence the delivery and success of SWDs receiving

remediation for the federally mandated high school English assessment. As is typical in

many high schools, teachers face challenges in providing remediation to these students

(Wexler, Vaughn, Roberts, & Denton, 2010). Students with disabilities need to be taught

differently based on their individual learning style (Sze, 2009). Teachers at ABCD High

School used scaffolding, reteaching, and individualized methods for providing help in

individual or small groups. Students were continually tested to see what they had

learned. Munoz (2011) stated that spending too much time preparing students for

standardized tests takes away from subject areas that are not tested. The needs of SWDs

are not being met effectively if teachers are doing the same thing for all students in their

classes. Effectiveness of teaching can help change the destiny of the student if teachers

prioritize enhancing content area instruction (Faggella-Luby et al, 2009).

Review of Current Research

Students with disabilities in the general educational setting face the same

curricular and graduation demands as their nondisabled peers. Students with reading

difficulties do much poorly than their nondisabled peers (Hock et al., 2009; Oyler,

Obrzut, & Asbjornsen, 2012). Students with disabilities lag behind their nondisabled

peers in academic achievements; they are less likely to partake in the full high school

curriculum, and often they are held to lower expectations (Aron & Loprest, 2012). As a

result of high stake accountability, increased attention has been given to low performing

students with or without disabilities (Elsenman, Pleet, Wandry, & McGinley, 2011;

Feuer, 2011). Balfanz (2009) noted that the primary purpose of high schools today is to

prepare students for college. Teachers are taking on new roles in order to meet these new demands and are redefining their daily practices (Elsenman et al., 2011). The problem of how to change instruction to meet high stakes testing has not been effectively researched (Wexler et al., 2010). Research is limited on teachers' views, opinions, and reflections as a contribution to remediation success.

Teaching practices. English high school teachers have been forced to change how they teach because of mandated federal regulations such as NCLB and IDEA, and general education teachers are having increased numbers of SWDs in their classrooms (Elseman, et al., 2011; VanSciver, & Conover, 2009). In addition to the current mandates in the 2014-2015 school year, Common Core State Standards (CCSS) will be widely adopted across the country to evaluate what students know (Walker, 2013). The inclusion of SWDs requires teachers possess skills that once were the purview of the special education teacher (Dee, 2011). Less attention has been provided to remediating reading difficulties at the secondary level (Wexler et al., 2010). In fact, one out every four secondary level students does not read or understand text at a basic level (Vaughn et al., 2010). The Council of Great City Schools reported (as cited by Hock et al., 2009) that 65% of teenagers score below the satisfactory level on state reading assessments. Students are unable to read for several reasons including poor decoding skills, inadequate fluency, lack of understanding of and meaning of words (Oyler et al., 2012).

Students learn in a variety of ways and require the use of different learning resources (Assar & Franzoni, 2009). Pyle & Vaughn, (2012) indicated that teachers can use several strategies to help students improve reading skills such as: daily review,

positive and corrective feedback, targeted instruction, monitoring student learning, and providing opportunities for students to practice. Though there is a lack of research at the secondary level about interventions and remediation outcomes, there is research suggesting that SWDs or nondisabled students taught by general education teachers using traditional instruction are outperformed by students of teachers using more effective and innovative interventions (Scruggs, et al., 2009).

VanSciver and Conover (2009) stressed the importance of teachers understanding SWDs' IEP accommodations. Accommodations benefit students especially in testing situations (VanSciver & Conover, 2009). Teachers need to know the best teaching strategies and to understand the different learning patterns of SWDs to become better teachers (Sze, 2009). Researchers have indicated that students are embarrassed by their poor reading skills and would be interested in learning to read if reading intervention at the secondary level actually worked (Vaughn, el at, 2010). In fact, researchers have shown that high quality implementation improves outcomes (Benner, Nelson, Stage & Ralston, 2011). If schools implemented school wide reading instructional practices across the content areas for all students including SWDs, there would be an improvement in comprehension and fluency (Reed & Vaughn, 2012)

Teachers at the high school level do not embrace inclusion of SWDs as fully as those teaching at the elementary level now that students with disabilities have been fully included in the general education classroom and curriculum (Kozik et al., 2009). There are many barriers creating resistance for teachers to make change including willingness of teachers to collaborate (Elsenmen, Pleet, Wandry, & McGinley, 2011; Riveros,

Newton & Burgess, 2012). There are even barriers to mandating effective interventions including poor teacher buy in (Duchaine et al., 2010). Research has indicated that high stakes testing has motivated administrators and teachers to change their practices, but these changes have affected the content coverage instead of promoting a deeper improvement in instruction (Supovitz, 2009).

High stakes testing.

Teachers' instructional practices are progressively more defined by high stakes testing and scripted curriculum (Au, 2011). High stakes testing has escalated over the decades and has increased the level of accountability for teachers (Donder, 2011; Wiliam, 2010). Supovitz, (2009) reported that 1997 test sales were estimated at $260 million, and that by 2008, the sales had almost tripled to approximately $700 million. The theory behind high stakes testing was to make schools accountable for student educational outcomes; however, there is ongoing debate over policies that award achieving schools and punish others (Heilig & Darling-Hammond, 2008). High stakes testing is the means by which schools determine if students are learning what they should be learning (Reich & Bally, 2010; Wiliam, 2010). Most states have adopted a series of exams aligned with core courses or comprehensive exams which high school students must pass in order to earn a high school diploma; additionally, the results from the exams will be used by states to determine college readiness (Balfanz, 2009; Jellison-Holme, Richards, Jimerson & Cohen, 2010).

Gasoi (2009) argued that policymakers have failed to acknowledge there are a diversity of schools throughout the nation with standards that do not fit together with the

values built into the current high stakes accountability mandates. It appears that evidence

on standardized high stakes testing is mixed (Feuer, 2011; Heilig & Darling-Hammond,

2008;). Some disadvantages of high stakes testing include possible cause of failure to

earn a high school diploma, the elimination of art, music, and history subjects in many

schools, and less time spent on innovation. Advantages include better planning for

individual students, the access that parents have to view results, their ability to see their

child's schools rating and how their child compares with others, the lowered anxiety

students experience, and the practice which results in better scores (Munoz, 2011). An

issue for SWDs is whether schools are developing effective programs that would help

them overcome disabilities (Head-Dylla, 2012). Reich and Bally (2010) noted that high

stakes policies have been used to strip teachers of their self-government and that they

encourage corrosion of the worth placed on their professional knowledge.

   Teachers' perceptions. Schools are focused on accountability and change; this

has made it harder for students to earn a high school diploma (Chappuis, Chappuis &

Stiggins, 2009). Teachers are faced with changing the way they teach (Peabody, 2011).

Especially in core academic areas that face high stake testing, test preparation has

become a common place and often time consuming part of classroom instruction

(Balfanz, 2009). Teachers' perceptions of interventions vary from program to program

(Jones, Yssel & Grant, 2012). Teachers' attitudes can change as they implement a

program (Duchaine et al., 2010; Fullan, 2001; Greenfield et al., 2010).   Kozik et al.,

(2009) noted that secondary level teachers have fewer positive attitudes toward special

education inclusion than elementary teachers do. The results of a successful program can

be transformative (Tedford, 2008). Most teachers view reform efforts as a positive move on the part of schools, although they do have concerns about the implementation of programs (Greenfield et al., 2010). In order for school wide reform to work, those collecting and analyzing data need support and time to process the data and share it with other teachers and stakeholders (Tedford, 2008). This represents a change in the school culture and not just a structural change in a program.

Implications of Positive Social Change

This researcher sought to explore teachers' opinions and points of view regarding factors that inhibit or enhance their instruction of SWDs needing English remediation. An investigation of teachers' beliefs as related to remediation might promote a positive social change at the local and county levels. Fullan (2001) introduced change theory in which he argues changes in school practices need well built support systems containing all stakeholders and resources devoted to the change process. Change theory in an educational setting is a set of ideas about change and how they affect the culture and structure of schools, the restructuring of roles, and the reorganization of responsibilities (Fullan, 1991). Based on anticipated findings from my data collection and analysis, various project directions may be devised. For example, I will conduct a professional development workshop for English teachers. This may address teacher buy in regarding SWDs. It will encompass working collaboratively to create a cohesive learning community and maintaining openness to innovative strategies of remediation that might be more effective. It could also involve the restructuring of the remediation program as

a whole including other HSA content areas. The professional development will occur at my workplace in the media center.

Initially, this professional development will be delivered locally and directed toward English teachers currently delivering remediation at the ABCD High School. A PowerPoint and interactive exercises will be used to enhance the presentation. Eventually, professional development might be expanded to county wide training which possibly could lead to some uniformity of remediation delivery across the district.

<div align="center">**Summary**</div>

Maryland high school SWDs are struggling to pass the state mandated HSAs required for graduation. These SWDs have been identified with a variety of disabilities including ADHD or ADD, ED, ID, SLD, and OHI which impact areas of reading comprehension, reading vocabulary, basic reading skills, basic written language skills, and written language content and expression. Also, many SWDs have difficulty with organization and study habits. The mandates of NCLB and the new obligations of RTT that this state has adopted have created pressure on school districts to develop supplemental educational resources to prepare SWDs to pass the English HSA. There is evidence that an achievement gap between SWDs and general education students exists and needs to be addressed (MSDE, 2012). Teachers use a variety of techniques and materials to implement remediation to SWDs. It is vital to understand the best ways to implement remediation in order to improve teacher practices. A gap in teaching practice might contribute to a gap in the passing rate between nondisabled students and SWDs. Although there are many intervention and remediation programs, research has indicated

that inadequate research has been conducted, especially at the secondary level. By using a social constructivist framework, an insight was gained of teachers' individual experience and perceptions of the remediation delivery at ABCD High School. This researcher addressed the variances in remediation delivery for SWDs by examining teachers' beliefs and perceptions of factors impacting their ability to deliver effect remediation to SWDs. Positive social change may happen through the creation of professional development on best teaching practices.

Section two of this document contains the methodology section. The methodology section consists of a description of the qualitative research design and explanation of data collection and analysis procedures to answer the research questions. The third section includes discussion of the project including an introduction, review of literature, discussion of the project, and project implications. Section four contains reflections and a conclusion. A final discussion, recommendations for addressing the problem differently, analysis of what was learned, reflections on the importance of the study, and implications, applications, and directions for future research are included.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

A qualitative method was used to conduct this study. A qualitative method using a grounded theory design allowed me to gather rich, detailed insights into and perceptions of participants of this present study. The use of a grounded theory design to investigate how six English teachers implementing English remediation describe factors which influence their ability to instruct effectively allowed an in depth look at what these teachers experience, believe, and feel about remediation and implementation of instruction to SWDs. The group of teachers consisted of six female highly qualified English teachers with two or more years teaching remediation. Using a grounded theory design helped the researcher and stakeholders gain a better understanding of how individuals interpret their experience (Merriam, 2009) with the designed implementation of the current English remediation program. Data collection for this study consisted of remediation observations, individual interviews, and review of artifacts. Observations took place in the participants' natural setting (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009). The natural setting was the classroom in which the English teachers provided remediation. The data collected from observations were used to verify and support the data collected from interviews. Open ended questions were an effective tool to elicit unbiased responses in an interview because the opinions of the researcher did not force the respondents into predetermined directions (Creswell, 2012). Artifacts were collected throughout the study and reviewed. In qualitative research, public or private documents can be collected (Creswell, 2009). The artifacts in this study included HSA schedules;

lists of HSA testing groups; archived HSA test scores; county remediation policy; school improvement team (SIT) results for 2013 HSA takers; Maryland Report Card 2011, 2012 and 2013; PMI data and benchmark scores; MSDE and Montgomery County HSA pratice websites; professional development schedules; and teacher made booklets and lessons used for remediation. Artifacts collected were either public or private documents. A grounded approach to qualitiative design was used to allow for rich, detailed insight and perceptions of participants regarding the remediation program at ABCD High School. A grounded approach consists of specfic actions for data collection and analysis including constant data sampling, coding, categorizing, and comparing in order to generate a theory about social phenomena (Glesne, 2011). Qualitative methods included the collection and summarization of data using primarily a narrative method. Using a narrative method to present the findings allowed for a more in depth description of what was discovered through the study (Merriam, 2009). In addition, narrative presentation of the findings of this study tells a story that reveals the experiences of the participants (Lodico et al, 2010), their feelings, frustrations, and thoughts. Specific narrative aspects considered were maintaining focus on the type of participants and the expectation that five to seven themes would emerge from the data collected. To further discuss the methodology utilized, the subsequent sections are included: Research Method and Design, Participants, Data Collection, and Data Analysis.

Research Method and Design

The proposed method was a qualitative grounded theory research method. Grounded theory was used in conducting this study to explore six English teachers'

experiences, beliefs, and feelings about remediation and implementation of instruction to

SWDs. Qualitative research is a form of research that focuses on qualities such as words

or observations, and data collected is not reduced to numerical indices (Glesne, 2011;

Merriam, 2009). Qualitative research is inductive in nature and builds patterns,

categories, and themes (Creswell, 2009). Qualitative research tends to collects data in the

field through multiple sources such as interviews and documents and focuses on learning

to understand the participants' perception and experience of the problem or issue

(Creswell, 2009). Qualitative research is interested how people interpret and give

meaning to their experience (Merriam, 2009). A qualitative approach is not interested in

beginning with an identified variable but rather with a well developed question. This

approach is concerned with the descriptions and meanings of perspectives of the

participants. Using a social constructivism framework for this study supported the

approach that was used for this research. Lodico et al.,(2010) noted that qualitative

researchers will be able to better answer research questions and help propose change to

make a program better or to determine its benefits. The qualitative data for this study

derived from information collected by remediation observations, interviews with

teachers, and artifacts. The research consisted of interviews with individual teachers;

audio taping was used; key terms were coded and ranked; and categorizing and

comparing highlighted emerging themes. A qualitative grounded theory design

contributed to knowledge needed to evaluate the impact remediation has on those SWDs

retaking the mandated English standardized testing.

Grounded theory is designed to examine a number of individuals who experience an action, interaction, or process. A grounded theory approach contains a systematic inductive process for developing a theory that emerges from data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009). Grounded theory design allows the researcher to address the question and to discover how the teachers view the remediation and provides an understanding of a social phenomenon.

Qualitative research consists of other methods including ethnography, phenomenology, and case study, but for this study the best approach was grounded theory. An ethnography design would not work for the reason that this design sought to interpret a group's shared pattern developed over time and not individual experiences (Creswell, 2012). Although a case study design could have been used for this study, it was not the most appropriate approach because a case study is characterized by bound phenomenon, meaning that the study takes place in its natural setting, bounded by time and space (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). If the participants in the study could be unlimited to just ABCD High School and expanded to other schools and context areas, the study would not have qualified as a case study. A phenomenological study attempts to obtain the real meaning of human experiences. Extensive amounts of data are collective over a period of time from the participants (Lodico et al., 2010). Additionally, a quantitative research approach would not work for this present study. Quantitative research approach consists of collecting numeric data and is interested in how one variable affects another (Creswell, 2012). As a result grounded theory design was the

best design for this study because it gave the researcher an opportunity to develop a

theory based on the data produced and collected through the study (Lodico et al., 2010).

Participants

The main criterion for selecting English teachers to participate in this study was

that these teachers have provided remediation to SWDs in the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades

who have taken and failed the English HSA at least once. I interviewed six of the current

English teachers who have participated in the remediation program at ABCD High

School since 2009 through 2014. A purposeful sampling method provided a

homogeneous group of participants sharing the defining characteristics related to the

research. During purposeful sampling, researchers deliberately select individuals and

sites which will supply rich information in an effort to understand the phenomena being

studied (Creswell, 2012; Creswell, 2009; Lodico et al., 2010). The participants for this

study came from one high school which is part of a larger school district. These teachers

met the criteria as highly qualified English teachers with a minimum of two years'

teaching experience who had provided remediation to SWDs between August of 2009

and to the end of February, 2014. Teachers with only one year experience would not

have practiced the entire HSA testing cycle.

The anticipated sampling was seven participants who were English teachers

employed at ABCD High School. Sample size is an important aspect for a researcher to

consider (Creswell, 2012; Lodico et al., 2010). The selection criteria allowed for a

representative sample of people who would best answer the research questions of this

present study. The intent was to involve all highly qualified English teachers who

provided remediation from August 2009 through the end of February, 2014. This provided impossible because some English department teachers had retired or taken on different positions in and outside the district. Merriam, (2009) recommended that sampling should continue until the point of saturation or redundancy is reached. For the purpose of this study, only six met the criteria though there are 10 English teachers employed at ABCD High School. Homogeneous sampling is a purposeful sampling that was utilized by the researcher to assure individuals possess similar characteristics and have specific and in depth knowledge of the remediation program (Creswell, 2012; Lodico et al., 2010;). Creswell (2012) noted that when the number of participants increases, the ability of a qualitative researcher to provide an in depth picture diminishes. Collecting data from six participants allowed for in depth interviews and provided an effective timeframe to analyze the data.

Participants were not provided any details of the study prior to receiving approval from the IRB for the study (approval number 12-17-13-0199627: expiration date December 16, 2014). The procedures for gaining access to participants followed logically. First, I used homogeneous purposeful sampling to select English teachers who have provided HSA remediation. In homogeneous sampling the participants have similar defining characteristics (Creswell, 2012; Lodico et al., 2010). Any first year English teachers were excluded since they would not meet the characteristic. Next, potential participants' contact information was obtained through the ABCD High School executive secretary. An email invitation was sent out to the English department teachers inviting them to participate in the study. Finally, I contacted each potential participant in person

or by phone to set up an appointment in order to gain their consent to participate in the study. For this present study, a total of seven participants replied, of which six were interested in participating; one declined.

I have worked for ABCD High School district for five full years. I was hired as the special education Student Achievement Specialist (SAS) with the duties of department leader and general education case manager. I currently hold a BA in Interdisciplinary Studies with a specialization in Early Childhood Development. I also hold two master degrees; the first is an MEd in Teaching with a concentration in special education and the second is an MS in Educational Leadership. I have certifications in the areas of Administrator I and II, and special education, infant to three, one through eight and six through adult. I am currently working on an EdD through Walden University.

I am employed at the same location in which the study participants work. In the Special Education SAS position I have a professional relationship with all six participants. These participants teach and have taught SWDs. At times within these relationships, I have found it necessary to resolve conflicts between teacher and student. My role at ABCD High School is of a SAS and IEP case manager; I also assist teachers' implementation of the IEPs of all SWDs. The relationship with these teachers is on a professional level that consists of trust, honesty, and confidentiality. My role is of a colleague and not a supervisor. I already had established a working relationship with some of the potential participants by virtue of my professional role as a Special Education SAS for the school. The responsibilities do not involve the remediation process or scheduling remediation. For those with whom I did not have an established relationship,

time was spent familiarizing ourselves with our individual professional backgrounds and sharing general commentary on experiences at ABCD High School. With all participants, I described the research topic to each individual face to face and the data collection process that would be used for the study. During our face to face conversation and prior to any observations and interviews, teachers were informed of the research topic and its process. Pseudonyms were used on data reports to assure participants' identities were protected. For this study participants are referred to as Mary, Jan, Sarah, Delia, Sylvia and Becky. Table B1 in Appendix B contains a representation of the demographics of participants.

Mary

Mary was a highly qualified English teacher. She worked at ABCD High School for nine of 15 her years of teaching experience. Mary provided remediation for nine of her nine years at ABCD High School. She taught a variety of English classes, but for the 2013-2014 school year she taught English 9, 10, and 11. Prior to becoming an English teacher, Mary served in the Marines for 20 years attaining the rank of captain. Once Mary retired from the Marines, she returned to school and earned a BA in English Literature and completed an additional 80 hours of education, 52 hours in counseling and 30 hours in education toward her teaching certification.

Jan

Jan was a highly qualified English teacher. Jan has worked at ABCD High School for 18 of her 32 years of teaching experience. Jan provided remediation for 10 of her 18 years at ABCD High School. She taught a variety of English classes, but for the 2013-2014

school year, she taught English 10, 11, and 12. Prior to Jan's employment at ABCD High School, she worked as a special education teacher and case manager who for two years traveled between a Maryland elementary and middle school in the same district as ABCD High School. Then for several years, she worked as an 8th grade English teacher in the same district at a middle school. Jan was the chair of the English Department at ABCD High School for 3 years. Jan holds a BA in English and a certification in special education kindergarten through 12th grade.

Sarah

. Sarah was a highly qualified English teacher and special education English content specialist. Sarah worked at ABCD High School for 10 years out of 30 years of her teaching experience. Sarah provided remediation for 10 of her 10 years at ABCD High School. Prior to working at ABCD High School, Sarah worked in the Pennsylvania Public School system. Sarah holds a BA in psychology, an MA in archetypal studies, an MEd in curriculum and instruction, and a certification in special education. Sarah teaches the Wilson and Just Words Reading program.

Delia

Delia was a highly qualified English teacher. Delia worked at ABCD High School for 11 of her 18 years of teaching experience. Delia provided remediation for 8 of her 18 years at ABCD High School. Prior to teaching at ABCD High School, Delia taught at a private high school as an English teacher for 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades. Delia is a certified English teacher, holds an BA in English, an MS in administration leadership, an MEd in technology, certification in reading, and she is currently pursuing a doctoral degree in

education. She has taught a variety of English classes, but for the 2013-2014 school year, she taught English 9, 10, and 11 and English AP (advanced placement).

Sylvia

Sylvia was a highly qualified English teacher. Sylvia worked at ABCD High School for 28 years out of 28 years of her teaching experience. Sylvia provided remediation for 10 of her 28 years at ABCD High School. She is a certified English teacher, holds a BA in English, and an MEd in Curriculum. Sylvia has taught a variety of English classes, but for the 2013-2014 school year she taught English 9, 10 and AP Literature.

Becky

Becky was a highly qualified English teacher. Becky worked at ABCD High School for 9 years out of 9 years of her teaching experience. Becky provided remediation for 9 of her 9 years at ABCD High School. Prior to working at ABCD High School, Becky worked in public relations at the school board for the same school district. She is a certified English teacher, holds a BA in English and an MA in English. Becky has taught a variety of English classes, but for the 2013-2014 school year she taught English 10th and 12th and AP Language.

Ethical Procedures

Measures for ethical protection of participants in this study played a very important role; therefore, it was very important to make sure the participants were willing participants and that they knew their rights as participants. Numerous ethical responsibilities to participants of a study exist (Creswell, 2012; Lodico et al., 2010). I

started by requesting consent from the potential participants. It is important to conduct

research that will present minimal risk to participants. For example, the interviewee

should be 18 or older, and, if younger, parent or guardian consent is needed. These

participants were voluntary participants; they did not receive funds or services as part of

the research. A consent form (Appendix B) which gained permission was explained to

each potential participants in a face to face meeting. Teachers did not sign the consent

form immediately. I asked each participant to review the consent form and consider

participation overnight. At the end of this meeting, I provided a self-addressed stamped

envelope with my home address for them to return the form. Providing a self-addressed

envelope to each participant ensured that they had the opportunity to make the decision to

participate without any type of pressure. In addition, this allowed for any teacher to opt

out without any negative consequences. Confidentiality was enforced throughout this

process and throughout the research process; no information on any participant was

shared.

Data Generation, Collection, and Recording Procedures

I used a qualitative design with a grounded theory data analysis approach to

investigate how teachers perceived the remediation program and how factors influenced

their ability to remediate effectively to reduce the struggle SWDs are having with the

federally mandated English HSA. I gathered data through remediation observations,

individual teacher interviews, and artifact reviews. My primary source of data was the

interview; observations and artifacts were used to corroborate teachers' comments.

Triangulation helped confirm the findings of the present study by validating evidence

from the three different data sources (Creswell, 2012). Additionally, triangulation

strengthened the internal validity of the study and is commonly found in qualitative

research (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009).

Prior to conducting the research, I obtained permission from the school district

and Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct the research

(approval number for this study is 12-17-13-0199627 which expires on December 16,

2014). Creswell (2012) noted that in most educational studies, permission must be

granted from a variety of individuals or groups. IRB and U.S. federal regulations were

followed throughout the research process. In this case, those participating in the

interviews were 18 years old or older. There was no need for parental consent since all

participants were over 18 years old. Participants were assigned pseudonyms on data

reports to maintain confidentiality. Participation of individuals was voluntary and at their

own discretion. They reserved the right to withdraw from the study at any time without

repercussions.

Two separate observations of each teacher were conducted during student

remediation. Seven individuals met the criteria as participants; however, one chose not to

participate. Observations are a frequently used method of data collection in qualitative

research (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009). By observing people in their natural setting,

the researcher can collect firsthand information of participants' behavior and of the

physical setting (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009). For this study, observations were

conducted in February and March, 2014, before the school's third English HSA

administration of the academic year. Participants were observed 30 minutes during two

separate remediation sessions at their worksite. Each observation was 30 minutes of a 60

minute remediation session. All observations were completed within a thirty day period.

The observations were scheduled at times when the participants in this present study were

remediating students who have failed the English HSA. During observations I observed

the interaction of the teacher with students, the type of material used to provide

remediation to the students, and accommodations, strategies and other supports provided

to students. My role as the researcher was of a nonparticipant. A nonparticipant observer

is an individual who visits the observation site and writes notes without becoming

immersed in the activities of the participants (Creswell, 2012). In this role, I sat at the

back of the classroom so as not to disturb the natural setting. During observations I used

an Observational Field Notes instrument (Appendix F). I developed the instrument using

Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtle's (2010) guidelines for conducting and recording

observations. The instrument included the time, date, location, and length of observation;

a pseudonym given to each individual participant; detailed description of activities and

setting; number of students; verbatim and direct quotes; and reflective field notes

(Creswell, 2009; Lodico et al., 2010; Merriam, 2009). Qualitative Observational Field

Notes consist of field notes taken at the research site on the behaviors and activities of the

individuals being observed (Creswell, 2009). I personally handwrote the notes using the

Observational Field Notes instrument. After each observation, I edited the notes using a

computer file. I saved the Observational Field Notes on a thumb drive and placed a hard

copy in a binder for easy reference. Usually in qualitative research, both descriptive field

notes and reflective field notes are used to control the researcher's bias (Lodico et al.,

2010). Descriptive field notes are the researcher's recorded description of the participants, activities, setting, and events that are occurring in the setting (Creswell, 2012; Lodico et al., 2010). Reflective field notes allow researchers to reflect on their own feelings and thoughts about what they are observing and how their feelings and thoughts might be influencing the observation (Lodico et al., 2010). Prior to utilizing the Observational Field Notes, I asked colleagues not related to this study to conduct a review of the Observational Field Notes form, and they found it to be adequate and easy to use. By using both descriptive and reflective field notes, the researcher is able to document what was happened and record personal thoughts related to themes that emerge during the observation (Creswell, 2012). Once each of the two observations was completed, both descriptive and reflective field hand written notes were completed and transcribed. The documents were saved to a thumb drive for safe keeping and a hard copy was placed in a binder and saved in a secure location. The secure location is a key locked file cabinet located in my home.

Interviews were the primary data collection method used for this study and occurred shortly after the two observations of the corresponding teacher. The six interviews were conducted with the same teachers previously observed to gather their opinions on the remediation program. The English teachers were interviewed individually in person during their off work hours. Each teacher determined the logistics of time and place for the interview. I used 12 open ended questions. This encouraged honest and unbiased answers. Creswell (2009) indicated that interviews are useful for maintaining control over the questioning process. An interview protocol was used so that

standard procedures were followed for all participants. The interview started with

requests for demographic information followed by 12 prepared, open ended questions.

Prior to conducting the interviews, I asked an expert panel of four of my colleagues

outside of the faculty to review the questions. The four individuals provided remediation

at other high schools in the district. These teachers were not part of the research

sampling. Through this review process, I found that the most important changes needed

to the Interview Guide (Appendix E) were in the chronology of the questions and in the

logic of the grouping of questions. The changes were incorporated into the Interview

Guide prior to using it. The interviews with the six participants each lasted

approximately 30 minutes. An audiotape was used to record responses to the questions

throughout the interview which later were transcribed verbatim. I used a semistructured

interview method. Semistructured interviews begin with prepared lists of questions that

can be followed up with probing beyond the protocol if necessary (Lodico et al., 2010).

The interviews had been carefully constructed to include foreshadowed or probing

questioning. Once each individual interview was finished, I assigned the same

pseudonym given during observations to each teacher, and then the audiotape was sent

for transcription within one business day of the interview. Prior to sending the

audiotapes to be transcribed, I explained the study and read the Confidentiality

Agreement to the potential transcriber. I sent a Confidentiality Agreement to the

transcriber with a self-addressed envelope to be signed and requested that she read and

return it to me. The transcriber returned the signed Confidentiality Agreement (Appendix

E2). The transcriber lives in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and is not related to any member of

this study or this researcher. I asked her to transcribe the interviews. Her educational

background is a BA in English Language Arts and a minor in Spanish and she is currently

working on an MA in Adult Education. Electronic recordings were sent to her and she

was able to return them within 24 hours of receipt. Once the transcription was

completed, I stored a password protected electronic file on a dedicated thumb drive and

kept in a safe locked file cabinet outside of ABCD High School. As interview results

were received, they were organized by pseudonym of the individual teacher. Once all the

individual interviews were completed, I conducted a review of the electronic transcription

and the handwritten notes to highlight key themes. Information was sorted by code and

theme. Immediately following the return of the all interview transcripts, member check

occurred. Member check is a process to take preliminary analysis back to participants to

check for accuracy (Merriam, 2009). Through member checking, teachers were able to

check accuracy of the information provided in the interview. All participants found the

transcriptions accurate and not misleading; two wrote additional comments to the

transcription expanding on their original response to a question. Using member check

ensures internal validity and credibility.

The third source of data for this study was artifacts. Artifacts are documents or

products pertaining to the process and results of teaching and learning (Lodico et al.,

2010). I collected artifacts pertaining to SWDs performance on English HSAs and

teachers' remediation documentation. Artifacts included remediation scheduling sheets,

English HSA current and archived scores, teachers' remediation lesson plans, and sample

materials. These sources are valuable to qualitative researchers because they provide

information in helping researchers understand the primary phenomena (Creswell, 2012).

In addition, to help understand the central phenomena, these types of sources do not need

to be transcribed; they are ready for analysis (Crewell, 2012). Teachers volunteered

artifacts such as the websites used during remediation, the teacher made workbook,

lessons, and remediation schedule. Other artifacts were public documents; therefore,

consent was not needed to obtain these artifacts listed above.

Data Analysis

For this study, information was collected from individual interviews,

observations, and artifact reviews. A grounded theory approach contains a systematic

inductive process for developing a theory that emerges from data collection and analysis

(Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009). By using constant comparison method, themes and

sub-themes were generated from interviews; observations and review of artifacts and they

were compared and contrasted for similarities and differences (Creswell, 2012).

Additionally, constant comparison gradually develops categories of information by

making connections and comparing data (Creswell, 2012). Themes and sub-themes is an

organizational framework that helps the researcher gain a deeper understanding of the

data collected (Creswell, 2012). Data were compared and contrasted until saturation

occurred. Final themes and subthemes were confirmed and illustrated by cutting, pasting,

and rearranging data using concept maps which is included in Table C. In concept

mapping, themes are reduced, refined, and interconnected which helps explain data's

meaning (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009).

To ensure trustworthiness and provide evidence of quality, data was triangulated. This researcher used three data sources: observation of remediation, individual teacher interviews, and artifact reviews. Triangulation is corroboration of evidence from different sources (Creswell, 2012; Glesne, 2011; Merriam, 2009), thereby, increasing the validity of the data and conclusion. The main source data collection was the interview. Two separate observations of each individual teacher were conducted during remediation delivery. Throughout the data analysis process artifacts were collected and used as part of triangulation. An example of a complete interview transcript is included in Appendix H. An example of the observation instrument I completed is included in Appendix I. Table 3 is data concept map that shows the data gathered from interviews, observations and artifacts.

Interviews were used as the primary resource. Most qualitative research includes interviews as part of data collection process (Lodico et. al., 2010). In triangulation three sources are used to collect data. For this present study observation, interviews and artifacts were collected. Interview data was corroborated and verified through observations and collected artifacts. For example all six participants expressed that scheduling time and motivating students are two concerns stressed in the interviews. I collected an artifact that supports this concern, a teacher made letter addressing parents about the importance of remediation. The teacher (Jan) created that letter not only to let parents know that she is well qualified before school remediation but also to motivate students and get parent buy in. The use of the interview allows for participants to express their feeling and thoughts in their own words (Creswell, 2012; Lodico et. al. 2010). For

this present study I conducted a semistructured interview in which I used 12 open ended questions to guide the interviews which I designed. I also used probes to elicit more information. I audiotaped questions and response to the interviews. I thanked the participants and assured them of the confidentiality and sent audiotaped interview to be transcribed.

Observations supported the data collected from interviews. The observations supported that teachers' responses to the interviews were actual reflections of their teaching methods. For example, when a teacher reported during the interview that there was a limited supply of remediation resources, I was able to see what kinds of materials were used during the remediation lesson. I noted that a teacher reported students are not motivated, I saw during observation that the teacher had to stop teaching in encourage a student to pay attention and participate. In addition I observed if, when and where accommodations were offered to students, I noted teachers' interaction with students, method of instruction, and any strategies used during remediation. During observations I used an Observational Field Notes instrument (Appendix D). Qualitative Observational Field Notes consist of field notes taken at the research site on the behaviors and activities of the individuals being observed (Creswell, 2009). I personally hand wrote and transcribed the notes. The documents were saved to a thumb drive for safe keeping and a hard copy was placed in a binder and saved in a secure location.

As part of the triangulation process, artifacts were collected to support the interview questions and responses. Creswell (2012) noted these artifacts provide information in helping researchers understand the primary phenomena. The artifacts

collection was an ongoing procedure throughout the interview and observation process. Some of the artifacts were very obvious such as the archived English HSA scores, student remediation list, and PMI data; other artifacts were collected as a as a direct result of teacher interviews and observations such as professional development schedules, Montgomery County HSA practice website materials, and remediation schedules for the HSA content courses. In collecting these artifacts, I found the artifacts along with observation and interview data related to the three questions that guide this study. For example, I found that there were limited resources for students to use in preparation for the HSA assessment. Also, after reviewing HSA scores and information on PMI, I show that many of the retakers were the same SWDs who had not pass the core course. I found no discrepancies or disconforming or outlying data among interview, observation results and artifacts. I found by triangulating the three sources, the results of the data collection were validated.

A peer debriefer was used to clarify any misunderstandings of the present researcher's interpretation of a theme or sub-theme, and to review interview transcriptions. A peer debriefer is a colleague who examines the field notes and provides feedback, probing questions, and alternate views of the data (Lodico et al., 2010). I had asked a retired colleague certified and experienced in the fields of special education and English to be my peer debriefer for this study. This peer debriefer provided English HSA remediation to SWDs at ABCD High School for four years prior to retirement. The purpose of debriefing helps limit researcher bias; it helps with the emergent hypotheses; and it reexamines assumptions (Lodico et al., 2010; Merriam, 2009). The peer debriefer

and I independently coded each data source. We discussed emerging themes from the observations, interviews, and artifacts to minimize researcher bias by providing different viewpoints. No discrepant data such as interviewee's conflicting comments about available remediation materials were found. In reviewing the data collected, the peer debriefer and I did noticed similarities among data sources.

The data analysis process began immediately after all the data had been collected from interviews and observation. Analysis of the data was in narrative form. "[N]arrative analysis extends the idea of text to include in depth interview transcripts" (Merriam, 2009, p 33). Once the transcriber returned the individual transcripts to me, member check occurred. As Merriam (2009) stressed, the member check method helps to validate emerging findings, to rule out misinterpretation, and to ensure internal validity and credibility. Member checking occurred within 24 hours after the transcripts were received. I utilized member checking to make sure transcript interviews were an accurate representation of each participants. I provided each participant a hard copy of the transcription for them to make any clarifications regarding unclear or misrepresented information. They received the two copies of the transcription in a manila envelope for privacy and easy return. All participants were instructed to handwrite any clarifications on the copy of the transcription then returned tit back to me and the other was for them to keep. Five participants stated that the transcriptions were accurate and, therefore, provided no clarification. Though the participant Sarah shared that the transcription was accurate and she did not clarify any information given to the first 11 questions and did not correct question 12, she did add to her response.

After completing all interviews, the debriefer and I separated out individual interview questions and grouped similar responses in order to create a Concept Map (Table B3). In this study, systematic design in grounded theory was used to analyze data. Through each phase, the transcripts were reviewed and read several times. In addition, transcripts were checked against audiotapes to make sure no mistakes were made during transcription; member check was utilized to guarantee accuracy and to allow participants to clarify any unclear or misrepresented information and to prevent researcher's bias, and to allow follow up. During the open coding phase, categories were generated by highlighting words and phrases to identify initial concepts. Open coding is process in which the researcher bases categories on data collected (Creswell, 2012). For this study each six individual interview was re-read and all key words and phrases were located and highlighted. In this phase there were 17 text groups that emerged. The groups were: collaboration with colleagues, formal training for remediation, lack of formal training in strategies for SWDs, lack of understanding of the different disabilities, lack of materials that identified weaknesses of individual SWDs, limited supply of remediation resources, differentiated instruction materials, pull out remediation, funding remediation programs, total time spent on remediation, one on one vs. group vs. imbedded in class remediation, school schedule and remediation, motivating students to participate in tutorial remediation, motivating students to learn, background courses, failure to master the concept after years of instruction, and linking test scores to passing English 10 content course. At the end of the open coding phase, it was clear that there were some

similarities among the participant's responses. After the open coding phase, I conducted the axial coding phase.

Axial coding phase is the process in which the researcher identifies one of the open coding categories that is core to the phenomenon being explored (Creswell, 2012). During the axial coding phase, the entire text codes were grouped to prevent redundant coding. Post-it notes were used to group initial concepts that emerged during the open coding phase. Categories identified during the axial coding phase included the following: (a) targeting remediation material, identifying weaknesses, and individualization of remediation; (b) pull out remediation, funding for remediation programs, total time spent, one on one vs group vs imbedded in class; (c) formal training to remediate, training to work with SWDs, and training on identified disabilities; (d) motivating students; (e) working together with colleagues, sharing information with colleagues of other subjects; (f) failure to master concepts after years of instruction and HSA test scores should be linked to passing content courses. During the axial coding phase, I continually refined the categories before going on to the selective coding phase.

Selective coding phase is the process in which writer forms a theory from the interrelationship of the categories developed in the axial coding phase (Creswell, 2012). During the selective coding phase, I used the constant comparison method in which categories were reduced into themes and sub-themes that could be explained by existing theories. Subthemes were grouped together in order for the main theme to emerge. Data were compared and contrasted between the interviews, observations and documents to note similarities and differences until saturation occurred (Merriam, 2009). As part of the

saturation process, a concept map was used to organized themes and subthemes (Table

B3). The following main themes emerged: scheduling, materials, motivation, and

collaboration with colleagues, poor student preparation and training. Both Themes and

Subthemes were organized into Table B2.

As a result 6 themes and 16 subthemes were discovered by the present researcher.

Themes and subthemes are presented in Table B2. The analysis of triangulation revealed

six themes; scheduling, materials, motivation, collaboration with colleagues, poor student

preparation, and lack of formal training. These are important factors that affect teaching

practices during the delivery of remediation to SWDs. I have created professional

development via workshops that would provide the English teachers with skills,

knowledge, and dispositions necessary to become more effective educators and to address

the themes and subthemes discussed in this study. To present the themes and the

respective subthemes, I discussed each theme and respective subtheme in greater detail

one at a time. To enrich the presentation of the findings, quotes, research observations,

and information from artifacts are utilized. To ensure confidentiality of the participants,

pseudonyms were utilized. An example of a complete interview transcript is included in

Appendix H. An example of a transcribed observation form I completed is included in

Appendix I. Also, included is Table B3 the Data Concept Map that displays data

gathered from observations, interviews and artifacts.

Theme 1: Scheduling

All six participants indicated that scheduling time to remediate students

individually was challenging. There is no period built in the day for remediation or after

school remediation program that students have to attend. It is very hard to pull students out of classes because they need those classes in order to meet graduation requirements. When analyzing the data, the following five subthemes emerged within the theme of scheduling: pull out remediation, funding remediation programs, total time spent on remediation, one on one vs. group, and school schedule and remediation.

Subtheme 1.1: Pull out remediation. Mary, Delia, and Becky expressed how they had to arrange their own schedule in order to have access to students to provide remediation. Delia and Becky mentioned how difficult it is to pull students from classes to provide remediation. Pulling students out of core classes upset the students as well as the teachers.

Delia explained:

Having access to the students is very difficult. Last year, I was responsible for remediating a group of boys. I would meet with them twice a week during my plan time. And they would have to be pulled from other classes, which, you know, hurts the students as well, but that's all, that's all we can do. So we pulled them from other classes and sometimes they'd show up, sometimes they didn't. They might forget. Or the teacher would forget. Or the teacher would think that whatever they're doing in class that day was more important than remediation and they'd keep them. So getting access to the students I think first of all, is the most difficult part.

Mary concurs with Delia by stating:

When a student is scheduled to retake the HSA, as English teachers, we choose

students who either are in our class or that we can work into our schedule. And

we pull them during our planning period and work with them on the average

about two hours a week, working on individual concepts that they need

remediating in.

Similarly, Becky found scheduling difficult. She expressed her thoughts on pull

out remediation and how it is impossible to do pull out in a six period school day. Prior

to last school year, the school day consisted of four mods a day, and at the semester end

students would start new classes giving them more opportunities to pass classes they

needed.   There was also an additional short mod called PEP (Pupil Enrichment Period).

During this period many of the core teachers would pull students for remediation.

Becky stated:

Remediation needs again to be made so the students are responsible for

themselves. Emphasizing that they have to come to do this or they are going to

fail the test. There has to be either a period built in the day for remediation, or

some kind of after school remediation workshop that they have to attend.

Otherwise they are not going to receive remediation, because I can't pull them out

of other classes to do it. It's impossible with the six period day

Subtheme 1.2: Funding remediation programs. Providing remediation lends to

an increased demand for such resources such as funding and the willingness of teachers

to take on extra work. Administration asked teachers to volunteer to provide remediation

beyond their contract time, during teacher planning, or before and after school hours.

Teachers received a stipend of 25.00 dollars per hour to provide remediation beyond their

regularly scheduled classes. Mary and Jan commented on funding.

Mary shared a positive remediation she had and expressed how she sees the

current remediation program.

Years ago we actually had a Saturday school for remediation that worked

incredibly well. Of course it required funding to the get teachers in on a Saturday

and we provided snacks for the students. I think that was pretty effective. Right

now it's kind of hit or miss I think, truly hit or miss with the students.

Jan agrees with Mary that in prior years successful remediation programs were

 funded outside of teachers' regular schedule.

The two prior principals … accommodated teachers as well as students. We

would work with students on our planning time and they would compensate us,

we could bring them in before school, after school, or the planning times. There

is a push with the current principal to remediate, but not with substantial teacher

compensation.

Subtheme 1.3: Total time spent on remediation. Delia, Becky, Jan, and Mary

agreed that finding time to provide remediation is a challenge, especially in a tightly

scheduled day. Mary stated:

One of the biggest challenges is getting the time to work with the student. More

often than not they can't stay after school. They can't get here earlier in the

morning and if we're pulling them from other courses, they're getting behind in

the other courses. So the challenge is to create the time in the course of a school day to work individually with the students.

Subtheme 1.4: One-on-one vs. group. All six of the participants agreed that working with individual students is better than working with a large group of students. The participants agreed that working with individual or small groups is more beneficial to students. Teachers establish better relationship with students and are able to personalize the instruction to better match the student's needs.

Sylvia stated:

 I think it's hard, remediating in the classroom can and sometimes cannot work, but I don't know what the solution is. I had one student who was willing to come in after school, he not only had a disability, but he was an ELL student … he passed this year at the beginning of the year . . . . So knowing the effort that we did after school, the remediation, the one on one attention made him successful, makes you feel good.

Delia shared her experience providing one-on-one remediation. Delia stated:

My students fail the test I take that very personally. And I want to remediate my own students, because we already have a relationship. [a student and I] worked together after school and he would come faithfully, you know, probably , it was probably like Tuesdays and Thursdays what I normally did, and he passed the test with flying colors and he needed to pass that test to get into Tech and he really wanted to go there.

Becky expressed her thoughts on what she believes are barriers to successfully working with SWDs.

Becky stated:

I really think the barrier for SWD's is the same as other kids it is scheduling, trying to find the time in the school day to work with them. Um, and because they have, tend to have, low reading comprehension, you really need to have one on one time to work with them. And, there is just not a lot of time in the day to do that.

Subtheme 1.5: School schedule and remediation. SWDs scores affect AYP of the school so it is important that SWDs participate and pass the English HSA just like other students. Preparing SWDs for the assessment is difficult when the remediation program lacks structure. Although all six participants commented on the lack of structure of the remediation program and the lack of organization, Delia, Sarah and Jan described how they see the current remediation program.

Delia stated:

[The remediation program] is random and haphazard. It is implemented as needed. There's not a specific plan for how we would do this. …the administration gets on the um the department leaders of the HSA courses, says "Here's your list, get them passed. Remediate them, do whatever you need to do".

Sarah stated:

[At the moment I think it is disorganized it doesn't really exist, does not a

program as such, it's basically left up to individual teachers and different

departments to undertake it in different ways.

Jan stated:

[Remediation delivery] varies from teacher to teacher. We are required by county

and state to remediate students prior to a state high school assessment at least

eight sessions.

Theme 2: Materials

Shifrer, Callahan and Muller (2013) noted, if teachers are expected to close the

gap in learning they must be provided with the right tools. The six participants

commonly used the same materials to remediate students. The interviews collaborate

with observations and artifacts collected and support the need for materials and strategies

to teach and prepare SWDs to pass the English HSA. When analyzing the data, the

following subthemes emerged within the theme of materials: lack of materials that

identified weaknesses of individual SWDs, limited supply of remediation resources, and

differentiated instruction materials.

Subtheme 2.1: Lack of materials that identified weaknesses of individual SWDs.

Teachers currently have the IEP snapshot that provides them with students' federally

identified codes and their accommodations and supplemental aids. It does not give them

the specifics about the disabilities. For example, federal code 08 is for SLD, but the

snapshot does not describe the disability; it just informs teachers of whether the

disability impacts reading, math or written language. Teachers do not know what SLD

refers to specifically, for example a short term memory issue or receptive language or dyslexia.

Becky stated:

The central office needs to provided teachers with more remediation materials cuz they have not provided anything, and there needs to be more coordination between teachers of what needs to be done to remediate for the HSA.

Sarah stated:

I think that there needs to be um really good data and when I say really good data, I mean data that you can look at, break down, and open up and really pinpoint where the problem is. Because, just having a vague idea that you know this kid maybe has trouble comprehending a passage that is going to affect him across the board in everything but we need to be able to identify what exactly is the problem with comprehension and focus on that.

Subtheme 2.2: Limited supply of remediation resources. All six of the participants relied on materials originating from MSDE public released HSAs. Teachers used the MSDE website itself. They also used the Montgomery County website which uses public release sections and adds description and explanation of correct and incorrect answer. The teacher created workbook included English HSA public released materials and worksheets commercially available. Jan, Sylvia, Mary and Becky convey how they rely on the same materials.

Jan stated:

What I did two years ago I researched the different counties as well as the state

examples of prior HSA's and I put together a booklet that covers all of the

indicators that the students need and then I wait to see what specifics I need to

hone in on. I also use a Montgomery County site, as well as the Maryland

K12.org site which will specify by the indicators that are were the weaknesses

are.

Sylvia stated:

I use old high school assessment releases and I use Montgomery County's

practice test that is on their website that gives students the reason why the answers

are wrong. And, then one of our teachers in our building created a packet …on

putting together worksheets and resources from all over to help us remediate.

Mary stated:

I would say the primary sources that are most effective would be the on line

sources that we have both through the State of Maryland web site and

Montgomery County also has a phenomenal program where we can tailor to the

student's needs.

Becky stated:

Montgomery County Public Schools has a really good website for HSA English

practice and remediation, I use that. The HSA website from the Maryland

Department of Education. And, the rest of it is just materials that I've gathered on

my own. There are no materials provided by the central office for remediation for

HSA.

Subtheme 2.3: Differentiated instruction materials. Four years ago

professional development was provided to the all staff at ABCD High School on

differentiated instruction. As part of the professional development, each staff member

received a three ring binder with information on differentiated instruction. As

participants described and as was observed, differentiated instruction materials are not

being used to provide remediation. The only technology observed during remediation

sessions included individual laptops and overhead projectors; otherwise, teachers relied

on direct instruction and question and answer sessions where the teacher asked the

question and student answered. The participants also used worksheets from the teacher

created workbook. The English teachers alternated between paper and pencil, and

computer. Jan stated:

> Students with the paper and pencil test become just a bored as when they take the
>
> actual test on the computer, and that is why I use the computer as much as I can to
>
> familiarize them as much as I can with what they need to do. … [students] see
>
> immediate results. If it is incorrect the program will tell them why it is incorrect
>
> and lead them into the right direction. If the student has a question which often
>
> they do, that is when I intercede and explain even further.

Theme 3: Motivation

The participants expressed frustration about lack of student motivation to

participate in remediation. They also made comments on other teachers not supporting

the remediation efforts. When analyzing the data, the following subthemes emerged

within the theme of motivation: motivating students to participate in tutorial remediation and motivating student to learn.

Subtheme 3.1: Motivating students to participate in tutorial remediation.
The participants agreed motivating students is difficult. Jan stated:

Primarily, I think it begins in the classroom, in the past we had English classes that were comprised of all the students who needed to pass the HSA. And you had more time and more dedication of the students because they would see one another achieving and they wanted to achieve.

Sylvia stated:

The remediation program pretty much takes place inside the classroom, or outside of school asking the students to stay after school. And I feel like it's very hard to get students to buy in to preparing for the test again, or to stay after school on their own time.

Becky stated:

I feel that students are not held accountable for coming to remediation, there is no way to make sure or say if I hold after school or before school remediation, there is no way to make them come or make them accountable for coming, so if we cannot make them accountable for coming they're not going to come. So there has to be some greater focus in our school on remediation and making students have to come to them, make it a requirement of some sort. Otherwise, they are not going to come. So that is what I don't like about it, it's not made to be a requirement.

Sarah noted:

Okay, I had a student at one point now this was when I was in ED and um she was

very low functioning had a great deal of difficulty of retaining information she

had sat HSA's many times, in the end she had sat HSA exams thirteen times and I

despaired of her ever passing all of them I was very surprised that she had passed

any um after numerous attempts she did manage to pass her Math and Biology

and um but with all of the reading required for English and Government and also

she had to retain the definitions and that was extremely difficult for her. So we

would work after school. One on one and she actually managed to pass, and she

had also her senior year completed bridge projects for both of those, but in her last

attempt that was the April set of the HSA's her senior year she passed both of

those exams by one point. And, what contributed to it just it was the students'

dedication and really and at the same time there was two of us it was Lynn and I

working with this student individually one with reading and the other with

government. And the fact that this student was willing to stay after school and

work with me.

Subtheme 3.2: Motivating students to learn. In addition to motivating students

to attend remediation, teachers were very concerned about motivating students to

participate in learning. Once teachers were able to get students in their classroom or

remediation session, they found that many students were not eager to participate in the

remediation.

Delia stated:

I want a small group that are mine; that I see on a regular basis because I think

that the relationship that you build with that student is more important than the

indicators that you help them learn, because the students need the motivation to

pass the test.

Jan stated:

What needs to change is the students' attitude. They feel they don't have to pass

something, they feel they do not have to put the extra effort in, that when they are

seniors they can do the Bridge. Here again I think it all stems to the attitude, not

only the attitude of the students, but the attitude of the parents, the community.

It's not felt that it's important, that what it matters if I know how to read and

analyze.

Sylvia stated:

This student just never tried on the assignments when there was an essay they

had to read he wouldn't read it and there was no way I could get him to buy in

and then he would just guess at the questions. When I got him to one time read a

poem he would not even go back to reference the poem to answer the questions,

so he just didn't care. So, I don't know what I can do to motivate somebody who

doesn't care. I just feel like when you have so many kids in the class that need to

pass the test again it's really hard to get them to buy in to doing it. They

sometimes feel like its extra work, there never gonna get it, or they don't have to

get it. They you know, they just don't buy in that it affects them, they

automatically assume they will get the score at the end where they combine all the

scores. Or, they feel like it doesn't matter if they don't pass it they can do a

Bridge Project. They just don't have a buy in that it is more important to pass the

test then to do the other things that they can do to pass it.   I don't know what, and

that is a good questions because I don't know what could change.

Sarah stated:

I have had many students who had to sit the exams many times over simply

because um they weren't prepared and they lacked the motivation that I described

in the previous student and um and it's very, very difficult to motivate students to

do something where they feel they're always going to fail.

Mary stated:

Again, it all has everything to do with the student motivation. If the student is not

willing to put forth the effort, there's nothing that you can do, and I've had a few

like that were they flat out it's not important to them so they don't engage their

brain with me while we're working.

Theme 4: Collaboration with Colleagues

There seemed to be many reasons that teachers do not have time to work with

their colleagues. Teachers' schedules are very full. It was not that teachers did not ever

work with colleagues; limited materials were shared among each other, but there really

was no discussion about working as a group to discuss individual disabilities. This

seemed to lead to duplication of effort whereby teachers worked on the same goals with

students. There was a lack of data shared. When analyzing the data, no subthemes

emerged.

Sarah stated:

Well for the moment I think that the most useful is experience and talking with

colleagues and cuz right now I am remediation English so I have found talking to

other English teachers, especially teachers that have been here a long time and

getting their ideas, having them share resources… I think that maybe there needs

to be a core group of people who are responsible for remediation so that those

people can go into the general classroom and intervene in the classroom…Well I

like the independence that I have and had to work with individual students where

I can, but at the same time the independence means that I don't necessarily know

what the English teacher is doing and what the math teacher is doing so there isn't

a team effort so it has both its advantages and disadvantages. I think there needs

to be a more collaborative effort across departments in order to get really effective

remediation because the skill that a student is lacking for example in reading is

going to affect them across the curriculum.

Theme 5: Poor student preparation

All of the participants agreed that the remediation students are poorly prepared for

high school English. Many of these students lack basic reading and writing skills, good

reading comprehension, and adequate study skills. When analyzing the data, the

following subthemes emerged within the theme of poor student preparation: background

courses, failure to master the concept after years of instruction, and linking test scores to

passing the English 10 course.

Subtheme 5.1: Background course. The English 8, 9, and 10 course work does not always match up with what students need to know by the time they have to take the English HSA. The instruction can be inefficient. The classwork students have had in the pass has not prepared them. Several teachers thought that classes have not prepared student well enough to pass the English HSA.

Mary stated:

I personally don't think that you can take a student who has failed the test and in a matter of hours a week provide enough remediation in some cases, to get the student to pass the test. They obviously have weaknesses in their course work over the course of years and to try to remediate it in a short period of time is a challenging task.

Sarah talked about the new CCSS:

I think changes the criteria for IEP's to SWDs I think that that's going to be a barrier. Um, that and also the changeover to core curriculum is going to place demands on SWDs that were not going to be able to fill the gaps, because there are really huge gaps in the skills what students across the board need so SWDs who are already behind the curve, or at the bottom of the curve they are going to need a lot of extra support in meeting the standards that are coming in. And there is a huge gap between what they have been taught and what they are required to know. That's probably the biggest gap, and biggest barrier and also as schools are increasingly having to cut down on staff the fewer staff you have available to help

with remediation or to be part of a remediation team then the less likely you are to have a concerted effort at remediation.

Subtheme 5.2: Failure to master the concept after years of instruction.

Students have had the instruction in class on materials related to the English HSA but still do not grasp the concepts or knowledge to pass the HSA.

Delia stated:

Well, if we do effective intervention, we may not need remediation. So that would be the point. Do intervention, prepare them for the test, take it once, pass it and be done. That would be the ideal. Um, is that going to happen for every student? No, especially for, um, our SWD's, especially if they're taking more than one test and if they have test anxiety, there are many, you know, factors there. Ah, but, ah, if they don't pass, I think the most effective thing is for them to be in that class again, because there are many skills. Becky stated:

Most of the reason any kid fails has these days is because they cannot read.

Sylvia stated:

I find that a lot of times it's with their reading level, that sometimes, I am not a reading teacher, so I know how to teach English, but I don't know how to teach reading. So I don't really know what to do to help a kid that can't read.

Jan stated:

I know that SWDs are priority, I understand that, but some of those students just are not capable of knowing all the still they need. They may know it one day but ask two days later they do not have a cue.

Subtheme 5.3: Should test scores be linked to passing English 10 content course. Teachers often notice the close connection between passing the course work and the English HSA. Several teachers thought that students who do not pass HSA should not receive credit for English 10.

Mary stated:

A student who doesn't pass the HSA should not be allowed to move on from English Ten. That student should remain in English 10, It's not remediation, but it's an ongoing course work that would help them. So I think that we need to make sure that these students do not go out of English 10 until they actually pass the HSA.

Delia stated:

Students who don't pass the HSA quite often will not pass the course which actually makes more sense. I think the two should be linked.

Theme 6: Training

All of the participants in this study are considered highly qualified English teachers. In addition, one of the six has a special education degree and one has a certificate of special education with a focus on emotional disabilities. When analyzing the data, the following subthemes emerged within the theme of training: lack of formal training for remediation, lack of formal training in strategies for SWDs, lack of understanding of different disabilities.

Subtheme 6.1: Formal training for remediation. Teachers perceived a lack of formal training on how to provide remediation. Teachers discussed the lack of training

for remediation that included topics such as poor data collection, inadequate coordination with other teachers, and difficulty with identifying and planning for specific weaknesses.

Delia stated:

We have no training to remediate. Well, there's no procedure. We are on our own completely. So, I may work very hard with the students, other teachers may not. I may be successful, other teachers may not be. Ah, like I said, there's no planning, there's no accountability. All we have to do is sign a form to say that we've done it. We could, we could actually sit and hang out with those kids and eat pie. Nobody would know the difference and we could say we remediated with them.

Mary concurs with Delia:

There's no formal training. Basically, we are provided information about the student and what the specific disabilities are and we are given information about strengths and weakness in the test and from there we pull our resources to tailor the remediation to the student.

Sarah stated:

It would be very useful to have a set of skills for each department for example some of the skills that students need for math and science are different from those they would need in say English or social studies. So I think it would be really good idea of highlighting what skills are needed and then teachers can work on those skills while they're in the general classes that would be a start there, needs to be some kind of overview. There needs to be an overview of what is needed

and then go from there, also having really good data in terms of what places are students failing what particular skills are they failing at. And for a while we were able to do that with English, but it is not with the changeover to Common Core Curriculum Standards it is not so clear anymore. So I think we really need to be able to pinpoint where are the areas that students are having trouble, individual students where are they having trouble.

Subtheme 6.2: Lack of formal training in strategies for SWDs. Teachers have expressed how little they know about working specifically with the different SWDs and their disabilities. These teachers have had training in their content area, but the amount of college course training on special education varied. In the last three years, no formal training has been offered to content area teachers through in-school professional development. During the time of this study, no such formal training was being offered to content teachers through in-school professional sessions.

Sylvia stated:

I was given none, I've only had one three hour course on students with special needs when I was in college thirty years ago, so I've had no training since.

Becky agreed with Sylvia and stated:

The only training I have for SWD's is what I had when I was getting my teaching certification. I had to take a course on SWDs. I have not had any training since then. I have had training on high level learners, but I have not had any additional training on low level learners.

Jan stated:

I believe that I am fortunate because I have Masters in Special Ed., so I have the training that I feel is adequate to assist these students. As far as teachers who do not have a degree in Special Education, they have not received any training to my knowledge.

Delia talked about the impact her lack of special education training had on a student who did not pass the English HSA:

[failing student] I feel like that was one of my failures. And well my failure is because I didn't have the skills I thought to meet her needs to understand, you know, how she could think it through and get through it faster. I just I didn't have the education.

Subtheme 6.3: Lack of understanding of the different disabilities. Beginning each semester, the research participant received an IEP snapshot for any SWD assigned to her classroom. The snapshot contains the name of the disability as defined by federal code, the required accommodations or supplemental aids, and educational goals. Teachers do not get a copy of the entire IEP unless they request it.

Mary stated that the success depends on understanding SWD's disability:

I think [success] just goes back to knowing the student, being well aware of what the student's individual needs are as far as what are the disabilities and how to work effectively with the student, whether it be a reading comprehension, whether it be whatever the problem is, being able to understand that and work individually with the student.

Delia stated:

Well, specifically, for SWDs, we need to know what that particular student's

deficiency is in and how to specifically help that student. If we're just, you know,

heading into remediation blind , just looking at indicators, we can go from the

indicators that student missed on the test, but if we don't know that particular

student's, um, issues or learning problems, um, then it takes even longer for the

teachers to figure out the student to be able to help that student.

Sylvia noted:

Well, I do get a list of their disabilities, but I don't always know what I

specifically can do, which strategies I can use to help them. I don't have that

knowledge, and so I think sometimes helping me learn how to chunk or maybe

provide the information in a different way might be helpful.

Outcomes

As a result of the data analysis, the following main themes emerged from the data

analysis: scheduling, materials, motivation, and collaboration with colleagues, poor

student preparation, and training. These themes were used to address the three research

questions posed in Section 1. In order to investigate the factors the effect teaching

practices that lead to a gap in SWDs success on the English HSA, I wanted to know how

teachers perceived their role in the delivery of English remediation, how teachers

described the English remediation program, and what factors teachers say influence their

ability to remediate SWDs effectively. The subsequent discussion contains a narrative

summary and interpretation of the data in relation to the research questions of the study.

The first theme that emerged was related to the teachers' responsibility for scheduling remediation. All six participants indicated that scheduling time to remediate students individually was challenging. The participants stated it was difficult to pull out students from other classes to provide remediation. Students do not have a free period in their schedule. Participants shared that grouping SWDs does not always work because of their learning abilities. SWDs have academic disadvantages (Shifrer et al., 2013). Teachers have only a limited amount of time available to work with them individually. In addition, three of the participants expressed how difficult it was to provide the necessary remediation to SWDs in a general education class with nondisabled peers because of the makeup of the class. Funding is related to scheduling. Over the years teachers have been paid to provide remediation during their planning and before or after school. Five out six participants expressed that giving up their planning did not work for several reasons: students would not always show up or teachers would forget to send them; the participants did not feel two hours a week was adequate time spent on remediation; and students' poor comprehension and reading skills inhibited their progress. Gallo and Odu (2009) noted scheduling has a significant effect on students' achievement. One participant shared thoughts about a prior remediation experience in which teachers were paid to provide remediation on Saturdays and it was her opinion that it worked incredibly well.

The second theme that emerged was materials. The participants expressed that there was a limited amount and limited variety of materials to use for remediation. They agreed that there was adequate availability of differentiated presentation methods that

included: paper and pencil, computer or websites, and teacher made booklets. The

participants stated that the primary source for remediation was the MD HSA and

Montgomery County practice websites. These two sites rely on the same public release

test sample questions; Montgomery County has added an explanation of correct and

incorrect answers. The second source was a teacher made worksheet booklet. The

participants articulated a need for materials that identify weaknesses of individual SWDs.

All participants believed that it was critical to have a variety of differentiated

instructional material to promote success in the delivery of remediation to SWDs.

The third theme that emerged was motivation. All of the participants expressed

that motivating students to participate in tutorial remediation and motivating students to

learn was part of their role in delivering remediation. Three of the participants stated

motivating students is part of their role in delivering English remediation. They

expressed concern that if students are not motivated, there is nothing that can be done;

students will not engage in learning. Several of the participants believed that students

must be held accountable for making every effort to pass the English HSA.

Coinciding with findings of current study regarding the third theme, Dornyei &

Ushioda (2013) define motivation as derives from the Latin verb "movere" meaning "to

move." Researchers note that it is impossible to fully understand what motivates a

person (Alderman, 2008; Dornyei & Ushioda, 2013; Midgley, 2012). Alderman (2008)

agrees with the three participants that believe that it is their role to motivate students. It

is educators' primary responsibility to help students' foster personal qualities of

motivation that include the development and achieving of goals, independent learning,

and fostering resiliency (Alderman, 2008; Dornyei & Ushioda, 2013). In addition, in relationship to the problem of this present study research has shown that extensive use of high stake testing has motivational consequences for students and teachers (Alderman, 2008).

The fourth theme that emerged was collaboration with colleagues. This theme is directly connected to the second research question. The participants felt that more collaboration with colleagues within and across the content areas was needed. One participant said remediation is handled differently based on subject area and that it could be a completely different content area. Participants agreed that there is no uniformity within the English department. All participants stated they would like to know what strategies or techniques other teachers use during remediation and what works and does not work with SWDs. One participant expressed a need for teams to share information on SWDs before remediation. All participants indicated a need for teacher collaboration to support and enhance instruction and student learning.

Coinciding with finding of current study regarding the fourth theme, teachers spend much of their workday isolated, working individually, without speaking to their colleagues (Gabriel, 2005). Marx (2006) noted working together is how effective teams share and understand the overall purpose. Collaboration is critical for student and teacher success (Gabriel, 2005; Marx, 2006; Taylor, Hallam, Charlton, & Wall, 2013). Groups that collaborate improve in practices and focus on purpose and outcomes (Taylor, et al, 2013).

The fifth theme that emerged was poor student preparation. This theme relates to the second research question. All of the participants believed that test scores should be linked to passing the English 10 content course. Four out of six participants believed that students who failed the English 10 content course should not be allowed to take the English HSA because they are not prepared. Kim, Samson, Fitzgerald, & Hartry (2010) noted students who fail to acquire basic reading skills by third grade and are unable to catch up by sixth grade tend to avoid reading and decelerate in comprehension. Several participants said that SWDs have been remediated for years and still fail to master the important concept. Harrison et al, (2013) noted SWDs demonstrate significant academic challenges as well as behavioral and social impairments. Students with disabilities perform below grade level when compared to same age peers (Harrison, et al, 2013).

The sixth theme that emerged was training. This theme is related to research question three. Teachers perceive a lack of formal training on how to provide remediation. Five out of the six participants agreed that they have not received adequate professional training needed to help English teachers develop skills, knowledge, and dispositions necessary to work effectively with SWDs and to close the gap in teaching practices that leads to differences in the HSA passing rate for SWDs compared to their nondisabled peers. I discovered through the interview process that many did not understand the manifestations of the different disabilities and how they impact teaching and learning for the student.

Coinciding with findings of current study regarding the sixth theme, Taylor et al., (2013) emphasized that when teams are provided tools and strategies, they clearly

understand the vision of student learning. Through professional development, teachers

can support each other and collaborate by sharing experiences and ideas that develop

current knowledge, skills, and dispositions (Burn, Mutton & Hagger, 2010; Dold &

Chapman, 2012).

Question 1: The first research question for the present study was: how do teachers

perceive their role in the delivery of English remediation? The participants unanimously

agreed that they were the primary deliverers of the English remediation to students both

SWDs and nondisabled. Teachers felt they were responsible for planning and analyzing

data. Four out six participants felt responsible for scheduling and motivating students.

All of the participants felt responsible for the HSA scores. Teachers shared that they

were responsible for providing the variety of appropriate materials to use in remediating

students with different needs.

Question 2: The second research question for the present study was: how do

teachers describe the English remediation program? The participants described the

current remediation process as ineffective and disorganized. It varies from teacher to

teacher and from subject to subject. It is not structured and it is not uniform. One

participant stated there is a need for good data to uniform instruction. Remediation

happens inside and outside the classroom. The participants believe remediation is

required by the state and the county before student can retake the HSA test.

Question 3: The third research question for the present study was: what factors do

teachers say influence their ability to remediate SWDs effectively? The participants

described the following as impacting factors that made the current remediation

ineffective: a lack of collaboration with colleagues, a need for funding, problems with student motivation, conflicts with scheduling, and the lack of data that identify student areas of weakness of individual SWDs being tested. Researchers found teachers in separate studies have expressed a lack of preparation and training which affects their ability to work with SWDs (Voltz and Collins, 2010; Zhang et al., 2014)). Three of the six participants felt that students' failure of the English HSA was linked to their inability to master the concepts taught in English 10 classroom. Teachers also mentioned a lack of central organization, lack of consistency across the academic departments, and a need for student remediation materials and supporting technology. In addition, several of the participants stated they have received little or no training for remediation.

Consequently, as an outcome, the project for this study will focus on developing the English teachers' skills, knowledge, and dispositions necessary to work more effectively with SWDs. I found that it was best to focus on strategies and knowledge teachers needed to work successfully with student. Some of the topics such as lack of funding I could not change so I choose not to address them. The project genre will be professional development to be delivered via workshop. The workshop will educate and provide English teachers material on variances of techniques, strategies, and skills to bridge the gap between teaching and learning of SWDs. Additionally, professional development would allow for collaboration with colleagues.

Section three contains a detailed description of the proposed project, goals of the project, a scholarly rationale of the project genre, and how the problem will be addressed through the content of the project. A review of the literature addressing the project is

included. Also, a discussion of the project including needed resources, existing supports,

potential barriers, implementation proposal, and roles and responsibilities of the

researcher is included. Furthermore, a project evaluation plan is described as well as the

project implications. Implications include possible social change as a result of the project

and the importance of the project to local stakeholders and in a larger context.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

The problem identified in this study is the gap in teaching practices that leads to differences in the HSA passing rate for SWDs compared to their nondisabled peers. This problem is related to the mandated English assessment taken by SWDs who are included in the general education curriculum. The current situation at ABCD High School has SWDs in the general educational setting facing the same curricular and graduation requirements as their nondisabled peers. At this high school, remediating SWDs who have failed the state English HSA presented an ongoing challenge. The findings of the present study indicate that teachers perceived a negative effect on the remediation program cause in part by inadequacies in instructional materials, teacher understanding of student disabilities, lack of formal training, scheduling, student motivation, and lack of collaboration. Literature review and findings discussed in Section 2 showed that students learn in a variety of ways and require the use of different learning resources (Assar & Franzoni, 2009) and that traditional instruction is frequently ineffective with students with disabilities (Edmonds, et al., 2009) who, therefore, need more support (Faggella-Luby et al., 2009). Also, many students with reading difficulties do much more poorly academically than their nondisabled peers (Oyler, et al., 2012; Hock, et al., 2009). In addition, previous studies concur with the results of this study indicating a lack of adequate training among general education teachers working with SWDs. Defur (2002) found that teachers were not adequately prepared to help SWDs meet state standards (as cited in Voltz and Collins, 2010). Hawley and Rollie (2007) have found evidence that

teacher learning is most powerful and long lasting when they are actively collaborating with a group of colleagues. Lieberman and Mace, (2009) stressed that teacher expertise is the most significant school based influence on student learning. Lieberman and Mace (2009) noted that it is commonly viewed that professional development should be the primary method to improve teachers' practices. Vaughan and Mclaughlin (2011) stressed professional development can enhance cooperative opportunities and motivate teachers to perform more effectively at work. In addition, Doren et al (2012) noted that professional development provides opportunities and guidance to integrate knowledge and skills learned.

To assist teachers in working effectively with SWDs, I propose to design a professional development project via workshops that will be presented over three days. I will conduct the professional development workshop entitled "Understanding SWDs and Their Disabilities." The professional development workshop will be conducted at ABCD High School and will likely occur in September of 2015 during the three day mandatory professional days. The workshops would be intended for the six participants of the original study and their colleagues in the English department of ABCD High School. I anticipate a maximum of 11 participants. Participants will volunteer to attend the professional development; no money will be paid to any participant.

Workshops will occur over three full days. Each day will begin at 8:00 a.m. and break at 11:30 a.m. The afternoon sessions will begin at 12:30 p.m. and end at 3:30 p.m. Day one workshop will address reading IEPs, define varies disabilities, and identifying effective strategies to use as part of classroom instruction and remediation. Day two of

the professional development workshop will consist of small group activities in which

teachers will analyze case studies and do collaborative problem solving. During day

three of the professional development, the workshop participants will develop individual

strategy plans for SWDs. During all three days there will be an opportunities for

participants to ask questions. Professional development has been chosen as the project

style because quality professional development allows educators to develop knowledge,

skills, and dispositions to become effective educators (Burn et al., 2010). In addition,

professional development has been recognized as essential to staff and school

transformation (Dold & Chapman, 2012). Lieberman and Mace, (2009) noted that when

teachers plan and worked together, they build commitment not only to each other but to

learning. This project will be designed to provide for teachers' interaction and

contribution to each other's learning; to build collaboration; and to assist teachers to

develop knowledge and skills needed to become more effective educators.

Findings from this present study have indicated that the English teachers are not

satisfied with the current remediation process. When asked to describe the current

remediation program, the participants used the following terms: disorganized, doesn't

existing, and challenging. Delia, a participant of this present study, stated that it was

random and haphazard and was implemented as needed. In addition, the participants in

this study consistently shared dissatisfaction with their past training on student

disabilities. They did not feel able to meet SWDs needs effectively. Therefore, the first

day of the professional development project will consist of two sessions, morning and

afternoon workshops on understanding the IEP and related documents as well as the

varies disabilities of students and strategies to use in classroom instruction and

remediation. Doren al el (2012) stated that when staff understands the SWDs' needs and

use the IEPs, they are able to provide a structure and meaningful planning process to

increase the prospect that students will leave high school prepared to access and engage

in meaningful post school activities. All six of the project participants expressed how

challenging they find students lacking motivation to learn. Although motivating students

is not directly addressed, teachers will be able to use knowledge and skills learned

through the professional development workshop. The overall goal of the first day of the

project is to provide teachers with knowledge of varies disabilities and effective teaching

strategies and to address the participants' expressed concern that they have received little

or no training to work with SWDs

The second day of the professional development will consist of a two half day

sessions in which teachers analyzing hypothetical case studies of students with a variety

of disabilities. The participants will have the ability to collaborate on the analysis of

short case studies. According to the participants, they meet as a team to address

administrative topics such as benchmarks, testing windows, and other calendar timeline

events, but they do not have opportunities to collaborate on strategies and ideas that

would help them better instruct SWDs. The afternoon session of day two of the

professional development will be spent develop individual strategy plans for SWDs.

During day three of the professional development, participants will be involved in

a morning session literature review. During this session participants will be provide an

article to read in small groups of 2 or 3 members. Within the group the participants

follow a text rendering protocol as developed by National School Reform Faculty in which participants chose important words, phrases or sentences to share in the whole group. This activity will provided for open dialog among the participants and everyone will have something to contribute to the group as a whole. In the afternoon session participants will develop individual strategy plans for their own students, participate in a wrap up activity which is completing the KWL chart from day one, and project evaluation. During all three days there will be an opportunities for participants to ask questions.

To provide a more detailed description of the project, Section 3 includes the project goals and a scholarly rationale of why the project genre was chosen. A review of the literature is also included. The review of literature provides research relevant to professional development, special education students, and collaborative learning theory. The section on project implementation includes discussion of resources, existing supports, potential barriers, and a timetable. Potential social change implications and the importance of the project to local stakeholders and the larger community are also included.

Description and Goals

The project study addressed the problems identified in Section 1, which included the gap in teaching practice that leads to differences in the HSA passing rate for SWDs compared to their nondisabled peers. The issue of the gap in teaching practices will be addressed by implementing professional development for English teachers who are providing remediation to SWDs. The goal of the professional development is the

provision of (a) an understanding of IEPs and how it benefits the student, (b) an understanding of the varies disabilities, (c) opportunities to interact and contribute to each other's learning, (d) time to build collaboration, and (e) toolbox of skills and strategies. Professional development was selected as the project genre because professional development can enhance networking opportunities and motivate teachers to perform more effectively at work (Vaughan & McLaughlin, 2011).

The primary reason for this research based project is providing English teachers knowledge, skills, and tools to work with students diagnosed with varies disabilities that include Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disability (ADD/ADHD), Emotional Disability (ED), Intellectual Disability (ID), Other Health Impairment (OHI), Specific Learning Disability (SLD), and Autism. In addition, the project will to help transform ineffective remediation for SWDs into a more effective remediation. Participants expressed that they needed more formal training to remediate SWDs. Many indicated that the only training they received was a semester in college or on the job. Additionally, the participants indicated a need for more collaboration. It was evident that teachers were providing remediation in a variety of methods using a variety of tools over different school years. The professional development project will provide the English teachers the knowledge, skills, and collaboration needed to provide effective remediation.

Rationale

The professional development workshop genre was explicitly selected to help address English teachers' knowledge, skills, and dispositions to work with SWDs. This includes providing the teachers with opportunities to collaborate and to understand causes

of gaps in student skill levels. Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (2011) emphasized

that teachers learn best in collaboration by examining student work together.

Professional development can be an effective path for enhancing knowledge and skills to

combat ineffective practices. Professional learning can increase the knowledge, skills,

and dispositions of staff, regardless of the profession (Brink, Vourlas, Tran & Halversen,

2012). Additionally, collaborative learning communities allow professionals to engage in

meaningful learning and construct new knowledge and skills (Laning, Lavallee-Welch, &

Smith, 2005).

I am trying to instigate change in teacher belief and provide teachers time and

tools that increase their abilities to work effectively with SWDs. A primary purpose of

this study was to investigate teachers' beliefs and perceptions of the current remediation

provide to SWDs in preparation to retake the English HSA. Through qualitative analysis

of the data collected which included teacher interviews, observations, and collection of

artifacts, clear themes and subthemes arose; the themes are collaboration with colleagues,

lack of formal training, materials, scheduling, motivation, and poor student preparation. I

found English teachers felt they had received very little or no training in working with

SWDs and did not spend time collaborating with each other on strategies and ways to

help SWDs achieve. The adult learning theory of andragogy will be applied to guide

implementation of the professional development project. Andragogy is based on six

assumptions: the need to know; the learners' self-concept; the role of the learners'

experiences; readiness to learn; orientation to learn; and motivation.

Through the analysis of the triangulation of sources, I found teachers questioned their instruction and expressed frustration at not knowing how to make their instruction more meaningful to SWDs. I tried to organize the three day professional development in a natural fashion, something that would match their teaching experience. First I plan on going in depth into the IEP, SWDs' disabilities, and strategies. I plan on making a connection between what I will be presenting and what the teachers experience at the start of each school year. In a real world situation, teachers receive a snapshot of the IEP with the disability code of each SWD. I am trying to broaden their knowledge of what is really in the IEP and how it can benefit them in providing instruction to SWDs. I plan on assisting the participants in developing an array of strategies that can be used in the classroom and during remediation. To give more meaning to the participants' learning, case study analysis activities will be conducted. Through this small group activity the participants will gain experience recognizing characteristics, matching the characteristics with strategies while developing individual instruction plans. Next, the participants will conduct research while at the same time practicing one of the strategies presented earlier in the workshop. Finally, armed with this new knowledge, skills, and experience, participants will be able to develop individual strategies plans for SWDs in their own classroom.

In conclusion, there was a clear need to give the English teachers knowledge of the various disabilities and strategies that work or do not work with different SWDs and to provide an opportunity for the English teachers to share their knowledge, experiences, and ideas to improve remediation for SWDs

Review of Literature

The literature in Section 1 provided the conceptual framework for the study. The conceptual framework consisted of social constructivism. The literature review included current literature regarding teacher perception, high stake testing, special education, and interventions. Literature in Section 1 explained that nontraditional instructional practices and additional academic support are key factors in SWDs' success. The second literature review, which is in Section 3, contains an analysis of research and theory pertinent to development and implementation of the professional development genre which includes professional development, components of quality, barriers to quality professional development, adult learning theory of andragogy and collaborative learning theory. Additionally, there is discussion of how theory and research support the content of the professional development. I used the literature review to explain and expand on the development of the project and rationale.

The present review of literature contains, primary, and peer reviewed journal articles of which the majority of the sources came from the Walden University Library databases. Additional sources were SAGE and ERIC databases along with scholarly books. Sources were gathered until saturation was reached. All sources meet established Walden University guidelines for a literature review with the exception of some older sources that provided a critical foundation of this study. No literature older than five years was utilized. Search terms utilized for the review of literature included combinations of the following words: *best practices, special education, professional development and workshop, barriers to professional development, collaborative learning,*

adult learning, andragogy, and quality professional development, student motivation,

student scheduling. The present literature reviewed contains over 60 primary sources that

address the development of knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to improve

remediation for SWDs.

Background

Presently, there is a demand placed on all educators to prepare students to pass the

high school assessments necessary to graduate (Alderman, 2008; Edmonds et al. 2009;

DeMeo, 2012). English teachers at ABCD High School are challenged preparing SWDs

who have failed the English HSA one or more times. Heubert (2002) noted that SWDs

fail advancement and graduation exams at disproportionate rates (as cited in Hibel,

Farkas, Morgan, 2010). In addition, Adlmean (1999) and Schneider et al., (1998) stated

SWDs often do not complete the typical requirements for admission to a four-year

college such as sequential math and science courses or foreign language credits (as cited

in Shifrer, Callahan, & Muller, 2013) which SWDs are not very successful in

accomplishing due to their diagnosed disabilities. Hibel, Farkas and Morgan (2010)

noted that difficulties associated with their disabilities may cause SWDs to learn the

curriculum at a slower rate. In addition, with the increased demand for more rigorous

expectations of Race to the Top and the newly adopted CCSS at ABCD High School, the

increased academic expectations are reflected in classroom instruction and standardized

testing, thereby, making graduation more difficult for SWDs. SWDs may complete

fewer academic courses by the end of high school compared to their nondisabled peers

(Shifrer et al., 2013). In addition, teachers see SWDs as challenges, and, therefore,

teachers need to learn skills and knowledge to work with SWDs (Oyler, 2011). As an effort to improve teacher quality, academic and policy makers understand that continuing professional development is necessary (Berrett, Butler, & Toma, 2012). In order to provide English teachers with understanding, skills, and dispositions necessary to close the gap in practice, I have designed a three day professional development workshop. The present review of literature includes sections on professional development, features of quality professional development, benefits of quality professional development, barriers to professional development, the adult learning theory of andragogy, and collaborative learning theory

Professional Development

Professional development at every level of education is an avenue to improve teacher quality (Barrett et al, 2012). Beaver (2009) noted professional development is successful when effective communication with teachers is occurring. Burke (2013) noted that for teachers to initiate change, they must want to improve their practice and need to be involved in selecting what they will learn. Professional development workshops can change teaching practice (Grigg, et. al., 2012). Researchers have recognized the importance of professional development in improving teacher knowledge and student outcomes (Barrett et al, 2012; Lutrick & Szabo, 2012). Professional development is the process by which teachers develop skills, knowledge, and dispositions (Burn et al., 2010). Waitoller and Artiles (2013) found that professional development can cause changes in teachers' practices, beliefs, and attitudes toward SWDs. Maddox and Marvin (2012) stated that across the United States, training programs are emerging which to address the

increasing needs for and mounting knowledge about effective educational practices.

Educational professionals who participate in such training and technical support report

increased confidence and skills as they incorporate their new knowledge into their

classrooms (Maddox & Marvin, 2012).

Quality Professional Development

Quality professional development promotes changes in teacher practices and in

turn influences students' achievement (Grigg, et. al., 2012). The National Staff

Development Council (2011) defines professional development as a "comprehensive,

sustained and intensive approach to improving teachers' and principals' effectiveness in

raising student achievement." (National Staff Development Council, 2011). Darling-

Hammond and Richardson (2009) stress that professional development must be

sustained, job embedded, and collaborative to be effective. Professional development has

to have purpose and must contribute to knowledge (Lieberman and Mace, 2009).

Waitoller and Artiles, (2013) noted that quality professional development should promote

and engage in inquiry processes to advance knowledge. Professional development should

be accessible, affordable, and effective to improve teaching practices (Fisher et al., 2010).

National Staff Development Council (2011) and The Professional Learning

Association (2011) have identified five standards that should be considered when

developing quality professional development: learning communities; resources; learning

designs; data; and implementation. The standards focus on professional learning for

educators with the purpose of developing knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions

(National Staff Development Council, 2011; The Professional Learning Association, 2011; Hunzicker, 2011).

The first standard includes establishing learning communities, which increases teaching effectiveness and results through teachers committing to continuous improvement and shared responsibility (The Professional Learning Association, 2011). Lindsey et al. (2009) pointed that teachers' working together is critical to sustaining innovations and creating change in education. Beavers, (2011) noted that highly quality, meaningful and effective professional development can affect teachers' skills and attitudes but further more increases the quality of education students receive .

The second standard includes and requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources such as human resources, funds, materials, technology, and time (National Staff Development Council, 2011; The Professional Learning Association, 2011).

The third standard includes variety of sources to plan, assess, and evaluate professional development (National Staff Development Council, 2011; The Professional Learning Association, 2011). Lieberman and Mace (2009) stated that it is important that knowledge must be made unrestricted so that it can be shared, evaluated, and corroborated.

The fourth standard includes learning designs which integrate theories, research, and other learning models for establishing effective professional development (National Staff Development Council, 2011; The Professional Learning Association, 2011).

The fifth standard includes implementation of long term changes through collaborative learning (National Staff Development Council, 2011; The Professional Learning Association, 2011). It is essential to focus on professional learning that is long term and collaborative and that leads to genuine changes in teaching practice and improved student learning (Hawley & Rollie, 2007). Through collaborative learning teachers develop awareness for diversity and learn to combine practice with feedback (Taylor el at., 2012).

Benefits of Quality Professional Development

A benefit of quality professional development is the opportunity for educators to network with other educators serving similar students in their classrooms (Maddox & Marvin, 2012). A benefit to qualify professional development is that allows teachers to collaboratively support each other (Beavers, 2009). When teachers receive adequate professional development, they can make a difference working with students (Zhang et al, 2014). A study conducted by Short, Echevarria and Richards-Tutor (2011) found that students who received intervention by trained teachers made significantly greater gains on standardized assessments.   The diverse viewpoints of educators provide a natural resource for learning (Moss el at., 2009). Another benefit of quality professional development is that it improves teacher knowledge and student outcomes (Barrett, Butler & Toma, 2013).

Barriers to Quality Professional Development

There are several barriers to providing and implementing quality professional development. These include school culture, time constraints, financial constraints, and

lack of follow up support. Professional development should focus on helping schools overcome barriers which inhibit teachers from learning and participating fully in collaboration with professional colleagues across the disciplines (Waitoller & Artiles, 2013). School culture is one barrier (Bal, Sullivan, & Haper, 2014). Schools across our nation are impacted by demographic changes among students; however, the demographics among educators have not changed (Devereaux, et al., 2010; Bal, Sullivan & Haper, 2014). Oyler (2011) notes that teachers must understand cultural and social orders for the ways discrimination and unfairness are created and preserved within the curriculum, the classroom, and the school. Barriers to cultural change are resistance, oppression, and a sense of privilege or entitlement (Lindsey et al. 2009; Oyler, 2011).

Time constraints form another barrier that prevents teachers from receiving full benefits from professional development. A barrier is finding time to conduct professional development without taking teachers away from classroom (Kolenc Kolnik, 2010). Participants must have opportunities to practice and collaborate what they learn from professional development. Elmore (2004) stated that teachers do not get continuous opportunities to learn and to evaluate their practice in their work place (as cited in Fullen, 2016). Taylor, McGrath-Champ, and Clarkeburn (2012) stated time is a challenge because it does not allot teachers time to problem solve, learn, and design teacher resources. Time is needed for teachers to work in study groups, conduct action research, plan and share lessons plans, and to support each other. Grigg, et al., (2012) found that teachers had difficulty implementing new knowledge learned in professional development.

A financial constraint is a barrier to quality professional development. Throughout the United States, budget cuts in education impact resources to improve classroom instruction including quality professional development (Young, 2009; Harrison et al. 2013). Harrison, Bunford, Evans, and Owens (2013) and Hibel, Farkas, and Morgan (2010) found the cost of educating students with disabilities was three times greater than that of educating nondisabled peers. Budget cuts are common in education and can prevent the availability of funds (Trost & Van der Mars, 2010). The high cost to provide service to special education (Hibel, Farkas, & Morgan, 2010) has cut into funds available to provide quality professional development to teachers (Bal, Sullivan, & Haper, 2014; Fisher, Schumaker, Culbertson, & Deshler (2010). Consequently, many school districts struggle to provide educators with quality professional development on a limited budget (Young, 2009).

The Adult Learning Theory of Andragogy

The adult learning theory of andragogy will be applied to guide implementation of the professional development project. Knowles, Holton and Swanson (2005) define andragogy as "any intentional and professionally guided activity that aims at a change in adult persons (p. 60). Pedagogy is the art and science of teaching children, where andragogy is the art and science of helping adults learn and take responsibility for what they learn (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 2005). Andragogy is based on six assumptions: the need to know; the learners' self-concept; the role of the learners' experiences; readiness to learn; orientation to learn; and motivation (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 2005). The following paragraphs will discuss the six assumptions in detail.

The first assumption of andragogy is the need to know occurs before learning. Adults want to know why they need to learn something before engaging in the learning process (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 2005, Beavers, 2011). Self-directed learning allowing teachers to determine what interests them (Beavers, 2009; Edmondson, Boyer, & Artis, 2012). Professional development should involve teachers in identifying what they need to learn (Hawley and Rollie, 2007). Knowles, Holton and Swanson (2005) noted that the need to know has three dimensions which are; the need to know how learning will be conducted, what learning will occur, and why learning is important. Keeping the dimensions in mind, I will begin the professional development workshop by describing the different learning that will take place during the professional development such as PowerPoint presentation, collaborative grouping, case study activities, and text rendering. In addition, I will inform the participants of the goals and objectives of the workshops and will identify why the information presented is important for bridging the gap in passing rates on the English HSA between first time SWD test takers and general education students.

The second assumption of andragogy considers the leaners' self-concept. Adults have a self-concept of being responsible for their own decisions and life (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 2005). Hawley and Rollie (2007) noted that in order for professional development to be effective and improve teaching, teachers need to assess their teaching practices. Garet et al. (2001) and Ball and Cohen (1999) found that professional development does increase teachers' perceptions of their own knowledge and skills (as cited in Barrett, et al., 2013). The researcher will provide task-oriented

opportunities throughout the second workshop for participants to interact in small groups through analysis of case studies. The researcher will provide opportunities for group discussion to allow the participants to work together to develop a greater understanding of SWDs and develop skills, knowledge, and dispositions to improve their abilities to work effectively with SWDs.

The third assumption of andragogy concerns the role of the learners' experiences. It refers to the prior experiences of the adult learner (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 2005). In this assumption teachers take a responsibility for their own learning and are involved in planning their own professional development (Beavers, 2009). As an individual matures, an increasing amount of experience becomes resourceful for learning (Edmondson, Boyer, & Artis, 2012). Adults are different from children in regard to their backgrounds and learning styles (Falasca, 2011). Individuals that learn to understand which opportunities to explore direct their own learning, stay motivated, and get more out of the learning experiences (Edmondson et al., 2012).

The fourth assumption of andragogy is the readiness to learn. Adults become ready to learn information when it applies to real-life situations (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 2005; Edmondson et al., 2012). Change in education depends on what teachers do and think (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991). Doren el at. (2013) state it is critical that learning communities focus on content driven by participants' needs and interests. As a result, I will provide the participants a professional development via workshop that will address their needs and interests as found in this present study.

The fifth assumption of andragogy looks at orientation to learn which is different from the subject-centered orientation to learning of children. Adults are life-centered or problem centered in orientation to learning (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 2005). As a result, I will provide real life examples of the various ways the participants can gain knowledge, skills, and dispositions that can be directly applied to instruction to enhance the instructing SWDs and struggling students.

The sixth assumption of andragogy is about motivation. Adults respond to some external motivators, but more significant motivators are intrinsic pressures (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 2005). Intrinsic motivators of adults include the desire for increased job satisfaction, self-esteem, and quality of life (Falasca, 2011). Motivation effects individuals' willingness to devote time to learning (Falasca, 2011). Adult learners need to know the worth of the new learning, the skills, knowledge, or attitudes they are working to acquire (Falasca, 2011). People are more motivated to learn when they can use the information (Beavers, 2009). As a result, I will provide a professional development workshop that will include the six components of andragogy: the need of the learner to know; self-directed learning; prior experiences of the learner; readiness to learn; orientation to learning and problem solving; and motivation.

Collaborative Learning Theory

Researchers promote the idea of establishing professional learning communities within school buildings to change practice and influence student learning (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). Most educators recognize that student learning is a social process; teacher learning is no different (Lieberman & Mace, 2009). Nihalani,

Wilson, Thomas and Robinson (2010) define collaborative learning as a small group of individuals who cognitively and cooperatively engage in a common task to achieve a shared goal. Teachers in collaborative learning settings work with other teachers and engage in dialogue to improve their teaching skills and student learning (Hawley and Rollie et al., 2007). Through collaborative practices teachers receive support which helps them deliver quality instruction to students. Learning communities give teachers opportunities to create learning which meets the needs of all students (Oyler, 2011). Burke (2012) stated that teachers prefer professional development that possesses reform oriented activities. Research confirms that professional communities heighten teachers' effectiveness and strengthen the overall pursuit of improvements in teaching and learning (Little in Hawley and Rollie 2007).

Discussion of the Project

The project includes a professional development workshop utilizing Microsoft Office PowerPoint 2007 as a presentation tool. The professional development consists of three full days. Description of the three day workshop can be viewed in Appendix A. Additionally, Table B4 contains a timetable proposal for project implementation. Implementation of the project will begin as soon as the current project study is approved by Walden University.

I will conduct the professional development workshop entitled "Understanding SWDs and Their Disabilities" for high school English teachers. The professional development workshop will be conducted at the school of the researcher and will likely occur in September of 2015. I would like to implement the workshop in September after

all English teachers have had a chance to review their class list and allow for any class

schedule changes to occur as well as to receive SWDs' accommodations and

supplementary aids and SWD individual IEP snapshot folders. This presentation is

planned for English teachers that would have the same students for an entire school year.

Workshops will occur over three full days; each day will begin at 8:00 a.m., and break for

lunch at 11:30 a.m. and begin the afternoon sessions will begin at 12:30 p.m. each day

will end at 3:30 p.m. Through the use of a PowerPoint presentation, participants will be

informed that they have indicated they need to work better with SWDs by learning more

about disabilities and manifestations, strategies that could be used when working with

SWDs of different disabilities and cognitive levels; understanding the IEP and the

information that it contains. The first day of the professional development project will

consist of two sessions, morning and afternoon workshops on understanding the IEP and

related documents as well as the various disabilities of students and strategies to use in

classroom instruction and remediation. Doren al el (2012) stated that when staff

understands the SWDs' needs and use the IEPs, they are able to provide a structure and

meaningful planning process to increase the prospect that students will leave high school

prepared to access and engage in meaningful post school activities. All six of the project

participants expressed how challenging they find students lacking motivation to learn.

Although motivating student is not directly addressed, teachers will be able to use

knowledge and skills learned through the professional development workshop to motivate

students to learn. The overall goal of the first day of the project is to provide teachers

knowledge of varies disabilities and effective teaching strategies and to address the

participants' expressed concern that they have received little or no training to work with SWDs.

The second day of the professional development will consist of a two half day sessions in which teachers analyze hypothetical case studies of students with a variety of disabilities. The participants will have the ability to collaborate on the analysis of short case studies. The case studies will not identify any student or person by name. Teachers will engage in discussion about what instructional strategies and methods would best support the student academically. The participants will also be provided with time to ask questions and allow colleagues to respond based on their experience and what they have learned from the workshop. This time will also allow teachers to indicate areas in which they still need help. According to the participants, they meet as a team to address administrative topics such as, benchmarks, testing windows, and other calendar timeline events, but they do not have opportunities to collaborate on strategies and ideas that would help them better instruct SWDs. The afternoon session of day two of the professional development will develop individual strategy plans SWDs.

During day three of the professional development, participants will be involved in a morning session literature review. During this session participants will be provided an article to read in small groups of two or three members. Within the group the participants follow a text rendering protocol as developed by National School Reform Faculty in which participants chose important words, phrases, or sentences to share in the whole group. This activity will provide for open dialog among the participants since everyone has something to contribute to the group as a whole. In the afternoon session,

participants will develop individual strategy plans for their own students, participate in a

wrap up activity by completing the KWL chart from day one, and complete a project

evaluation. During all three days there will be an opportunities for participants to ask

questions.

Needed Resources, Exiting Supports and Potential Barriers

Needed resources will include Microsoft Office PowerPoint 2007 file on thumb

drive, hard copies of the presentation, hypothetical SWDs case studies, and working

internet source, a list of current research sources, writing utensils, and large post its. I

will require additional support from the school in which the professional development

will occur. The school will provide a location within the building, computer, screen,

tables, and chairs that are need for the professional development workshop. I will request

the computer technician to be available the day of the presentation in case of any

technology problems.

Potential barriers of the professional development workshops include possible

unavailability of a room with a computer and screen available on the day of the

workshop. To prevent any potential barriers from occurring, I will conduct a trial run

before the actual presentation in the potential location assigned for the workshop. I will

notify technical support within the building about the presentation and the potential for

assistance, if necessary.

Implementation of the Project

The current researcher will be the presenter of the three day professional

development workshops. The researcher will be responsible for making sure that the

computer and personal thumb drive are working. During the professional development workshop, I will present PowerPoint handouts to the participants which will include some of the findings of the current study indicating a need to develop skills, knowledge, and dispositions. In addition, in the second day workshop, the researcher will conduct activities in which teachers will analyze a case study, share their experience, engage in collaborate learning and plan for SWDs, and participate in question and answer sessions. The activities reflect principles of andragogy and will break up the lecture component to keep attendees motivated and engaged during the workshops. Although the participants will receive a small packet that includes the information on the PowerPoint slides, participants may to take notes pertaining to the workshop, if preferred. Participants may ask questions for clarification and provide comments relevant to the professional development topic at any time during the presentation.

Once this project study has been approved by Walden University, I will request the permission from the building principal to conduct my presentation. I will present the building principal with a copy of the PowerPoint Presentation, a list of all resources needed to implement the project and materials. In addition, I will invite the principal in person to attend the workshops or to stop in to observe a portion of the workshop to become more familiar with the content, if desired.

Project Evaluation Plan

Creswell (2009) and Dold and Chapman (2012) stated, the researcher should review the original goals of the project study and reflect on areas of strength and weakness throughout project implementation. The present researcher will share the

project study (Dold & Chapman, 2012) with key stakeholders such as school

administrators, teachers, students, and parents who have the power to influence and make

a difference in the education of SWDs and the remediation program at ABCD High

School. The building principal of the present researcher is a key stakeholder as the

principal is the individual who must permit the professional development workshops,

which will be conducted at the school of the researcher. To evaluate the project, I will

utilize formative and summative assessments.

Formative evaluations are collected and data is shared to assist in making changes

or improve a program or issues in the project (Lodico, et. al., 2010). During project

implementation, the researcher will collaborate with colleagues to generate knowledge,

skills, and dispositions needed to overcome issues associated with instruction and

providing remediation to SWDs. The researcher will provide a reflection and feedback

sheet after each session that will give the participants an opportunity to reflect on the

strengths and weaknesses of the professional development workshop. Feedback from the

participants may allow the researcher to adjust any potential weaknesses and to plan for

any future discussions. The names of the individuals providing feedback will not be

revealed unless the individuals prefer to be identified by signing the form.

For this project three different formative assessments will be utilized the

Muddiest Point Paper, the Parking Lot, and Talk and Turn. Each of these formative

assessments was selected to match different segments of the presentation. The first

formative evaluation is called the Muddiest Point Paper; it will be used to check the

participants' understanding of each major section of the first day morning session of the

PowerPoint presentation. After each segment of the PowerPoint, participants will take

out a sheet of paper and will have one minute to write down a single question about the

topic or a confusing aspect of the presentation. I will walk among the participants to

clarify any confusion. During the day two workshop, the first half of the day will be

devoted to case studies and creating the individual strategy plan for the hypothetical

student. After I model the first case study, participants will be paired in groups of two to

three members. Each group will receive a case study to analyze and a packet of post-its.

During the group work, I will use the Parking Lot protocol to assess their learning. On

their post-its each group will write observations, comments, and questions; they will then

post the post its to the wall. I will monitor the post its and if necessary, intervene and

clarify. The second half of day two of the presentation a question and answer session

where the participants can ask questions of me about anything related to the topics

covered in the workshop and about their own experiences. After the first 20 minutes of

the question and answer session, I will use Talk and Turn, which lets the participants talk

to their neighbor for two minutes while I walk around and monitor. This will be repeated

after another 20 minutes has passes. The last 20 minutes will be devoted to summarizing

and reviewing the total presentation and having the participants complete the L column of

the KWL charts of day one as the summative assessment (Appendix J).

After the implementation of the project, I will conduct a summative assessment.

Summative evaluations focus on determining whether goals were met in a program

(Lodico, et. al., 2010; Spaulding, 2008). I will use a KWL chart as part of the opening

segment of the PowerPoint presentation as my ice breaker. Participants will be asked to

write three things they know and what they want to know about SWDs, IEPs, disabilities, and teaching SWDs. Once they have written their three items, I will collect the sheet and keep it until the end of the third day workshop. For the summative assessment, participants will complete the L column of the KWL chart and they will be collected.

Justification for formative assessment is that it can provide educators with information needed to create positive changes in instruction and practice (Clark, 2011). Formative assessment can serve as prompt to close the gap between individual's understanding and desired learning (Clark, 2010). OECD (2005) study defined six elements of formative assessment process: 1). establish classroom culture and the use of formative assessment; 2). establish learning goals and tracking progress toward those goals; 3). use of varied instruction methods to diverse needs; 4). use of varied approaches to assess understanding; 5). feedback on individual performance and adaptation of instruction to meet identified needs; 6). active involvement of the learning process (as cited in Clark, 2010). Justification for using a summative evaluation is to measure the perceptions of the participants' experience and the overall judgment of the program and its success (Spaulding, 2008).

The utilization of the adult learning theory of andragogy and the collaborative learning theory while designing and implementing the workshops enhances the quality of the professional development as the theories help provide effective adult learning experiences (Beavers, 2009). The overall goals for this project are: (a) participants will be able to define the federal coded disabilities, (b) participants will be able to locate information within the IEP that will help them understand the disability of individual

students, (c) participants will be able develop individual strategy plans to meet individual

student's needs.

Overall Evaluation Goals and Stakeholders

Overall goal of the evaluation is to determine if the project study effectively helps

address the teachers' concerns about instructing SWDs. Additionally, the evaluation goal

is to help determine if the project study enhances instruction. It should provide

information that could be used to provide the educational community with information to

design professional development that will continue to address teacher concerns and to

equip teachers with research based practices to engage students in the learning process

and at the same time prepare students to pass the mandated state assessment. Important

stakeholders in the project study include all of the English teachers who will be actively

engaged in the learning process by attending the three day professional development

workshops. The English teachers are key stakeholders because such professionals will

have a key role in change for the profession.

My building principal will also be a key stakeholder for several reasons. First, the

principal is the individual who must permit the professional development to occur in the

school building which is where I am currently employed. The principal is also the

individual responsible for professional development plan for the school. Secondly,

principals can set the tone for a community of learners. Thirdly, the principal becomes a

key stakeholder who can deny or support the presentation of professional development.

Collaboration with stakeholders is critical in order to create social change within the

school building. It is my hope that this project would attract a broader number of

stakeholders including English teachers from other schools within the district, other
content teachers that also work with SWDs, and central office professionals.

Project Implications

The current project study has implications for social and academic change. Social
change in the content of this project implies change in the teachers' role as educators.
Academic change in the content of this project means changing the performance of
students in the classroom and on the standardized test.

The findings of this study may increase positive social change as followed. The
professional development workshop includes a plan for enhancing teachers' skills,
knowledge, and dispositions to promote positive change. The project will promote
teacher buy-in regarding SWDs. The project will help teachers working collaboratively
to create a cohesive learning community. It will encourage teachers to maintaining
openness to innovative strategies of remediation that might be more effective.

The findings of this study may increase positive academic change as followed.
The findings will add to scholarly research and literature in the field of meeting the needs
of SWDs. The professional development workshops will provide new knowledge for
English teachers to engage in and directly apply practices and strategies in their
instruction of not only SWDs but all students. It could also involve the restructuring of
the remediation program as a whole by including other HSA content areas. Eventually,
professional development might be expanded to county wide training which possibly
could lead to some uniformity of remediation delivery across the district.

Importance of the Project

The importance of the project is three fold. First, is through the professional development workshops teachers are gaining information that should cause them to question their own teaching skills, knowledge, and dispositions. Secondly, teachers are learning from their colleagues, and thirdly, there is an emphasis on student achievement and closing the gap between SWDs and nondisabled peers. Section 4 reflects on the strengths and limitations of the current project study in addressing the problem. A discussion of how the researcher may approach the problem differently in the future is included. Information learned regarding scholarship, project development and evaluation, and teachers' perception of the remediation program as well as their ability to work with SWDs. Also included is discussion of an analysis of self as a scholar, practitioner, and project developer. The potential impact of the project on social change, implications, applications, and directions for future use are also included.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

A qualitative research method using a grounded theory was used in conducting this study to explore English teachers' experiences, beliefs, and feelings about remediation and implementation of instruction to SWDs. The resulting project addresses issues of frustration that teachers regarding their inability to reach students in the class, difficulty understanding the disabilities SWDs, and the demands of the remediation program.

As a result of researching literature and analyzing the data, my level of scholarship increased and I was able to design a project to address issues associated with adult learning theory. Increased scholarship often leads to contributions of researchers to teaching and learning such as the development of professional development programs, a new curriculum, and lesson or unit plans (Kanuka, 2011). Bernstein (2012) expanded further by stating the scholarship involves knowledge acquired through a process of research and study leading to an important role of the scholar as a positive social change agent.

In this present study, I conducted extensive research pertinent to issues impacting adult learning and teaching SWDs and how to alleviate such issues through the development of skills, knowledge, and dispositions of the English teachers. I reviewed the available research until researching a point of saturation. After that, I conducted a qualitative study to determine the teachers' perception of the current remediation program. After conducting the qualitative study and analyzing the data, I engaged in a second review of the literature to provide information pertinent to professional

development, which was the project genre. Afterward, I created a three day professional

development project to develop teachers' skills, knowledge, and dispositions regarding

preparing SWDs for the English HSA. Throughout the process and afterwards, I engaged

in reflective thought, leading to the present reflections and conclusions section. Section 4

involves a self-reflective analysis.

Section 4 contains a discussion of the strengths and limitations of the project in

addressing the problem and recommendations of alternative ways to alleviate the

problem. I have included an analysis of what I learned about scholarship, project

development and evaluation, and change and about myself as a scholar, practitioner, and

project developer. Additionally, I have included an overall reflection on the importance

of the work and what I learned as well as a discussion regarding the implications,

applications, and directions for future research.

Project Strengths

I have identified strengths of the project. The project is firmly grounded in theory

and well researched. The project includes the components of a quality professional

development. The National Staff Development Council (2011) and The Professional

Learning Association (2011) have identified standards that should be considered when

developing quality professional development. One of the project's strengths is the

incorporation of the five standards; the development of a learning community; the

consideration of resources such as money, technology, and time; the provision of the

learning design; the inclusion of data, learning theories, and research; and

implementation of long term change.

The first strength is the establishment of learning communities. This professional development gives educators the opportunity to network with other educators that service similar students in their classrooms. Through collaborative learning teachers develop awareness for diversity and learn to combine practice with feedback (Taylor el at., 2012). Participants will discuss case studies of hypothetical students as well as their current students and they will collaborate on the development of individual student plans. The participants will share their teaching experiences, they will learn from each other diverse viewpoints, and they will develop a shared responsibility to the students, to each other and school as a whole.

The second strength is the consideration of prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources such as human resources, funds, materials, technology, and time (National Staff Development Council, 2011; The Professional Learning Association, 2011). The professional development will have no extra expense to the school because it would be presented during a scheduled professional day. Technology is already in place and accessible and familiar. Time will be planned for the workshop and will be spread evenly over three days. This would be a day already scheduled for teachers because it would be on a professional development day.

The third strength is the provision of the learning design which provides the teacher many opportunities during the workshop practice new learning with ongoing assessments, feedback and coaching so the knowledge becomes fully integrated into the teachers' teaching. Lieberman and Mace (2009) state that it is important that knowledge must be made unrestricted so that it can be shared, evaluated, and corroborated. The

logic of the professional development builds a superficial understanding of IEPs and disabilities and to a more complete understanding of process, critical attribute, meaning, and connection.

The fourth strength is the involvement of data, learning theories, and research as a framework for establishing effective professional development. The results of my study led directly to topic for my project. The critical review of the literature provided the theories and information pertinent to the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that was included in the potential outcome of the professional development.

The fifth strength is potential for implementation of long term change. The professional development could increase English educators' effectiveness in teaching SWDs and nondisabled peers. It has the potential for changing the current remediation program and affecting the English HSA results. A long term change could be the restructuring the ABCD remediation program. In addition, the implementations could change teaching practice in other content areas and improve student learning. This professional development could be replicated at other schools.

I believe that the professional development process structured which has been to include curricula content; technical and collegial support would be an effective process that would benefit English teachers and teachers from all content areas.

Limitations and Recommendations for Remediation

Limitations to this study should be kept in mind. First, the sampling group was a very small group, as there were only six participants. The second limitation was that the study involved only English teachers that provided remediation two years or more. The

third limitation was that the participants were from only one high school building of a larger district. Future research is needed to expand this study to involve more participants from a wider range of academic content areas. This project was limited to English teachers; however, other teachers in other content areas also provide remediation and work with SWDs who would benefit from the project as well. Because the findings in this study are limited to a small number of participants, the results of this study present opportunity for further qualitative research to investigate teachers' perception of the remediation programs in the different content areas as well as other school communities.

A different way of addressing the problem of preparing SWDs to pass the English HSA would be to establish a remediation program that is coordinated and focused on effectively achieving the expected outcomes. Currently in the ABCD High School district there are programs such as AVID and Project Upward Bound that focus on high achieving students by providing workshops, conferences and collaboration among teachers on a regular basis. If the district would provide the same expectations and training to teachers providing the remediation SWDs, the students could be more successful. There may be a need for establishing a time of the day for students to receive remediation without affecting the necessary courses they need to pass for graduation. I would invite the ED and ED Summit case managers as well as the English and Math content specialist to take part in the delivery of professional development. This would increase collaboration within the special education department and also among the various content teachers.

Action research could be another method to address the problem. Action research is a professional development trend for educators (Burke, 2013; Doren at el, 2013). Action research is an avenue to identify and take action to solve problems **in** practitioners' own practice and school setting (Dold & Chapman, 2012; Lodico et al. 2010). As a result of action research, immediate changes can occur in the educational setting (Lodico et al., 2010). When active research is utilized during professional development, teachers can continuously assess their teaching and learning (Fullen, 1993) through identification of problems and questions, communication with colleagues, and acquisition of new skills (Burke, 2013; Doren el. at., 2013; Fullen, 1993). Action research evaluates the impact of teachers' learning by looking at changes in teachers' practices, beliefs and attitudes (Waitoller & Artiles, 2013). Furthermore, professional development can enhance opportunities for collaboration and encourage teachers to perform more effectively at work (Vaughan & McLaughlin, 2011). Professional development has the ability to transition educators from being trained to active learners (Snehi, 2011). In action research the intent is to change something, to problem solve and to take action (Glesne, 2011). Chou (2011) found action research is an effective way to assist teachers in understanding their practice and improving student learning.

Scholarship

As an educator for more than 20 years, with 15 years in special education, I appreciate that this experience has provided me with firsthand knowledge of the struggles, frustrations, and dedication of the English teachers who work with SWDs in the preparation to pass the English HSA. Through the triangulation of the data collection,

I witnessed lack of materials and the lack of strategies which teachers need to use to deliver differentiated instruction to students. This research truly made me focus on the details of the problem. I learned that although teachers have their content area specialty, they lack the additional knowledge to work with students with great academic needs and disabilities. Through the use of a professional development workshop I can start to assist the English teachers to gain the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to work with SWDs. In addition, create a collaborative learning environment where teachers can brainstorm, solve problems and in confidence discuss students that they share in the different content areas.

Through the process of this present research, I have gained a better understanding of scholarship. I have learned scholarship is time consuming and requires patience. It involves self-discipline, organization, time management and the ability to stay focused. Additionally, it involves being persistent to complete in depth work to saturation. I found that it is very important to keep my own bias out of the analysis of the literature reviews and maintain an objective stance. I gained knowledge, skills, and a disposition as well through this process. I gained the ability to view my topic from multiple prospective and was able to identifying the authors' bias.

<div align="center">**Project Development and Evaluation**</div>

In developing the project I learned the importance of the adult learning theory of andragogy. I became aware of what should be taken into consideration when working with adults. The six assumptions of andragogy helped me stay focused on the organization and strategies that would be needed in the presentation and delivery of the

professional development workshop. I focused on the need to know; the learners' self-concept; the role of the learners' experiences; their readiness to learn; their orientation to learn; and their motivation.

I learned how easy and useful formative assessment is. In order to continue assessing learning and progress, formative assessment was used throughout the project. This would give immediate feedback of what is working and what is not working.

Leadership and Change

As a result of conducting the doctoral study, I learned that effective leadership promotes positive change. Through the research I learned that unclear communication can lead to a perception of a lack of leadership of administration and even school district. This could lead to confusion, frustration, and ineffective implementation of an academic plan. It is important to have strong leadership and a clear vision of what is necessary to promote needed change. Effective leadership will reduce confusion and increase motivation.

Analysis of Self as Scholar

As a result of the doctoral study project, I have acquired new knowledge, skills, and dispositions. I learned that a scholar must have a passion for a particular topic of study and must be significantly dedicated to the topic and study. Through the process of developing a proposal, I learned how to identify a problem important enough to be researched. Through the data collection process, I learned how important it is to support the assumption that a problem exists and how the literature reviews supported my study. I was impressed with the information found during the literature review. The literature

supported the thought that the problem did exist beyond ABCD High School. Through the data collection and literature reviews, I was lead to pursue professional development as my genre.

In addition, I have learned I have had to face personal challenges such as balancing my home life, work life and school life. I have to admit that at times I felt that I was neglecting one or the other. I learned that the hours are long and it is important to have support from family and friends. Though I frequently felt isolated from family and friends due to my dedication to the doctoral journey and my desire to write a through and accurate dissertation that reflects the reality as I found it through the different processes of the study. I learned how to organize my personal time better, plan ahead, and prioritize better.

As a scholar I learned that the transformation into a practitioner is a continuous process. I learned through this doctoral study that I can be a social change agent. The findings of this study could have a great impact on the current and the future remediation programs for ABCD High School district. It is my hope that sharing my research findings will begin conversations among stakeholders about the type of professional development that is needed to best serve the teachers, students, parents and community.

Analysis of Self as Practitioner

As a practitioner I gained a strong sense of accomplishment from this study. As I reflect on the journey I took in order to become a scholar, I remember the long hours of study and struggle trying to understand the rubric. I learned that the problem I identified was not exclusive; literature showed that it existed beyond the school in my study. I

learned through direct practice how to engage in data collection and analysis data. The process of interviewing was more complicated than I originally thought it would be. The steps of gaining permission and making sure that confidentially was not breached were nerve wracking.

As I experienced, connecting theory and other information gained from research and data collection to practice is an important function of a practitioner. The adult learning theory of andragogy with its six components was crucial to my understanding of how to meet the needs of the participants in the creation of a well-organized, meaningful professional development workshop. I used the six components of andragogy to guide the design of my project. The six components of andragogy include the following: the need of the learner to know; self-directed learning; prior experiences of the learner; readiness to learn; orientation to learning and problem solving, and motivation to learn (Beavers, 2009; Knowles, el. at., 2005). I feel that content of my project had substance and depth in its response to the needs of the participants as expressed in the interviews and evident in the observations and review of artifacts.

Analysis of Self as Project Developer

I obtained valuable information while conducting this grounded theory study. As a project developer I have to admit that I was nervous and excited at the same time. I wanted to develop a project that would address all of the concerns of the teachers in a vehicle that could be used later if need be and could be updated as new research becomes available. I took my lead from themes and subthemes that emerged from my research. This experience provided me with firsthand knowledge of the teachers' thoughts on the

remediation program, student outcomes, and teaching environment. I also witnessed the results of the lack of materials and strategies used in instruction. To develop a project that would address the problem, I had to think critically and creatively using the information I gathered. As a project developer I had to stay determined, focused and engaged in the continuous monitoring of the strengths and the potential weaknesses of the project.   I learned that ongoing evaluation is critical to development and implementation of the project. I feel more confident in designing future projects that can help promote positive social change.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

This project has implications for changes to the current remediation program at ABCD High School. It could also unify the remediation programs across the district in which English teachers within the county receive the same training, are provided adequate resources and opportunities to collaborate with other English teachers. In addition, the project could be used across other content areas in which reading is an important factor in its core curriculum.

The applications of this project can contribute to effective teaching skills and strategies that would help in closing the gap in practice. Additionally, the project could help teachers gain knowledge about using the IEP of a SWD to better prepare the student academically and, in some cases, emotionally for high stakes testing. Those responsible for the creating professional development can refer to the present study as a guide for improving professional development experiences for educators by incorporating the components of quality professional development.

The data presented in this study was limited to the perceptions of six highly qualified teachers working for the same school in a large district. Future research could investigate the problem and related questions of this current research by broadening the demographic scope to include other parts of the country and other types of school settings. The present study contributes to research on high stake testing, special education, and remediation and professional development. A quantitative study to determine the impact of remediation of SWDs and nondisabled peers could be another area of inquiry. A quantitative study could be used to determine if providing adequate and long term professional development to remediating teachers makes a difference in the passing rate of SWDs. Data could be compared from a pre-and posttest quantitative study that could include using professional development process as a control to determine if English teachers provided with professional development addressing the issues found in this study would have a higher rate of passing SWDs than those that did not receive professional development. Action research could be another method to address the problem.

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

The present doctoral project resulted in the development of a three day professional development workshop. The project was developed through the implementation of a qualitative method using of a grounded theory design to investigate how six English teachers implementing remediation describe factors which influence their ability to instruct effectively. It allowed an in depth look at what these teachers experience, believe, and feel about remediation and implementation of instruction to

SWDs. Pseudonyms were used on data reports to assure participants identities were

protected. Triangulation helped validate the findings of the present study by comparing

evidence from the three different data sources (Creswell, 2012). The data collection

consisted of 12 observations (two per participant), six interviews and a collections of

artifacts related to remediation. Member check occurred with 24 hours of receiving

transcribed interviews. There was continuous peer reviewed and related literature

review. Data were compared and contrasted until saturation occurred. A debriefer was

used to clarify any misunderstandings of the present researcher's interpretation of themes

or subthemes and to review interview transcriptions. As a result six themes and 16

subthemes were discovered by the present researcher. As a result I created a three day

professional development workshop that addressed finding discussed in this study.

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Appendix A: The Project

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

Slide 1: Understanding SWDs and Their Disabilities

Title of the professional development workshop

Slide 2: The Problem

The problem is the gap in teaching practices that leads to differences in the English HSA passing rate for SWDs compared to their nondisabled peers.

Slide 3: The Study

Investigate teachers' perceptions of the implementations of the current remediation, as well as their beliefs regarding factors that influence their ability to remediate SWDs effectively.

Slide 4: Results

Findings from this present study have indicated that the English teachers are not satisfied with the current remediation process. When asked to describe the current remediation program, the participants used the following terms: disorganized, doesn't existing, and challenging. Delia, a participant of this present study, stated: It is random and haphazard. It is implemented as needed. In addition, the participants in this study consistently shared dissatisfaction with their past training on student disabilities. Teachers did not feel able to meet SWDs' needs effectively.

Slide 5: Results Continue

Themes: Scheduling; Materials; Motivation; Collaboration with Colleagues; Poor Student Preparation; Training

Subthemes: Pull out remediation; Funding remediation programs; Total time spent on remediation; One-on-one vs. group vs. imbedded in class; Lack of materials that

identified weakness of individual SWDs; Limited supply of remediation materials; Motivating students to learn; Background course; Failure to master the concept after years of instruction; Should test score be linked to passing English 10 content course; Formal training for remediation; Lack of formal training in strategies for SWDs; Lack of understanding of the varies disabilities

Slide 6: Project

This project will be designed to provide for teachers' interaction and contribution to each other's learning; to build collaboration; and to assist teachers to develop knowledge and skills needed to become more effective educators.

Slide 7: Professional Development

A three day professional development workshop good starting point to address the results of this study, the title: Understanding SWDs and Their Disabilities

Day 1: Understanding the IEP, related documents, varies disabilities of students, and teach strategies

Day 2: Analyzing hypothetical case studies of students with a variety of disabilities and developing individual strategy plans

Day 3: Literature review and text rendering protocol and wrap-up activity

Slide 8: Learning Format

Direct teaching using the PowerPoint

Collaborative Group Work

Problem Solving Activities

Formative and Summative Evaluations

Slide 9: Day 1, 2, & 3 Goal

The overall goal of the three day project is to provide teachers knowledge of various disabilities and effective teaching strategies and to address the participants' expressed concern that they have received little or no training to work with SWDs.

Slide 10: Day 1

The first day of the professional development project will consist of two session, morning and afternoon workshops, on understanding the IEP and related documents as well as the different disabilities of students and strategies to use in classroom instruction and remediation.

Doren el. al., (2012) stated that when staff understands the SWDs' needs and use the IEPs, they are able to provide a structure and meaningful planning process to increase the prospect that students will leave high school prepared to access and engage in meaningful post school activities.

Slide 11: Day 2

Participants will analyze hypothetical case studies of students with different disabilities (small group activity); Develop instructional strategies; Share session (group as a whole)

Slide 12: Day 3

Literature review (small group activity); Text rendering protocol as developed by National School Reform Faculty; Develop individual strategy plans for SWDs; Wrap-up activity complete "L" of KWL from day 1

Slide 13: Formative Evaluations: will be used as part of the professional development Muddiest Point Paper; Parking Lot; Talk and Turn; Post-its

Slide 14: Summative Evaluation

After the implementation of the professional development, a summative assessment will be conducted. Summative evaluations focus on determining whether goals were met in a

program (Lodico, et. al., 2010). Participants will be asked to complete the "L" in KWL that was introduced on Day 1.

Slide 15: Working with Adults

The standards focus on professional learning for educators with the purpose of developing knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions (National Staff Development Council, 2011; The Professional Learning Association, 2011; Hunzicker, 2011).

Slide 16: Materials Needed

Microsoft Office PowerPoint 2007 file on thumb drive; working internet source ; hard copies of the presentation; hypothetical SWDs case studies; a list of current research sources; writing utensils (pen/markers); large post-its; 3x3 post-its; KWL sheet; writing paper.

The researcher will require additional support from the school in which the professional development will occur. The school will provide a location within the building, computer, screen, tables, and chairs that are need for the professional development workshop. Request the computer technician to be available the day of the present in case of any technology problems.

Slide 17: Case Study 1

Student is a 14 year old female in 9th grade. She was most recently evaluated in May of 2013. Results of cognitive measures reveal that the student's cognitive abilities to be in the low average range with a Full Scale IQ of 86 on the WISC-IV. There is a significant discrepancy between her verbal comprehension and perceptual reasoning with the perceptual reasoning best representing her abilities. On the verbal comprehension index the student earned a score of 71 that corresponded to the borderline range. The student demonstrated some difficulty with items involving concept formation, fund of knowledge, and verbal expression. The student demonstrated borderline to low average ability with items involving social judgment and knowledge of conventional standards of

behavior. On the perceptual reasoning index the student earned a score of 106 that corresponded to the average range. She scored in the average range on items involving visual processing, visual perception and organization. The student scored in the average range on items dealing with abstract and categorical reasoning ability. On working memory index the student earned a score of 83 that corresponded to the low average range. The student scored in the average range on items involving auditory short-term memory, attention, sequencing and concentrations. She performed in the low average range on items involving visuo-spatial imaging and mental manipulation.

Slide 18: Case Study 2

Student is a 19 year old female in 12th grade, which is a 5th year senior. The student was first identified in pre-school as a child with a speech/language impairment as well as deficits in cognition, academic skills, and speech/language. At her fires re-evaluation meeting (3 years after the first meeting) her disability code was changed to mental retardation because her intellectual ability and adaptive functioning both fell within the deficient range. In third grade the student was dismissed from speech/language services. In fifth grade she was dismissed from operational therapy services. Her records note that she was diagnosed with an Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Current WJII test results: broad reading 80, low average; word ID 85, low average, reading fluency 77, borderline; passage comprehension 85, low average; word attack 81, low average; reading vocabulary 72, borderline range; reading vocabulary 72, borderline range; broad math 51, deficient, calculation 39, deficient, math fluency 52, deficient; applied problems 62, deficient; math calculation 39, deficient; applied problem 62, deficient; math calculation 39, deficient; broad written language 84, low average; spelling 76, borderline; writing fluency 94, average; and writing samples 96, average.

Student's coding: Mental retardation (01). The psychological assessment revealed a verbal IQ of 58, performance IQ of 75 and full scales IQ- 64. Visual-motor skills were noted to be significantly delayed. There were also significant impairments in adaptive

skills within the school setting. Student takes medication for ADHD, has speech/language and occupational therapy services in addition to special education.

Slide 19: Case Study 3

Student is a 17 year old male in 11th grade.   Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children – IV (WISC-IV) Results: verbal comprehension-79, low average; perceptual reasoning index -59, borderline; working memory index 56, low average; processing speed index 53, borderline; and full scale IQ 53, borderline.

A review of individual subtest scaled scored reveals a normal amount of inter-subtest scatter; subtest scaled scored ranged from 3 to 6, with 10 being an average score. The student scored significantly below average on all subtests, indicating a relatively flat and depressed pattern of development. No areas of significant strength or weakness were noted within his own performance.

Results of this evaluation are indicative of overall severely depressed cognitive skills related to other children of same age as this student. His verbal comprehension ability is within the borderline range of functioning and his perceptual reasoning skills place within the extremely low range of ability. Working memory skills and visual processing speed are in the borderline range. Visual-motor integration is delayed, but generally commensurate with overall cognitive functioning. Adaptive skills are weak. Behavioral and emotional concerns are present, which appear to be related to the student's depressed cognitive skills and academic difficulties. These included signs of depression, withdrawal, and attention and learning problems.

Woodcock Johnson III (WJIII) results Broad reading 78, low; brief reading 79, low; letter-word ID 62, very low average; reading fluency 84, low average; passage comprehension 65, very low average; math calculation skills 65, very low; broad math 66, very low; calculation 71, low; applied problems 73, low; math fluency 70, low range; basic writing skills 77, low; spelling 64, very low range; writing samples 70, low; writing fluency 71, low range.

Slide 20: Strengths

The project is firmly grounded in theory and well researched. The project includes the components of a quality professional development. The National Staff Development Council (2011) and The Professional Learning Association (2011) have identified standards that should be considered when developing quality professional development. This project included the five standards. This project's strengths are the development of a learning community; the consideration of resources such as money, technology, and time; the provision of the learning design; the inclusion of data, learning theories, and research; and implementation of long term change.

Slide 21: Social Change

The current project study has implications for social and academic change. Social change in the content of this project implies change in the teachers' role as educators. Academic change in the content of this project means changing the performance of students in the classroom and on the standardized test.

Slide 22: Social Implications

The findings of this study may increase positive social change as followed:

➢ The professional development workshop includes a plan for enhancing teachers' skills, knowledge, and dispositions to promote positive change.

➢ The project will promote teacher buy-in regarding SWDs.

➢ The project will help teachers working collaboratively to create a cohesive learning community. It will encourage teachers to maintaining openness to innovative strategies of remediation that might be more effective.

Slide 22: Social Implications Continued

The findings of this study may increase positive academic change as followed:

➢ The findings will add to scholarly research and literature in the field of meeting the needs of SWDs.

➢ The professional development workshops will provide new knowledge for English teachers to engage in and directly apply practices and strategies in their instruction of not only SWDs but all students.

➢ It could also involve the restructuring of the remediation program as a whole, including other HSA content areas.

➢ Eventually, professional development might be expanded to county-wide training which possibly could lead to some uniformity of remediation delivery across the district.

Appendix B: Tables

Table B1: Demographics of Participants

To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms were used

Participants	Current Occupation	Educational Background	Number of years providing HSA English Remediation	Number of Teaching experience	Number of years teaching at ABCD High School
Mary A highly qualified teacher	**English Teacher** English 9 English 10 English 11	BA in English Literature beyond BA- 82 graduation hours (52 in counseling and 30 in education for certification). Retired from the Marines as a captain in 1991 (20 years of service).	9 years	15 years	9 years
Jan A highly qualified teacher	**English Teacher** English 10 English 11 English 12	Certified English teacher; B.A. English 5-12; Special Education K-12	10 years	28 years	18 years
Sarah A highly qualified teacher	**Special Education English Content Specialist** Push-in to English classes for support and taught Wilson and Just Words all grade levels	BA in Psychology; Teachers diploma; Teacher certificate Special education; MA in Archetypal studies; Med in Curriculum & instruction	10 years	30 years	10 years
Delia A highly qualified teacher	**English Teacher** English 9 English 10 & 11 English AP	Certified English Teacher; BA in English; MA in Administration Leadership: Administration I & II; Certified Reading Teacher; M.Ed technology; currently pursuing Doctoral	8 years	18 years	11 years

Participants	Current Occupation	Educational Background	Number of years providing HSA English Remediation	Number of Teaching experience	Number of years teaching at ABCD High School
Sylvia A highly qualified teacher	**English Teacher** English 9 & 10 AP Literature	Certified English 7-12 BA in English MEd in Curriculum	10 years	28 years	28 years
Becky A highly qualified teacher	**English Teacher** English 10 English 12 AP Language	Certified English BA in English MA in English	9 years	9 years	9 years

Table B2: Themes and Subthemes

Themes	Subthemes
1. Scheduling	1.1 Pull out remediation
	1.2 Funding remediation programs
	1.3 Total time spent on remediation
	1.4 One-on-one vs. group vs. imbedded in class
2. Materials	2.1 Lack of materials that identified weakness of individual SWDs
	2.2 Limited supply of remediation resources
	2.3 Differentiated instruction materials
3. Motivation	3.1 Motivating students to participate in tutorial remediation
	3.2 Motivation students to learn
4. Collaboration with Colleagues	4.1 N/A
5. Poor Student Preparation	5.1 Background course
	5.2 Failure to master the concept after years of instruction
	5.3 Should test score be linked to passing English 10 content course
6. Training	6.1 Formal training for remediation
	6.2 Lack of formal training in strategies for SWDs
	6.3 Lack of understanding of the various disabilities

Table B3: Data Concept Map

To ensure confidentiality of participants, pseudonyms were utilized.

Participants	Data Source	Research Question 1	Research Question 2	Research Question 3
		How do teachers perceive their role in the delivery of English remediation?	How do teachers describe the English remediation program?	What factors do teachers say influence their ability to remediate SWDs effectively?
Mary	Interview	Students are scheduled and about 2 hours weekly of remediation is provided. Teacher's job is to provide remediation and help all students pass the English HSA.	No formal training. When a student is scheduled to retake the HSA, English teachers choose students to remediate who either are in the class or can be worked into a schedule. Students are pulled during planning period. Remediation is provided an average of 2 hours a week, working on individual concepts that they need remediating in.	No central organization. A need for professional development supporting SWDs, motivate students and strategies. Scheduling, funding and time. Understanding SWDs disabilities and individual needs.
	Observation	Remediation in a general education English 10 classroom setting; embedding remediation in instruction; teacher directed instruction		Lack of variety of materials; lack of technology; lack of strategies for differentiation for SWDs.
Jan	Interview	Responsible for remediating SWDs and for their HSA scores. Create useful materials and share with my colleagues. Motivate students. Effective student grouping. Using data to remediate.	It varies from teacher to teacher. Required by county and state to remediate once students have failed.	Lack of effective student materials and technology. Students are not motivated and the attitude of the parents, they don't seem to understand the importance of remediation. Need data that indicates student weaknesses and grouping them together to focus on that need.
	Observation	Small group or individual instruction using teacher made material	Used her planning period	Teacher made HSA workbook; MD HSA website/Montgomery County HSA website; used lap top with student.
Sarah	Interview	Responsible for remediation and the student HSA scores. Making sure students show up for their scheduled time to receive the remediation they need.	Disorganized; really does not exist. Individual teachers and different departments undertake it differently. There is a need for good data to uniform instruction.	Lack of uniform program. Lack of professional training specific for remediation. Nned for cross-curricular connections. Need individualizing instruction to match student deficits. Lack of materials. A need for collaboration with colleagues.
	Observation	Re-teach and intervention instruction; scheduled students;		Taught testing strategies; accommodation were used; HSA workbook; Lack of variety of materials; lack of technology;

Participants	Data Source	Research Question 1	Research Question 2	Research Question 3
Delia	Interview	Get student to pass the HSA. Provide support to the students. Schedule time to remediate. Motivate students.	It is random and implemented as needed. English department leader will try to coerce teachers to assist in remediation during planning or after school.	Lack of direction and consistency. Effective accessing. Time constraints and scheduling conflicts. A need for individualizing instruction to meet SWDs' needs. Lack of teaching strategies to reach SWDs' needs. Lack of consistency in remediation across the curriculum. Lack of accountability within departments. Collaboration among department teachers.
	Observation	Remediation in a general education class;		Lack of variety of materials; lack of technology; lack of strategies for differentiation for SWDs
Sylvia	Interview	Teach and create a workable schedule but it does not always work. Student motivator. Grouping students. (Difficulty to individualize remediation).	Remediation program pretty much takes place inside the classroom. Very hard to get students to stay after school for one-on-one support. Very ineffective program.	Student motivation. A need for strategy training to work with SWDs. Lack of technology that would provide variety of materials. Frequency of reading deficits among SWDs. Scheduling. Lack of student and parent buy-in.
	Observation	Remediated in general education class;		Lack of variety of materials; lack of technology; lack of strategies for differentiation for SWDs
Becky	Interview	Responsible for remediation the student HSA scores. Have to differentiated for students and understand the IEP. Find materials and create an instruction plan.	From subject area to subject area it could be completely different. Remediation program at WHS is very challenging. Administration has left it up to departments to determine how to remediate.	Lack of uniformity. Resources are limited. Scheduling difficultly. Need for teacher training. Student Reading deficits among SWDs. Lack of student buy-in.
	Observation	General education class;		HSA practice booklet; test taking strategies/differentiation
All participants	Artifacts	How do teachers perceive their role in the delivery of English remediation?	How do teachers describe the English remediation program?	What factors do teachers say influence their ability to remediate SWDs effectively?
All participants	Artifacts	Schedules for students; County Master Plan; Maryland Report Card 2011, 2012, & 2013; HSA schedule; List of HSA testing groups; Archive HSA testing scores; Archive record of test scores	Archives HSA test scores and student retakes; County remediation policy; SIT- results for all 2013 HSA takers dated 9/23/13; Teacher records of student (SWD) progress on remediation goals; Prior year scheduling guidelines for PEP which included remediation.	PMI data/benchmark; MSDE/Montgomery County Websites; teacher made booklets; PD schedules; SWD accommodation report; 2012 of cross-curriculum remediation scheduling.

Table B4: Project Timetable

Date	Action
September 2015 (one week prior to workshop)	The present researcher will provide a PowerPoint copy of the workshop presentation to the building principal. The present researcher will personally invite the principal to attend the workshop, if desired.
September 2015 (three days prior to workshop)	The present researcher will inform the technology support workers in the school about the presentation and if needed, will request their help to set-up the PowerPoint.
September 2015 Day 1 - 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.	Implementation of Day 1 workshop
September 2015 Day 2- 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.	Implementation of Day 2 workshop
September 2015 Day 3- 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.	Implementation of Day 3 workshop
September 2015	Review Summative evaluations for future use and changes

Appendix C: LETTER OF COOPERATION

Dear Researcher,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the research study entitled: **Students with Disabilities and Standardized Testing: Do Variances in Remediation Influence Success?** within the

_____ School District and at _____High School. As part of the present research study, I authorize you to observe the selected English Teachers for two, 30 minutes remediation sessions and to conduct a face-to-face interview with the individual for 30 minutes at the school or selected site after their work hours. I understand that school/district affiliations and will be assigned pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality. Participation of the individuals will be voluntary and at their own discretion. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time without repercussions if our circumstances change.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting. I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and will not be provided to anyone outside of the research team without permission from the Walden University Institutional Review Board.

Sincerely,

Signature: _____

Appendix D: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH INVESTIGATION

You are being asked to participate in a research study as described in this form. You have been selected to participate in the study due to your professional involvement in the remediation of SWDs in preparation to retake the English HSA. All such research projects carried out within this department are governed by the regulations of both the Federal Government and Walden University. These regulations require that the investigator obtain from you a signed agreement (consent) to participant in this study if you desire. This study is being conducted by Janie Mora who is a doctoral student at Walden University. You may already know the researcher as the Special Education Student Achievement Specialist and Case Manager, but this study is separate from that role. My role will be that of nonparticipant.

Purpose and Procedures:
The purpose of this research study is to investigate teachers' perceptions of interventions and implementations of the current remediation, as well as their beliefs and opinions regarding factors that influence their ability to remediate effectively SWDs. A total of seven teachers who provided remediation to SWDs from August, 2009, to January, 2014 school years will be used for the present study.

Participation in this study involves an observation conducted by the researcher at work setting for 30 minutes of two separated sessions of remediation instruction. The observations will occur in early January of 2014. The researcher will schedule the observations with you in advance. During the observation, the researcher will not interfere with our work and will not disrupt student learning as the researcher will maintain the role of a nonparticipant. Participation in this study also involves one 30 minute individual interview at the end of January, 2014. The interview will occur at the work setting, after work hours of the participant or off campus based on the arrangements made with the participant. Interviews will be held in a quiet space free from noise and distractions. The interview will be audio-recorded and later transcribed word-for-word by a transcriber. The researcher will ask you to provide artifacts such as time sheets and schedules. The artifacts will not include student work. Data collection and your participation will begin in January of 2014 and will finish by the end of February, 2014. Lastly, the researcher will ask one or two individuals who are part of this study to spend an hour to member check the accuracy of the findings. Member check will be utilized to assure accuracy and to allow you to clarify any unclear or misrepresented information and to prevent researcher's bias, and to allow follow up. As a participant in the member check process, you will be asked probing questions such as if the interpretations are realistic and are the themes accurate. This expected to occur in March, 2014.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
Participation in the study will not affect your professional standing or reputation in any way. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to participate in the study. If you decide to participate in the study now, you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you would otherwise be entitled. If you decide to decline or discontinue there will be no adverse impact on your relationship with the researcher. No particular direct benefits will accrue to the individual. In this case, the benefits to society include new knowledge on improving teaching practices and closing student achievement gaps.

Privacy and Safety:
Your name is not requested for purposes of this study. A pseudonym will be assigned to you and your affiliated school to maintain confidentiality at all times. All observation comments and interview responses will remain confidential. No known risks are associated with participation in the current study. Any significant new findings will be provided to you during the course of the study. You will receive a

summary of the results of the study. You may also maintain a copy of the Informed Consent Form for your use.

Contacts and Questions:
For further information regarding the study, please feel free to ask the researcher any questions you may now have or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via email at janie.mora@waldenenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. Dr. Leilani Endicott is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 1-612-312-1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is **12-17-13-0199627** and it expires on **December 16, 2014.**

I CERTIFY THAT I HAVE READ AND FULLY UNDERTAND THE ABOVE STUDY. ALL MY QUESTIONS HAVE BEEN ANSWERED TO MY SATISFACTIONS BY THE RESEARCHER. I WILLINGLY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE.

_____   _____
Participant's Signature   **Date of Consent**

 _____
Researcher's Signature

Researcher's Email: Janie.mora@waldenu.edu
Researcher's Cell #: (301) 748-8021

Appendix E.1: CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT - DEBRIEFER

Name of Researcher: _____

Name of Signer/Peer Debriefer: _____

During the course of my activity in collecting data for the research study titled "Students with Disabilities and Standardized Testing: Do Variances in Remediation Delivery Influence Success?" I will have access to information that is ***confidential*** and should ***not*** be disclosed to anyone or group at any time. I acknowledge that the information must remain confidential and that improper disclosure of confidential information can be damaging to participants.

By signing this Confidentiality Agreement I acknowledge and agree that:

1. I will not disclose or discuss any confidential information with others, including friends or family.
2. I will not in any way disclose copy, release, sell, loan, alter or destroy any confidential information except as properly authorized.
3. I will not discuss confidential information where others can overhear the conversation. I understand that it is not acceptable to discuss confidential information even if the participant's name is not used.
4. I will not make any unauthorized transmissions, inquiries, modification or purging of confidential information.
5. I agree that my obligations under this agreement will continue after termination of the job that I will perform.
6. I understand that violation of this agreement will have legal implications.
7. I will only access or use systems or devices I'm officially authorized to access and I will not demonstrate the operation or function of systems or devices to unauthorized individuals.

By *signing this document, I acknowledge that I have read the agreement and I agree to comply with all the terms and conditions stated above.*

Signature: _____   **Date:** _____

Appendix E.2: CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT - TRANSCRIBER

Name of Researcher: _____

Name of Signer/Peer Transcriber: _____

During the course of my activity in collecting data for the research study titled "Students with Disabilities and Standardized Testing: Do Variances in Remediation Delivery Influence Success?," I will have access to information that is confidential and should not be disclosed to anyone or group at any time. I acknowledge that the information must remain confidential and that improper disclosure of confidential information can be damaging to participants.

By signing this Confidentiality Agreement I acknowledge and agree that: I will not disclose or discuss any confidential information with others, including friends or family. I will not in any way disclose copy, release, sell, loan, alter or destroy any confidential information except as properly authorized. I will not discuss confidential information where others can overhear the conversation. I understand that it is not acceptable to discuss confidential information even if the participant's name is not used I will not make any unauthorized transmissions, inquiries, modification or purging of confidential information. I agree that my obligations under this agreement will continue after termination of the job that I will perform. I understand that violation of this agreement will have legal implications. I will only access or use systems or devices I'm officially authorized to access and I will not demonstrate the operation or function of systems or devices to unauthorized individuals.

By signing this document, I acknowledge that I have read the agreement and I agree to comply with all the terms and conditions stated above.

Signature: _____   Date: _____

Appendix F: OBSERVATIONAL FIELD NOTES

Participant(s):

Date of Observation:

Start Time of Observation: End Time of Observation:

Setting of Observation:

<div align="center">Descriptive Notes</div>

Person(s)	Comments	Actions
Observer	Reflective Notes	

<div align="center">*Observations do not include student comments or behavior</div>

Appendix G: INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. How would you describe the remediation program at ABCD High School?

2. What types of training was provided to you in preparing for remediation to SWDs? If none, what training would have been most effective for helping you provide remediation to SWDs?

3. What supports, services, and resources have you found to be useful in your remediation efforts?

4. What is not working?
    Probe: What needs to be change?

5. What challenges or barriers exist in providing remediation effectively to SWDs?
    Probe: How could such challenges or barriers be alleviated?

6. What role do you see the administration at the school has in providing remediation?

7. What about the current or past remediation implementation did you like or dislike? Why or why not?

8. Describe a remediation experience that you consider to be one of your most successful. Probe: What contributed to the success?

9. Describe a remediation experience that you consider to be one of your least successful. Probe: What contributed to the lack of success?

10. What still needs to be done to implement remediation and effective intervention?

11. Describe your vision of an effective remediation program.

12. Are there any comments or thoughts you have about the effectiveness of the remediation provided that were not covered in this interview that you would like to mention?

Appendix H: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT- SARAH

1.) How would you describe the remediation program at ABCD High School?
At the moment I think it is disorganized. It doesn't really exist, does not exist as a program as such. It is basically left up to the individual teachers and different departments to undertake it in different ways.

2.) What type of training was provided to you in preparation for remediation of Students with Disabilities?
Basically none, these are skills that I realize that students need after many years of working with them, students with SWDs. And basically, these are things that I have worked out pretty much by myself, or in conversation with other colleagues and being in classes and observing how skills are taught.

3.) What type of training do you think should be provided?
Well, I think that it would be very useful to have a set of skills for each department, for example some of the skills that students need for math and science are different from those they would need in say English or social studies. So, I think it would be a good idea of highlighting what skills are needed and then teachers can work on those skills while they're in the general classes that would be a start, there needs to be some kind of overview. There needs to be an overview of what is needed and then go from there. Also, having really good data in terms of what places are students failing and what particular skills are they failing at. And for a while we were able to do that with English, but with the change to Core Curriculum, Core Standards it is not so clear anymore. So, I think we really need to be able to pinpoint where are the areas that students are having trouble in and what skills do they need to have.

4.) What support services and resources have you found to be useful in your remediation efforts?
At the moment I think that the most useful is experience and talking with colleagues. Right now I am remediating English so I have found talking to other English teachers, especially teachers that have been here a long time, getting their and having them share resources.

5.) What is not working in the remediation program?
What is not working, well because there is a lack of focus and a lack of overview and as we move into Core Standards there is also a lack of data. So those are things that are going to impact the ability to remediate. And I think there needs to be a core group of people who are responsible for remediation so that those people can go into the general classroom and intervene in the classroom.

6.) What challenges and barriers exist in providing remediation effectively to SWD's?

This new rule I think changes the criteria for IEPs to SWDs I think that that's going to be a barrier. Also, the changeover to Core Curriculum is going to place demands on SWDs that we are not going to be able to fill in the gaps, because there are really huge gaps in the skills what students across the board need so SWDs who are already behind the curve, or at the bottom of the curve they are going to need a lot of extra support in meeting the standards that are coming in. There is a huge gap between what they have been taught and what they are required to know. That's probably the biggest gap, and the biggest barrier and also as schools increasingly have to cut down on staff the fewer staff you have available to help with remediation, or to be part of a remediation team then the less likely you are to have a concerted effort at remediation. For example, there really isn't any one person right now who is given the task of remediation it's kind of a number of people have been given that mandate a little bit. Everybody's meant to do a little bit but there is no concerted effort, there is no focus there is no thread that connects us all we are all just doing our individual thing the best way we can.

7.) What role do you see administration at the school having in remediation?

I think leadership needs to bring together different parties from different departments and providing a central focus for remediation, insisting on extra staff being provided to give that remediation, especially, in schools where you hear a very high percentage of SWDs, or students who are low performing. I think that that needs to happen at the administrative level, but I also think it needs to happen at the legislative level because, administration can only use what resources they are given as well. The territory that administration needs to inhabit is a place that exists between school and politics.

8.) What about the current or past remediation implementation did you like or dislike? Why or Why not?

I like the independence that I have and had to work with individual students where I can, but at the same time the independence means that I don't necessarily know what the English teacher is doing and what the math teacher is doing so there isn't a team effort, or so it has both its advantages and disadvantages. I think there needs to be a more collaborative effort across departments in order to get really effective remediation because the skills that a student is lacking, for example in reading is going to affect them across the curriculum.

9.) Describe a remediation experience that you consider to be one of your best or most successful?

I had a student at one point now that was when I was in ED and she was very low functioning, had a great deal of difficulty of retaining information and she has sat HSAs many, many times. In the end she has sat HSA exams thirteen times and I despaired of her ever passing all of them. I was very surprised that she had passed any after numerous attempts she did manage to pass her math and biology but with all of the reading required for English and government and also she had to retain the definitions and that was

extremely difficult for her. So we would work after school. One on one she actually managed to pass, and she had also her senior year completed bridge projects for both of those, but in her last attempt that was the April set of the HSAs her senior year she passed both of those exams by one point. And what contributed to it was just the student's dedication and really at the same time there was two of us it, Lynne and I working with this student individually on reading and the other with government. The fact that this student was willing to stay after school and work with me made her successful.

10.) Describe a remediation experience that you consider to be one of your least successful, and what contributed to that?

Wow, there is many it is hard to say which would be the least successful because any time a student does not manage to pass the exams then that's you know not successful. I have a had many students who had to sit the exams many times over simply because they were not prepared and they lacked the motivation that I described in the previous student. It is very difficult to motivate students to do something where they feel they are going to fail.

11.) What still needs to be done to implement remediation ineffectively in effective intervention?

Well, as I said before I think it needs to be a team approach, there needs to be a central focus. I think that there needs to be really good data and when I say really good data I mean data that you can look at, break down, and open up and really pinpoint where the problem is because, just having a vague idea that you know this kid maybe has trouble comprehending passages that is going to affect him across the board in everything but we need to be able to identify what exactly is the problem with comprehension and focus on that and so that means that we would need very flexible scheduling and we would need room in students' schedules to provide remediation. We would need the staff to do it and that would mean more money.

12.) Describe your vision of an effective remediation program?

I think I just did.

13.) Are there any comments or thoughts that you have about the effectiveness of the remediation provided that we have not covered in this interview that you would like to mention?

Well I do not think I focused on the flexibility of scheduling with the changeover to Core Curriculum, what is happening, and this is probably not the only school where this is happening. I am sure but it means that students really have to be in classes and pass those classes there is not enough flexibility in their schedules to allow for remediation. I also think that it needs to happen early and it needs to be extremely well done at the early

level so that by the time students are getting to middle school basically all they're getting is a little bit of extra support rather than an intervention.

Appendix I: OBSERVATIONAL FIELD NOTES

Participant(s): Sarah

Date of Observation: February 17, 2014

Start Time of Observation: 1:33 p.m.   End Time of Observation: 2:10 p.m.

Setting of Observation: Teacher assigned classroom

Descriptive Notes

Person(s)	Comments	Actions
1-teacher (T) 4- students	T- turn to page 5, Fireflies In the Garden by Robert Frost T-Do you remember this person? Do you remember who wrote this poem? T-Can you tell me something you remember about this poem? T-He compared the firefly to stars. When I was a child I would see fireflies light up at night and they looked like little stars flying around. T- Review words: "emulating", what is a word that starts with "t"? Temporarily – not all the time. Can you tell me a word that happens all the time? The word starts with a "p". Permanently. Look at question 2 on page 5. T- Let's answer the question: Is there a conflict in the poem? You must eliminate the wrong answers. G, possible, H, is that possible, I, is unimportant. Look at how the one is worded, there is a negative word, <u>in, dis, and un</u> all mean not. H makes the most sense. You are looking for the most likely. Number three, read the question and underline the best word. What was the best answer? A. ruled out; B-ruled out; C-does he say that? (possible); D- know D is true but	Teacher hands out HSA practice booklet. She reads the title of the page. Teacher posed between each question giving students time to respond. Teacher reads the poem. Teacher sits and waits (3 minutes)

Person(s)	Comments	Actions
	is not in the poem. The only answer is C.	
Observer researcher	Reflective Notes -teacher does not explore students' experience with fireflies. -Teacher is trying to motivate the students to participant by asking questions. -Teacher is teaching a strategy of eliminating the wrong answers	-Materials used for remediation: HSA workbook, pencil -Teacher provided wait time for students to answer -it did not appear that accommodations were being offered to individual students.

*Observations do not include student comments or behavior

Appendix J: SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

KWL Sheet

Name:

Subject area:

Instructions: Please complete the KWL form as instructed below.

Day 1: Fill out the "K" & "W" sections of this form

Day 3: Fill out the "L" section of this form. This session will be used to assess the effectiveness of the workshop.

Know: (this is what I know about special education, SWDs, IEPs, etc.)	
Want to Know: (this is what I want to know about special education, IEPs, SWDs, etc.)	
Learned: (this is what I learned from attending this PD)	

Other comments:

Curriculum Vitae

Janie M. Elizondo- Mora

jem78073@aol.com

Education

Walden University, MN

Ed. D. in Administrator Leadership for Teaching and Learning   December 2014

Hood College, MD

M.S. in Educational Leadership   May 16, 2009

University of the Incarnate Word, TX

M. Ed. in Teaching   May 10, 2002

B. A. in Interdisciplinary Studies/ Early childhood Education   December 10, 1998

Employment

Special Education Student Achievement Specialist/Case Manager

Washington County Public School, MD

 Williamsport High School   August 2009 to present

Responsibilities:

- Department Leader

- Work closely with Administration

- Schedule, organize and conduct IEP meetings

- Plan and implement professional development for teachers and paraprofessionals

- Order department supplies

- Mentor and train new Case Managers

- Create push-in schedule and supervise para-professionals

- Monitor case loads

- Communicate with teachers, parents, students, and community

- Bilingual Support

- Provide accommodation/support to individual and small groups of students

- Behavior management

- Conducted Woodcock Johnson III Educational assessment (English/Spanish)

Special Education Case Manager/Department Leader

Frederick County Public Schools, MD

Hillcrest Elementary School   2008-2009

Responsibilities:

- Department Leader

- Assist other case managers

- Work with teachers, parents, students and community

- Bilingual support

- Read 180 instructor

- Schedule, organize and conduct IEP meetings

- Provide accommodation/support to individual and small groups of students

- Behavior management

- Conducted Woodcock Johnson III Educational assessment

Learning for Life Teacher/ Special Education Case Manager

Governor Thomas Johnson High School   2005-2008

Responsibilities:

- Schedule, organize, and conduct IEP meetings

- Instructed all subject areas

- Behavior management

- Create schedules and supervise paraprofessionals

- Organize community work activities for students

- Provide accommodation/support to individual and small groups of students
- Work closely with teachers, parents, students and community

Special Education Teacher/Case Manager

Lewistown Elementary School   2004-2005

Responsibilities:

- Working closely with teachers, parents, students

- Instructed all subject areas

- Behavior management

- Conducted IEP meetings

- Conducted Woodcock Johnson III Educational assessment

TDD Teacher/Case Manager.

Richmond Public Schools, VA

Redd Elementary School   2003- 2004

Responsibilities:

- Instructed student K-5 all subjects

- Behavior management

- Scheduled, organized, and conducted IEP meetings

Behavior Adjustment Class (BAC) Teacher.

Somerset School District, TX

Somerset Elementary School   2002- 2003

Responsibilities:

- Create lesson plans for grades K-5 all subjects

- Scheduled, organized, and conducted IEP meetings

- Behavior management

- Supervise paraprofessionals

- Work with teachers, parents, students and community agencies

Special Education/Resource Teacher 6-12.

Jourdanton School District, TX

Big Foot Alternative School   2000- 2002

Responsibilities:

- Plan classroom lessons for student in 8-12 grade

- Instructed student from grades 8-12

- Supervise students at all times

- Taught and reinforced Boys Town Behavior Method

- Behavior management

Child & Adolescent Caseworker III

Jourdanton, TX

Camino Real SOC Mental Retardation/Mental Health   October 1998- August 2000

Responsibilities:

- Assessing children and teens
- Organize outing and activities
- Counsel at-risk children and teens
- Teach emotional/behavioral coping skills
- Maintain a case load
- Record keeping
- Make home and school visits
- Share strategies with classroom teachers, parents, and students

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Professional Experience

Active member of the Student Assistance Program for substance abuse   2009-present

Served as a member on the School Improvement Team   2009 -2011

Active member of the Student Support Team   2009 -present

Social Committee Chair   2012-present

Active member of NEA   2004- 2014

Washington County Teacher Association (WCTA)   2009-present

Bilingual (English/Spanish); translation of professional documents; organized/time management; self-directed; online IEP procedures/process; interpersonal & communication skills; strong behavior management; scheduling & management of staff

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Leadership Experience

WCTA representative- 2 years

Special Education Department Lead Teacher- 7 years

Professional Affiliations

NAE (National Association for Education)

MSEA (Maryland State Education Association)

WCTA (Washington County Teacher Association)

Certifications

Administrator I and II Certificates

Advanced Professional Teaching Certificate Special Education infant-adult

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Professional Presentation and Papers

Mora-Elizondo, J. (2015). Teachers' perceptions of students with disabilities,

standardized testing, and remediation. Dissertation. January, 2015