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Teachers' Perceptions of an Integrated Third Grade Curriculum's Effects on Students' Reading Achievement

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Walden University
2015

Abstract

Teachers' Perceptions of an Integrated Third Grade Curriculum's
Effects on Students' Reading Achievement

by

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MA, Hampton University, 1986

BS, Norfolk State University, 1976

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

Walden University

March 2015

Abstract

School leaders in a Virginia urban school district designed and implemented a reading-infused integrated curriculum to address Grade 3 students' struggles to read and comprehend grade-level text. Informed via a constructivist approach, the curriculum integrated the core subjects, reading, and service learning for developing competent readers, thinkers, and problem solvers. This instrumental case study focused on 13 Grade 3 teachers' perceptions of the integrated curriculum in regards to their students' reading achievement. Qualitative data were collected from face-to-face interviews, students' progress of work documents, and the district's integrated curriculum unit. Open coding was employed to analyze the data. Inductively, triangulated data sources were analyzed. Findings indicated that teachers perceived the integrated theme unit, teacher collaboration, and training in the area of reading to be beneficial, but that they found trainings on pedagogical practices of content integration and service learning to be lacking. Based on these findings, a project was developed to support the district's integrated curriculum program by providing a professional development program to Grade 3 teachers on pedagogical practices for implementing a constructivist-integrated curriculum. This project study can contribute to positive social change by providing the district's Grade 3 teachers with an integrated curriculum for students struggling to read and comprehend grade level text, which prepares students for school success, college, and the global work force.

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Dedication

This project study research is dedicated to my three children, two younger brothers, and husband. I am so proud of how they have supported me along my journey in the doctoral program at Walden University. Throughout my journey, they were a blessing and an inspiration to me through their kind words of encouragement, belief, and unconditional love. During the times that I thought of quitting, they refused to let me. I thank God for giving me such a wonderful, supportive, humorous family.

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Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

Public school leaders in the United States have faced the problem of developing and implementing a curriculum that infuses reading instruction, supports local districts and federal standards, and helps students to pass state reading tests. According to Knight-McKenna (2009), studies have found that many teachers lacked in-depth content knowledge and skills for designing and fostering language and literacy development. Children experiencing weak emergent reading experiences generally failed to become proficient readers, thus requiring intensive interventions (Knight-McKenna, 2009). In addition, Knight-McKenna (2009) found in a report written by the National Assessment of Education Progress (2007) that one-third of students in the United States of America read below basic level by fourth grade, and a high percentage of these were minority students: Hispanics (50%), American Indians (51%), and African Americans (54%). School leaders have continued to search for the appropriate curriculum to meet the needs of a diverse population of students and local, district, and federal standards.

The nature of this research study centered on elementary Grade 3 students in 1 Virginia school district who were struggling in reading and comprehending grade level content material. In this Virginia school district, reading scores declined in the school years of 2010 and 2011 on the state reading test administered at the end of each school year. Reading is a necessary life skill and finding the appropriate curriculum that supports building a strong reading foundation for all students was challenging for school

leaders. Integrating reading into content-area courses was grounded in the belief that “content-area courses enhanced with reading skill instruction could contextualize reading concepts and assist in improving participants’ reading skills” (Polkinghorne, Hagler, & Anderson, 2010, p. 33). In addition, content integration provided teachers and students with experiences that are enriching and intellectually stimulating (Lee, 2007).

Educators in an urban school district in Virginia, like all school educators in the United States, have continued facing the pressures of accountability from the ‘No Child Left Behind Act of 2001’ to the Virginia Standards of Learning to ensure all students learned the essential content skills and demonstrated the ability to read and comprehend printed text. Another recent federal government’s blueprint for reform report specified that all students, including students from diverse backgrounds or cultures, who graduate from high school receive an education that prepares them for college and a career (United States Department of Education, 2010). According to this educational reform measure, schools have failed to provide the appropriate instruction, access to a challenging curriculum, and the necessary supports and attention all students need to be college and career ready. The blueprint reform mandated states develop and adopt standards in English language arts and provide all students a complete education that will prepare them to contribute to a democratic society and survive in a global economy (United States Department of Education, 2010).

Wagner (2008) and the national organization Partnerships for 21st Century Skills (2009) also advocated the need for schools to provide an instructional curriculum that

will prepare students for survival in a global society. They encouraged instructional programs that promote mastery of core subjects and the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills, communication, collaboration, and creativity skills all students need to survive in a global economy. An integrated curriculum provides students opportunities to experience learning that is authentic and centered on an organized curriculum that presents significant problems or issues for students to solve while learning essential content and skills (Pate & Nesin, 2011).

The intended practice of integrated programs is that learning be grounded in authentic real world experiences by moving in the direction of action, reflection, and social transformation (Sharpe & Breunig, 2009). The integrated curriculum in this study blended core subjects (reading, writing, mathematics, science, social studies, and the arts) through the investigation of a central theme guided by the theories of constructivism, experiential learning, and the integrated curriculum framework. In this qualitative study, teachers presented their perceptions concerning the effectiveness of implementing an integrated curriculum that infuses reading instruction indicating if the program supported students' reading achievement in Grade 3.

Definition of the Problem

The problem this study addressed was Grade 3 students in a Virginia school district who were struggling to read and comprehend grade level content text. The ability to read is necessary for educational achievement and life-long success. Children with poor reading abilities often experience academic difficulties, school failure, emotional

distress, social problems, and drop out of school (Lilles et al., 2008). The district's leaders in this Virginia school district experienced similar concerns supported by the research that they addressed by revising the third grade curriculum to infuse reading across the curriculum. The district's decision-makers, curriculum specialists, building administrators, and teachers voiced their concerns about Grade 3 students lacking a strong reading foundation, which affected student success, specifically in Grades 3 through 12.

In addition, school district leaders found other concerns that demanded a need for change in the curriculum to assist students struggling to read and comprehend grade level content material. Educators using the old curriculum failed to provide a foundation for improving students' reading proficiency levels. Some schools in this local urban school district lost their accreditation status while others failed to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) because of students failing the state reading test (Virginia Department of Education, 2012). Another major factor of concern was the steady decline of students' reading scores for the 2010 and 2011 school years on the state reading test (Virginia Department of Education, 2012). The students in this local school district's scores fell below the state's reading pass rate scores during that time frame. For these reasons, the decision-makers in the district addressed the problem of students reading and comprehending grade level content text by implementing an integrated curriculum that infused reading instruction.

The local district in the study needed a curriculum program to address Grade 3 students' reading struggles of content text, which is crucial to school success and in the workplace (Stagliano & Boon, 2009). Furthermore, Stagliano and Boon (2009) argued that the ability to comprehend text was an area where many students across the grade levels struggle and fall short. In an information-based society, reading and comprehending text proficiently is critical for a productive lifestyle. Presented next are some of the reading literacy concerns in the United States of America that have been reported by researchers.

The Alliance for Excellent Foundation, a national nonmembership policy and advocacy educational organization, estimated 6 million middle and high school students read below grade level (as cited in Wise, 2009). Wise (2009) found that between 5 and 10% of these students read at a second or third grade level. Far too many middle and high school students failed to read and comprehend difficult grade level content text (Wise, 2009). Other evidence that substantiated the reading concern was reading test data from the 2009 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) administered to 15-year-old students. PISA reading literacy results reported only 30% of United States students demonstrated the ability to read and comprehend difficult reading tasks that required students to locate embedded information and construe meaning from nuances of language and critically evaluate text. Half or more of public school students eligible for free and reduced lunch scored below the overall Organisation for Economic Cooperation

and Development (OECD) and United States averages in reading literacy (Fleischman, Hopstock, Pelzar, & Shelley, 2010).

Another concern was the graduation rate in the United States. Wise (2009) indicated that respected researchers who used different methodologies found the actual graduation rate in 2008 was 70%. Today, the United States of America's high school graduation rate ranks near the bottom compared to developed nations that were members of the OECD. The current academic performance of secondary school students ranges from mediocre to poor and considering "human capital is a prerequisite for success in the global economy, U. S. economic competitiveness is unsustainable with poorly prepared students feeding into the workplace" (Wise, 2009, p. 372).

On the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading assessment, 33% of fourth grade students in the United States read below basic level. Fifty percent of the 2009 NAEP reading assessment required fourth grade students to demonstrate the ability to read and comprehend informational text. Beginning in the early grades, educators need to increase reading instruction on informational text to prepare students to be independent and productive readers. Research has indicated 90% of reading instruction included the use of stories or literary text (Dreher, 2000), as cited in Baker et al., (2011). A requirement of the new Common Core State Standards was that beginning in kindergarten; students acquire competencies in the area of informational learning. This is a skill needed to prepare students for success in school and in the real world (Baker et al., 2011).

Another study reported a reading epidemic in American education in which over 8 million Americans struggle with reading and comprehending at a basic skill level (Boyer & Hamil, 2008). This reading epidemic relates back to the need for implementing the appropriate curriculum for providing students a strong reading foundation.

Significantly, educators experienced difficulty in establishing standards for curriculum selection and implementation that challenge, inspire, and motivate students to achieve academically (Watkins & Kritsonis, 2011). Implementing the appropriate curriculum design was lacking as the growing body of evidence revealed students in the United States of America faced the challenges of reading and comprehending grade level content-related material, lacked critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and failed to apply essential learning's to real life situations (Nathan, 2010). Students read very little informational or nonfiction text, which provides opportunities to learn reading strategies and engage them in reading (Plummer & Kuhlman, 2008). The growing body of evidence has indicated a serious need for an integrated curriculum that employs best practices for improving students' reading achievement.

Still, another flaw in the curriculum design process of helping students become proficient readers was that educators have failed to identify students' specific reading weaknesses and remediate those struggling readers (Speece et al., 2010). Limited progress has been made in the identification and remediation of reading skills for middle childhood students in Grades 3, 4, and 5. By the time middle childhood students reach

Grade 4, 34% have late emerging reading disabilities that surfaced at least by Grade 3 (Speece et al., 2010).

Evidence from a qualitative study by Brinda (2011) on engaging reluctant readers found high school students and preservice teachers began developing negative attitudes towards reading in fourth and fifth grades, which existing literature substantiated. Middle grade students shut down and lose interest in reading when middle grade educators fail to “go beyond mere reading comprehension and address engagement in literacy across the curriculum” (Brinda, 2011, p. 9). A part of the integrated curriculum needs to include identifying and remediating areas of weaknesses for the middle childhood student such as the students identified in the study.

The school district in this study restructured its curriculum by implementing an integrated curriculum that infuses reading in a deliberately systematic approach. A significant indicator that supported the need to restructure the third grade curriculum was Grade 3 students’ performance on the reading state test. Reading scores continued to decline. In 2009, the reading pass rate for third graders in the district was 85%; for the 2010 school year, the reading pass rate dropped to 75%; and in 2011 school year, the reading pass rate dropped again to 73% (Virginia Department of Education, 2012). As a part of the implementation process, this urban school district did the following: (a) planned and designed the integrated curriculum using research based practices, (b) provided professional development for teachers, and (c) provided resources for the

integrated curriculum. A single case study was used to examine if teachers perceive the integrated curriculum effective in improving students' reading achievement.

Curriculum integration, a curriculum approach, emphasizes “meaningful connections between topics and skills covered in different subject areas and creates high-level learning opportunities beyond any single discipline” (Zhou & Kim, 2010, p. 126). In researching the topic, terms found in the various studies synonymous to integrated curriculum were *interdisciplinary teaching*, *thematic teaching*, *synergistic teaching*, *content integration*, *core curriculum*, and *cross curriculum*. According to Hus (2010), a significant characteristic of curriculum integration was to guide the “development of the students' potential and acquisition of basic functional knowledge” (p. 25). Curriculum integration supports student achievement and mastery of content matter and helps students understand subject content in a holistic and higher cognitive level of academic achievement (Watkins & Kritsonis, 2011).

Rationale

The local district in the study designed the integrated curriculum and required all third grade teachers to implement the program. Third grade students struggled with reading and comprehending grade level content text in the core subject areas and needed a curriculum to address their reading difficulties. Currently, no study had been conducted to determine the effectiveness of this district's newly mandated program. A study was warranted to examine the effectiveness of the curriculum program in promoting students' reading achievement. This single case study provided the opportunity to examine the

perceptions of teachers implementing an integrated curriculum that infuses reading instruction. A gap existed in the number of empirical studies that focus on classroom teachers' actual experiences in implementing curriculum integration (Park, 2008). On a broader level, this study aimed to provide a detailed description of teacher practices, strategies, and resources used to promote Grade 3 students' ability to read and comprehend text in the core areas of reading, math, science, and history that may benefit educators and decision makers experiencing similar concerns.

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

The educators in the district voiced concerns over students struggling to complete daily work, projects, and formative and summative assessments adequately. Students' state test results confirmed the concern that students lacked the ability to read and comprehend grade level text. Furthermore, student test results from state testing indicated students failed to meet district and state standards, specifically in reading.

Virginia State's English Standards of Learning Test (SOL) scores for Grade 3 students in this school district steadily declined as indicated in Table 1 during the 2010 and 2011 school years. Table 1 presented data displaying the school district's fall membership enrollment and the reading pass rate scores for a period of 3 years. From 2008 to 2009, 85% of 2,380 students enrolled passed reading; for the school year 2009-2010, 75% of 2,296 students enrolled passed reading, and for the school year 2010-2011, 73% of 2,262 students enrolled passed reading as shown in Table 1 (Virginia Department of Education, 2012).

Table 1

Reading Pass Rates for the Last 3 Years in the Urban School District

Grade 3 school year	School district fall membership enrollment	Percentage of students passing reading
2008-2009	2, 380	85
2009-2010	2,296	75
2010-2011	2,262	73

Note. Virginia Department of Education. (2012). Retrieved from virginia state report card: <http://doe.virginia.gov/statisticsreports/schoolreportcard>

Another indicator of declining scores was the difference in the percentage of students passing reading in Grade 3 between the school district and state. In 2008-2009, the pass rate in reading was 85% for the school district and 86% for the state, a difference of 1%. The difference was greater in 2009-2010 (See Table 2) as the pass rate in reading was 75% for the school district and 83% for the state, a difference of 8%. However, in 2010-2011, there was even more of a decrease for the school district in which 73% of the students passed reading and 83% of the students passed reading for the state, a difference of 10%. For the last 2 years, the percentage of students who passed reading for the state remained the same with 83% of Grade 3 students passing reading as indicated in Table 2. Overall, within that period of time, the school district's reading pass rate scores fell below the state's reading pass rate scores with a drop in Grade 3 students' pass rate scores of 12% from 2008-2009 (85%) to 2010-2011 (73%) school years as displayed in Tables 1 and 2 (Virginia Department of Education, 2012).

Table 2

Comparison Between the Urban School District and the State in Reading

Grade 3	2008-2009 percentage of students passing reading	2009-2010 percentage of students passing reading	2010-2011 percentage of students passing reading
School district	85	75	73
State	86	83	83
Difference	-1	-8	-10

Note. Virginia Department of Education. (2012). Retrieved from virginia state report card: <http://doe.virginia.gov/statisticsreports/schoolreportcard>

Reportedly, the state of Virginia required schools to administer assessments in the areas of Reading, Mathematics, Science, and History to all Grade 3 students, the only grade level in which students take four assessments (Virginia Department of Education, 2012). Trends in students' test scores for the areas of Mathematics and Science displayed down-up-down patterns (See Table 3). In History, scores remained the same for the years 2008-2009 and 2009-2010, with 91% of the students passing; however, there was a significant drop in the scores by 13% for the 2010-2011 year with 78% of the students passing, shown in Table 3 (Virginia Department of Education, 2012). Steady declines of reading scores, inconsistent performance levels by students on state tests, and students' inability to read and comprehend grade level content material were reasons why the school district implemented an integrated curriculum that infuses reading instruction.

Table 3

The Urban School District: A Three-Year Report of Scores for the Content Areas Tested

Grade 3 3 year trend	Reading percent passing	History percent passing	Math percent passing	Science percent passing
2008-2009	85	91	85	84
2009-2010	75	91	90	87
2010-2011	73	78	87	81

Note. Virginia Department of Education. (2012). Retrieved from virginia state report card: <http://doe.virginia.gov/statisticsreports/schoolreportcard>

Concerns involving students' poor reading skills and the need for a curriculum that provided students a strong reading foundation lead back to a need to implement an integrated curriculum that infuses reading instruction, beginning at the elementary level. Furthermore, the development of the integrated curriculum program was not limited to influencing students' understanding of content and reading but included relevant and authentic tasks for enhancing students' motivation and increasing academic vocabularies (Parsons & Ward, 2011).

This qualitative case study examined the effectiveness of implementing an integrated program from teachers' perceptions to determine if the program will prepare students with the basic literacy skills needed to be productive functional citizens in an information-based global society. In addition, the integrated curriculum was a model developed and designed by the school district leaders to close the reading achievement gap.

Evidence of the Problem From the Professional Literature

A gap existed in the research field on the effects of curriculum integration. A limited number of empirical studies have been reported that focus on the actual practice of classroom teachers implementing curriculum integration (Park, 2008). Another gap existed pertaining to school accountability and high stakes testing (Brinegar & Bishop, 2011). Brinegar and Bishop (2011) pointed out the need for more examples of content integration in schools with diverse populations such as the one in this study for the purpose of preparing students “from all walks of life for full and informed participation in our democratic society” (p. 220).

According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 2009 reading results, 33% of fourth grade students read and comprehended below the basic level. Content level reading requires students to read and comprehend expository text. At the early elementary level, schools have failed to provide students adequate exposure to expository text, which is critical for academic success (Meyer & Ray, 2011). Finding a curriculum program to meet the needs of students struggling to demonstrate the ability to read and comprehend content text remains a challenge in the educational field.

Integrating the curriculum created a coherent curriculum, unlike the traditional curriculum that is often fragmented and failed to engage students in learning (Carlisle, 2011). In the integrated curriculum approach, students are active participants in the learning process as they learn what a task leads them to do, actively constructing knowledge, which is the constructivist approach (Parsons & Ward , 2011). Parsons and

Ward (2011) asserted that “well-designed tasks both explicitly teach students the skills and strategies for comprehending text and give students experiences that show them content literacy is a worthwhile pursuit” (p. 462). In addition to providing a coherent curriculum, content integration encompasses valuing student voice, needs, experiences, and related schooling to real life (Carlisle, 2011).

The integrated curriculum program in the study required all students to conduct experiential service learning experiences that provide them the experiences of using knowledge learned in the academic setting while simultaneously solving a community need (Billig, 2011). High quality service learning provides students the opportunity to work collaboratively in solving real-world problems and to develop cognitive and academic skills to prepare them for college and work (Kielsmeier, 2011). The experiential service learning experience capitalized on students’ positive assets and potentials as students apply classroom knowledge to work together in solving a need within their community. Research on the effects of service learning has indicated that student participation in service learning programs contribute to closing the achievement gap, improves social skills, and enhances self-esteem and academic achievement (Nelson & Sneller, 2011). The service learning component, a critical element of the integrated program in the study, requires the need for students to learn the essential content concepts and read and comprehend grade level text in all subject areas.

Operational Definitions

The operational definitions section defined terms associated with the study as they are guides to understanding the nature of the study.

Academic achievement: Defined as “learned proficiency in basic skills and content knowledge” (Lee, 2007, p. 9).

Adequate yearly progress (AYP): AYP is defined by each state educational agency and the five components of NCLB that are based on certain performance indicators of academic achievement, school attendance, and student test participation. The following subgroups must demonstrate academic achievement to obtain AYP, students with disabilities, English language learners, economically disadvantaged students, and racially and ethnically diverse students (Thompson, Joel , & ChrisOshima, 2011).

Blueprint for Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act: Implemented during President Barack Obama’s administration, the intended purpose of this plan is to renovate the federal government’s role in public education. The blueprint is a framework to guide the federal government’s “deliberations and shared work – with parents, students, educators, business and community leaders, elected officials, and other partners – to strengthen America’s public education system” (United States Department of Education, 2010, p. 2). The ultimate goal of the reform measure is to provide every student in the United States a world class education necessary to succeed in college and a career (United States Department of Education, 2010).

Integrated curriculum: Researchers Shriner, Schlee, and Libler (2010) used Jacob's (1997) definition of integrated curriculum as a "curriculum approach that consciously applies methodology and language from more than one discipline to examine a central theme, issue, problem, topic or experience" (p. 51). Other terms used interchangeably are *content integration, interdisciplinary curriculum, multidisciplinary curriculum, fused curriculum, transdisciplinary curriculum, cross-disciplinary curriculum,* and *integrative curriculum* (Shriner et al., 2010).

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB): An educational reform act approved by President George Bush and the 107th Congress in January 2002 that focuses on schools closing the achievement gap through the implementation of five primary components. The five components are accountability for results, flexibility and local control of funds, scientifically proven teaching methods, expanding options for parents, and defining a highly qualified teacher (Trolan & Fouts, 2011).

Reading comprehension: "The process of unlocking meaning from connected text" (Sadeghi et al., 2012, p. 119).

Standards of learning (SOL): The state of Virginia's SOLs are "the expectations for student learning and achievement in grades K-12 in English, mathematics, science, history/social science, technology, the fine arts, foreign language, health, physical education, and driver education" (Virginia Department of Education, 2012, para. 1).

Thematic units: A group of correlated activities created around topics crossing several areas of the curriculum with the intention of fostering process learning and active involvement of all students (Benson, 2012).

Significance

The superintendent, school board, curriculum specialists, school principals, reading specialists, teachers, parents, and community stakeholders in the local district want to improve Grade 3 students' reading proficiency levels. The outcome of this study provided vital information to other schools facing similar concerns about an instructional tool to enhance student learning and teacher quality. Results from the study indicated that employing an integrated curriculum is a valuable resource for all grade levels to implement in promoting student success in reading and comprehending content text material. In addition, findings from the study may be of interest to public schools in the United States in need of improvement as mandated by the federal government to close the achievement gap, promote rigorous accountability, and prepare students to graduate as college and career citizens (United States Department of Education, 2010).

This qualitative study can be added to the existing body of limited research about the effects of employing an integrated curriculum in helping students to become proficient readers of grade level content text and enhance teacher quality. The study provided an understanding of the relevancy of a pedagogical approach that views teaching and learning holistically in a student-centered environment that uses theme units in which students' problem-solve real life issues from several subject areas (Etim, as

cited in Selcuk, Emiroglu, Tarakci, & Ozel, 2011). Accordingly, it is Walden's initiative to contribute to positive social change globally. This study has the potential to contribute to positive social change by providing third grade educators with a systematic integrated curriculum approach that promotes student achievement and to develop competent readers, problem solvers, and critical thinkers to function in an information-based society.

Guiding Research Question

The problem prompting the qualitative case study was that the school district's Grade 3 students experienced academic difficulty in reading and comprehending grade-level content related material. The school district then implemented a third grade integrated curriculum for the purpose of improving students' reading achievement. This qualitative case study explored the effectiveness of implementing an integrated curriculum that infuses reading instruction from the perceptions of Grade 3 teachers and examining students' work samples and reading levels as well as the integrated curriculum. The third grade integrated curriculum program is a top-down mandate from school district leaders for all Grade 3 teachers to implement. The guiding question was as follows: What are teachers' perceptions of the third grade integrated curriculum in regards to Grade 3 students' reading achievement? The research subquestions were as follows:

1. How do teachers infuse reading across the integrated curriculum?
2. How have the teachers' experiences in working with the integrated curriculum affected students' reading outcomes?

3. What lessons did teachers learn from infusing reading across the integrated curriculum?

A single unit case study provided evidence to determine if Grade 3 teachers perceive that the integrated curriculum program implemented by the school district leaders promotes Grade 3 students' reading achievement. The integrated curriculum program is based on the conceptual frameworks of constructivism and the integrated curriculum approach, reading comprehension research-based practices, and experiential learning. Evidence for answering the study's guiding question and subquestions included an analysis and comparison of multiple data sources, which were individual teacher interviews, teacher feedback form of student work samples and reading levels, and the district's integrated curriculum unit plan.

Review of the Literature

Introduction

In the literature review, I discuss constructivism, the integrated curriculum approach, evidence-based practices for teaching reading, and experiential learning in promoting reading literacy. The school district leaders in the study developed and implemented the integrated curriculum program to meet Grade 3 students' learning needs in reading and comprehending grade level content and to prepare them for school success, college, and the global work force. The school district leaders in the study, like many school leaders in the United States, can prepare students to function productively in a global society through the practice of a constructivist integrated approach. Schools

employing the integrated curriculum need to provide opportunities for students to develop their critical thinking skills as they learn how to coexist and flourish within a culturally pluralistic society and develop a sense of justice (Kwak, 2008). Ilica (2011) asserted that schools develop a space where students can find answers to their questions and cultivate and stimulate social relations, independence, originality, curiosity, and investigative spirit. In this literature review, I will present how the constructivist framework applies to the study and an analysis documenting the problem of poor reading literacy in the broader community that is associated with the school district's Grade 3 students' problem in struggling to read and comprehend grade level content text.

For this research study I used current literature within a 5-year period consisting of peer-reviewed articles. Walden University's online library provided a plethora of articles from the educational databases of ERIC, Education Research Complete, SAGE, and Thoreau. The search began by using the keywords *integrated curriculum*, *content integration*, *interdisciplinary curriculum*, *reading*, *reading comprehension*, *constructivism*, *experiential learning*, and *service learning* to find articles needed for the study. Although there were numerous studies on the integrated curriculum, many of the studies spoke mainly about the various definitions, terms, and types of integrated approaches. Current research revealed that only a few studies have been conducted on actual teacher practices of an integrated curriculum.

Constructivism

Constructivist teaching principles in today's classroom settings range from early childhood to the higher educational learning environments. The review on the constructivism approach presents (a) the principles and characteristics, (b) the constructivist connection to the integrated curriculum, (c) strategies for implementation, and (d) the critics' views on constructivism.

Principles and Characteristics of Constructivism

Constructivists Dewey, Kroll, and Piaget defined constructivism as learners actively constructing new knowledge based on prior knowledge and experiences (as cited in Ciampa, 2012). Constructivism, an epistemology, is a postmodernism theory of learning that "offers an explanation of the nature of knowledge and how human beings learn" (Ultanir, 2012, p. 195). Gordon (2009) referred to Windschitl's interpretation of constructivism as learners actively creating, interpreting, and reorganizing knowledge individually. Through a cultural and social context, students are scholarly participants in the learning process that includes experiences of problem-based and inquiry learning. The constructivist theory focuses on the knowledge, beliefs, and skills students bring to the learning experience (Garbett, 2011) of which learning in and of itself is a child-determined exploration and guided discovery emphasizing authentic experiences that mimic real life experiences (Ciampa, 2012). The commonality that constructivist theorists proclaim is that students' learning and knowledge construction need to be authentic, hands on, and inquiry based.

Leading constructivist theorists Dewey, Piaget, and Montessori viewed the learners' prior experiences and background knowledge as the basis of how real understanding is constructed (as cited in Ultanir, 2012). Learners actively engage in meaning-making of new understanding that interconnects with their beliefs, previous knowledge, ideas, and experiences. Furthermore, Dewey (as cited in Ultanir, 2012) promoted critical thinking, self-directed learning and the need for educators to facilitate the learners' natural developing tendencies and potential. An examination of the constructivist approach and the perspectives of constructivist theorists Dewey, Piaget, and Montessori concluded that constructivism emphasizes knowledge building, and existing knowledge is related to a person's social content, cultural content, and the media's recommendation of life stages and life situations (as cited in Ultanir, 2012).

More and more classrooms are shifting towards constructivist practices, a student-centered or learner-centered approach, through which learners "acquire facts, principles, and theories as conceptual tools for reasoning and problem solving in meaningful contexts" (Khoja, Sana, Karim, & Ali Rehman, 2009, p.192). Students take control of the pace of their learning as the teacher acts as a facilitator, which means there is contact between the teacher and students to achieve learning outcomes in subject matter content. However, shifting towards constructivist teaching practices to improve student learning requires the appropriate teacher training, support, and resources.

Hubbard (2010) believed that a significant characteristic of the constructivist theory is that much of the student's knowledge is constructed through social interaction,

or students collaborating and learning together. This social component, known as social constructivism, postulates knowledge is constructed as the learner interprets and synthesizes his or her ideas. Social constructivism produces positive outcomes in student learning and motivation with class activities that are hands-on and high level as well as student-led projects using the discovery process, collaboration, and the experiential approach (Hubbard, 2012). According to Hubbard (2012), student success and engagement are dependent on four elements of constructivist teaching principles. The first element is eliciting prior knowledge that occurs through discussion and learning. Here, students build on the existing knowledge. The second element, creating cognitive dissonance, promotes new learning as this element requires students to expand their frame of thinking. Students work collaboratively, facing dissonance together. Next, applying prior knowledge with feedback is the third element. Students work independently and frequently collaborate with the teacher. Both teacher and students question the process, make suggestions, and agree or disagree. The fourth element is reflecting on the learning experience. Reflection is high level learning through which students analyze and evaluate the experience from start to finish (Hubbard, 2012).

Constructivism and the Integrated Curriculum

The constructivism theory dominates the integrated curriculum in that the role of the teacher is to provide a learning environment that prepares students for the workplace and everyday life experiences. Constructivism, a philosophical framework, asserts that “humans construct meaning from current knowledge structures” (Lamanauskas, 2010, p.

5). Constructivists emphasize the discovery of knowledge as an integrated whole and not divided into separate subjects (Lamanauskas, 2010). Constructivism, the process of how one thinks and learns, involves learners constructing meaning from reality, according to Vygotsky (Liu & Chen, 2010). In the learning environment, the students construct, create, invent, and develop knowledge and meaning. The teacher, who is the facilitator, provides information and organizes activities that enable learners to discover their own meaning (Liu & Chen, 2010). Furthermore, the teacher promotes a student-centered previous-rich environment in which students' prior knowledge and experience become the growth point that leads to introducing students to new knowledge (Jia, 2010).

Within an integrated curriculum that infuses reading, students struggling to read and comprehend content text would benefit from constructivist reading instruction tailored to attend to their specific reading deficits. Watkins and Kritsonis (2011) found a successful integrated curriculum model based on the philosophy of the "Ways of Knowing through the Realms of Meaning" that increased student knowledge, learning, and cognitive ability. This constructivist approach builds on students prior knowledge then adds new knowledge to strengthen their academic learning and understanding, as in the area of reading, in a prescribed curriculum. In the general education setting, this integrated curriculum model provides students with experiences that promote critical thinking and expression of ideas and concepts, which can potentially benefit students' academic and social needs (Watkins & Kritsonis, 2011).

Strategies for Implementing Constructivism

Incorporating constructivist reading instruction in an integrated curriculum to improve reading literacy among the Grade 3 students in the study requires teacher buy-in, knowledge, and understanding of how to implement constructivist pedagogy (Smart, Witt, & Scott, 2012). One strategy for developing teacher buy-in, knowledge, and understanding of constructivist teaching is the use of metacognitive journals. This constructivist practice involves the use of metacognitive journals as a tool for teachers to examine, retain content course concepts, and reflect on beliefs and practices about constructivism; teachers think about their teaching practices (Cornish & Cantor, 2008). Cornish and Cantor (2008) found that by providing the appropriate resources, training, and support, teachers experienced success in understanding and developing an appreciation for constructivism. Teachers used a guidebook of strategies to promote academic achievement based on two frameworks. The first framework by Bransford, Darling-Hammond, and LePage (2005) is the how people learn (HPL) framework, and the second framework by Villegas and Lucas (2002) is a culturally responsive framework. The focus of the HPL framework is on thinking about learning that places emphasis on the (a) the learner's strengths, interests, and preconceptions, (b) knowledge to be acquired and how to transfer the learning, (c) assessment of learning for feedback of what has been learned and to guide new learning, and (d) the learning community, which is the environment inside and outside of the classroom. The second framework, the culturally responsive framework, insists that teachers provide a learning environment that

is responsive to all children by demonstrating in daily practice a constructivist view of teaching and learning. Doing so demonstrates respect and support for diversity, democracy, and social justice. Cornish and Cantor (2008) found that incorporating metacognitive journals to be an effective method of modeling the practice of constructivist teaching as teachers learned by actually implementing the constructivist theory in their learning environment.

Another effective strategy in the paradigm shift of the practice from traditional teaching to constructivist teaching is using teacher leaders to train teachers. A team of researchers reported that a small group of teacher leaders were highly influential in promoting change with their students and new teachers by employing constructivist principles in the teaching and learning process (Singh et al., 2012). To promote student achievement in K-12 science classrooms, a group of five teacher leaders in Iowa moved from traditional instructional practices to using the principles of constructivist teaching after receiving professional development. Once trained, the teacher leaders incorporated constructivist principles in their instructional settings that supported students in developing strategies to enhance learning and achievement. Furthermore, school leaders implementing the professional developments led to continuous growth and improvement in practice for both the teacher leaders and new teachers (Singh et al., 2012). Although this strategy was used to improve science instruction, it can be used to promote teacher development in the practice of content integration that infuses reading instruction.

Criticisms of Constructivism

As much of the research supports the practice of constructivism as an effective theory to promote student learning, there are also critics who believe constructivist practices to be less effective. An awareness of these criticisms needs to be considered when implementing a constructivist integrated program that promotes reading achievement to avoid program failure. Reportedly, critics noted that there is minimal guidance in employing the constructivist approach because teachers provide open-ended learning instruction and the focus is on students being responsible for adding to their own knowledge (Taber, 2011). Critics believe constructivist teaching practices come with a variety of interpretations that leave doubts concerning its effectiveness (Taber, 2011). Furthermore, Nikitina (2010) claimed there is also the challenge of promoting learner autonomy while simultaneously providing a solid framework for the learning experience. Other concerns are that constructivist pedagogy lacks a specific blueprint in how to organize classroom procedures, fails to ensure that lessons lead to the required learning outcomes, and presents with the challenge of assessing individual student learning when learners work collectively with a group project (Johnston & Karageorgis, 2009). Nikitina (2010) cited Windschilt's theory of educational constructivism as lacking rigor in the area of assessment because of the large amount of freedom given to learners in the learning process. Moreover, Grady, Watkins, and Montalvo (2012) concluded that teachers failing to implement the program with fidelity and the schools failing to provide the

appropriate professional development were factors that hindering the program's effectiveness.

Furthermore, according to Gordon (2009), there is the concern of a disconnection between theory and practice in constructivism education as teachers perceive that the abstract philosophies differ from the reality of classroom practice. Teachers lack a clear understanding of the epistemological and ontological constructivist assumptions. In addition, researchers reported American public schools have been less supportive of constructivist teaching practices because of the pressures of high stakes testing that reduces teacher autonomy, initiative, and creativity, a conflict of basic constructivist principles (Gordon, 2009).

Moreover, Nikitina (2010) reported that one teacher dealt with the challenges of constructivist pedagogy by developing a framework that outlined specific subject-matter learning goals and learning outcomes, organizing the project (small group collaboration), and creating a rubric to grade work. This teacher achieved the pedagogical aims and students improved in their ability to speak Russian. Nikitina (2010) concluded that an authentic learning program implemented by the teacher presented a solid argument in defense of the effectiveness of constructivist pedagogy.

In the literature review on the constructivism theory, I presented a clear description of the principles and characteristics and philosophical stances by leading constructivist theorists on the need to implement constructivist teaching in an integrated curriculum to promote reading literacy. Teachers need to be knowledgeable and

understand how to deliver constructivist teaching instruction, which is significant to student learning; therefore, providing the appropriate resources and support is crucial to successful implementation. In a constructivist learning environment that is student-centered, students learn, collaborate, work, and problem solve in preparation for the real world. Reading proficiently is critical in the learning process. The shift from traditional teaching to constructivist teaching through content integration is to promote reading literacy and overall academic achievement among students.

Reading and Reading Comprehension

Specifically, the reading literature review will address (a) reading and reading comprehension elements for gaining a deep understanding of words in print, (b) the effects of cognitive, metacognitive and comprehension instruction on students' reading achievement, and (c) structures for teaching expository text. In the review, I will present the effects of reading researched-based strategies on students who struggle in reading and comprehending grade level text.

Reading and comprehending text is critical to student success in school and in the working world. Reading comprehension is “the process of constructing meaning from words” (Stagliano & Boon, 2009, p. 36). The National Reading Council of 2003 posited that reading comprehension involves students making connections and generating understanding from words read. Researchers report too many elementary students, including students with learning disabilities, who experience difficulty in comprehending printed text in the content areas (Stagliano & Boon, 2009). Mills and Hogan (2009) used

the 2000 National Reading Panel's definition of reading comprehension as purposeful and active by which the reader acquires meaning through problem-solving that is intentional with the thought processes interchanging with text. The key elements include the reader's prior knowledge and content meaning that is influenced by the printed text. Years of research have confirmed that the critical strategies needed to develop effective comprehension are "activating prior knowledge, summarizing, story grammar lessons, imagery, question generating and thinking aloud" (Mills & Hogan, 2009, p. 65).

Additionally, Akhondi, Malayeri, and Samad (2011) argued that students entering the intermediate grades are expected to read and comprehend expository text to learn content area subject material. Preparing students to demonstrate reading proficiency of expository text lies in the hands of educators who need to be knowledgeable and skilled. Furthermore, the researchers purported, "One of the most efficient strategies for which there is an influx of research and practice is training students on text structure knowledge to facilitate their comprehension of expository texts" (Akhondi et al., 2011, p. 368).

Cognitive, Metacognitive, and Comprehension Strategy Instruction

To help students read and comprehend content text print, students need a comprehension strategy, which is a plan or technique to get information when reading text in print (Dymock & Nicholson, 2010). For students, the reading process involves understanding the direct meaning of text and implied ideas as a means of developing an understanding of self and the world when thinking and reacting about what is read (Al-Alwan, 2012). Studies have indicated that effective ways of building a strong reading

foundation are through the practices of cognitive instruction, metacognitive instruction, and comprehension strategy instruction (Zarei, Shokrpour, Nasiri, & Kafipour, 2012). Cognitive strategies involve the way linguistic information is processed that includes rehearsing, organizing, inferring, summarizing, deducing, imaging, transferring, and collaboration. Metacognitive strategies involve the practice of using higher order thinking skills in a learning activity that includes planning, monitoring, or evaluating (Zarei et al., 2012).

The practice of using one or more combinations of cognitive, metacognitive, and comprehension strategies has been found to improve students' reading achievement, which supports students learning the essential subject matter content skills (Zarei et al., 2012). The results of educators teaching cognitive and metacognitive strategies led to improvement in reading comprehension and content achievement because the learners were conscious of their learning and rate of improvement. Students learned how to organize and store newly learned information and how to combine that new information with the old information. Therefore, students employing metacognitive and cognitive strategies experience meaningful learning, study with deeper understanding, learn faster, and experience greater interest, confidence, and less stress (Zarei et al., 2012).

Third grade teachers can promote students' reading and comprehending of content text by teaching students the metacognitive strategies of planning, monitoring, and self-assessing their progress (Al-Alwan, 2012). One study found that Grade 3 students in the experimental group, who was taught using metacognitive reading comprehension

strategies, demonstrated statistically significant differences in reading comprehension in comparison to the control group taught using the traditional method of reading passages. The metacognitive strategies taught to the experimental group were “planning before reading, monitoring during reading, and evaluating one’s reading performance after reading” (Al-Alwan, 2012, p. 4). Moreover, Al-Alwan (2012) reported that factors contributing to the effectiveness of the metacognition strategies used by students were (a) mental involvement when reading the passages, requiring students to analyze and evaluate when reading, (b) organizing and relating events in a passage, tools beneficial to memory and understanding, (c) the ability to plan and recognize what they learned, (d) monitoring and checking reading comprehension, and (e) assessing their progress. The metacognitive strategies presented aligned with other research of how reading comprehension improves as a result of employing metacognition reading strategies (Al-Alwan, 2012).

The evidence presented points to a need for third grade teachers to train students on how to use cognitive, metacognitive, and comprehension strategies, which can lead to improving students’ ability to read and comprehend grade level content text. Much of the reading, beginning in third grade, involves students reading expository text. Students experience difficulty in reading expository text and can benefit from employing the cognitive, metacognitive, and comprehension strategies presented. The studies indicated that students’ using these research-based reading strategies experienced school success. The reading deficits of the Grade 3 students discussed in the project study demonstrate

the need to use cognitive, metacognitive, and comprehension to support them in learning to read grade level content text.

Expository Text

Fang (2009) remarked that reading expository text is challenging for students, which is compounded by the fact that the process of learning to read is difficult. In the primary grades, students are exposed mostly to narrative text, but by the time they move to Grade 3, more emphasis is placed on expository text reading. Fang also contended that narrative text focuses on students learning how to read whereas expository text focuses on students reading, which requires learning new information. In the school setting, much of what students learn and the information that they are assessed on is through learning expository language. Therefore, students in the intermediate grades of 4 through 6 need to demonstrate proficiency in reading and comprehending expository text, which is a challenging task that many experience (Fang, 2009).

Moreover, Fang (2009) argued that elementary students in the intermediate grades experience difficulty in reading to learn information because they are required to read different types of text that are primarily expository reading. The same requirement is expected of the Grade 3 students in the integrated curriculum study. Fang believed students need to be taught how to read expository text; otherwise, they may find it difficult to read and avoid reading expository text material. Through the example of a science expository text passage, Fang conveyed how the language in expository text aids

in constructing knowledge, which is more complex than common sense day-to-day life language.

Moreover, there are four linguistic challenges described by Fang (2009) that students need to demonstrate proficiency in order to comprehend expository text. The first challenge is technicality, which deals with technical and specialized terms such as DNA, genome, cell, and genes that are unfamiliar and are not part of everyday language. The second challenge is abstractions, which deals with the abstract text such as those used a science passage (discover, instruct, reveal, and achieve). The abstract nouns and technical terms help in synthesizing text, creating text flow, presenting information, developing arguments, summarizing, and judging information. The third challenge, density, is the large of amount of information that can cognitively overload the reader and slow down the processing of comprehending text. The fourth challenge, authoritativeness, deals with the distant or impersonal nature of the language, as in the science, to allow for presenting information objectively, accurately, and assertively. Fang (2009) also cautioned that readers may find expository text of this nature unappealing and less involved, therefore alienating students from reading expository text.

Dymock and Nicholson (2010) reviewed theoretical and research evidence that promoted explicit teaching and a systematic process for teaching any student how to comprehend expository text. Children experienced more difficulty in reading expository text in comparison to narrative text because expository text contained many structures (examples, cause-effect and comparing-contrasting) and narrative text contained one

structure. The researchers presented five significant comprehension strategies to explicitly teach and model when teaching students how to comprehend expository text. The five main comprehension strategies discussed were “(a) activating background knowledge, (b) questioning, (c) analyzing text structure, (d) creating mental images, (e) summarizing” (Dymock & Nicholson, 2010, p. 167). The five comprehension strategies must be taught explicitly, one at a time and over a period of time. Dymock and Nicholson found that students using the comprehension strategies learned to self-regulate their learning and demonstrated improvement in comprehending expository text. The five evidence-based comprehension strategies can be used by all students for improving their reading and comprehension abilities (Dymock & Nicholson, 2010).

Another research-based comprehension strategy employed by Ropič and Aberšek (2012) was the practice of graphic organizers, which increased students’ reading comprehension levels. Ropič and Aberšek conducted a five month experiment on 8 and 9 year old Grade 3 students in Slovenia that demonstrated the positive effects of integrating literacy and science instruction, which improved students’ reading comprehension of explicatory texts when reading the grade level science textbook. The researchers provided valuable insight on the use graphic organizers for increasing students’ understanding of explicatory text. Ropič and Aberšek (2012) asserted that graphic organizers can assist students in making meaning of text structure because of their level of concrete cognitive development. Moreover, Ropič and Aberšek discovered that

students can learn how to use graphic organizers to “make their preexisting knowledge visible and to integrate new knowledge into the preexisting mental scheme” (p. 97).

Furthermore, Mills and Hogan (2009) argued that there are four interventions teachers can use to improve K-6 students’ reading and comprehending of expository text. The first intervention is teachers learning the meaning of reading comprehension and the five areas of reading instruction, which are comprehension, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary. The second intervention is a strategy that teachers use with their students, in which they show students how to slow down their thinking and deeply analyze understanding or comprehension; often multiple strategies are needed for the reader to completely comprehend text. The third intervention involves teachers modeling clarification of a skill by using expository text, which involves asking probing questions and rereading the text. In the fourth intervention, teachers use graphic organizers to scaffold the readers’ thinking in regards to the text meaning. Mills and Hogan (2009) concluded that providing professional development on the instructional strategies by an expert to be beneficial to teachers.

In another study, Stagliano and Boon (2009) found that story-mapping improved expository text reading comprehension skills of elementary students with specific learning disabilities. The study replicated and extended past research of effective practices utilizing story-mapping strategies to improve reading comprehension of students with specific learning disabilities. Students in the study reported they experienced more difficulty with reading comprehension prior to learning story-mapping

procedures (Stagliano & Boon, 2009). The strategy of story-mapping is promoted by the district leaders in the study, which has the potential to improve the Grade 3 students' reading and comprehension literacy of content text material.

Montelongo and Herter (2010) studied how one teacher used technology to scaffold text comprehension that improved students' reading and comprehension skills, science vocabulary, and science knowledge. Through integrating technology in science instruction, the teacher scaffolded comprehending of expository science text by teaching text structure and vocabulary. The teacher used activities on the computer that involved sentence completion through the use of graphic organizers and writing summaries.

Montelongo and Herter contended that reading comprehension and content knowledge improves when teachers scaffold content text and students access the internet as a means for locating, organizing, and writing information, which is aligned with 21st century learning.

Similarly, Montelongo, Herter, Ansaldo, and Hatter (2010) discovered that the practice of teaching lesson cycles using text structures in learning to read, write, and locate the main idea in expository text produced positive outcomes for middle school students in grades six and seven. Their findings indicated that teaching lesson cycles help students learn and recognize the different text structures of generalization, sequencing, comparing and contrasting, cause and effect, and problem solution (Montelongo et al., 2010).

In addition, two of the researchers on this team, Montelongo and Herter (2010), found similar results in another model that integrated technology and science, using some of the same text structures that produced positive outcomes, which confirms the body of literature regarding the effectiveness in using lesson cycles strategies to improve students' reading comprehension. The practice of employing lesson cycles to teach text structures (generalization, sequencing, comparing and contrasting, cause and effect, and problem solution) is a strategy that can benefit Grade 3 students who struggle with reading and comprehending expository text.

In the reading literature review, evidence was presented on how manipulating students through the reading and reading comprehension process included the practice of using cognitive, metacognitive, and comprehension strategy instruction, and engaging students in authentic learning experiences using expository text. Trained educators who use a research-based systematic approach in teaching students to read and comprehend informational text can produce positive outcomes in promoting reading literacy.

According to Alderton (2010), the 2008 National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) reported that educators in 21st century classrooms need to equip students with the skills and abilities to read and write proficiently. Along with the 2008 NCTE, the 2009 International Reading Association also emphasized the need to integrate the new literacies of using multimedia and technology as a means of promoting reading literacy (as cited in Alderton, 2010). The new literacies involve internet research, which requires students to use traditional comprehension skills, search the internet for information,

predict, make connections, summarize, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and phonics (Alderton, 2010).

Similarly, Conley and Wise (2011) argued that the effective ways for educators to teach reading comprehension include implementing strategic comprehension strategies and multiple literacies. Teachers who employ the comprehension strategies and multiple literacies also need to incorporate authentic texts grounded in students' experiences, which will inform instruction and make connections across the content areas. As a necessary life skill, people need to demonstrate proficiency in reading and comprehending, which are critical elements for acquiring knowledge and understanding of subject matter content, thriving in the workplace, and functioning as an informed citizen (Conley & Wise, 2011). The goal for conducting the project study is to find a systematic reading program designed to develop elementary Grade 3 students' reading competency in preparation for school success, college, society, and the global world.

Integrated Curriculum

The district's educational leaders in the study implemented an integrated curriculum program that infused reading instruction because Grade 3 students struggled to read and comprehend grade level content text. In the district's old curriculum, the practice of the traditional method of teaching the core subjects in isolation was common practice. As a leading pioneer of the integrated curriculum approach, constructivist, John Dewey advocated that "the subject matter of the curriculum should be situated in familiar contexts that are meaningful to students" (Dewey, 1902, as cited by Dowden, (2007), p.

52). Teachers employing content integration can enhance students' reading, creativity, critical thinking, decision-making, research, problem solving, and socialization abilities (Brown, 2011). In addition, teachers implementing an integrated curriculum with fidelity can help students learn better by showing them the interrelationship of different subjects, develop a deeper understanding of subject matter, and retain important concepts (Opitz, 2011). Therefore, this section of the literature review will provide an in-depth discussion of the integrated curriculum framework by addressing; (a) the need for an integrated curriculum, (b) models demonstrating the effects of the integrated curriculum approach in regards to reading achievement, and (c) the process of implementing an integrated curriculum.

Need for an Integrated Curriculum

The integrated curriculum program in the study is a form of curriculum integration. Curriculum integration, according to Dowden (2007), is the generic term for curricula that is integrative. Dowden (2007) referred to Gehrke's meaning of curriculum integration as the forms of curriculum in which student learning activities are designed with "the notion of helping students recognize or create their own learning" (p. 52).

Other terms synonymous with curriculum integration are *integrative curriculum*, *multidisciplinary curriculum*, *fused curriculum*, *transdisciplinary curriculum*, and *cross-disciplinary curriculum* (Dowden, 2007). Through using an integrated approach, "students' understanding goes deeper, and, therefore, has staying power" (Opitz, 2011, p. 535).

The district's integrated curriculum program contains elements of two prevailing models of content integration. The first content integration model is the student-centered integrative model by Beane, in which the curriculum is organized to enhance personal and social integration (Beane, 1997, as cited by Shriner et al., 2010). The second content integration model is the subject-centered multidisciplinary model by Jacobs, which is curriculum centered and intentionally applies methodology and language from the disciplines for the purpose of examining a central theme, issue, problem, topic, or experience (Jacobs, 1997, as cited by Shriner et al., 2010). The Grade 3 students in the study can benefit from an integrated model that is student-centered and organized around a central theme for academic, intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development to prepare them to function in a global information-based society.

Koralek (2008) posits that a teacher employing an integrated curriculum that infuses reading instruction allows students to achieve grade level content learning standards as they explore a theme and learn facts related to a topic. Students learn the connection between the content areas and apply their knowledge in meaningful ways (Koralek, 2008). Moreover, the 2007 International Society for Technology in Education reported the need for educators to practice content integration because the standards for science, mathematics, technology, and English language arts share similar strands requiring a holistic view of the curriculum (Wood, Jones, Stover, & Polly, 2011). In the accountability era in education, state assessments are administered, which students are required to demonstrate their competency of the core subjects, reading, writing, math,

history, and science. Studies have shown that students performed well academically, and on national standardized tests and state-implemented assessments in schools, which emphasized integrated curriculum programs (Shriner et al., 2010).

The school district's educators in the study administer a yearly state assessment, which all Grade 3 students are required to demonstrate their competency of reading, math, science, and history. Implementing an integrated curriculum approach that infuses reading instruction would support Grade 3 students in reading and comprehending content text of these core subjects, which can lead to learning the essential content concepts and passing the required state assessments.

Integrated Curriculum Models Connected to Reading

Regardless of the subject area or grade level, all teachers need to incorporate reading strategies in their instructional delivery (Miller & Hopper, 2010). In recent studies, Miller and Hopper reported there were models based on the principles of constructivism that promoted students' ability to read and comprehend grade level content text through an integrated approach. The models presented were relevant, consisted of high levels of student engagement, and pertained to real world experiences. The instructional teaching practices of the integrated models were also theme-related, inquiry-related, and problem-based.

In one model, Grade 3 students experienced success through the practice of an integrated approach that embedded direct instruction teaching of reading and reading comprehension skills in the area of science (Cervetti & Pearson, 2012). The rate of

learning for the Grade 3 students receiving the integrated curriculum method of instruction exceeded the rate of learning of students receiving the traditional method of instruction. Teachers incorporating knowledge building science investigations and comprehension strategy instruction supported students' literacy development and learning the essential science concepts. In this content-oriented reading instruction program, the integrated approach employed was student-centered and included learning activities that were hands-on, collaborative, and promoted student autonomy (Cervetti & Pearson, 2012). Students experienced high levels of engagement and motivation. This model exemplifies how inquiry and problem-based learning practices in an integrated approach can improve Grade 3 students' reading and reading comprehension abilities. The integrated model can help students see the relevancy of learning to read. In addition, the model provides a clear understanding of the need for third grade teachers to provide authentic learning experiences to support the development of students' collaborative, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills (Cervetti & Pearson, 2012).

In promoting reading literacy among Grade 3 students, the integrated approach can be used to teach students about real world concerns such as living a healthy lifestyle by providing informational literature (Optiz, 2011). In this integrated model a classroom teacher integrated reading and fitness to increase students' learning capacity and fight obesity by providing children's literature that focused on health and well-being. Reading instruction involved the teacher using literacy teaching strategies to develop lessons that simultaneously developed reading skills and improved the overall health and well-being

of students. The thought processes employed attributed to promoting students' ability to read and comprehend text and were active, purposeful, evaluative, thoughtful, strategic, persistent, and productive. Reportedly, students engaging in an integrated curriculum program that integrates reading and physical activity are likely to show greater gains on their reading assessment results (Opitz, 2011). This model ties in with the district school's leaders need to promote content integration; a practice which can help improve Grade 3 students' reading test scores.

Another model demonstrated how students' published a classroom newspaper that focused on a content theme, as in science and social studies, produced positive effects in promoting reading literacy. Sahn and Reichel (2008) noted that content integration promotes students learning core subjects, which includes reading. When teachers provide authentic learning experiences in an integrated model in which students are assigned jobs requiring them to observe, inquire, collect data, and work cooperatively (developing their social and emotional skills) to publish the newspaper, students learn the relevancy of reading. Sahn and Reichel (2008) believed that content integration also increases student motivation and fosters self-esteem, a sense of belonging, empathy, cooperation, and diversity. The study's Grade 3 teachers need to implement the integrated curriculum and provide their students authentic learning experiences, which can lead to students improving their reading skills, feeling a sense of value and responsibility, and learning the essential core subject concepts, simultaneously.

Wood, Pilonieta, and Blanton (2009) touted the significant role of a content integration practice described as an integrated literacy circle, which improved middle school students' reading skills. Students participating in an integrated literacy circle learned how to read and comprehend simultaneously, content material. During the integrated literacy circle the teacher used discussions centered on content as part of students' knowledge acquisition. The researchers indicated that the practice of teachers using the integrated literacy circle strategy helped students develop, expand and improve basic reading skills, and become proficient readers while learning subject matter content (Wood et al., 2009). The practice of implementing an integrated literacy circle would serve as another effective strategy in supporting Grade 3 students struggling to read and comprehend grade level content text.

Kelner (2010) shared experiences of the positive effects in helping elementary teachers and students integrate the arts in daily classroom instruction. Teachers used strategies, such as dramatization of stories and story characters, which helped to improve students' reading and comprehension skills. "Quality arts-integrated instruction can help schools achieve any school improvement plan that includes meeting the needs of all students" (Kelner, 2010, p. 231). Moreover, Kelner (2010) emphasized the need for stakeholders to support integrating the arts across the curriculum, which can promote teacher growth and student learning.

In another model, an elementary teacher demonstrated the effectiveness of content integration, which improved students' reading achievement, by implementing an

integrated environmental science and reading unit that included quality children's literature (Napoli, 2011). The elementary teacher taught an integrated environmental awareness unit and children's literature that helped to develop students' higher order thinking skills, problem solving skills, and increased their understanding about the environment. The teacher used quality literature to inform students about a real world concern, which encouraged students to take positive actions (Napoli, 2011). In this article, Napoli provided a sample lesson of how reading potentially increases students' vocabulary and engages them in text discussions about the world through reading fiction and nonfiction books. Through this authentic learning experience, the teacher promoted reading literacy and provided opportunities for students to practice and develop inquiry skills through content integration instruction. Napoli (2011) found that the infusion of literacy and science instruction employed, developed students' reading and comprehension of fiction and nonfiction science texts, problem-solving, decision-making, creativity, and social skills, which exemplifies the need for the study's Grade 3 teachers to use the integrated approach. Simultaneously, Grade 3 teachers can help students see the relevancy of reading as they learn content skills.

Repeatedly, the models presented indicate a need for the district's teachers in the study to implement an integrated curriculum program that infuses reading, which will provide students the authentic experiences and help them understand the relevancy of learning to read. In addition, Zhanova, Rule, Montgomery and Nielsen (2010) recommended the practice of an integrated curriculum approach because the integrated

approach is student-centered and aligned with the research of providing meaningful learning associated with personal connections to content connections, multi-step operations, decision-making, and increased student motivation. The integrated curriculum approach would serve the academic and reading needs of the Grade 3 students in the study who struggle with reading and comprehending grade level content text.

Implementing an Integrated Curriculum

The main ingredient needed for content integration is a research-based organized systematic structured program (Bintz & Moore, 2007). The other necessary ingredients lie in teachers demonstrating knowledge and understanding of how to teach and infuse reading across the curriculum, knowledge of the content subjects, and how to incorporate constructivist teaching principles into the instructional setting. Educational leaders need to provide professional development when introducing new programs unfamiliar to teachers. The authors (Shriner et al., (2010) commented that in one study, professional development training positively influenced middle school teachers' attitudes and beliefs in implementing content integration strategies. Further, these authors indicated that the professional development supported teachers in learning how to teach the district and state standards and content integration techniques simultaneously. From participating in this training program teachers discovered how the practice of content integration establishes positive relationships with students, is relevant to learning, and interconnects curriculum learning with the community. Moreover, the authors (Shriner et al., 2010)

posited that factors influential in changing teachers' attitudes and beliefs were "teachers' knowledge and skills, subject culture, assessment, and institution support" (p. 53).

Another factor to consider regarding professional development is that coaching and teacher training improves teacher practice which leads to improving student achievement (Strahan & Hedt, 2009, Fang, et al, 2008). The results of another study demonstrated positive outcomes for students and teachers by implementing teacher training on how to integrate science and reading literacy (Fang, et al., 2008). The integrated curriculum approach proved to be effective; however; it is significant to note that content integration is complex and multifaceted because teacher received professional development on effective reading strategies to incorporate, how to conduct monthly meetings, plan reading strategy lessons, and develop inquiry-based units. Thus, schools implementing an integrated program with the appropriate supports and resources, resulted in a positive change regarding teachers' attitudes and students' level of engagement increased (Fang, et al., 2008). The district's educational leaders in the study need to be knowledgeable of the large amount of teacher preparation needed before implementing an integrated curriculum, and also plan how to assist classroom teachers who may be unfamiliar with the integrated curriculum approach. The district's Grade 3 teachers can benefit from integrated curriculum professional developments, which will guide and support them in using the district's integrated curriculum program as a daily practice.

Moreover, Rockwell (2008) noted from a study that developing the appropriate content integration program involves teacher collaboration and extensive planning. During the planning and collaborative stage teachers participated in comprehensive planning sessions to organize concepts and skills across the content to facilitate effective and efficient lesson development. Teachers also developed theme units that included “broadly stated goals, state standards across the curriculum, weekly plans, and the lists of support materials for each week, sample informal assessments, and state adopted textbook chapters” (Rockwell, 2008, p. 60). Rockwell shared that teachers experienced positive outcomes in which primary and intermediate students’ level of engagement and reading test scores improved significantly. Furthermore, Rockwell (2012) cautioned that time can be a barrier, as teachers need time to plan the theme units, review the state standards, and reflect before program implementation.

Malik and Malik (2011) presented a dozen tips for educators to consider when developing a new integrated curriculum or revising an existing curriculum. The tips are applicable in any educational setting including the settings of the third grade teachers in the study. Successful and sustained implementation of an integrated curriculum involves training staff members, planning the integrated program, choosing the level of integration, and integrating the curriculum horizontally and vertically. Educators need to create work groups in which responsibilities are clearly defined. Moreover, it is significant for educators to identify the learning outcomes and content skills students need to learn. Another tip is to develop themes centered on a big idea, problem or topic

that link the different disciplines. Theme units enable teachers to “meaningfully link different disciplines so that students will see the ‘big’ picture (Malik & Malik, 2011, p. 101). Successful implementation involves teachers preparing a timeline to present each theme. In selecting themes, the flow of the topics is logical. Each new topic needs to build students’ knowledge from previous topics presented. Determine the assessment tool and time to assess student learning. Open communication to staff and students ensures that stakeholder understand their roles and expectations. Communication to staff and students involve providing written information, open discussions about the progress of the program, and addressing concerns. The last tip for successful implementation of an integrated curriculum is to collect feedback data and assessment results to reevaluate and revise the program as needed (Malik & Malik, 2011).

The strategies and practical tips presented by Malik and Malik (2011) are useful tools that the school district’s educational leaders in the study can use in developing and implementing an integrated curriculum program. When institutions fail to provide the necessary support structures for content integration, they risk teachers adopting the practice routinely (Malik & Malik, 2011; Sturko & Holyoke, 2009). As the district leaders move forward with the integrated curriculum program, they need to consider that helping teachers can lead to helping Grade 3 students with their struggles in reading and comprehending grade level content text.

Experiential Learning and Service Learning

Experiential learning is another guiding theory associated with the Grade 3 integrated curriculum and the constructivist approach to teaching and learning. A part of integrated curriculum program involved Grade 3 students conducting service learning projects, which is experiential learning to promote reading literacy in an authentic way. Experiential learning is based on the work of theorists John Dewey, David Kolb, Kurt Lewin, and Jean Piaget. Experiential learning falls under the umbrella of learning through participation, which also includes the areas of work-integrated learning, cooperative education, and service learning (Mackaway, Winchester-Seeto, Coulson, & Harvey, 2011). Common features of experiential learning and service learning include students working collaboratively, using research and reading skills, communicating, and demonstrating problem-solving and critical thinking skills (Mackaway et al., 2011). The literature for this study will solely address experiential learning and service learning by providing a clear description of each, characteristics, and the connection to reading literacy.

Experiential learning, an educational pedagogy, is an established, integrative, holistic, learning process that combines experience, perception, cognition, and behavioral learning approaches that optimize student learning and retention (Liu & Olson, 2011). Ord and Leather (2011) supported Dewey's theories, which include (a) the learning experience is a simplistic cycle of doing that is continuous from past, present to future, (b) learning is transactional and complex, and (c) experience is linked to meaning, which

requires the learner to try and undergo the experience to conceptualize the learning. Furthermore, Ord and Leather (2011) argued in favor of the combined theories of Dewey, Kolb, and Piaget that experiential learning interconnects thinking, action, and learning in which the meaning for each individual learner is unique and complex based on each student's prior experiences. Experiential learning involves more than the learner reflecting on the experience but also includes the process of trying and undergoing. In addition, Ord and Leather (2011) noted that the process of trying and undergoing accounted for accommodation and assimilation of the whole experience for the purpose of providing an engaging and meaningful experience to each learner.

Hansen (2012) also viewed experiential learning as a relevant, meaningful, hands-on approach of authentic learning and reflection. In one study, (Hansen, 2012) noted that learners experience the evolving of knowledge acquisition through problem-based learning, the adult learning theory, Knowles' andragogical approach (Knowles & Swanson, 2011), and experiential learning. Students learned as a result of reflection and planning, conceptualization, and experimentation and by applying strategies and rules. Moreover, as an authentic learning experience, student participation in the experiential learning projects benefitted both the students and the community (Hansen, 2012).

Hagan (2012) provided a simplistic description of referring to experiential learning as direct hands-on experience learning. Moreover, Smith (as cited in Hagan, 2012) noted that Kolb and Fry's viewed experiential learning as the continuous spiraling of four elements, which are: (a) concrete experience, (b) observation and experience, (c) a

formation of concrete concepts, and (d) the need to test new situations. The various ways educators can provide experiential learning to students range from hands-on activities, case studies, living case studies, internships, job shadowing, to classroom-based activities (Hagan, 2012). Furthermore, Hagan (2012) stated that students experience a sense of accomplishment by “pulling together all they have learned and putting it into action” (p. 624). Throughout experiential learning students complete assignments that provide them with real world experiences that involve student collaboration in applying their knowledge and skills to complete the project. In addition, students learn about team building, how to use new technology, and contribute to their communities by implementing and completing a service learning project (Hagan, 2012).

Experiential learning, based on Kolb’s theory, transforms an individual as he or she interfaces with the content and experience followed by reflecting on concepts taught (Green & Ballard, 2011). According to Bergsteiner, Avery, and Neumann (2010), with Kolb’s experiential learning theory, each individual creates knowledge from experience rather than from the instruction learned. The learning process involves the learners experiencing conflicts, disagreements, and differences that move them through the stages of action, reflection, feeling, and thinking. The various styles of learning that occur affect the learning preferences that can change according to the situation. Bergsteiner et al., (2010) contented that the process of learning is holistic, which results from synergistic interactions with the environment that involve people making choices of the parts of the environment for engagement.

Much of the research on experiential learning has focused on middle, secondary, and higher education environments with few studies at the elementary level. According to Drake and Long (2009), more studies are needed in examining the efficacy of problem-based learning with elementary students. Through conducting a pilot study with fourth grades in a public school district, Drake and Long (2009) revealed that problem-based learning produced positive effects in students' learning science content, showed evidence of collateral learning, and exhibited more time on task behaviors. From the findings of the science pilot study, Drake and Long indicated that there were high possibilities of success in implementing a problem-based experiential model on the elementary level. Moreover, Drake and Long (2009) shared that utilizing problem-based learning includes students' exposure to reading content text.

Added, there were other studies that presented vital information on the effects of experiential learning in regards to promoting reading literacy. Reilly (2009) shared the experience of one teacher who used side shadowing (the actual happening along with possible happenings) to help Grade 3 students' use their imagination when reading, writing, and demonstrating their knowledge of content material. The teacher used the side shadowing and experiential learning to assist students in recognizing multiple perspectives when reading.

In another study, Fillipatou and Kaldi (2010) revealed that the academic achievement, attitudes, motivation, and self-efficacy of fourth grade students with learning difficulties improved in participating in an experiential learning project-based

environmental studies unit about sea animals. The experiential project-based activity involved students working cooperatively in a group, researching and reading information, contributing to discussions, and producing a written assignment. From the interview results, Fillipatou and Kaldi (2010) concluded that fourth grade students preferred experiential learning versus the traditional passive method of direction instruction.

Similarly, McGrew's (2012) pilot study that involved teachers implementing a science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) curriculum included experiential learning, which teachers helped promote elementary students' reading achievement, technological literacy, and develop their problem solving skills. Through a collaborative effort, teachers designed an integrated STEM curriculum. McGrew (2012) also discovered that the elementary students 'vocabulary usage exceeded grade level content and standards.

The models presented are indicators that experiential learning engages and motivates students to learn through problem solving and to read and comprehend content text. In addition, all of the models presented demonstrated how experiential projects benefitted the community and promoted reading literacy through a rigorous and challenging integrated curriculum. The district leaders in the study require all Grade 3 students to participate in a service learning project, which can promote reading literacy as students problem solve a community need.

Role of Service Learning

Experiential learning is a component of the grade three integrated curriculum in which all students participate in a service learning project. As a form of experiential learning, service learning, traced back to Dewey, is active learning in which young people make relevant contributions within their communities (Kielsmeier, 2011). Service learning, a philosophy of experiential learning is defined as pedagogy that supports the development of a student's academic, social, maturity, critical thinking, and communication, collaboration, and leadership skills (Judge et al., 2011). O'Connor (2009) cited the 2004 National Youth Leadership Council as defining service learning as "the explicit linkage of academic subject matter to community-based and student-directed service projects" (p. 13). Billig (2011) described service learning as an educational practice that connects student learning of academic content in the classroom to performing a need in servicing the community. Service learning is high-quality learning that engages students in the learning process by applying the academic standards to real-life learning situations. It is a pedagogical approach in which the federal, state, and local governments highly recommend that educators in grades K-12 and higher education institutions promote within their learning environments (Lake, Al Otaiba, & Guidry, 2010).

Billig (2011) and Krebs (2008) shared similar thoughts on the critical components of service learning taught in the classroom setting which are preparation, action, reflection, demonstration, and celebration. Service learning helps students' master

content goals while developing their communication, socialization, civic, and higher level thinking skills (Billig, 2011). In the classroom setting, service learning that is implemented with fidelity empowers, innovates, develops critical thinking skills, and fosters community connections among learners. As a pedagogical approach in education, service learning provides students the opportunity to apply knowledge and academic skills to address real-life community needs (Judge, et al., 2011). Kielsmeier (2011) posited “service learning advocates view all people in a democratic society as citizens with the capacity to contribute - regardless of their age, economic background, educational attainment, race or ethnicity, or physical or learning challenges” (p. 3).

Krebs’ (2008) exploration of K-12 teachers’ motivational levels for teaching service learning in the classroom setting found that there are benefits in employing this pedagogy. A number of studies have been conducted involving the experiences and motivational levels of faculties in the higher education setting; however, a gap exists in the research on K-12 educators’ motivational levels and involvement in service learning. In one study, Krebs (2008) reported that teachers who employed service learning pedagogy (a) experienced high levels of motivation to initiate service learning, (b) found personal satisfaction in serving the community, (c) reported that service learning supported their philosophies and teaching styles, (d) were driven to motivate other educators to implement the program, and (e) observed at-risk students engaged and motivated to learn.

Elvin (2011) shared the positive effects of a service learning project that increased student engagement and motivation and promoted literacy learning with at-risk students. The group of diverse second grade students conducted a service learning project at nearby retirement home that provided authentic learning for developing literacy learning, compassion, and a sense of responsibility in making their world a better place. Students demonstrated their knowledge of an ecology unit by creating books, skits, raps, and poems to present to citizens at the retirement community. The students conducted the service learning project with enthusiasm and the residents at the retirement community enjoyed their visits (Elvin, 2011).

Similar to the experience shared by Elvin is another study, which an elementary teacher in a fourth and fifth grade combination classroom presented a service learning civics unit grounded in citizenship education that produced positive outcomes, improved student attendance, and increased student motivation and enthusiasm towards learning (Ponder & Lewis-Ferrell, 2009). The teacher facilitated by moving students in a step-by-step process of understanding the roles and responsibilities of a good citizen and establishing a democratic classroom. The plan for the projects required students to work in multiple roles in putting their ideas into action. The reflection process or reflective thinking was continuous throughout the civics unit in helping students to make sense of their experience (Ponder & Lewis-Ferrell, 2009). Ponder and Lewis-Ferrell (2009) shared that both of the service learning projects reinforced students' research, reading,

writing, communication, and citizenship skills through content integration that reinforced students' reading skills authentically.

Soslau and Yost (2007) concluded from the results of a quantitative study that integrating math, literacy, and a service learning experience increased student learning and motivation. The study involved two groups, the experimental and control, of African American urban fifth grade students eligible for the free and reduced lunch program. The experimental group received the content integration and service learning experience; the control group received traditional instruction without the service learning experience. Data collected from the study showed an increase in math and reading scores, increases in attendance, decreases in student suspensions with students in the experimental group in comparison to the control group. Moreover, Soslau and Yost (2007) further emphasized that in the era of accountability and federal mandates, schools adopt the practice of service learning because it is an effective pedagogical strategy to enhance student academic achievement.

Specific standards have been designed to guide educators in conducting service learning activities. Nelson and Sneller (2011) collected data from several studies on the effectiveness of implementing quality service learning programs in schools with at-risk adolescents that incorporated the K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice. The service learning standards for K-12 included eight domains with standards that are clear, measureable, and actionable for producing positive outcomes. The eight standards are" (1) duration and intensity, (2) link to curriculum, (3) partnerships, (4) meaningful

service, (5) youth voice, (6) reflection, (7) diversity, and (8) progress monitoring” (Nelson & Sneller, 2011, p. 15). Reportedly, Nelson and Sneller (2011) indicated that the standards of linking service learning to the curriculum and progress monitoring aligned with the goal of helping students to improve their reading and comprehending of content text in order to learn the essential content skills through the integrated approach.

The positive outcomes reported about the various service learning programs indicate the need for educators to incorporate the K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice in the instructional setting. Producing high quality service learning programs capitalize on the positive qualities that students have to offer. Implementing high quality service learning programs possibly will yield positive outcomes academically, socially, and behaviorally (Nelson & Sneller, 2011).

The school district leaders in the project study designed the integrated curriculum to improve students’ reading and comprehending of content text by providing authentic and relevant learning experiences. Beckhem and Watkins (2012) contented that preparing students for the 21st century workplace means schools need to provide authentic learning through experiential learning because “90% of the skills needed by today’s knowledge workers are experiential”(p. 61). Nonetheless, it is significant to point out that the delivery of high quality real-life experiential learning has been described as difficult, time-consuming, costly, and difficult to assess and scale (Beckem & Watkins, 2012).

Rumsey and Nihiser (2011) addressed the difficult question of what happens when service learning fails. The authors contended that service learning has the potential to fail if there is a breakdown in communication, an unclear focus, and lack of direction, lack of consistency, weak collaboration, and limited resources. Rumsey and Nihiser (2011) presented these pitfalls to inform and warn educators of the possible challenges to beware of when conducting service learning projects.

The literature presented on experiential learning and service learning supports the need for educators to provide learning experiences for the Grade 3 students in the study that are authentic, hands-on, and help students to understand the relevancy of learning content subject matter. In experiential learning, a required skill needed by the Grade 3 students is the ability to read and comprehend text. As a part of the knowledge acquisition, students research information, work in groups, collaborate, reflect, problem solve, and use critical thinking skills in linking classroom learning to outside learning. Of the skills, attitudes, and dispositions noted in the literature, the ability to read proficiently stood among one of those critical life skills.

Conclusion

The review of literature centered on the conceptual frameworks of constructivism and the integrated curriculum approach, researched-based reading and reading comprehension strategies, and experiential learning. The research presented showed that there is an increase in the practice and popularity of content integration in today's instructional settings. The discussion focused on researched-based practices that will

equip educators with resources concerning the effectiveness of the integrated curriculum approach in K-12 and higher educational settings, which are applicable for teachers to use with struggling Grade 3 students. Research studies consistently indicated how content integration supported students' reading achievement. The need to provide teacher training and preparation in how to incorporate constructive teaching principles and implement an integrated curriculum are crucial elements that can contribute to the program's success. Much of the reading in third grade is expository text; therefore; cognitive, metacognitive, and comprehension strategies will serve as useful tools to help students read and comprehend expository text. In addition, significant information was presented regarding criticisms and concerns to be aware of when implementing an integrated curriculum based on constructivist principles. The third grade integrated curriculum program in the study included Grade 3 students participating in service learning, which is experiential learning that can promote reading literacy. Service learning is active learning in which young people make relevant contributions to their communities by problem solving a need (Kielsmeier, 2011). In conclusion, the body of evidence presented indicates that improving Grade 3 students' achievement in reading is highly dependent on teacher practice.

Implications

The integrated curriculum unit program in this study is a constructivist approach designed by the school district's leaders to address Grade 3 students' struggles in reading and comprehending content text. An integrated curriculum that infuses reading

instruction has the potential to improve students' reading achievement (Polkinghorne et al., 2010). Based on the anticipated findings of data collection and analysis, there are several implications for possible project directions to consider from conducting this qualitative case study.

An action research or program evaluation research study could be considered. Action research study could address the areas for enhancing the current integrated curriculum program. A program evaluation study could provide insight about the professional development, resources, and other support systems in the curriculum program. The possibility of conducting action research or a program evaluation research would provide an extensive amount of information about the overall program and unknown developments that may arise. Presenting a comprehensive report could enlighten decision makers as they reflect on the current integrated curriculum program in place.

Furthermore, designing a structured professional development training program could be considered. The program would include training on constructivist teaching and reading practices to incorporate in an integrated curriculum. The teacher training program would include the necessary resources and support for helping teachers transition, experience comfort, and think outside-the-box in helping Grade 3 students who struggle to read and comprehend grade level content text.

Summary

In summary, I discussed how one urban school district sought proactive measures to address Grade 3 students' inability to read and comprehend printed text in the content subject areas. The school district leaders planned, developed, and implemented an integrated curriculum that infuses reading instruction for all Grade 3 teachers to use. The district found this reform measure necessary due to the steady decline of Grade 3 students' state reading test results and daily classroom performance.

The main idea of this research study is to examine the effectiveness of an integrated curriculum that infuses reading instruction. Therefore, the guiding question I will address is, "What are teachers' perceptions of the third grade integrated curriculum in regards to Grade 3 students' reading achievement?"

In addition, I presented other research regarding the reading literacy concerns many people experience. Continuously, the federal government holds public schools accountable for providing quality instructional programs for all students in the United States for the purpose of preparing students to compete and function successfully in a global society (United States Department of Education, 2010). Schools are in need of a curriculum that provides authentic learning opportunities and supports the achievement of students from diverse backgrounds; so that they can pass high stakes tests. To prepare students for the real world and to pass the state reading test, the school district in the study required all third grade teachers to implement the integrated curriculum as a daily instructional practice and all students to conduct an experiential service learning project.

Operational terms and definitions were also introduced. The operational terms are presented throughout the project study. I presented clear and simplistic definitions to convey an understanding of terms and how they relate to the information discussed in the project study.

The literature review contained current research regarding the frameworks of constructivism, experiential learning, reading comprehension researched-based practices, and the integrated curriculum approach. The frameworks are models that provide scientific evidence of how the integrated curriculum affects student achievement and teacher practice for educators in search of effective strategies for schools failing to meet the reading needs of a diverse student population. Compelling evidence was reported from the empirical studies, which discussed how the frameworks prepare students with the life skills of demonstrating proficiency in reading, solving real-life problems, effectively communicating and collaborating, and using their creative abilities. These are life skills that Wagner (2008) and the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2009) advocate all students need to be college, career, and citizen ready. In addition, a discussion was presented on possible implications and limitations that may result in conducting this project study.

Section 2, the methodology section, presents a detailed description of the qualitative case study approach employed. Section 2 entails the sampling procedures, types of data collected, data collection procedures, and data analysis. The significance of Section 2 is that this section lays the ground work needed to answer the research question

and subquestions based on the teachers' perceptions concerning the effectiveness of the integrated curriculum program that infuses reading instruction.

In Section 3, each aspect of the project study will be explained, which includes the goals, rationale for selecting the project, and how the project addresses the problem in the study. Then I will present a second review of the literature regarding the project. The project will include a plan that outlines the implementation process, resources needed, timeline, and the roles and responsibilities of the individuals involved in the project. An evaluation plan will be developed and implemented to provide feedback about the project. Included in the evaluation plan will be a description justifying the selection of the evaluation tool, the evaluation goals, and the names of key stakeholders. Implications for social change and the significance of the project on the local level and in the broader community will be addressed.

Section 4 will provide a description of what was learned, experiences in conducting the study, and how the project can benefit students experiencing reading and reading comprehension difficulties through an integrated curriculum approach. This reflective section will also note the project study's strengths, limitations, and provide recommendations based on the work of the study.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

The problem of this qualitative project study was that Grade 3 students struggled to read and comprehend grade level content text. These Grade 3 students needed to pass the Virginia reading standards of learning test administered at the end of the school year. The school district in the study designed and implemented an integrated curriculum program in 2011. A qualitative instrumental case study design was used to learn teachers' perceptions of the third grade integrated curriculum in regards to Grade 3 students' reading achievement.

In the methodology section, I explained the research design and justification for selecting a qualitative design, the setting, participants' description, selection process, and procedures for gaining access to the participants. Descriptions for establishing a working relationship and ethical considerations concerning the participants, data collection, and the role of the researcher are also discussed. Data analysis included a descriptive account of how data were analyzed, coded, triangulated, and measured for ensuring credibility and accuracy.

Research Design and Approach

A qualitative case study was used for this study. A case study is defined as an "in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (Merriam, 2009, p. 40). Using a case study approach allowed for flexibility of obtaining meaningful information to provide a rich detailed description and to capture the full complexity and uniqueness

(Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010) of the integrated curriculum program's effectiveness through the words of the third grade teacher participants.

Merriam (2009) defined qualitative research as "how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world" (p. 13). Qualitative research, inductive, interpretive, and holistic, allowed for reporting multiple perspectives of the effectiveness of implementing an integrated curriculum that infuses reading instruction. A qualitative study supported selecting a small purposeful sample to learn and understand the daily practices of the teacher participants as the product of qualitative inquiry is richly descriptive, using words and pictures to describe what has been learned about the phenomenon (Creswell, 2009).

The specific case study in this single unit was instrumental. In an instrumental case study, I examined an integrated program that infuses reading mainly to provide insight or redraw a generalization (Merriam, 2009) regarding the program's effectiveness in promoting reading achievement and how those findings aligned with the literature. Employing an instrumental case study helped to understand the interconnectedness of the integrated curriculum, reading instruction, and experiential service learning for the purposes of improving teacher practices and student learning. Furthermore, the instrumental case study research was helpful in facilitating and understanding whether the integrated curriculum supported students' progress in the area of reading (Merriam, 2009).

In moving forward, an explanation was warranted to justify selecting a qualitative design versus a quantitative design. In a qualitative design, the sampling method used was purposeful or intentional based on people who can provide the best information for understanding the phenomenon studied. A qualitative study was deemed appropriate for answering the guiding question of this study. By conducting a qualitative study, data collection and analysis through semistructured interviews provided insight about daily practices, resources, teacher-student interactions, student work, and methods for monitoring and assessing students' learning. I conducted face-to-face interviews, which demonstrated sensitivity to ethical issues and challenges by establishing rapport and going to the worksite or place convenient to the participants (Creswell, 2012).

I considered employing a quantitative design; however, this design was ineffective in adequately answering the study's research question and subquestions. In comparison to the qualitative design, a quantitative design required the practice of using systematic random sampling to identify participants and sites, which is less effective for this study. By using numerical data, I would have failed to disclose a descriptive account of teachers' perceptions of the effects of teaching the integrated curriculum program to students struggling to read and comprehend grade level content text. The quantitative process required distributing anonymous questionnaires or having participants come to an experimental laboratory, thereby eliminating the possibility for me to collect data in a natural setting or establishing a direct working relationship with participants. Instead, the qualitative design allowed me to generate open-ended questions specific to the study,

contrary to the quantitative design that involved collecting closed-ended data, often using another researcher's instrument Creswell, 2012). For the reasons presented, a qualitative design was the most effective approach to employ.

The Setting

The school district for this study was a mid-size urban public school district located in Virginia, in the United States of America. The district's integrated curriculum program was implemented in the 2011-2012 year. During that period, the school district's educators served a student population of approximately 30,500 students in five early childhood centers, 24 elementary schools, seven middle schools, five high schools, one middle/high combination school, and nine program sites. In the school district, there were 2, 262 Grade 3 students of different ethnic backgrounds, ability levels, and socioeconomic statuses. Of the 24 elementary schools, 14 were Title 1 and four were magnet schools that specialized in environmental science, communications arts, global studies, and math, science, and technology. Instructional settings consisted of general education students, English language learners, and students with specific disabilities (learning disabled, emotional disturbed, orthopedic impaired and 504 Plan students).

Assumptions and Limitations

I assumed that I would recruit 15 teachers to volunteer for the study; however, 13 teachers agreed to volunteer for the study. A second assumption was that I would be able to view students' work samples. That form of data collection was amended to developing a teacher feedback of students' progress of work form in which teachers provided the

information because the district's review board does not allow viewing any documents that exposes a student's name. Initially, I planned to gain access to the participants by seeking support from the social studies curriculum supervisor, who oversees the integrated curriculum. However, I readjusted my plan. According to the school district's review board, I was directed to work with the building principal in gaining access to the participants. A final assumption was the participants would provide accurate information.

There were several possible limitations. All of the participants in the study were females. This may have affected the views and themes provided to address the effectiveness of the program. The sample size was also small and homogeneous, which makes it difficult to generalize the results. Moreover, the study focused on third grade only. Some modifications would be needed for a different elementary grade level, middle school, or high school setting.

Participants for the Study

The participants for the study were 13 third grade teachers from five elementary schools in this urban school district. The sampling strategy was purposeful sampling, homogeneous, to recruit participants currently employing the integrated curriculum and had vital information to contribute to the study's guiding question (Lodico et al., 2010). A participant pool of this size produced a large amount of data to obtain a point of saturation in learning and understanding the effects of implementing the integrated curriculum program in regards to students' reading achievement (Merriam, 2009). I am

employed in an elementary school in the same school district as the participants; therefore, the participant selection process involved teachers employed at a different elementary school where I am not employed.

Criteria for Participant Selection

The criteria for the participant selection were third grade teachers who (a) had 3 or more years of teaching experience, (b) attended the district's integrated curriculum professional developments, and (c) had been implementing the district's integrated curriculum since the program was first implemented in the beginning of the 2011 school year. The program had been in effect for 2 years. The teaching experiences of the participants in the study ranged from 4 to 28 years.

I worked as an elementary administrator at an elementary school in same school district as the participants and did not hold a supervisory role over them. None of the participants selected were employed at the same school where I worked. At the school where I am employed, some of my responsibilities involved participating in the same training as the participants and evaluating teachers' progress in implementing the integrated curriculum program; therefore, I established a relationship that was professional and respectful, and I took ethical measures to protect them. A quality case study was used to provide an in-depth account and understanding through listening and gathering information (Creswell, 2009) from third grade teachers who were willing to share their experiences and knowledge about the effectiveness of the integrated curriculum program.

Access to Participants and Establishing a Work Relationship

Initially, I planned to gain access to the participants by seeking support from the social studies curriculum supervisor, who oversees the integrated curriculum. However, I readjusted my plan. According to the school district's review board, I was directed to work with the building principal in gaining access to the participants. By way of email communication, I provided a written copy of the purpose and intent of the research study to seven elementary principals along with a copy of the district's letter of approval to conduct the study (See Appendices C and D). The only question addressed from most of the principals was the amount of time needed with teachers. I communicated the answer to that concern. All of the principals were supportive and responded quickly. Principals from five elementary schools provided me the names of 17 teachers to invite to the study. I then sent email invitations to the recommended third grade teachers, inviting them to volunteer for the study (See Appendix E). I introduced myself, provided a reason for the communication, and explained the nature of the study.

Thirteen teachers agreed to volunteer for the study. Initially, I planned to invite 15 teachers; however, only 13 teacher participants responded. Then, I sent a second email arranging a time and place to conduct the interview and a copy of the confidentiality agreement to each teacher. Teachers emailed the date and place. Next, I addressed all questions asked by the participants by phone or through email. At the request of the teachers, all interviews were conducted at their schools. Then, I sent a third email confirming the interview date along with a copy of the interview questions. In

addition, I communicated that at the conclusion of the study, I would disclose my findings to the building administrators and the teachers as recommended by Creswell (2012).

The window for data collection was tight. I began collecting data in April 2014 and completed the collection process near the end of May 2014. The district's review board and principals preferred that I complete the data collection process before the administration of state assessments began. Data collection was completed before state assessments were administered.

Ethical Considerations

Creswell (2009) asserted the need for all researchers "to be aware of and anticipate ethical issues in their research" (p. 22). Therefore, in the process of collecting data for this study, I respected the participants and the research sites and eliminated putting them at risk or causing harm. No names were disclosed in the study. The teacher participants were assigned a number to protect their identities. Participants received no compensation, rewards, or benefits. I collected the signed consent forms prior to conducting the interviews. In working to obtain a successful study, I practiced the ethical behaviors advocated by Creswell (2012).

I obtained approval from Walden University (approval #01-02-239138) and the school district's review board to conduct the study. I provided a copy of the letter from the school district's review board to the building principals verifying permission to move forth (See in Appendix D). Located in Appendix F is a copy of my certificate verifying

training through National Institutes of Health, a requirement for protecting research participants in the study. All data collected, the audiotaped interviews, transcriptions, and my field notes, were stored in a computer file protected by a secure password. I understood and complied with the university's review board policy and did not disclose any information.

There were several possible conflicts that I considered in conducting this study. I am the researcher who is an elementary assistant principal in this urban school district. There was the possible concern that teachers felt they had to participate in the study, which could be viewed as a conflict of interest because I hold a supervisory role. However, I work at a different elementary school than the teacher participants. Therefore, I did not hold a supervisory role over them. A part of my supervisory role involved evaluating teachers' progress in implementing the integrated curriculum program. In working with the study's participants, my relationship was professional and respectful, and ethical measures were initiated to protect them. I had no prior connections to the participants.

I worked to establish rapport and trust with the interviewees by taking the time to get acquainted with them. I addressed all questions and concerns before, during, and after the interviews. Full disclosure of the nature of the study, interviews, audio recording the interviews, and completing the teacher feedback form were communicated. I informed the participants of their right to quit the study at any time.

The interview process was timely. I communicated to the participants that interviews would be recorded, the amount of time needed to conduct the interviews, and the possibility of asking further questions later if needed. In addition, I arranged a time and place at the convenience of the teacher participants to conduct uninterrupted private interviews as recommended by Merriam (2009).

More ethical practices included complying with the guidelines from the university and school district institutional review boards, which included the discovery of a teacher participant's ineffectiveness in job performance. Reporting information objectively is significant in establishing a credible study (Creswell, 2012). This included stating my biases upfront about wanting positive outcomes from the study. I understood the critical need to report the information collected objectively, even if my research study revealed less favorable results (Creswell, 2012).

Data Collection and Methods

I used strategies from Creswell (2012) and Merriam (2009) in developing a data collection plan. I listed and explained the types of data needed, how the data were collected, the time frame and schedule for data collection, procedures for administering the study in an ethical manner (this was discussed in detail earlier), and the role of the researcher. My data collection plan outlined the appropriate structures and ethical procedures to follow (Creswell, 2012).

The forms of data collection I used to address the guiding question in the study were: (a) person-to-person interviews (b) teachers' completing a feedback form of

students' progress of work in the areas of reading, social studies, science, and service learning participation (See Appendix H), (c) the district's integrated curriculum unit plan (See Appendix B), and (d) field and reflective notes. In addition to audio recording the interviews, field and reflective notes were recorded in a journal from the interviews and information participants presented from completing teacher feedback of students' progress of work forms. The digital-recorded interviews with each teacher participant were semistructured with a mixture of structured and flexibly worded questions (Merriam, 2009). These methods of data collection assisted me in understanding from the participants' perspectives if an integrated curriculum that infuses reading instruction improved Grade 3 students' reading achievement (Merriam, 2009).

Plan and Duration of Data Collection

The time frame that I collected data from third grade teacher participants was six weeks. I gained access to the integrated curriculum unit from the district's curriculum website. The procedures I used for conducting each interview were consistent. The participants were responsible for completing and returning the teacher feedback forms electronically.

For structure, I developed an interview protocol. I generated questions based on my administrative and teaching experiences and by researching content integration. Then I consulted with a reading specialist colleague to conduct a final review of the questions. I developed the interview protocol to ensure that the appropriate questions yield specific information needed to address the study's guiding question and subquestions (Creswell,

2012). The interview protocol (See Appendix G) contained 13 questions and the teacher feedback form contained five tables (See Appendix H) that provided information needed to understand the effects of utilizing an integrated curriculum that infuses reading instruction for Grade 3 students who struggled to read and comprehend grade level content material.

Prior to the interview, I emailed the participants a copy of the interview questions a week in advance. The location and time of the interview was determined by each of the interviewees and communicated to each building administrator. On the scheduled day of the interview, I did a meet and greet with each building administrator. We talked briefly about the study. Then I met with each participant to conduct the interview.

When meeting with each teacher participant, I began the interview process by establishing a rapport with the teacher participant through casual conversation of an exchange of information about each other's lives. Signed consent forms were collected prior to conducting the interviews. Then I reviewed the interview expectations and addressed each participant's questions or concerns. Each participant acknowledged no questions or concerns to address. After setting up and testing the digital recorder, I conducted and recorded the interview. Each of the interviews lasted 25 to 30 minutes.

My first two interviews were more of a learning experience. I notated my impressions of the two participants. The participants were somewhat reserved and cautious about their responses. One participant apologized for giving what she perceived to be a negative response to a question. I shared there is no right or wrong answer; it is

what you think or perceive. I provided reassurances by complimenting them on their teaching practices and having child-centered classrooms, which put them at ease. In moving forth with the other interviewees, I began by complimenting them on their teaching abilities. Other impressions noted were throughout the interviews, teachers spoke freely, laughed, and provided a wealth of information. In addition, I noted the teacher participants did not use the term constructivism but some of their practices suggested a constructivist approach. The participants spoke very little about service learning. In audio taping the interviews there were a few interruptions with three of the teacher participants such as teachers coming in the class to get materials, announcements over the intercom, and the cell phone ringing, mine.

A second form of data collection involved documenting evidence of students' progress in which teachers completed a feedback form of students' progress of work located in Appendix H. The teacher feedback form contained five tables on Grade 3 students' progress in reading, social studies, science and service learning participation.

The feedback form contained a compiled list of each teacher participant's responses for the five tables listed (See Appendix H). In Table 6 of the teacher feedback form, each participant listed the reading skills reinforced through journal response work, criteria used to assess journal work, and a description of students' overall performance of work. Table 7, each participant indicated how many students read above, on, and below benchmark. Tables 8 and 9, each participant listed the history and science project and report assignments, criteria used to assess the history and science assignments, and Grade

3 students' overall performance. For Table 10, each participant typed an "X" in the box to indicate the level of classroom participation in conducting a service learning project. I reviewed the directions for completing the feedback form, answered questions asked, and informed participants to return the forms by email.

In bringing closure to the interviews, I communicated the possible need to ask additional questions later. I thanked the participants for volunteering their time for the study. After the interviews, I notated in my journal impressions of the interviewees' behaviors.

I transcribed the interview data and emailed each participant a copy of the transcription to review for accuracy of information. Two minor challenges I faced were getting the five of the teacher participants to return the teacher feedback forms and verify the interview data within the deadline set. I sent two to three email reminders. All of the participants verified the transcriptions and returned the completed feedback forms.

The third form of data collected was the district's integrated curriculum unit. The integrated curriculum unit (See Appendix B) was comprised of one major theme and nine subthemes. Each of the nine subthemes contained a big question. Through the theme-related unit, students are expected to read and learn the essential grade level concept skills.

I kept a journal of field and reflective notes. My notes contained information on what I gleaned from (1) teacher interviews, (2) examining the contents of the integrated unit to determine what students' are expected to achieve, (3) using teachers' feedback of

students' work progress to determine if teachers adhered to the plan, and (4) examining students' reading levels to determine if the integrated unit supports students' reading achievement regardless of their reading abilities (below, on, or above grade level in reading).

Researcher's Role

I was the primary source for collecting data. I sought to collect and analyze the multiple sources of data to address the guiding question and subquestions and how the data related how this information related to the literature review presented in the study. I, the assistant principal, was employed in the same district as the participants. I conducted the study in an ethical manner and did not hold a supervisory role in collecting data for the study. The participants were selected from different elementary schools in the district. This excluded selecting participants working at the same school site where I worked. There were no prior connections with the teacher participants. I complied with the guidelines set forth by institutional review boards for Walden University and the school district. I informed each participant of the right to discontinue the study at any time. Each participant was provided a copy of the interview transcription for review to ensure accuracy of data collected. Transcription and feedback form data were assigned a number (Teacher 1, Teacher 2, etc.) to protect the participants' identities. Confidential interview and teacher feedback data, and my notes were secured in a computer file protected by a password.

I spent time establishing rapport with the participants in an effort to build trust and respect. I worked to remain objective and to reduce biases concerning feelings, attitudes, and thoughts of what was disclosed from the participants. I collected huge amounts of interview data for reporting the effectiveness of the program, which was done by exhibiting behaviors that were nonjudgmental, sensitive, respectful, and involved active listening throughout the interviews (Merriam, 2009).

Data Analysis

To analyze the data I employed Creswell's (2012) steps, which included preparing, organizing, and interpreting the interview data. The six steps I used were (a) preparing and organizing data that were analyzed, (b) thoroughly reading all the data, (c) coding organized information into chunks or segments, (d) coding for generating a description, (e) writing a narrative to communicate the findings of the data analyzed, and (f) interpreting the meaning of the data analyzed (Creswell, 2012).

In the first step I prepared and organized multiple sources of data, which was critical because of the large amounts of information collected in a qualitative case study (Creswell, 2012). The audio taped interviews were transcribed. I had the teacher feedback form data, downloaded a copy of the district's integrated unit, and my typed notes. Triangulation," the process of corroborating evidence" (Creswell, 2012, p.259) from the interviews and documents enhanced the accuracy of the project study.

I used the qualitative computer software program, HyperRESEARCH (ResearchWare, 2012), for storing, organizing, and coding raw data. The qualitative

software program allowed for quick access in searching through data, locating key words or phrases, grouping information based on similar characteristics and grouping information by research question and subquestions.

In step two, I read the interview answers, documents, and typed notes to obtain an understanding of the data. Initially, I developed some tentative codes. Open coding, forming “initial categories of information about the phenomenon being studied by segmenting information” (Creswell, 2012, p. 424) was used. Data from the interview transcriptions, teacher feedback forms, integrated unit plan, and field and reflective notes were organized under broad categories selected to address the research questions. The broad categories were (a) professional development, resources and support, (b) typical day of teaching content integration and reading, (c) strategies for integrating reading, (d) monitoring student learning, (e) barriers for infusing reading across the curriculum, and (f) suggestions for improving the program. Teachers’ feedback of students’ progress in completing reading journals, social studies and science projects and reports, and reading levels were categorized as teachers’ feedback of students’ progress of work. Data pertaining to the curriculum unit were categorized as the integrated unit.

Then I sorted the information from each participant’s answers to the interview questions under the broad categories. I read through the data again to determine which multiple data sources, which included specific interview answers by questions addressed the research questions. I placed this information under the research question and subquestions. Table 4 shows data used to answer the guiding question and subquestions.

Table 4

Data Used to Address Research Questions

	Interviews	Teacher Feedback Form	District's Integrated Curriculum Unit
Guiding Question	X Q1, Q2, Q5, Q6, Q7, Q8, Q9, Q10, Q11	X	X
Subquestion 1	X Q3, Q4, Q10		
Subquestion 2		X	X
Subquestion 3	X Q1, Q2, Q12, Q13		

Data collection and analysis were simultaneous and continuous. Organizing the triangulated data in the manner explained, provided critical information needed to compare and analyze the cases and documents. Participants' answers to nine of the interview questions addressed the guiding research question. I addressed the guiding question from (a) answers to Questions 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11, (b) teacher feedback of students' progress from work form, and (c) the district's integrated curriculum unit. Participants' answers from interview questions 3, 4, and 10 addressed subquestion one. Data from the teacher feedback form and district's integrated unit addressed subquestion two. Participants' answers from interview questions 1, 2, 12, and 13 addressed subquestion three.

During the analysis I highlighted key information from the interview data and color coded certain information that continued to surface repeatedly. For the teacher feedback form, I listed the information collected about the reading journals, reading

levels, social studies performance, science performance, and service learning participation. I sought to find connections among teacher participants' responses to the questions, their use of the district's integrated unit plan, the reading and content assignments completed by students, and evidence that suggested students' used their reading and research skills to enhance reading progress.

Step three involved condensing the codes, labeling segments of information, examining for overlaps and repeated information. Data that did not support answering the study's question were placed in a separate file. The coding process was helpful in sorting out and making sense of information collected (Creswell, 2012). In facilitating the analysis process, interview data, and notes from teachers' feedback of students' progress of work and the integrated unit were read and reread, examined, and coded based on similarities and differences (Creswell, 2012).

Research Findings

I presented my findings upon the completion of three more steps of the data analysis process. In step four I continued analyzing the data in which my interpretations of the information led to the emergence of four major themes. The four emerging major themes were (a) Infusing Reading across the IC and Reading Achievement, (b) Infusing Reading in the Integrated Curriculum, (c) Teachers' Experiences Affected Reading Outcomes, and (d) Barriers and Lessons Learned.

Step five; I represented the themes in a qualitative narrative. The narrative conveyed my findings from data collection and analysis that lead to answering the

study's research question and subquestions in the final narrative report (Creswell, 2012). A part of my findings included direct quotes from the participants. I compared data collected to determine if and what relationship existed in helping struggling students to read and comprehend grade level content text in an integrated curriculum that infuses reading instruction. For step six of Creswell's (2012) data analysis process, I interpreted or provided meaning of the data. A peer-debriefer was included throughout the data collection, data analysis, and completion of the final report.

The data I collected from interviews, teachers completing a feedback form of students' progress from work, and the district's integrated unit answered the following guiding research question and subquestions:

What are teachers' perceptions of the Grade 3 integrated curriculum, in regards to grade three students' reading achievement?

1. How do teachers infuse reading across the integrated curriculum?
2. How have the teachers' experiences in working with the integrated curriculum affected students' reading outcomes?
3. What lessons did teachers learn from infusing reading across the integrated curriculum?

Theme 1: Infusing Reading Across the IC and Reading Achievement

Data collected from teacher interviews addressed the study's guiding research question: "What are teachers' perceptions of the third grade integrated curriculum in

regard to Grade 3 students' reading achievement?" The following questions on the interview protocol supported the findings for the guiding research question:

Q1. What are your perceptions of the integrated curriculum professional development?

Q2: Did the professional developments affect your teaching practices? Please explain.

Q5. What resources do you use to infuse reading across the curriculum?

Q6. Describe the support systems in place for infusing reading throughout the integrated curriculum.

Q7. In utilizing the integrated curriculum and reading instruction, how did you monitor student learning?

Q8. To what extent do you collaborate with team members about infusing reading instruction across the curriculum?

Q9. What information do you share in your team meetings about content integration and reading instruction?

Q10. What are significant factors for integrating reading across the curriculum?

Q11. What did you notice about your students' interactions in learning how to read using the content integration process?

I interpreted from responses there were significant indicators affecting Grade 3 students' reading achievement, which were (a) teachers knowing how to teach reading, (b) teacher collaboration, (c) resources and support, and (c) student learning and

reactions. Then I divided these indicators into subthemes to provide detailed descriptions I captured from the participants' views. From the teachers' responses I discovered that these were indicators in which teachers perceived to be beneficial in promoting Grade 3 students' reading achievement in an integrated curriculum.

The need to know how to teach reading. The participants in the study provided rich descriptions of their reading instruction, which led to this subtheme. The specifics of reading strategies in the content integration process will be explained further in subquestion one. From the participants' responses for Q5 and Q10, I learned their reading practices were consistent in that teacher participants worked with small and large groups and taught students the similar strategies for comprehending and reading grade level content text materials.

In addition, I learned from participants' answers to Q5 and Q10 that during the reading block time, teachers used the reading instruction plans or anchor lessons developed by the school district. The lessons focused upon teaching students reading comprehension strategies. The reading specialist within each school presented trainings and attended some of the third grade participants' planning sessions.

Three major components of the participants' reading instruction were fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension instruction. Teachers reported they used anchor lessons in which a specific comprehension strategy was introduced and modeled followed by independent practice by students. Eleven of the teachers discussed how they introduced the comprehension strategies in whole group and later met with students

during small group instruction. Students were ability grouped in small groups to further reinforce fluency, reading comprehension, and vocabulary skills. The other two teachers in the study, who taught gifted students, reported they did very little small group reading instruction because their students were advanced readers. All of the teachers shared that they used the reading strategies when teaching content matter material.

Teacher collaboration in an integrated curriculum. The participants in the study reported positively regarding collaborating to implement the integrated curriculum. According to their responses to Q5, Q6, Q8, and Q9, teachers were responsible for planning the lessons and gathering the materials needed, which they shared was time intensive; however, working together made the job doable. Teachers were in constant communication with each other.

Answers from Q8 and Q9 indicated through teacher collaboration the participants planned, wrote lesson plans, shared resources, and created a share server to upload plans for team members to access. The participants discussed their students' progress and problem solved concerns. Teacher 7 stated, "We always have our SOLs out and talk about pacing, how long we are going to teach it, and just share ideas. We know our own kids and how to adjust it". Teacher 9 remarked, "We share data; we talk about what's coming up, what we need to not forget. Like, we use the shared mind mentality, like don't forget to do this, oh yeah, that makes me think of that. We just kind of feed off of each other, and share with each other what we need to remember to do." Also, Teacher 13 pointed out, "I think that we just come across from different areas. We have different

strengths, different children. And so, somebody will come to the table with a book. Somebody will come to the table with a website. Somebody will come to the table with ideas. Somebody will come to the table with centers. Somebody will come to the table with I don't know what to do with little Johnny; oh, I tried this." These statements were among some of the evidence of the role of teacher collaboration in an integrated curriculum program.

To further add, teachers shared that other teacher collaboration involved the reading specialist and teachers themselves taking ownership to learn how to infuse reading across the curriculum. I interpreted from the participants' responses that learning how to integrate the curriculum was left up to them to problem solve. They perceived the district's professional development helpful in providing the unit with the instructional topics, goals, and timelines but did not model practices for integrating the content.

During the 2011-2012 year, the school district leaders provided a half day division wide integrated curriculum training with all third grade teachers. The teachers in the study reported unfavorably about the training. Teachers perceived the training to be rushed with too much information being crammed in during a short period of time (I mentioned earlier that this was a rescheduled condensed training because of bad weather conditions.) The training covered the contents of the integrated unit plan with the reminder that students were expected to participate in a service learning project. Teachers reported that they retained little to no information. They did report that the district providing the integrated curriculum with the thematic units and reading resources

to be helpful tools. Teachers further indicated that the reading specialist was a good resource in guiding them in the reading process. I interpreted from the participants responses that they had flexibility planning how to infuse reading across the curriculum as long as they presented the topics and goals in the districts' curriculum thematic unit. Above all, I learned collaboration was a key factor in the planning and teaching process.

Resources and support structures. Teachers discussed that they had access to the district's integrated unit, reading resources, time to plan, and support personnel for implementing the integrated curriculum. Teachers further reported that the resources provided were helpful but noted that content resources were limited.

In 2011-2012, the school district in the study implemented the integrated curriculum to support third grade students' struggling to read and comprehend grade level text. All third grade teachers were mandated to implement the plan, which was located on the district's curriculum website. Furthermore, teachers implementing the integrated curriculum unit would be able to provide Grade 3 students the experience to learn about the world that they live in through teaching the theme-based unit (See Appendix B). The curriculum unit contained one major theme and nine subthemes as shown in Table 5. Each of the subthemes listed the estimated time frame, enduring understandings, essential questions, topics and state standards of learning objectives (See Appendix B). Participants viewed the integrated curriculum unit as a helpful tool in giving them a guide of what needed to be covered for the school year.

Table 5

Major Theme: Our World: Understand the past. Affect the present. Grow the future.

Marking period	Unit	Subtheme topic	Estimated time
1 st	1	Rules and laws	24 days
	2	Places and populations	19 days
2 nd	3	Shaping our world	21 days
	4	Measuring our world	25 days
3 rd	5	Making choices	18 days
	6	Exploring our world	25.5 days
4 th	7	Individual contributions	14 days
	8	Symbols and synthesis	10 days
	9	Meet Virginia	7 days

Note. [REDACTED] School Curriculum, 2012

Another resource was technology. Technology resources were the internet, Smart software, reading and content software programs, and the state department of education's website. The concern expressed was the limited number of laptops and computers, which teachers found to be a barrier. More resources included science and social studies textbooks, books from each school's library, personal classroom libraries, reading trade books, and reading resource materials provided by the school district.

Participants further shared that the reading specialist, reading interventionist, technology specialist, librarian, and administrators were support structures in helping with resources and implementing the integrated program. Among the support structures in place, teachers named their team members to be a valuable resource.

Student learning and reactions. Teachers viewed student learning and reactions to be significant indicators for determining the effectiveness of infusing reading in the

content integration process to support Grade 3 students' struggling to read and comprehend content text material. The district's goal was to provide a program for improving Grade 3 students' reading achievement and increase students' pass rates on the state reading test. To gauge Grade 3 students' reading progress, teacher participants presented a number of informal and formative means for assessing student learning.

Informally assessing learning included conducting student conferences, informal talks, teacher observations, anecdotal records, monitoring small group work, daily class work, and independent practice work. Teachers presented how they formatively assessed their students. Students completed exit cards and quick checks in which they responded to no more than five questions for the purpose of demonstrating their knowledge of a skill. Teachers administered content unit tests; teacher made tests and quizzes, and the district's benchmark assessments. In addition, teachers acknowledged they assessed students' learning through projects and reports. Teacher 9 shared how the results of student progress often led to a generated list of students needing additional reinforcement of skills that they failed to master. Teacher 10 stated how she viewed the assessment data, took notes, and streamlined instruction often to ensure that she was not teaching things that students already knew.

Moreover, from interview data I ascertained teachers perceived students' level of engagement increased. Teacher 4 discussed how students were "a bit more engaged" and responsive in learning real facts about the content. Teacher 6 said, "The students have a lot of ah-ha moments, where they say, "Oh, I see now how these things tie together".

“The children themselves begin to look for connections much more.” Teacher 7 remarked, “It helps them retain the content information that they are learning. It helps keep that knowledge fresh. They don’t just learn it and forget about it.” Teacher 9 said, “I see their excitement and the willingness to read a more challenging book because they have some content knowledge so they are going to pick that biography rather than that Dr. Seuss book. The student will say, “I want to read more about Thomas Jefferson, okay, what do we have?” “It brings out that piece in them that makes them interested.” Teacher 10, “I noticed that they are excited about reading. You know, we’ve got diversity in our books as far as the way the kids look in the books and what people are doing, and different places. We are actually having things offered that we taught across the curriculum. You have to do this now, put the book down. You can take it with you to the lunchroom. Some kids choose to read during recess.” Teacher 11, “Children became more fluent with the vocabulary, because they were hearing the vocabulary often throughout the day.” Teacher 12, “When they can read and write about it, a lot of kids are very interested, especially with nonfiction.” Teacher 13, “So, I think that now the children are doing the talking, the children are finding each other’s errors. They are talking out why that’s an error. I think that just to have that more integrated, having more freedom; correlating the word integrated with more freedom to feel like I can let the subjects overlap.”

A few of the teachers emphasized the points to be cautious of to avoid jeopardizing students’ level of engagement, specifically when working with low level

readers. Teacher 1 cautioned that materials can affect the level of student engagement. Teacher 1 pointed out the need to have the appropriate materials based on students' reading levels. According to Teacher 1, "Your excelling readers are really going to dig deep and have the high level thinking about it and talk about it, whereas with your lower level readers, you are going to attach them to pictures, bold vocabulary, things like that when you integrate the curriculum. It's a lot more modeling and looking at the pacing and the vocabulary." In Teacher 3's class a high number of third grade students read below grade level readers (first grade reading ability). In the content integration process, Teacher 3 reported students' experienced frustration when given independent activities; the vocabulary was too difficult. Teacher 3 incorporated the practice of small group instruction to reinforce vocabulary orally. Teacher 3 stated, "I see a lot of frustration because it's too hard. You can only break down science words but so much. There are only certain things that you can reword and use smaller vocabulary."

Overall, I garnered from the interview data the teacher participants' perceived infusing reading across the curriculum, significant in helping students struggling to read and comprehend grade level content material. I interpreted from the participants' responses several significant indicators that supported them in the content integration process. Teachers indicated that even though their children's reading levels varied from reading below grade level, on grade level and above grade level, content matter material was difficult for them to read and understand. In other words, according to Teacher 1,

“Integrating reading is not just a choice; it is just the way it is. They won’t be successful any other way.”

Teachers indicated the integrated curriculum unit provided them a plan of the thematic units that included essential content information and timelines to teach the essential content material. Teachers did not perceive the professional development to be helpful in showing them how to implement the program and model content integration. Strategies for teaching reading were consistent among the teacher participants; however, teaching practices for implementing the integrated program to infuse reading were left up to the teachers to problem solve. Teacher 10 stated that she had some understanding of content integration, learned more about it by talking to others, and read articles to help in understanding what to do in the classroom. Teachers noted that during the implementation stage they would have preferred the district’s professional development included modeling content integration. The last significant indicators were measures teacher participants used to assess Grade 3 students’ progress and reactions. The various tools discussed for monitoring Grade 3 students’ reading progress demonstrated students’ reading and comprehending of grade level content material improved. Teacher participants revealed that students’ level of engagement increased; however, a few of the teacher participants warned that in content integration improving student learning and student engagement is contingent on providing the appropriate materials and pacing, specifically for below grade level readers to avoid student frustration.

Theme 2: Infusing Reading in the Integrated Curriculum

Theme 2 addressed the first subquestion: “How do teachers infuse reading across the curriculum?” My findings were based on interview data from three of the questions on the interview protocol:

Q3. What is a typical day like in your practice of integrating reading across the curriculum?

Q4. What teaching strategies did you use to integrate reading across the curriculum?

Q10. What are significant factors for integrating reading across the curriculum?

I sought to gain insight of the teacher participants’ instructional practices for infusing reading in the integrated curriculum. Through my analysis and interpretation of interview data, I noticed several practices or strategies consistently stood out from my coding of interview information on a typical teaching day, significant factors, and strategies for infusing reading. Teacher participants infused reading to support Grade 3 students struggling to read and comprehend grade level content text by utilizing the practices of (a) modeling, (b) cognition and metacognition, (c) exposing students to a variety of genre, (d) making connections, (e) graphic organizers, and (f) novel studies.

The teacher participants shared that they had a separate block of time to teach reading during the instructional day. Teachers infused the reading strategies and practices mentioned in the content areas of math, history, and science. I presented

strategies and practices teacher participants discussed for infusing reading instruction in the integrated curriculum unit.

Modeling and teaching students how to think were practices used. Teacher 1 stated, “I think for me, modeling pops out; just a lot, a lot, a lot of modeling. A lot of showing; a lot of when I do this I’m thinking; a lot of that kind of talk out loud to get them use to doing the types of things that you are asking them to do. And modeling for them what that looks like. Talking the talk; using the vocabulary. Just for my kids, a great deal of modeling.”

Another strategy teachers incorporated was exposing students to a variety of genres. The participants indicated how exposing students to different types of genre was intentional in helping students to grasp content concepts in the areas of science, social studies, and math. Teacher 2 used books with visuals and selected short passages from content text to help students to comprehend, read, and learn content concepts. Teacher 8 stated how infusing reading “within the content areas of science and social studies provided students’ the experience of learning the different text features of fiction and nonfiction books.” Teacher 3, “When I think of integrating, I think of exposure. They read it; they see it. They do it with us.”

One teacher participant used novel studies as a practice of developing students’ reading and comprehension skills and learning content text material. Much of Teacher 6’s reading instruction consisted of doing novel studies. Teacher 6 said, “Whenever there

are places in the novel where we can connect it to social studies, science, and even math, I'll do that.”

Making connections was another strategy. According to Teacher 5, “I think we are integrating in the curriculum using text-to-text and text-to-world and making connections daily.” Teacher 9 said that you have to make strong connections; then added, “If you are going to read a book, and you are going to make that connection, say to a biography, you need to make sure you are reading a strong biography; one that really represents the things you are pointing out.”

Still another strategy mentioned by teachers was the use of graphic organizers. Teacher 9 remarked, “One of the things that we use is a lot of graphic organizers. Graphic organizers whether it was a Venn diagram, a T-chart. It could be as simple as drawing pictures of boxes, and basically like a flow map, explaining what happened in all content areas, as well as reading and math.”

Theme 3: Teachers’ Experiences Affected Reading Outcomes

Data collected from the teacher feedback form and the district’s integrated curriculum unit addressed the second subquestion, “How have teachers’ experiences in working with the integrated curriculum affected students’ reading outcomes?”

Participants viewed the integrated curriculum unit as a helpful tool because the unit provided them a guide of the topics, skills, and learning goals for the school year. The teacher participants completed the teacher feedback of students’ progress of work form. The teacher feedback form consisted of five tables: (a) Table 6, Reading Journal

Performance, (b) Table 7, Reading Levels of Students, (c) Table 8, Students' Social Studies Performance, (d) Table 9, Students' Science Performance, and (e) Table 10, Service Learning Participation (See Appendix H). All of the tables displayed are located in Appendix G, which contained a summary of the information from all of the participants.

Table 6, Reading Journal Performance, displayed reading skills reinforced through students' journal responses, the criteria used to assess reading journal work a description of students' overall reading journal work and additional informational they wished to add. To gauge students' reading progress, the participants assigned topics and questions requiring students to present written responses to reinforce students' reading comprehension, vocabulary and allowed them to use prior knowledge in making connections. Table 6 displayed the various comprehension skills reinforced; comparing and contrasting, inferring, main idea, noting details, character traits, predicting, retelling, summarizing, and synthesis. Criteria used to assess students' progress ranged from anecdotal records, checklist, and students presenting oral presentations, rubrics, and individual student conferences. The majority of the participants commented within the school year students' growth as good to satisfactory.

Table 6

Reading Journal Performance Chart

List reading skills reinforced through journal response work	Comprehension-comparing/contrasting, inferring, main idea, noting details, drawing conclusions, character traits, predicting, retelling, summarizing, synthesis, making connections, and vocabulary
List criteria used to assess reading journal work	Anecdotal records Checklists Classroom Presentations -Allowing students to share what they wrote and hearing their explanations to check for understanding Rubric Student Conferences
Description of students' overall performance of reading journal work	1 Teacher Reported: Most students presented little detail to support answers when working independently. They often needed prompting from teacher to present satisfactory to near satisfactory work. 9 Teachers Reported: Most students made good to satisfactory growth throughout the year. 3 Teachers Reported: Majority of students used graphic organizers and gave good information; a few struggled because they would not use graphic organizer.
List additional information you wish to add	NONE

Table 7, Reading Levels of Students, displayed the number of students reading above benchmark, on benchmark, and below benchmark in each participant's class.

Class sizes ranged from 20 to 25 students. In Table 7, twelve of the participants' had

students reading below benchmark level. Seven of the 12 teacher participants' had 8 to 15 students reading below benchmark level. Teachers' 6, 9, 12, and 13 had the fewest number of students reading below benchmark (0 – 3 students). In comparison to the other teacher participants, Teacher 2 had the highest number of students reading below benchmark (15 students). Teacher 6, the only participant reported zero students read below grade level, five read on grade level and twenty read above grade level benchmark.

Table 7

Reading Level Performance

Reading Levels	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9	T10	T11	T12	T13
Above	5	0	4	6	5	20	5	4	4	9	5	17	5
On	9	5	8	8	7	5	11	12	14	8	13	5	18
Below	8	15	9	10	9	0	6	7	2	4	3	2	1
Total # Students	22	20	21	24	21	25	22	23	20	21	21	24	24

I interpreted from the reading level data that the varied reading abilities presented challenges in providing appropriate instruction. I reported earlier that the participants shared how reading content text was difficult for all Grade 3 students; even more so with below benchmark readers. Teacher 2 pointed out, “They are still learning to read instead of reading to learn. This is a huge thing for third graders.”

Table 8 Students' Social Studies Performance, displayed information about the projects and report assignments, criteria used to assess the projects and assignments and descriptions of students' overall performance of project and report assignments, and additional information they wished to add. The projects and report assignments aligned

with the district's integrated curriculum standards (See Appendix B) in which Grade 3 students are introduced to the heritage and contributions of ancient Greece, Rome, and West African empire of Mali. The projects and report assignments represented activities students completed to develop their geographical skills, demonstrate an understanding of basic economic concepts, demonstrate an understanding of basic principles of democracy, identify contributions by selected individuals, recognize American lifestyle and contributions (See Appendix B). Project and report assignments were completed in cooperative groups and the individual student. Some assignments were completed in school and some were assigned as homework. Checklists and rubrics were the methods for assessing student progress. Participants indicated most of the students met the requirements for completing the project and report assignments.

Table 8

Student Social Studies Performance

List social studies project and report assignments	<p>Flip books</p> <p>mapping projects (create a map of the classroom)</p> <p>Creating a 3D Map of the world using a balloon (labeling all continents, oceans, and hemispheres)</p> <p>Creating an exchange system to model the economics of Mali</p> <p>Written Reports on Mali, Rome, and Greece</p>
List criteria used to assess social studies project and report assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checklists • Rubrics
Description of students' overall performance of projects and report assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most students performed adequately with appropriate support at home or in class
List additional information you wish to add	NONE

Table 9, Students' Science Performance, displayed information about the projects and report assignments, criteria used to assess the projects and assignments and descriptions of students' overall performance of projects and assignments, and additional information they wished to add. Table 9 displayed projects and report assignments completed by students to expose them to the steps of conducting the scientific investigation, physical science, behavioral and physical adaptations, living systems, the natural world, and geological concepts (See Appendix B). Students completed projects and report assignments in cooperative groups and some were completed by the individual

student. In addition, students completed some assignments in school and some were assigned as homework. Checklists and rubrics were the methods for assessing student progress. The participants indicated most of the students met the requirements for completing the projects and report assignments.

Table 9

Student Science Performance

List science project and report assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design a simple machine • Phases of the moon using chalk/paper • Phases of the moon using Oreo cookies • Flip books • Reports on specific animals and their habitat, their role in the food chain, and any adaptations
List criteria used to assess science project and report assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rubrics • Checklists • Observations
Description of students' overall performance of projects and report assignments	Most students performed adequately with appropriate support at home or in class
List additional information you wish to add	NONE

Table 10, Service Learning Participation, teacher participants indicated the level of students participating in a service learning project. Table 10 shows how teachers responded.

Table 10

Service Learning Participation

Students Participating in Service Learning Project	Please Respond by placing an “X” in the box you select.
All Students Participated in a Service Learning Project	X Teachers 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13
Most of the Students Participated in a Service Learning Project	X Teachers 7 and 8
Half of the Students Participated in a Service Learning Project	None
Less Than Half of the Students Participated in a Service Learning Project	None
No Students Participated in a Service Learning Project	X-Teacher 4 – time did not allow for SL project

Table 10 showed that most of the Grade 3 students participated in a service learning project. Two of the teachers indicated that most of the students participated in a service learning project. Only one teacher reported that students did not participate in a service learning project. Teacher 4 shared that because a large group of students were reading below benchmark (10 students); more time was used to strengthen their reading skills.

At the end of the interviews, I reviewed the directions for completing the teacher feedback form and asked teachers to return the completed form by email. I asked them to provide information about the service learning projects. In reviewing my notes, I learned from the responses that most of the teachers who provided service learning experiences possibly could have confused service learning with community service. The teacher participants were aware that all Grade 3 students were required to participate in a service

learning project; however; the teacher participants reported that they received no formal training on service learning. I interpreted from their responses that some form of a SL project or community service project was done to satisfy the district leader's requirement and the projects were conducted near the end of the 2011-2012 year. In addition, the teacher participants observed that students enjoyed working together, planning, and conducting the service learning projects. Although teachers noted students took ownership for conducting the service learning projects, no information was collected regarding the specific service learning projects and amount of time spent.

Theme 4: Barriers and Lessons Learned

The last subtheme addressed Subquestion 3, "What lessons did teachers learn from infusing reading across the integrated curriculum?" Data collection for answering subquestion three were from the following questions on the interview protocol:

Q1. What are your perceptions of the integrated curriculum professional development training?

Q2. Did the professional developments affect your teaching practices? Please explain.

Q12. Describe the barriers for infusing reading instruction across the curriculum.

Q13. What suggestions would you recommend for improving the program?

Data from Q1 and Q2 indicated teachers did not perceive the district's professional development to be helpful. Answers to Q12 and Q13 overlapped because

what teachers discussed as barriers were also recommendations for improving the program and lessons learned.

I compiled a list of barriers the participants shared, which were hindrances in implementing the program. Barriers were the different reading abilities of students, time, money, resources, pacing, and limited technology (computers and laptops).

There were several lessons learned when implementing the district's integrated curriculum. The first lesson learned as reported by the participants is the need to provide the appropriate training or professional developments before and during the implementation stage of the program. Teachers reported favorably regarding on-site reading training provided by each school's reading specialist. They perceived the district's professional development helpful in providing the unit with the instructional topics, goals, and timelines. However, the participants viewed the professional development did not model practices for (a) integrating the content, (b) implementing service learning, (c) teaching content integration with students of varied reading abilities, especially students reading below grade level standards. Teachers indicated they would have preferred training in these areas.

A second lesson learned is the need for a flexible schedule. Participants reported when implementing the program, the district required them to follow a set schedule which included 90 minutes for integrated language arts, 60 minutes for math, and 60 minutes of writing daily. A flexible schedule would eliminate the constraints of the

required times. Thirdly, when implementing an integrated program teachers' reported they needed enough of the appropriate content resources and technology.

Conclusion

Primarily, the interview data revealed teacher participants perceived an integrated curriculum that infused reading instruction supported Grade 3 students in learning to read and comprehend grade level content material and acquiring content concepts. Through utilizing an integrated approach, Opitz (2011) asserted, "Students' understanding goes deeper, and, therefore, has staying power" (p. 535). One thought that signified the need to infuse reading in content integration was from Teacher 1; "Integrating reading is not just a choice; it is just the way it is. They won't be successful any other way."

Teacher participants viewed the program benefitted students based on student progress and reactions. Teachers monitored students' academic progress through formal and informal assessments, reading journals, reports and projects. Students' motivation and level of engagement increased, a point made by Cervetti and Pearson (2012) on the benefits of content integration.

Teacher participants used strategies and practices that were evidence-based as confirmed by the literature review. The teachers viewed the integrated curriculum unit as a helpful tool in giving them a guide of what needed to be covered for the school year. A researched-based organized systematic structured program is needed in content integration (Bintz & Moore, 2007; Malik & Malik, 2011). Data from the feedback form

indicated teachers perceived the projects and assignments aligned with the district's integrated theme unit in the areas of social studies and science.

Teachers shared how they worked and planned continuously. Rockwell (2008) indicated teacher collaboration and extensive planning are key elements in the content integration process. There was consistency in how and what to teach in the area of reading due to the support of the reading specialist. Professional development provided by an expert such as the reading specialist, can be beneficial to teachers (Mills & Hogan, 2009) in that preparing students to demonstrate reading proficiency lies in the hands of educators who need to be skilled and knowledgeable (Akhondi et al., 2011). Teachers infused the reading strategies and practices mentioned in the content areas of math, history, and science as advocated by Cervetti and Pearson (2012) and Montelongo and Herter (2010). Other research-based practices teacher participants reported using were modeling, cognition and metacognition strategies (Zarei et al., 2012), exposing students to a variety of genres (Napoli, 2011), conducting novel studies (Wood et al., 2009), making connections (Mills & Hogan, 2009; Stagliano & Boon, 2009), and using graphic organizers (Ropič & Aberšek 2012).

The teacher participants were aware that all Grade 3 students were required to participate in a service learning project; however; the teacher participants reported that they received no formal training on service learning. I interpreted from their responses that some form of a SL project or community service project was done to satisfy the

district's requirement and the projects were conducted near the end of the 2011-2012 year.

Barriers noted were the different reading abilities of students, time, money, not enough resources, pacing, and limited technology (computers and laptops). According to Malik and Malik (2011), when barriers surface, as with the participants in this study, it is critical to acknowledge the barriers and address them effectively.

In addition, teachers indicated the need for professional development on how to implement an integrated curriculum and service learning. A critical point mentioned by researchers is implementing an integrated curriculum program is a complex process that requires professional development to familiarize staff with the program, how to deliver the program, the range of learning situations, and the assessment process (Malik & Malik, 2011). According to Virtue, Wilson and Ingram (2009), an integrative curriculum works best when:

Teachers have access to adequate instructional supplies and resources, the Internet and other technology, and other material support; relationships among teachers, students, and staff are positive, trusting, and collaborative; common planning time, flexible scheduling, and other structural/organizational supports are in place; and the overall school culture supports curricular innovation (p. 5).

Evidence of Quality

Creswell (2009) postulated that in qualitative research, "real life is composed of different perspectives that do not always coalesce, discussing contrary information adds

to the credibility of an account” (p. 192). I conducted a search for possible discrepant data to report as a means of validating findings. There was very little outlying or disconfirming data found. All of the participants agreed and verified the transcriptions. For the teacher feedback form, I developed tables to show the activities completed by the Grade 3 students that required them to use reading and comprehension skills. If there had been a conflict with the data collected then the possible need for an investigation would have been warranted to examine how this data informed my study. No discrepant data were found to report. For this qualitative case study, there were a number of measures for establishing reliability and validity. The criteria for evaluating this qualitative study were credibility, dependability, and transferability.

Credibility measures included stating and addressing my biases. I expressed an interest in the need to produce positive outcomes due to my belief in the curriculum program, the large amount of time I invested in the study, and my need to see Grade 3 students experience success. I complied with the ethical guidelines and followed the appropriate behaviors in the research process of conducting and following the scientific procedures in this qualitative case study with objectivity.

Other credibility measures included teacher participants’ reviewing interview transcription data to ensure accuracy of information. A search was conducted for possible discrepant data; none was found to report. Findings were validated through triangulation. Data triangulation corroborated my findings from comparing and analyzing the multiple data sources of teacher interviews, documents, and notes, which

produced evidence to support the descriptions and themes (Creswell, 2012). In addition, a peer-debriefer was included throughout the data collection and analysis and final report process.

Dependability involved my description of data collected, analyzed, and interpreted, audio taped interviews, and making data available for review upon request. Transferability was the thick rich description of the case study (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010). Lastly, relating my findings to the work of credible researchers supported the validation process (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006).

Summary

In summary, this was a qualitative instrumental case study in which I captured teachers' perceptions of the strategies and practices used in an integrated curriculum that infused reading instruction for Grade 3 students struggling to read and comprehend grade level content text. Presented were the methods and procedures I used to address the guiding question, "What are teachers' perceptions of the third grade integrated curriculum in regards to Grade 3 students' reading achievement?" My findings indicated teachers perceived beneficial resources were the integrated theme unit, teacher collaboration, and training in the area of reading. Trainings on pedagogical practices of content integration and service learning were nonexistent. Teachers had the flexibility of problem-solving how to teach an integrated curriculum. I interpreted from their responses that they preferred more guidance and models for teaching an integrated curriculum.

In the data collection and data analysis, ethical guidelines in accordance to the university and school district were followed. My methods of data collection were individual teacher interviews, teachers' feedback of students' progress of work, and the school district's integrated curriculum unit.

A systematic plan was employed to collect and analyze data. A qualitative software tool was used to record, code, analyze, and store data collected. Inductively, data collected from multiple data sources were used to build concepts and theories regarding the effectiveness of the integrated program. Through data collection and analysis a report was generated of how teachers infused reading in an integrated curriculum to help struggling third grade readers and the connections to conceptual frameworks. The final section presented procedures for establishing reliability and validity.

Section three of the project study will present the project based on the needs expressed by the participants for implementing an integrated program. The project is intended to support the district's integrated program and provide professional developments on how to implement an integrated program and service learning. The professional development would also include educating teachers on constructivist practices.

This study can promote social change by providing educators with a curriculum filled with best practices that promote reading literacy and student achievement for third graders in preparation for college and the global world. Finally, it is critical to mention

that this project study (1) has the potential to provide valuable information for those educators interested in implementing an integrated curriculum, and (2) presents strategies and practices adaptable for any grade level.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

My findings from Section 2 indicated that teachers wanted models of how to teach (pedagogy) an integrated curriculum. The proposed project is an integrated curriculum professional development (ICPD) designed to support the district's integrated curriculum program. The ICPD is designed to enhance third grade teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge and skills by incorporating best practices for training adults and for teaching content integration. The purpose of the ICPD project is to (a) educate teachers on constructivist educational practices and (b) model practices for teaching the integrated curriculum program.

In Section 3, I present a brief description of the proposed professional development project, the goals of the project, and the rationale for selecting the project. Next, I present the literature review about the project. Then, I provide specific details about the project, which include the resources needed, implementation process, time table, and roles of the people involved. In the final section, I present the plan for evaluating the professional development project, justification, evaluation goals, and implications.

Goals

The goals of the professional development model are to provide third grade teachers with the knowledge and skills for teaching the district's integrated curriculum.

The professional development will provide third grade teachers structures that are consistent and research driven to incorporate in their daily teaching practices.

Rationale

I developed the project based on concerns expressed by the research participants who indicated a need to help Grade three students struggling to read and comprehend grade level content text. The participants shared that the professional development in the area of reading was beneficial because it was structured, provided a format for teaching reading, and contained specific skills and lesson plans to follow. Furthermore, the teacher participants stated that the reading specialist was instrumental in delivering reading training, providing support to teachers, and monitoring teacher practices and students' progress. This was not the case in teaching an integrated curriculum in which teachers received limited training.

Interview data revealed teachers consistently expressed the need for models of teaching practices for implementing an integrated curriculum. The ICPD program will support teachers in designing and teaching integrated lessons that will enable Grade 3 students to read and comprehend grade level text and promote student achievement. To enhance third grade teachers' knowledge and skills in teaching an integrated curriculum, the ICPD program must be "purposefully conceptualized, thoughtfully implemented, and meaningfully employed" (Loughran, 2014, p. 280). Moreover, administrators can benefit from the consistency of having a systematic structure in place when monitoring

what student learning should look like and how teachers differentiate instruction to address the needs of students reading below, on, and above benchmark standards.

Furthermore, teacher participants expressed a need for professional development in the area of service learning. Due to the amount of time and work needed for teachers to learn content integration practices (Malik & Malik, 2011), recommendations will need to include future plans for phasing in service learning professional development and service learning.

Review of Literature

The literature review is replete with studies that show the benefits of the role effective professional development has on improving teacher quality and student learning. The professional development literature presents compelling information on what constitutes quality or effective professional development that will equip third grade teachers in the study with the knowledge and skills for teaching the district's integrated curriculum program. The literature review is divided into three sections. The first section begins with current literature on adult learning and professional learning. In the second section, I discuss professional development and education. Then in the third section, I present professional development in regards to constructivist practices and integrated curriculums and a model of an integrated curriculum unit.

For the project study, the online library on the Walden University website provided sources from the educational databases of ERIC, Education Research Complete, ProQuest, and Education from SAGE and Thoreau. The search began by using keywords

professional development, effective practices, best practices, interdisciplinary learning, integrated curriculum, content integration, multidisciplinary learning, constructivism, and constructivist teaching. There was a wealth of literature on the broad topic of professional development. In the search for specific articles modeling schools experiencing successful professional development, however, studies were limited. The same held true in the areas of professional development in constructivist teaching and integrated curriculums, which were often noted in the literature of articles I researched.

Adult Learning and Professional Learning Relationship

In an effort to provide meaningful professional development (PD) for implementing and sustaining new programs, it is critical to understand how adults learn. Knowles' adult learning theory, andragogical process model, is employed; an approach that is collaborative and problem-based (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2011). Here, the presenter or trainer acts as the facilitator in providing the learner with procedures and resources to acquire the knowledge and skills for implementing the integrated curriculum program. The process model involves eight elements:

“(a) preparing the learner; (b) establishing a climate conducive to learning; (c) creating a mechanism for mutual planning; (d) diagnosing the needs for learning; (e) formulating program objectives (which is content) that will satisfy these needs; (f) designing a pattern of learning experiences; (g) conducting these learning experiences with suitable techniques and materials; and (h) evaluating

the learning outcomes and rediagnosing learning needs” (Knowles et al., 2011, p. 114).

Beavers (2009) accounted for the unique ways adults learn, their variety of experiences, and predefined ideas of what adults perceive that they need to learn in advocating for PD that involves active involvement and reflection. It is critical to respect and recognize the different needs of teachers and how a teacher’s practice in the classroom setting is unique. Therefore, transitioning teachers into a new program such as the integrated curriculum in the project study can be accomplished with ease by incorporation of specific adult education principles as advocated by Knowles’ adult learning theory. Listed are the guidelines that educational leaders need to follow:

- Allow teachers to provide input about topics of professional development;
- Use teachers’ variety of experiences as learning opportunities;
- Keep topics practical and applicable rather than theoretical and philosophical;
- Facilitate dialogue among peers geared towards problem-solving;
- Provide options and alternatives to support different learning styles;
- Encourage teachers to facilitate the learning activities rather than having them organized by administrators;
- Create a system-wide atmosphere that appreciates diversity, openness, and critique; and
- Support alternate theories and reflections for everything from teaching strategies to board policy (Beavers, 2009, p. 6-7).

Discussing the significance of adult learning is necessary for understanding what teachers in the ICPD project need that will possibly lead to habits of daily sustainable practices. David (2013) cited Bell and Gilbert's (1996) reports of the numerous studies on professional development; however, there are concerns because of the gaps in the literature, which are related to the nature of teacher development, factors contributing to or hindering teacher development, and the frustrations teachers desiring change face. Beswick (2014) reported little attention has been paid to the ways professional learning providers seek to find out about teachers' perceived needs and the effectiveness of their efforts in eliciting teachers' needs or in driving professional learning. Beswick further added that professional learning providers must first establish a climate of trust, which starts by involving teachers in the professional learning process by asking them about their needs and providing a list of ways to address those needs.

The discussion on adult learning warranted the need to show its relationship regarding professionals in professional learning communities. Webster-Wright (2009) posited that "despite changes in response to research findings about how professionals learn, many professional development practices still focus on delivering content rather than enhancing learning" (p. 702). Professionals, such as the teachers in project study, learn from a diverse range of activities, formal PD programs, collaborating with colleagues, experiences outside of the workplace, and a combination of experiences (Webster-Wright, 2009).

There have been arguments regarding the implicit assumptions of professional learning and research (Webster-Wright, 2009). One assumption is well-designed PD programs with good facilitators will result in changes in practice. Another assumption is knowledge is transferred to the practitioners' minds and enacted in practice, and then the learning can be mandated through attendance or through engagement in the programs. However, there is the concern of the poor understanding regarding continuous professional learning and how professionals learn in the workplace. Webster-Wright (2009) warned how assumptions of this nature have created problems, limited critical inquiry, and perpetuated the status quo.

Often, current PD programs have overlooked implications of both context and ontology in learning. Webster-Wright (2009) shared that researchers have argued for a shift in the conceptualization and practice from development to learning through authentic professional learning. Most professionals are enthusiastic and want to improve their practice, which means those in supervisory roles need to be supportive during the learning stage and focus less on seeking control, hindering learning, and standardizing learning experiences (Webster-Wright, 2009).

In moving forth, the relationship found between adult learning and professional learning is that both require active learning centered on the needs of the teacher learner. Teachers' beliefs and dispositions must be considered in that how they think about what is done in their classes is just as significant as what they should be doing (Kim, Erekson, Bunten, & Patricia, 2014). Research on adult learning and professionals learning in the

work environment provided insight of practices to use in the ICPD project that can engage teachers in learning and sustaining practices, which may result in positive learning outcomes for Grade 3 students.

Professional Development and Education

Student preparation for the 21st century workplace requires schools provide classroom teachers the appropriate training to be knowledgeable and skilled. A significant factor contributing to student achievement and education improvement is teacher quality (Cochran-Smith, as cited in Carpenter and Sherretz, 2012). Worldwide, the practice of providing professional development is commonplace as a means for improving teaching and student learning. In the United States, the federal, state, and local governments are active supporters in promoting teacher professional development. The continuous growth in international research according to Petrie and McGee (2012) “has resulted in guidelines to support developers and deliverers of PD to understand what constitutes effective PD approaches that are likely to lead to improvements in teacher and school practice” (p. 59).

On an international level, PD was found to be one of the main reasons why schools in some countries performed well. Rothman and Darling-Hammond stated in a 2011 educational brief that the Alliance for Excellent Education and the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education reported that the educational systems in Finland, Ontario, and Singapore were among the highest-performing jurisdictions based on results from international tests of student achievement. Among some of the factors that

attributed to their success were recruitment, preparation, induction, professional development, evaluation and career development, and retention (Rothman & Darling-Hammond, 2011).

Understandably, there is the need to define what constitutes meaningful or effective professional development. First of all, effective professional development is defined as “that which results in improvements in teachers’ knowledge and instructional practices, as well as improved student learning outcomes” (Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson & Orphanos, 2009, p. 3). This definition was written in a comprehensive technical report to inform stakeholders of teacher development research-based structures, which have proven to have positive effects in student achievement (Wei et al., 2009). In addition the authors presented some evidence-based studies to communicate a strong and vital message that high quality professional development “focuses on enhancing teachers’ knowledge of how to engage in specific pedagogical skills and how to teach specific kinds of content to learners” (Wei et al., 2009, p. 3).

In this technical report published by the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) 2001, three standards were constantly emphasized, which served as the guiding force in teacher growth and development (Wei et al., 2009). Countries abroad and the few schools in the United States that experienced success employed the NSDC 2001 standards. The first standard, context standards, focused on adult learning communities, strong leadership, and resources to support adult learning and collaboration. The second standard, process standards, included student data, which drives teacher learning, the use

of multiple evaluations to assess learning, research-based decision making, design, learning by applying knowledge, and training teachers how to collaborate. The third standard included the content standards of equity, quality teaching, and family involvement (Wei et al., 2009). If the ICPD program in the project study entails the standards advocated by the educational experts in the technical report, then the outcomes can lead to building teacher capacity and changes in teacher practices that will benefit both teachers and students.

In the age of accountability, public schools spend large amounts of money training teachers. Much of the funding comes from the federal government. Schools need to invest in PDs that will align with the NSDC's standards. Editorial Projects in Education's 2011 report, *Quality Counts*, indicated that in the 2009-2010 academic year, 40 states had developed formal professional development standards (from the NSDC 2001 standards) of which 24 financed professional development for all districts (Akiba, 2012). Studies conducted produced relevant information of the effects of PD in the educational setting.

In one study, 577 Missouri middle school math teachers were surveyed to find out which professional learning activities they participated in and the amount of time spent on the PD activities (Akiba, 2012). Seven types of PD activities studied were (a) PD programs, (b) teacher collaboration, (c) university courses, (d) professional conferences, (e) mentoring/coaching, (f) informal communications, and (g) individual learning activities. The results of the study indicated middle school math teachers spent the

greatest amount of time in the areas of teacher collaboration, professional development programs, and individual learning activities. Knowledge of this information can be useful when planning which PD activities for the ICPD project to incorporate that may support teachers in the learning process. In Section 2, teachers revealed one of the support structures they favored was teacher collaboration.

Another study revealed alarming results regarding the effects of PD practices. One of the largest and most inclusive syntheses of PD research reported by Guskey and Yoon (2009) led to the discovery of only nine elementary schools experiencing positive effects and met the standards set by What Works Clearinghouse (WWC). A group of scholars from the American Institute for Research analyzed 1,343 studies (elementary, middle, and high schools) that addressed the effects of PD and student learning outcomes. The nine studies were conducted between 1986 and 2003; no middle and high schools met the standards and no schools met the standards between 2004 and 2006 (Guskey & Yoon, 2009).

According to Guskey and Yoon (2009), rigorous and scientific investigations produced evidence of why the nine elementary schools met the standards set by WWC. Some of the schools conducted workshops focused on research –based instructional practices. The participants were involved in active-learning and had the flexibility to adapt the practices to their classroom situations. For some schools, school improvement resulted from using outside experts to conduct PDs. Time for educators to engage in high-quality PD was significant even though the amount of time differed among the

schools. Schools spending 30 or more contract hours experienced success. Job-embedded assistance and follow-up after introducing the main PD were crucial elements. Tailoring the PD activities based on the specific content, the nature of the work, and the context of where the work takes place produced positive effects. The last analysis revealed the PD practices all nine elementary schools had in common. All of the elementary schools focused on specific subject-related content or pedagogic practices and emphasized teacher discretion in the implementation process (Guskey & Yoon, 2009).

Furthermore, Guskey and Yoon (2009) pointedly noted findings presented did not mean that other methods of training teachers were ineffective. The PD strategies discussed were scientifically proven to be effective even though they were less than perfect and varied in quality and effect. Guskey and Yoon (2009) posited, “The amount of valid and scientifically defensible evidence we currently have on the relationships between professional development and improvements in student learning is exceptionally modest” (p. 499). This study provides useful information that needs serious consideration in the development of the ICPD program in the project study.

The 2009 Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), awarded a grant by the National Science Foundation, conducted a meta-analysis of studies on the effects of PD involving K-12 science and mathematics teachers that also produced positive outcomes (Blank & de las Alas, 2009). The report provided scientific evidence to state and local education leaders concerning the effects of teaching training programs on improving student learning. The CCSSO analyzed 16 completed studies; 12 of the

studies were mathematics. Their findings from the 16 studies showed significant effects of teacher development on student learning. In the report several common patterns were noted in the PD designs and learning goals. The program designs emphasized teachers learning specific content and pedagogical content. Key features for implementing the PD program included follow-up, reinforcement of learning, teacher support, and adequate time learn (Blank & de las Alas, 2009). These research-based practices aligned with the NSDC's standards for teacher quality. Moreover, these were some of the exact practices reported by Guskey and Yoon (2009), which resulted in the nine elementary schools experiencing success.

PD on Constructivist Practices and Integrated Curriculums

The integrated curriculum is a constructivist approach. Constructivism was discussed in depth in the first literature review section of this paper. A significant element of the constructivist approach is the focus on active learner engagement, which builds on the learner's prior knowledge and applies that knowledge through authentic learning situations (Hartfield, 2010). The learners, both teacher and student, develop the ability to apply, create, synthesize, and solve problems. In addition, multiple learning skills are developed simultaneously (Hartfield, 2010).

One of the goals of the PD project is to educate teachers about constructivist teaching practices in an integrated curriculum. It was unclear from the participants' responses in Section 2 about how knowledgeable they were on constructivism, its role

and connection to the integrated curriculum, and what constructivist practices look like. This is why educating them on constructivist teaching is included in the ICPD project.

In today's classrooms, educators need to be knowledgeable and skilled in the constructivist approach. The 21st century is an era of constant societal changes, which means educators need to equip students not only with cognitive knowledge, but also meta-competences (Scheer, Noweski, & Meinel, 2012). Teaching meta-competences such as students developing social skills, creative skills, reflective skills, and the ability to interpret different information needs to take place in a constructivist learning environment.

Moreover, the researchers (Scheer et al., (2012) conducted a study that produced positive experiences for a group of teachers who used a team-based learning model known as Design Thinking, a framework on how to implement constructivist learning. The Design Thinking model supported teachers in executing holistic and interdisciplinary learning in a real-life context. Scheer et al., (2012) examined identifying problems related to constructivist learning and teaching and recommended solutions for teachers experiencing difficulty in the implementation process. Noted were three essential components of the constructivist learning design for enhancing cognitive knowledge and meta-competences: “(a) involvement of students; (b) experience space; and (c) balance of instruction and construction” (Scheer et al., 2012, p. 10).

An elementary teacher shared a model of an integrated curriculum taught to primary students that incorporated constructivist practices, which led to increased student

achievement and engagement (Board, 2013). In the inquiry-based approach the teacher presented broad questions that integrated science, social studies, language, and art. In addition, Board (2013) shared that the teacher used a variety of assessment forms in which students demonstrated their knowledge and understanding of content skills and concepts.

Other vital information was presented regarding specific practices to include when teaching content integration that is inquiry-based. Board (2013), contented that teachers need to connect children to the curriculum by using real-world problems or questions and provide a variety of ways to support children in finding the solutions or answers. Teachers must also allow extended time for exploration of the topics of interest and provide the necessary resources. Plans need to be flexible. According to Board (2013), crucially, the teacher is the facilitator and is responsible for establishing a classroom community in which ideas are shared as a group.

Then, in another study, teacher leaders employed effective PD training in which teaching practices changed among a group of elementary teachers and English Language Learner (ELL) students' learning improved (Carrejo & Reinhartz, 2012). The 35 elementary teachers participated in a yearlong PD on how to integrate language learning and science, using the 5E pedagogy model. The steps in the 5E pedagogy model are engage, explore, explain, elaborate, and evaluate. According to Carrejo and Reinhartz (2012), the teachers developed a comfort level in teaching ELL students because the PD involved hands-on learning of the actual activities, teacher observations, mentors and

coaches (support), a variety of activities to choose from, and adequate time to learn the method of teaching. The elementary teachers observed that as the ELL students learned science, they also learned the English language. The ELL students made significant gains on the state reading and science tests (Carrejo & Reinhartz, 2012). The 5E pedagogy model is one of the practices emphasized by the school district leaders in the study for third grade teachers to use. The PD project needs to include continued use of the 5E pedagogy model along with training teachers how to integrate the curriculum by infusing reading instruction. Providing PD of this nature in the project study could possibly lead to positive learning outcomes for the third grade teachers working with diverse groups of students.

There were a few more studies, which resulted in positive outcomes for teachers and students by incorporating constructivist teaching and learning in the content integration process. A study conducted by a team of researchers demonstrated how high quality PD on integrating health education and literacy instruction boosted third grade teachers' confidence and practice, which produced positive outcomes for Grade 3 students learning health education (Deal, Jenkins, Deal, & Byra, 2010). Both the PD program and integrated health and literacy curriculum were guided by evidence-based practices. Third grade teachers were provided interventions based on a questionnaire they completed prior to implementing the PD program. In the on-going PD program, teachers were provided the necessary resources, time and support, taught how to integrate health and reading, and how to assess students. The trained health educators facilitating the program planned the

PD program based on teachers' needs. Findings from teachers completing an evaluation and results of student work were indicators for determining the effectiveness of the integrated program. According to Deal et al., (2010), the long-term PD program met the criteria for high quality PD, which included an intervention that was sustained, intensive, and content focused.

Ruiz, Thornton, and Cuero (2010) contented that contemporary literacy educators have consistently and strongly appealed to integrate reading across the curriculum. Teachers in elementary and secondary schools experienced success in implementing constructivist practices when integrating reading and math. Ruiz et al., (2010) found that reading across the content areas was critical in helping students develop a deeper understanding of the various subjects. Teacher collaboration, a structured curriculum, and continuous PD promoted students' learning how to read and understand mathematics as a means by which students became proficient in reading and writing. Professional development best practices were instrumental to the programs' success (Ruiz et al., 2010).

Teachers required to implement programs that are new or unfamiliar to them most likely will need to be trained (Visser, Coenders, Terlouw, & Pieters, 2010). One multidisciplinary science module study pointed out a three-step approach to follow when identifying the essential characteristics of a PD program. The steps included are (a) connect the PD program to daily school practice; (b) consider the specific features of the

curriculum; and (c) use evidence-based practices for curriculum implementation (Visser et al., 2010).

Significantly, there was an article in which Newman, Krustchinsky, Vanek and Nguyen (2009) reported the experiences of a third grade teacher who created an integrated curriculum science unit. In this content integration model the third grade teacher shared the steps for developing and implementing this integrated unit in a creative way. The inquiry-based constructivist science unit employed by the third grade teacher was an authentic hands-on approach, which developed and reinforced Grade 3 students' reading, writing, research, technology, art, social, and communication skills (Newman et al., 2009). A detailed step-by-step discussion presented next, showed the steps, which were planning, preparation, collaboration, and the appropriate resources and time to implement the integrated science unit.

The goal of the science unit was for students to learn about sea-life in their own community through exploration and inquiry. The teacher began by planning and preparing the unit (Newman et al., 2009). In this model the teacher was assisted by a preservice teacher from the local university. Developing the unit included the third grade curriculum standards and national science standards. Intentionally, the teacher selected seven common sea life specimens found in the local community bay. Resources were gathered, which included live specimens, books, and internet access of the direct links for students to access quickly on the topics for the research project. A research writing

rubric was constructed (Newman et al., 2009). Within this process reading, reading comprehension, and research skills were reinforced.

Next, the teacher worked to capture the students' interest or engage them in the research project. A research-based inquiry model of attention grabbing scenarios was used. Students solved content-related questions by answering yes or no. Probing, inferring, and investigative skills were reinforced, which helped students to provide reasonable explanations to the questions posed. At this point, students began to formulate questions based on personal interest about sea life of a variety of species. In the knowledge building stage, students had quick access to links to research their topics of interest and during silent reading time. Workstations were developed for students to have silent reading time, work on structured activities and formulate questions and information about a favorite species. Information was recorded on a teacher-supplied data collection sheet. In addition, this article supplied a list of books provided for the third grade students to read (Newman et al., 2009).

In the writing stage, students were presented outline formats and graphic organizers to select from in researching their topics. Drafting their research papers involved using the writing rubric as a guide as students worked alone, with peers, and conferenced with the teaching. Students worked in small groups to create PowerPoint presentations. PowerPoint presentations were graded using a rubric. For the final stage of the research project, students completed individual research papers and a group PowerPoint that they presented to the class. At the end of the unit students examined real

examples of species dissected by the teacher and compared them to drawings and diagrams. Assessing students' progress was continuous in this process. The teacher and students hosted a sea life celebration party. Students' projects were displayed as they shared their research projects with invited parents and guests. Cooked seafood of the specimens students' studied was brought in to sample (Newman et al., 2009).

The science research unit showed the beginning-to-end process of content integration. The integrated science research project demonstrated the effects of student learning and engagement in an authentic way. Newman et al., (2009) reported that reading, a critical component in the research process was not forced on students; it was presented as relevant and necessary for knowledge building, personal interest, and for supplying information needed to complete the research project. As one of the goals of the ICPD project is to model how to teach an integrated curriculum, this science research integrated project can serve as a model to show the end product of the PD project program, which is, third grade teachers planning and implementing lesson units of this caliber.

Implementation

The project, the integrated curriculum professional development program (ICPD), is an interactive training model that includes 30 hours of formal training. Job-embedded assistance and follow-up after each ICPD session will be crucial elements (Guskey & Yoon, 2009) of the program. The ICPD program is designed for third grade teachers implementing the program for the upcoming school year. The maximum number of

participants for the ICPD program will be 28 teachers. The ICPD program will be connected to daily school practice, the specific features of the integrated curriculum, and use evidence-based practices for curriculum implementation (Visser et al., 2010). The ICPD program will focus on enhancing Grade 3 teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge and skills needed for teaching the district's integrated curriculum program. In all, the ICPD program's design is based on what the literature review emphasized regarding meaningful professional development. Intentionally, third grade teachers will learn from a diverse range of activities, which include formal trainings, planning and collaborating with colleagues, and applying what they learn within their workplace setting (Webster-Wright, 2009).

Learning Outcomes

Third grade teachers will apply what they have learned from the ICPD program in teaching the district's theme-based integrated curriculum (See Appendix B). The projected learning outcomes of the ICPD program are third grade teachers will do the following:

- Define the term integrated curriculum in relation to the district's program;
- Identify and explain the constructivist practices in an integrated curriculum program;
- Plan and teach integrated lessons that infuse reading instruction;
- Differentiate instruction to accommodate students reading above, on, and below reading benchmark standards; and

- Select the appropriate assessments to measure student progress.

Resources Needed

The six formal training days will be scheduled on days built in the district's school calendar that are designated for professional development, school-based and district-based. Teacher participants will not need substitute teachers. I will facilitate the formal trainings and will ask for licensure renewal points to compensate my time and work. The following resources needed for the ICPD program are as follows:

- Approval from the district's administrative team and/or school board to implement the ICPD program;
- Support from the district's administrative team and elementary administrators;
- Support from third grade teachers to participate in the ICPD program with the intention of implementing the practices with fidelity;
- Approval and support from the executive director and technology department to create an ICPD website for communication of program updates, teacher feedback, ideas, and practices;
- Support from teachers to complete the preassessment survey prior to and the post assessment at the conclusion of the ICPD program;
- The chief academic officer and executive director to grant permission to conduct the formal trainings at one of the PD sites and approve the days to conduct the trainings;

- Program administrator of curriculum to approve the program syllabus; determine the certification points to be awarded to the participants.

Other resources needed are readily available and accessible. One available resource is the district's integrated curriculum unit, which is found on the curriculum website. As was mentioned earlier, teachers needed to demonstrate the ability to teach reading. Therefore, the other available resource is the reading specialist. In each elementary school the reading specialist oversees the reading program and is the reading coach for teachers.

Potential Barriers

There are concerns of potential barriers that could interfere with the success of the program. One barrier is the administrative team and/or school board might disapprove the project. Another barrier is elementary administrators might not support the project. Then, there is the concern that third grade teachers might implement the practices partially, with little fidelity, or not at all. Some teachers might be resistant to change. A final barrier to consider is failure of the ICPD trainer to demonstrate the ability to work with teachers and provide the appropriate help and guidance to teachers experiencing levels of discomfort or struggles in teaching the integrated program. As the ICPD program's focus is on enhancing teacher learning (Beavers 2009; Webster-Wright 2009; Beswick 2014) of how to design and teach integrated lessons, implementing the ICPD program will include providing support to teachers in a timely and sensitive manner.

Timetable

Teacher participation in the ICPD program will be voluntary. The participants will attend six training sessions over the course of nine months, August through April (See Appendix A). Three of the training sessions will be six hours and the other three sessions will be four hours; a total of 30 hours of formal training, providing approval of the program administrator. The months of April through June will consist of soliciting teacher participation and online registration for the upcoming school year. The program will be advertised on the district's website in addition to all third grade teachers receiving an email invitation. The program flyer is in Appendix A of the project section. The advertisement will outline a brief description of the ICPD; certification points awarded to teachers for licensure renewal, and a link to register. All elementary administrators will receive the same notification in order that they are aware of a training program that supports their instructional program.

Once teachers have registered, they will complete an online pre-evaluation, a needs assessment survey (See Appendix A). The survey serves as a guide in tailoring the training to accommodate the needs of the teacher participants. In addition, the ICPD program calendar, events, syllabus, and PowerPoint presentation are located in Appendix A of the project section.

Consecutively, day one and day two training sessions (See Appendix A) will be conducted early August. Conducting the trainings during this time of the year will allow the participants' time to learn, plan, and prepare for students as school begins the first

week of September. All trainings will be held in one of the district's professional development meeting rooms. I will facilitate the ICPD program. Teachers will need their laptops for every training session. The school district provides all teachers with a laptop.

On the morning of the first day of training (See Appendix A), I will begin by having teachers complete the sign-in attendance sheet, welcome the teachers, and do introductions, and get acquainted. The table seating will be arranged intentionally in small groups of four. I will review the class syllabus (See Appendix A); present the objectives and learning outcomes of the ICPD program the agenda for day one. The first activity on the agenda is to provide teachers' feedback from the online needs assessment survey. I will acknowledge and validate the survey data. Teachers will be encouraged to elaborate and add additional or new information. For the remainder of the day, I will present a series of mini interactive activities that require active involvement (Beavers, 2009; David, 2013) by the third grade teachers. Teachers will work in small groups to complete the assigned activities on qualities students need to demonstrate in the 21st century, historical information and characteristics of constructivist practices and the integrated curriculum, and critique an integrated curriculum research article. Teachers will learn and practice using the ICPD website, examine the district's integrated curriculum unit, and plan, collaborate and teach a first day of school lesson to the participants. At the close of the session, I will review the objectives for day one and teachers will complete an exit card. On the exit cards, participants will response to three

items: (a) strengths of the training; (b) areas in need of improvement or concerns; and (c) questions or comments.

The training session for day two (See Appendix A) will focus on building classroom learning communities, assessing student learning, student portfolios, classroom setup, and collaborating and planning for subtheme one of the integrated curriculum. The afternoon will be a work session, which teachers will work in their small groups to examine and develop integrated lessons using the 5E pedagogy model. Teachers will create integrated lessons based on the essential questions, topics of learning, objectives, and standards for Grade 3. As the facilitator, I will monitor their work closely and will allow time for whole group discussion and sharing of progress. In this session, teacher participants will take one of the developed lessons and teach that lesson (modeling teaching content integration). Key points of discussion will include identifying constructivist practices, integrated subjects, and resources needed. At the close of the lesson teachers will review the objectives for day two and complete an exit card. The exit card is a quick check or evaluation of the training. Participants will response to three items: (a) strengths of the training; (b) areas in need of improvement or concerns; and (c) questions or comments.

At the conclusion of the two training sessions, teachers will be tasked with the responsibility of planning and collaborating with their school's grade level team members. The third grade teachers will apply what they've learned within their daily classroom instruction.

Teacher participants will share knowledge and information from the ICPD with their grade level team members. From the end of August through October, teacher participants will plan, collaborate, teach, and reflect on integrated curriculum unit lessons (See Appendix A). Participants will also be required to complete and post on the ICPD website one integrated lesson or practice activity and submit a monthly update of progress report. Maintaining a journal, hard copy or electronic, for reflection can be powerful in the learning process. The monthly progress reports will basically contain a summary of teacher participants' reflections of daily practices and student behaviors. In addition, teachers can use the blog as a support system for communicating and collaborating with other participants in the program.

The third training session (four hours) will be conducted near the end of October (See Appendix A). I will facilitate informal conversations of how participants' are progressing, planning, collaborating, and teaching practices of subthemes one and two. Teachers will discuss and share what is going well, areas of concern, and if they need help. In this session teachers will bring students' work samples and reading data of students' reading below, on, and above grade level to share how they are differentiating instruction to meet students' needs. This discussion will lead into the next activity, which is training the participants how to use the computer-based interactive achievement program.

In using the interactive achievement computer-based program, teachers can select from a large range of reading passages, questions, technology enhanced items, and

multiple-choice items for teaching, reinforcing skills, and assessing student learning.

Working within their small groups, teacher participants will develop and upload a quiz or practice activity on a required third grade standard assigned by the facilitator. All third grade teachers can access lessons uploaded on the computer program. At the close of the training, teachers will review the objectives for day three and complete the exit card.

During the period of November through January, the participants will work with their school's grade level team members on subtheme units three and four. They will complete and post on the ICPD website one integrated lesson or practice activity and submit a monthly update of progress report. The participants will continue to use the blog as a support system for communicating and collaborating with other participants in the program.

The fourth training session (See Appendix A) will be scheduled near the end of January. During this session, teacher participants will examine student work, assessment data, the interactive achievement computer-based program, and teaching practices to determine how if they are progressing as planned in reading, and if not, determine the next steps. Subtheme units five and six will be presented for the third marking period. Teachers will work in their groups first and then as a whole group to share, validate success, and problem solve concerns. Teachers will plan and collaborate in their small groups on subtheme unit five. At the close of the training, teachers will review the objectives for day four and complete the exit card.

Teacher participants will continue planning, collaboration, and teaching during the end of January through April, with their school's grade level team members on subtheme units five and six. They will complete and post on the ICPD website the one integrated lesson or practice activity and submit a monthly update of progress report. The participants will continue to use the blog as a support system for communicating and collaborating with other participants in the program.

In March, day five training (See Appendix A), participants will share integrated practices and student progress and behaviors. Participants will bring in three student portfolios. The small groups will discuss, examine, and analyze the portfolios of a student reading below, on, and above benchmark standards. They will post what they noticed, thoughts, and concerns on chart paper to share during whole group activity. They will return back to their small groups to plan and integrated lessons to teach for subtheme unit six. At the close of the training, teachers will review the objectives for day five and complete the exit card.

Teacher participants will complete and post on the ICPD website the last integrated lesson or practice activity and submit a monthly update of progress report. In addition, they will complete the online ICPD post evaluation (See Appendix A) by the end of the first week in April. A report on the results will be presented at the last ICPD session at the end of April.

The last training, day six (See Appendix A), will be conducted in April. A video clip will be shown of the teacher participants conducting integrated instructional lessons

and exhibiting student work samples and projects. Teachers will discuss and share constructivists and content integration practices observed. Then, I will display the results of the post evaluation and facilitate an open discussion of the feedback results. After the survey activity, I will facilitate an activity to support teachers in preparing students for the end of the year reading and math state assessments as teachers complete instructional content integration lessons for subthemes seven, eight, and nine. I will lead teacher participants in the thought process of the next steps, which will include phasing in service learning. The last final activity will be acknowledging and celebrating Grade 3 teachers' completing the ICPD program and awarding certificates.

Roles and Responsibilities of Those Involved

Teachers, students, administrators, and the trainer involved in the ICPD program can contribute to the program by assuming full ownership or responsibility of their roles in the program.

Third grade teacher participants have the following responsibilities:

- Attend all sessions and bring laptops.
- Actively participate in all training sessions.
- Complete all online activities on time.
- Use practices and strategies presented in the ICPD trainings.

The elementary building administrators have the following responsibilities:

- Support the strategies and practices implemented in the ICPD program
- Support and encourage teachers participating in the ICPD program

- Acknowledge teachers' work and efforts with students, parents, and staff.

Grade 3 students' of the teacher participants have the following responsibilities:

- Learn and practice the integrated curriculum strategies they are exposed to in the classroom environment.
- Actively participate in classroom instruction daily.
- Ask questions or seek help from the teacher to clarify misunderstandings or uncertainty of information presented.

The trainer, facilitator of the sessions, will have the following responsibilities:

- Provide well-planned lessons and resources for all ICPD trainings.
- Provide feedback to all online communications within the time frame established.
- Provide support and guidance to teacher participants
- Follow the ICPD program syllabus.

Evaluation

I will incorporate several methods for the third grade teacher participants to evaluate the ICPD program. Prior to the start of the professional development, I will administer a preassessment, which will be a professional development online needs assessment survey, to the third grade participants (See Appendix A). I modified a needs assessment survey from Survey Monkey. Data collected from the preassessment survey will help me prepare and plan a training program to accommodate the learning needs expressed by the participants.

Throughout the ICPD program, I will formatively evaluate the participants' progress to determine if they are utilizing the strategies and the effects of teachers' practices on student learning. Formative evaluations will include teacher participants' online lesson assignment submissions, monthly reflective progress reports, comments posted on the ICPD blog, and participants' exit card information. Ongoing formative evaluations are valuable in knowing if learning is on track or if adjustments are warranted to achieve learning outcomes (Haslam, 2010).

Toward the end of the ICPD program teacher participants will complete a post assessment (See Appendix A). The post evaluation that I will use is an evaluation model endorsed by the National Staff Development Council (Haslam, 2010). The results of the post evaluation will determine whether the participants' perceived ICPD program met their learning goals, improved content integration teaching practices and improved students' abilities to read and comprehend grade level text.

Third grade teacher participants will receive evaluation feedback of the preassessment during the first training session. In that training session their learning needs will be validated and addressed. The formative evaluations will be a part of my continuous evaluation of the program, making adjustments as needed, and providing feedback based on questions or concerns presented. The post evaluation feedback will be presented during the last class session followed by an in-depth discussion of their perceptions of teaching practices and student behaviors and learning. An evaluative report summarizing the results of these formative and summative assessments will be

presented to the district's administrative team, program administrator, building principals, and teacher participants.

ICPD Project Social Implications

Local Level

Locally, the ICPD project study can enhance the district's integrated curriculum program by developing third grade teacher participants' knowledge, skills, and understanding of how to teach an integrated curriculum that infuses reading instruction. As all third grade teachers are required to implement the integrated curriculum, the ICPD project presented could enhance their classroom practices. Third grade teachers utilizing evidence-based practices for implementing the integrated curriculum can strengthen their integrated curriculum teaching practices, which may lead to improving students' reading and comprehension abilities of grade level content text.

Furthermore, the ICPD project has the potential to increase the district's Grade 3 pass rate on the state reading test and can help some of the non-accredited elementary schools earn an accreditation rating. Reaching accreditation would boost staff morale and attract parents to enroll their children because the school is high performing. Significantly, teachers implementing the content integration evidence-based practices learned in the ICPD program can develop students' reading foundation, a lifelong skill.

This project study can contribute to positive social change by providing the district's third grade teachers with an integrated curriculum professional development designed to enhance teaching practices to support students' struggling to read and

comprehend grade level text. The implementation of an integrated curriculum of this nature can provide teachers' knowledge and skills to develop students' reading skills, which prepares students for school success, college, and the global work force.

Far Reaching

Far reaching, the project study could possibly provide other schools facing similar concerns an instructional learning tool to enhance student learning and teacher quality. The project, informed by the literature, can be used by any grade level in need of providing content integration professional development, implementing content integration, and improving student achievement. In addition, the study may be of interest to public schools in the United States in need of improvement as mandated by the federal government to close the achievement gap, promote rigorous accountability, and prepare students to graduate as college and career citizens (United States Department of Education, 2010).

Conclusion

I presented my proposed project, an integrated curriculum professional development program designed to support the district's integrated curriculum program and to enhance third grade teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge and skills by incorporating best practices for training adults and for teaching content integration. I presented a description of the ICPD project, goals, rationale and literature review. Next, I provided a detailed discussion of the project, resources needed, implementation process, time table, and roles of the people involved. For the last sections of the project, I

addressed the plan for evaluating the professional development project, justification, evaluation goals, and social implications.

As I proceed to the final section of this project study, Section 4 will serve as an appropriate place to voice my reflective thoughts. In Section 4 I will discuss the project's strengths, limitations, recommendations in addressing the problem, and overall insights of this scholarly project.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusion

Introduction

I will present the strengths, limitations, recommendations, and my reflective thoughts regarding the project in Section 4. My reflective thoughts will convey my viewpoints from developing to evaluating the integrated curriculum professional development project. This reflections section will also encompass a discussion of my critical learning points, implications, applications, and directions for future research regarding the project.

Project Strengths

There were a number of strengths that surfaced from the project study. The first one is that the professional development program was created based on teacher interview data of teacher participants expressing a need for professional development on how to teach an integrated curriculum. Malik and Malik (2010) asserted that implementing an integrated curriculum program is a complex process that requires professional development to familiarize staff with the program, how to deliver the program, the range of learning situations, and the assessment process. The ICPD project spans from August 2014 through April 2015 (nine months), allowing adequate time for teacher development and growth through active involvement, reflection, collaboration, planning, problem solving, and a variety of learning activities, guided by the literature review. The total amount of time for the formal ICPD sessions equals 30 hours. I planned 30 hours of teacher training based on findings from credible studies that indicated schools whose

educators engaged in high quality professional development of 30 or more hours experienced success (Guskey & Yoon, 2009).

There are also a few more strengths to include about the project. The second strength is that the ICPD program focuses on pedagogy and is designed to develop teachers' knowledge and skills for teaching the district's integrated curriculum. The third strength is that the ICPD program is a hands-on interactive training model in which third grade teachers can apply what they learn to support students struggling to read and comprehend grade level text. The fourth strength this professional development program has is that it is connected to daily school practice, the specific features of the interactive curriculum, and evidence-based practices for curriculum implementation (Visser et al., 2010). Finally, job-embedded assistance and follow-up are provided after each training session (Guskey & Yoon, 2009).

Project Limitations and Recommendations

The professional development project presents some limitations to discuss. Firstly, the project was developed based on interview data collected from a small number of participants, and all 13 were females. No males participated in the study. Small sample sizes and representations of one gender may present difficulty in generalizing the results. Recommendations for future research would include larger samples and males to generalize the results.

A second limitation is the project focuses on one grade level in one school district. The professional development program is only tailored to support the school

district's theme-based integrated curriculum unit. This PD project could be modified to serve as a model that educators in any grade level can employ for planning meaningful PDs when implementing new instructional programs.

A third limitation is that the ICPD project will involve a tremendous amount of work and time on the part of the trainer in the areas of planning and preparing for each PD session, grading online assignments, attending to the needs of participants, and the upkeep of the online website. Funding will also be needed to compensate a trainer for future professional development training cycles. I will conduct the first professional development cycle at no cost, only for licensure renewal points, since my interest in the project is personal and professional. I seek to find a solution to teaching and learning struggles presented in the integrated curriculum program for both third grade teachers and students. Through meaningful professional development, teachers can help prepare 21st century students to be college and career ready as content integration enhances students' reading, creativity, critical thinking, decision-making, research, problem solving, and socialization abilities (Brown, 2011).

The last limitation of the project is the set schedule for off-site training. The inflexibility of the schedule will require mandatory teacher attendance for every training session. The professional development program could attract more participants if the professional development training were an online format. An online PD would eliminate teachers leaving their school sites on professional development school days.

Furthermore, teachers would have flexibility in setting a schedule to continue developing their knowledge and skills for teaching the integrated curriculum program.

Scholarship

The scholarship of my research study has led to some intensive and aggressive stages of growth, which resulted in my creation of an integrated professional development project. The depth and breadth of my research study are an outgrowth of completing the administrative leadership doctoral classes and prospectus. I have acquired a new set of lenses and scholarly vocabulary. I have learned at a pace that has allowed me to see the big picture, which is to find a real life on-the-job concern to explore and problem-solve that can contribute to positive social change. I perceive this level of learning as the highest on the learning spectrum because the level of achievement requires advancing through a rigorous, time intensive scientific process to problem solve a concern.

The school district in the study implemented an integrated curriculum to support students struggling to read and comprehend grade level text and improve the district's reading pass rate scores on the state test. In conducting the project study, I learned a great deal about the types of integrated curriculum approaches, the pioneers, historical background, and benefits and disadvantages of implementing content integration practices. I also learned about characteristics of meaningful professional development and the significance of the NSDC. Moreover, I became immersed in reading peer-reviewed articles and was surprised to learn that in my search for specific articles

modeling schools experiencing successful professional development, studies were limited. The same held true in the areas of professional development in constructivist teaching and integrated curriculums, which were often noted in articles I researched.

Project Development and Evaluation

The idea of conducting a project study on the topic of the integrated curriculum was developed based on my experiences in working with the third grade teachers at my school site. All Grade 3 teachers were required to implement the school district's integrated curriculum program, which meant the teachers had to learn the contents of the theme-based unit and problem solve how to teach the program. As an administrator in the school district in the study, my role is to assist, monitor, and evaluate the teachers; therefore; I also had to demonstrate competence in supporting them with implementing the program with fidelity.

I began by brainstorming a list of items that I needed to learn such as the definition of an integrated curriculum, the advantages and disadvantages, its connection to reading, and how to help teachers deliver a quality integrated curriculum program. At this early stage, I spent time researching integrated curriculums. It was during my research of the topic that I developed the problem to explore. Using the Walden University online library, my search began by using the keywords *integrated curriculum*, *content integration*, *interdisciplinary curriculum*, *reading*, *reading comprehension*, *constructivism*, *experiential learning*, and *service learning* to find peer-reviewed articles needed for the study.

To address the guiding research question and subquestions, I used a qualitative approach, collected and analyzed the multiple data sources, and reported my findings. My findings indicated teachers perceived beneficial resources were the integrated curriculum theme unit, teacher collaboration, and training in the area of reading. However, trainings on pedagogical practices of content integration and service learning were nonexistent. Teachers had the flexibility of problem-solving how to teach an integrated curriculum (pedagogy). I interpreted from the participants' responses that they preferred more guidance and models of integrated curriculum pedagogical practices, which led to creating an integrated curriculum professional development project. Due to the amount of time and work needed in learning content integration practices (Malik & Malik, 2011), future plans will include phasing in a service learning professional development and service learning.

Planning and developing the integrated curriculum professional development project to align with the standards of the NSDC for teacher quality was a major task (Wei et al., 2009). I worked to include the critical elements of meaningful PD as informed by my second literature review that could lead to building teacher capacity and changes in teacher practices that will benefit both teachers and students. In Appendix A, I created specific resources needed for the PD project that included (a) a flyer to advertise the program, (b) an online website, (c) a PD syllabus, (d) the agendas for each of the PD sessions, and (e) formative and summative evaluations.

The methods I developed for evaluating the PD project will be continuous and goal-based. The formative and summative evaluations will serve to inform if participants perceive the PD program meets their learning goals. As informed by the literature, I designed a preevaluation, which is a needs assessment survey to assist in planning PD sessions that will address the participants' needs. Formative evaluations will include teacher participants completing exit cards at the end of each PD session, questions and concerns posed, and online assignments and discussions. Informal assessments of this nature assist in learning how the participants are progressing and if adjustments to the program are warranted. The summative evaluation or online post evaluation will be completed by the teacher participants to determine the effectiveness of the PD project, if learning outcomes were attained, and ways to improve the training.

Leadership and Change

Leadership and change happened for me to meet the requirements of the program, others asking for my support, and the resources and information I shared with colleagues. Working on my project study has been a learning experience and a rude awakening for me. I experienced a growth spurt and need to move forward by putting my new knowledge and skills into action. I realize there is much more to learn and will continue to develop my knowledge, understanding, and skills of constructivist integrated curriculum practices.

Moreover, leadership for me, means accepting the challenges and risks involved in promoting a professional development program that can support the school district in

improving Grade 3 students' reading pass rate scores and overall achievement. I am prepared to provide a meaningful integrated curriculum PD that could strengthen teachers' daily classroom practices to benefit student learning. Studies have shown that students perform well academically as well as on national standardized tests and state-implemented assessments in schools that emphasize integrated curriculum programs (Shriner et al., 2010). Additionally, Cervetti and Pearson (2012) found that the rate of learning for the Grade 3 students receiving the integrated curriculum method of instruction exceeded the rate of learning of students receiving the traditional method of instruction. Implementing an integrated curriculum that infuses reading instruction would support the school district's Grade 3 students to read and comprehend content text of the core subjects, which can lead to learning the essential content concepts and passing the required state assessments.

I know that I will face opposition and resistance because change for some is uncomfortable. As an instructional leader, my role is to promote programs that can support student learning. I have learned from my research project that an integrated curriculum is an evident-based practice that can improve Grade 3 students' reading and comprehension. My work in creating the ICPD project will be beneficial in helping Grade 3 teachers develop their knowledge and skills in the pedagogical practices of a constructivist integrated curriculum.

To implement the ICPD project, solid support will be needed by the district's administrative team, technology supervisor, building principals, and Grade 3 teachers

willing to strengthen their content integration practices by actively participating in the professional development program. This will be a huge change, mostly on the part of the classroom teachers participating in the ICPD program. Changes in teacher practices may lead to improved student learning. Then this will be a data set that I can speak about to support the need for meaningful PD that may influence stakeholders and decision makers to continue the ICPD program.

Self-Analysis as a Scholar, Practitioner, and Project Developer

Scholarship for me included participation in Walden University's online classroom discussions, group assignments, conferences with my doctoral chair, and informal discussions with colleagues and other educators regarding policies, trends, concerns, and student learning. I can honestly say that my enrollment in the university's administrative leadership doctoral program exceeded my learning expectations. I have progressed through the doctoral program with increased knowledge, skills, and understanding of how to problem solve educational concerns by employing the scientific research process. Now, whenever I read educational literature, I critically examine the content and credibility of sources instead of my old way of accepting information on face value or because it sounded impressive. Moreover, I have grown in my ability to create scholarly research documents as a result of my course work through Walden University.

As a practitioner, I have been using some of the evidence-based constructivist integrated curriculum and reading practices in my school environment. I have also observed that teachers are generally receptive, often seeking my help. In our lead team

meetings, one of my responsibilities is to present student assessment results and conduct discussions about their students' results. I often do so by questioning teachers in a nonthreatening manner to obtain information about their daily teaching practices. I have facilitated instructional talks and provided credible sources of information. In addition, I see practices and strategies that could be incorporated in daily classroom instruction to support student learning in all K-5 elementary grade levels at my school. I provide support when instructed by my principal or when asked by teachers with the understanding that I must demonstrate patience and caution with my approach in offering assistance.

As the project developer, I developed a ready-to-use professional development project to support the district's integrated curriculum program. In developing the ICPD project, I considered teacher interview data and the information presented in the second literature review. Currently in the school district, there are no integrated curriculum workshops or training programs in effect. I would welcome the opportunity to present the ICPD project.

Reflective Thoughts of My Work

My reflective thoughts presented represent the significant amount of information learned during my doctoral journey. I have read and processed a tremendous amount of information on constructivism, integrated curriculums, evidence-based reading practices, service learning, adult learning, and professional development. This arduous process led me to selecting a research topic, formulating the research question and subquestions,

analyzing data, and creating a project. From this journey, I produced a final product, a qualitative instrumental case study.

In this case study I examined the effectiveness of a curriculum program in my school district. The stakeholders in the school district mandated all third grade teachers implement the integrated curriculum to improve Grade 3 students' reading and comprehension skills and improve the district's reading pass rate scores on the state test. I conducted the study to examine the effectiveness of the curriculum program from the third grade teacher participants' views. As no study has been conducted, I could provide valuable information from triangulated data and analysis regarding the effects of a content integration program that infuses reading instruction.

From the literature, I learned a gap exists in the number of empirical studies that focus on classroom teachers' actual experiences in implementing curriculum integration (Park, 2008). This research study could add to the existing body of literature on integrated curriculums as I provided a thick rich description of teacher practices, strategies, and a professional development project for promoting Grade 3 students' ability to read and comprehend grade level text. Moreover, a study of this nature could benefit other educators and decision makers experiencing similar concerns or serve as an informative resource for those interested in implementing an integrated curriculum program.

Over the course of time in the doctoral program, I have evolved in my level of problem solving educational questions and concerns. Metaphorically speaking, I

advanced through the stages of crawling, to walking, and then running at high speeds in learning about my research topic. I became immersed in studying integrated curriculums, evidence-base reading practices, constructivism, service learning, and meaningful professional development practices. At this point, I have the ingenuity and motivation to facilitate the ICPD project. If afforded the opportunity, I will.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

My extensive investigation of the project study resulted in the development of the ICPD project for Grade 3 teachers in the school district. I designed the ICPD project based on the characteristics of what constitutes meaningful professional development. Loughran (2014) cited Avalos' (2011) views that professional development is about teachers learning how to learn and then transforming their knowledge into practice to promote student achievement. The ICPD project revolves around doing activities with teachers (Loughran, 2014) as a part of the learning process. Studies have shown that a positive relationship between professional development and student learning exist when schools focus on research-based instructional practices, participants are involved in active-learning, and have the flexibility to adapt those practices to their classroom situations (Guskey & Yoon, 2009).

Foremost, there are several implications that may arise from this project study. As the most valuable resource needed to support student learning is the teacher, the ICPD project can support Grade 3 teachers in executing a curriculum program that is holistic and integrated by instituting a structured process to follow (Scheer et al., 2012).

Furthermore, as teachers develop their content and pedagogical content integration practices, students may become proficient in reading and comprehending grade level text, learn essential content skills, and develop critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and social skills. This could lead to an improvement in the school district's Grade 3 pass rate scores in reading. The school district's decision makers could possibly allocate funds for integrated curriculum professional development.

Then there is the positive social change factor to consider. Teachers receiving meaningful professional development and implementing those integrated curriculum practices with fidelity can contribute to preparing students for school success and life. Significantly, students have the opportunity to acquire the 21st century skills needed to prepare them to contribute in a democratic society and survive in a global economy (United States Department of Education, 2010).

In closing, once the program has been implemented, future research should be conducted to determine the effectiveness of the integrated professional development program. This can be done by conducting a program evaluation study. Another study could involve a mixed-methods approach to compare effects of the professional development with the results from students' reading test scores. Then, there is the possibility of conducting a longitudinal study to determine the effectiveness of the program over an extended period of time.

Conclusion

In this qualitative instrumental case study I examined Grade 3 teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of an integrated curriculum that infuses reading instruction. My findings indicated that teachers perceived beneficial resources were the integrated theme unit, teacher collaboration, and training in the area of reading. Teachers further indicated a need for professional development on integrated curriculum pedagogical practices. Based on my findings, I designed an integrated curriculum professional development to enhance Grade 3 teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge and skills by incorporating best practices for training adults and for teaching content integration.

I designed a ready-to-use professional development project to support the district's integrated curriculum program. In developing the ICPD project, I considered evidence-based practices and strategies presented in the second literature review. In addition if implemented, this professional development program has the potential to improve teachers' integrated curriculum practices and improve student achievement.

On a final note, I completed this project study to problem solve a concern in my school district. Though the professional development has not been implemented yet, I will present a summary report of this study to the district's administrative team and express an interest in conducting the training sessions. If afforded the opportunity, I have a professional development resource ready to implement that will support the school district's student achievement initiative

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Appendix A: The Project

A1.1 The Flyer



 <p>Are you looking for effective practices to support students in meeting district and state standards in reading?</p>	 <p>Are you curious about what others are doing to integrate the curriculum?</p>	 <p>Are you looking for a support group to share ideas about integrating the curriculum?</p>
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Enhance your knowledge and skills in the areas of:

- Planning and teaching an integrated curriculum
- Differentiating instruction to support students struggling to read and comprehend grade level text

Six (6) sessions of training will guide and support you in enhancing your knowledge and skills for teaching an integrated curriculum.

<p>Workshop Dates</p> <p>August 5 - 8:00-3:30 August 6 - 8:00-3:30 October 30 - 8:00-12:00 January 30 - 8:00-3:30 March 20 - 8:00-12:00 April 24 - 8:00-12:00</p>	<p>Participants will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Plan, Collaborate, and Teach • Demonstration Lessons • Role Playing • Work with Interactive Achievement • Examine Students' Work and Assessment Data • Unpack the Integrated Curriculum
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Deadline for Registration is June 15, 2015 - Register online at www.icpd@nn.k12.va.us

A1.2 Needs Assessment Professional Development Survey

Thank you for registering for the Integrated Professional Development! Please complete this brief survey (9 items), which can help us to prepare for the integrated professional development training that can accommodate your needs.

1. How many years of teaching experience do you have? **(select one)**

- One year
 2-5 years
 6-10 years
 More than 10 years

2. How likely are you to attend following PD delivery methods?

PD Delivery Format	Very Likely	Likely	Not likely
Interactive Workshop	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Online/Self-paced	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
University course work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mentoring/Coaching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Problem-based projects	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Small collaborative group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hands-on/Field based	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seminar/Conference	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. I can benefit from professional development opportunities addressing effective instructional strategies and teaching methods in the following areas: **(check all that apply)**

- Integrating Math
 Integrating Reading
 Integrating Writing
 Integrating Social Studies and Science
 Classroom Management in Content Integration
 Interactive Achievement Technology Tool
 Other (Please specify)

4. Please indicate the degree to which you would be interested in training in the following areas:

	Very	Somewhat	Neutral	A little	Not at all
Teaching (and addressing the needs of) limited English proficient students	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Identifying early and appropriate interventions to help students with different learning styles	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Differentiated instruction methods/strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Effective methods for improving student behavior in the classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>				

	Very	Somewhat	Neutral	A little	Not at all
General classroom management skills	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Understanding and using data and assessments to improve classroom practice and student learning	<input type="checkbox"/>				
The effective use of technological resources (technologies) to improve teaching practice and student learning	<input type="checkbox"/>				

5. I would be interested in the following types of PD activities:

PD Delivery Format	Very Likely	Likely	Not likely
Adapting to standard of learning objectives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professional learning community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teaching practices for content integration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Motivation and student engagement strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. What PD topics would like to attend for in-service trainings?
7. The MOST effective professional development course/activity that I participated in my career was .
8. Why was this PD activity/course/training you participated MOST effective?
9. What are your suggestions or ideas to have better and productive trainings?

1.3 ICPD Syllabus

Dates	Activities (Note: 6 Formal ICPD = 30 Hours)
April – June	Advertise ICPD
May – June	Online Registration
May – June	Complete online preassessment needs survey
August	1st Formal ICPD – 6 Hours (8:00-3:30-1.5 hrs. lunch)
August	2nd Formal ICPD – 6 Hours (8:00-3:30-1.5 hrs. lunch)
September – December	School site – Plan-Collaborate-Teach-Reflect
September – December	Online Participation on ICPD website Teachers will:

	<p>(1) Share a minimum of 2 activities, lessons or practices implemented; Due dates: Assignment #1 End of Wk. 2 of October Assignment #2 End of Wk. 2 of December</p> <p>(2) Submit online to facilitator monthly: update of progress, concerns and questions, and support needed Due Date – End of 4th Week of each month</p>
October	3rd Formal ICPD – 4 Hours (8:00-12:00)
January	4th Formal ICPD – 6 Hours (8:00-3:30-1.5 hrs. lunch)
January – April	School site – Plan-Collaborate-Teach-Reflect
January – April	<p>Online Participation on ICPD website Teachers will: (1) Share a minimum of 2 activities, lessons or practices implemented; Due dates: Assignment #1 End of Wk. 2 of February Assignment #2 End of Wk. 2 of April</p> <p>(2) Submit online to facilitator monthly: update of progress, concerns and questions, and support needed Due Date – End of 4th Week of each month</p>
March	5th Formal ICPD – 4 Hours (8:00-12:00)
April (Due Beginning of Month)	Complete online post assessment survey Due Date – End of Wk. 1 of April
April (End of Month)	6th Formal ICPD – 4 Hours (8:00-12:00) Oral discussions of program Share feedback from assessment survey Compare beginning survey and ending survey Discussion of next steps Celebration

A1.4 ICPD Training Schedule

TIME	<p>DAY 1 – EARLY AUGUST</p> <p>Goals: (1) Participant Introductions, (2) Review ICPD syllabus and participant expectations, (3) Introduce how schools can prepare 21st century students, (4) Introduce historical and background information on constructivist practices and integrated curriculums, (5) Introduce use of ICPD website, (6) Unpack/analyze district’s integrated curriculum theme unit, and (7) Plan, collaborate, and practice teach first day of school lessons</p>
	<p>8:00-3:30 (Full Day – 6 hours) – Classroom Arranged Groups of 4 per table</p> <p>Materials needed: Copies of ICPD syllabus, PowerPoint presentation of Day 1 information, copies of PowerPoint for teachers to record notes on, copies of integrated curriculum research article, Smartboard, laptop computer, LCD projector, chart paper, markers, post-it pads, and designated area marked “Parking Lot”, and power strips for teachers to keep laptops fully charged</p>
8:00-8:45	<p>Classroom Arranged Groups of 4 per table</p> <p>Take Attendance – Teachers will sign-in on attendance sheet; required for recertification points</p> <p>Welcome and Get Acquainted – Introductions, identify school/years of experience/share one thing expected to learn from the ICPD</p> <p>Housekeeping items addressed (restroom locations, breaks, lunch, etc.)</p> <p>Review Class Syllabus – Overview of program/ Protocols for earning recertification points</p> <p>Parking Lot – Teachers will write questions on a post-it note and place on board space. Questions will be addressed at the designated times listed on the agenda. Teachers are not required to identify themselves.</p>
8:45-9:50	<p>Activity 1 – Total time: 25 minutes</p> <p>Feedback of Online Needs Assessment Survey – Post, discuss, and invite open discussion among teachers</p> <p>Acknowledge and validate survey data and teacher concerns. If new information is presented during open discussion, address how that need or concern will be met. Always involve others who may have reasonable resolutions.</p> <p>Activity 2 – Total time: 40 minutes</p> <p>Group Activity – Turn/Talk/List on Chart Paper</p> <p>Question: What qualities will our students need in the 21st century for success in college, careers and citizenship?</p> <p>Have one person from the table share. Allow for open discussion. (10 minutes)</p> <p>Move to PPT slide</p> <p>Tony Wagner, Harvard Professor listed the following qualities shared by over 600 CEOs. These were the qualities high school graduates needed in the 21st century to be college, career, and citizenship ready:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical Thinking and Problem Solving • Collaboration across Networks and Leading by Influence • Agility and Adaptability • Initiative and Entrepreneurship • Effective Oral and Written Communication,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessing and Analyzing Information • Curiosity and Imagination <p>Compare and discuss Wagner's findings with what the teachers listed: Give teachers two minutes to turn and talk with table members. Share orally. (Total time: 10 minutes)</p> <p>Move to PPT slides presenting the essential capacities of 21st century schools. Present and share with teachers practices that can lead to school improvement and prepare students to be college, career, and citizenship ready. Question for discussion: Do you see any of these qualities in your school? Which of the qualities do you see in your school? Turn and Talk (Total time: 10 minutes)</p>
9:50-10:20	<p>Break (15 minutes)</p> <p>Activity 3 – Total time: 15 minutes</p> <p>Presentation of History of Integrated Curriculum and Constructivism in Education</p>

TIME	DAY 1 – EARLY AUGUST
10:20-11:30	<p>Activity 4 – Total time: 10 minutes</p> <p>What do you know? Question: What do you know about an integrated curriculum? Take a moment and think.</p> <p>Discussion: Have teachers share their responses. Ask one volunteer to record responses on chart paper.)</p> <p>Activity 5 – Total time: 40 minutes</p> <p>Content Integration in the 21st century</p> <p>Show 15 minute video clip on content integration. Present some background information about the video clip and have teachers to look for the content integration approaches that were modeled, features of each, and constructivist practices observed? How does the district compare with the models in video? Group Activity (25 minutes)</p> <p>Discussion and checking for understanding of the content integration video Teachers will respond to the questions presented. There will be 1 recorder per group.</p> <p>Groups will share answers.</p> <p>Let's look at your responses about concerning what you know about the integrated curriculum and note the similarities and differences.</p> <p>Display PowerPoint Slide – Introduce the operational definition of the integrated curriculum. Discuss and Share.</p> <p>Activity 6 – (Total time: 20 minutes)</p> <p>Small Group/Large Group Activity – Read/Think/Analyze/Share: Research article by James Newman, Karen, Vanek, Rick, and Kim-Thoa Nguyen (2010) entitled “An O-“Fish”-ial Research Project” that models an integrated standards-based unit in one third grade classroom. Have one group member record responses on chart paper. Groups will present recorded responses.</p>
11:30-12:55	Lunch

TIME	DAY 1 – EARLY AUGUST
<p>1:00-3:30 (Break Time 2:15-2:30)</p>	<p>Parking Lot – Address items posted (5 minutes) Activity 7 – (Total time: 25 minutes) Teachers need to have their laptops out Introduce them to the ICPD website, login information to gain access to website, how to manipulate the tools, resources, assignment section, uploading assignments, and discussion board. Review protocols for blogging.</p> <p>Activity 8 – Unpack the Grade 3 Integrated Curriculum and Begin the process of planning the first week of school (Total time: 30 minutes) PowerPoint Slides – About the big picture – Unpacking the district’s integrated curriculum unit Display and discuss the major theme and nine subthemes Group Activity: Turn and Talk Teachers will pull up the integrated curriculum unit – review of the major theme, “Our World”, and the nine subthemes. Identify the approach with the approaches presented in the content integration video. Are you familiar with the IC unit plan? Are you familiar with the first subtheme, the standards, goals, objectives, and timelines? What resources do you have to support you in your instruction? Brainstorm how to introduce the IC program to students and how to introduce the first subtheme on rules. What is critical to know about your students as you plan the integrated unit? Have 1 group member record notes. Discuss and share.</p> <p>Activity 9 – Role Play – Plan and teach a lesson for the first day of school. (Total time: 1 hour) Let’s start small by planning the first day of school. In your groups develop a plan that can be used to teach to your third grade students using the 5E model. Each group will teach the lesson and teachers will pretend they are the students. Groups can have the option of collaborating with other groups. Keep in mind the constructivist practices and content integration approaches presented in the video. Here are some things to keep in mind as you plan: How will you begin welcoming your students? What will be the first activity you conduct with your students? How will you build a sense of community with your students? How does the IC unit connect with building a sense of community? How will your rules, routines, procedures, and expectations connect to the IC unit? Will students be involved in developing classroom rules? What resources will you need? Discussion: After all groups have presented, teachers will share what they noticed about the lessons, planning, collaboration, constructivist practices, and content integration practices. The facilitator will record key points shared.</p> <p>Closing Activity – 3:15-3:30 Conduct a quick review of learning events from training session. The intention is to upload the lessons in the “Sharing Ideas” section of the ICPD website. I will ask one group member to upload the lesson plan on the website for others to use.</p> <p>Activity 10 – Complete Exit Card Inform teachers of the agenda for Day 2. The goal is to plan lessons for the first</p>

	two weeks of school. Teachers are encouraged to bring books or whatever resources they have for this work session. Reminder: Please bring your laptops.
TIME	DAY 2 – EARLY AUGUST
	<p>8:00-3:30 (Full Day – 6 hours) – Classroom Arranged Groups of 4 per table Goals: (1) Introduce and practice strategies for building classroom communities, (2) Discuss and analyze various methods to assess student learning, student portfolios, and (3) Discuss, model, and create integrated curriculum lessons Materials needed: PowerPoint presentation of Day 2 information, copies of PowerPoint for teachers to record notes on, Smartboard, laptop computer, LCD projector, chart paper, markers, post-it pads, and designated area marked “Parking Lot”, power strips</p>
8:00-11:30	<p>Display PowerPoint slide of goals and objectives for Day 2 Session Attendance/Sign-in Activity 1 – Building a Sense of Community (Total time: 40 minutes) PowerPoint Slide – Introduce the 4 Sequential Components of Morning Meeting and conduct a Demonstration Activity – Morning Meeting Some may be familiar and some may not. Morning Meeting – The facilitator will conduct a morning meeting with teachers of the four sequential steps, greeting, sharing, group activity (with will be a review of Day 1 events and question/answer session), and announcements (an overview of the events for Day 2). Discuss and Share Activity 2 – Assessing Student Learning Break – 15 minutes 9:45-10:00 Activities 3, 4, and 5 – 10:00-11:30 Activity 3 – Student Portfolios Activity 4 – Classroom Set-up Activity 5 – Work Session – Planning the first two weeks of school</p>
11:30-12:55	Lunch
Afternoon 1:00-3:30 (Break Time 2:15-2:30)	<p>Integrated Curriculum – 1st Marking Period: Subtheme Unit 1 Rules and Laws and Unit 2 Places and Populations Work Session – Planning for the first two weeks of school Teachers will work in their small groups planning and collaborating the first two weeks of school. Using the IC teachers will follow the essential questions, topics of learning, objectives and standards. The facilitator will guide them in this process by monitoring the progress of each group. When teachers have struggles during the planning, they will be asked probing questions to get them back on track. Closing Activity (Time 3:00-3:30) – Review goals and objectives, next steps (work with grade level teams, plan, collaborate, teach, reflect), and remind teachers of upcoming activities and lessons to upload on the ICPD website. Address items posted on the “Parking Lot”. Complete Exit Card</p>

TIME	DAY 3 – OCTOBER (8:00-12:00 – 4 Hours)
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	<p>Teachers have a workday in October.</p> <p>Goals: (1) Conduct informal conversations with teachers of how they are progressing in teaching the integrated curriculum and teaching practices, (2) Analyze and compare work samples of students' reading below, on, and above benchmark, (3) Practice utilizing Interactive Achievement, a computer-based assessment and teaching tool, and develop assessments and practice lessons to assess student learning.</p>
<p>8:00-12:00 (Break 9:45-10:00)</p>	<p>Attendance/Sign-in</p> <p>Activity 1 (8:00-9:00 – Total time: 60 minutes)</p> <p>Teachers are at the end of the 1st marking period and have taught two of the subtheme integrated units. Discussion and group input will address the following:</p> <p>Where are we now? For this session, teachers will bring samples of lesson plans, student work, assessments used (formal/informal)</p> <p>Planning and Collaboration – How is this working at your school?</p> <p>Teaching Integrated Lessons – What are teachers noticing about teaching practices? Following timelines? What's going well? What are areas of concern? What do you need help on?</p> <p>About the Students – Update on student progress</p> <p>Discuss student behaviors and adjustments to third grade</p> <p>Differentiated Instruction: How are teachers accommodating students' learning needs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of students reading below benchmark – • The number of students reading on benchmark – • The number of students reading above benchmark – <p>Examine student work samples</p> <p>How do you know that students are learning?</p> <p>Questions and Concerns</p> <p>Activity 2 (9:00-11:45) – Using Interactive Achievement – A computer-based assessment and teaching tool (New to the district). For technical support, an ITC specialist will be invited to this session. The facilitator will select three reading objectives that teachers will develop practice lessons and/or assessments.</p> <p>Review of the resources, selecting items to assess student learning, learning objectives, SOL objectives, how to manipulate the program, set up and administer assessments or practice lessons, and review reports</p> <p>Reading – Develop quick checks, practice activities, and assessments to administer to students based on level of learning, district expectations, and state standards of learning.</p> <p>Closing Activity – 11:45-12:00</p> <p>Reminder to teachers: Teachers should be planning and collaborating with grade level teams for subtheme Unit 3: Shaping Our World and Unit 4: Measuring Our World (2nd marking period). The facilitator will monitor and support teachers' progress through the ICPD monthly reflections, blogs, and emails</p> <p>Parking Lot – Address items posted.</p> <p>Review objectives for Day 3 session.</p> <p>Complete Exit Card</p>

TIME	Day 4 – January (Full Day – 8:00-3:30)
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	Goals: (1) Discuss and share integrated curriculum teaching practices, (2) Bring reading data to show and discuss students' reading progress, (3) revisit IA onTRAC to discuss pros and cons and discuss and share student reports, (4) examine student work samples, (5) Unpack and plan integrated lessons for subtheme five, (6) conduct one practice lesson for participants to critique
8:00-9:50	Attendance/Sign-in
10:05-11:30	<p>Activity 1 Pedagogical Practices (in teaching the constructivist integrated curriculum) Small group/large group – Teachers will bring samples of integrated curriculum subtheme lessons taught and share experiences in small group. Look at the theme unit to determine if goals, objectives, timelines were met. On chart paper groups will take one of the lessons and list what was noticed about the lesson, subjects that were integrated, how learning was assessed, and how students performed.</p> <p>9:50-10:05 – Break</p> <p>Activity 2 Reading Progress Small group/large group - Let's look at where students are now. Teachers will examine and analyze reading data and share student's progress and next steps. How are students progressing in reading and comprehending grade level text? How do you know?</p> <p>Activity 3 Small group/large group Examine student work samples to determine if reflective of students' reading ability. Explain</p> <p>Activity 4 Status of Interactive Achievement – Are teachers utilizing? What are the pros and cons of the program? Examine reports.</p>
11:30-12:55	Lunch
12:55 – 3:15	Parking Lot – Address items posted (5 minutes) Activity 5 – Teachers their laptops for this activity. Small groups will review and discuss the integrated curriculum (2 nd Semester, third marking period) – Subtheme Unit 5: Making Choices and Unit 6: Exploring Our World
(Break 2:15-2:30)	Activity 6 Teachers will unpack and plan integrated lessons for subtheme five, and conduct one practice lesson for participants to critique
3:15-3:30	Activity 7 Closing Activity – (1) Address Parking Lot items and (2) Conduct a quick review of learning events and complete exit cards.
TIME	DAY 5 – MARCH (4 Hours)

	Goals: (1) Analyze student work, portfolios, and IA onTRAC reports, and (2) Examine and discuss students' reading progress, and (3) Plan and collaborate
8:00-12:00	<p>Attendance/Sign-in 8:00-8:15 – Attendance/sign-in, question/answer time and /update of where students are.</p> <p>Activity 1: Analyzing student work – Group Activity (8:15-9:15 – Total time: 60 minutes) Bring in 3 student portfolios of a student reading below, on and above benchmark and 1 Interactive Achievement reading report.</p> <p>Break – 9:45-10:00</p> <p>10:00-11:45 – Unpacking the curriculum – Fourth marking period – Unit 7: Individual Contributions; Begin planning integrated curriculum lessons</p> <p>11:45 – 12:00 – Closing Activity – (1) Address Parking Lot items and (2) Conduct a quick review of learning events and complete exit cards.</p>

TIME	DAY 6 – APRIL (4 Hours)
	Goals: (1) View video clips of teachers and discuss practices, (2) discuss how teachers will prepare students for end of year testing, (3) Present feedback from post evaluation, compare and analyze, (4) discuss and plan next steps, and (5) Celebrate completing program
8:00-12:00	<p>Attendance/sign-in</p> <p>Activity 1: Start by showing a brief clip of teacher participants in their classroom setting delivering instruction. Show some of student projects. View, discuss, and share, constructivist practices, content integration, student progress, and teacher practices.</p> <p>Activity 2: Feedback from survey</p> <p>Break – 9:45-10:00</p> <p>Activity 3: The integrated curriculum and SOL test preparation</p> <p>Activity 4: Next steps – Are teachers ready to incorporate service learning for the next school year?</p> <p>Activity 5: Celebration/graduation – present certificates</p>

A1.5 PowerPoint Handout

Integrated Curriculum Professional Development

By
Charlene Bazemore

ICPD – Day 1

Goals

- Participant Introductions
- Review ICPD Syllabus
- Review feedback from Needs Assessment Survey
- Introduce how schools can prepare 21st Century students
- Introduce background information on constructivist practices and integrated curriculums
- Introduce the ICPD website and website's tools – Laptops required at all training sessions
- Unpack the integrated curriculum theme unit
- Plan, collaborate, and practice teaching first day of school lesson

ICPD – Day 1

- Participant Introductions – introduce yourself, school you teach and share why you decided to take this PD.
- Review class expectations, breaks, lunch, etc.
- Review the course syllabus and address questions or concerns

Pre-Assessment Feedback

Post the questions and results of the Needs Assessment Survey

- What commonalities and differences did you notice in how teachers responded?
- Were there any responses that you expected?
- What surprised you?
- How did your response compare to the overall response to each question?

Preparing 21st Century Students What do you think?

Group Activity – Turn and talk to your table group and have one person record your responses on chart paper to this question:

What qualities will our students need in the 21st Century for success in college, careers, and citizenship?

A representative from each table will share responses recorded.

Tony Wagner, Harvard Professor, listed the following qualities shared by over 600 CEOs.

These were the qualities high school graduates needed in the 21st Century to be college, career, and citizenship ready:

- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Collaboration across Networks and Leading by Influence
- Agility and Adaptability
- Initiative and Entrepreneurship
- Effective Oral and Written Communication
- Accessing and Analyzing Information
- Curiosity and Imagination (Wagner, 2008)

Compare and discuss Wagner's findings with what the you listed.

The Essential Capacities of 21st Century Schools

The essential capacities were presented in a report published by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) Commission as to guide schools in examining their programs and practices (Witt & Orvis, 2010).

- Analytical and Creative Thinking and Problem-solving
- Complex Communication —Oral and Written
- Leadership and Teamwork
- Digital and Quantitative Literacy
- Global Perspective
- Adaptability, Initiative, and Risk-Taking
- Integrity and Ethical Decision-Making

What were the similarities and differences in the qualities listed by Wagner and the essential capacities presented by Witt and Orvis?

Constructivism

- Constructivists, Dewey, Kroll, and Piaget defined constructivism as learners actively constructing new knowledge based on prior knowledge and experiences (Ciampa, 2012).
- The constructivist theory focuses on the knowledge, beliefs, and skills students bring to the learning experience (Garbett, 2011) of which learning in of itself is a child-determined exploration and guided discovery; emphasizing authentic experiences that mimic real life experiences (Ciampa, 2012).

Constructivism and the Integrated Curriculum

- The constructivism theory dominates the integrated curriculum in that the role of the teacher is to provide a learning environment that prepares students for the workplace and everyday life experiences. Constructivism, a philosophical framework, asserts, "Humans construct meaning from current knowledge structures" (Lamanauskas, 2010, p. 5). Constructivists emphasize the discovery of knowledge as an integrated 'whole' and not divided into separate subjects (Lamanauskas, 2010).

Constructivism and the Integrated Curriculum

- The teacher, who is the facilitator, provides information and organizes activities that enable learners to discover their own meaning (Chu Chih & Ju (Crissa) Chen, 2010). Furthermore, the teacher promotes a student-centered previous-rich environment in which students' prior knowledge and experience become the growth point that leads to introducing students to new knowledge (Jia, 2010).

Content Integration

View "Strands and Strategies: 21st Century Teaching, Learning, and Leading" video presentation to learn:

- Background information on content integration and constructivism
- The definition of content integration
- Differentiated instruction
- Characteristics of multidisciplinary, theme-based, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary learning
- 5 E Model
- Models of constructivist integrated teaching

(Carlson & Rosch, n. d., <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V0zBkM6-RDQ>)

What is an integrated curriculum?

Researchers, Shriner, Schlee, and Libler (2010) utilized Jacob's (1997) definition of integrated curriculum as a "curriculum approach that consciously applies methodology and language from more than one discipline to examine a central theme, issue, problem, topic or experience" (p. 51).

Other terms used interchangeably are content integration, interdisciplinary curriculum, multidisciplinary curriculum, fused curriculum, transdisciplinary curriculum, cross-disciplinary curriculum, and integrative curriculum (Shriner, Schlee, & Libler, 2010).

Read/Think/Analyze/Share

Small Group/Large Group Activity

Distribute copies of a research article by James Newman, Karen, Vanek, Rick, and Kim-Thoa Nguyen (2010) entitled "An O-"Fish"-ial Research Project" that models an integrated standards-based unit in one third grade classroom.

Questions for Discussion

- How did the teacher integrate the curriculum?
 - What were some of the constructivist practices implemented?
 - How did the teacher prepare for this unit?
 - List the resources used?
 - How did the teacher assess student learning?
- Have one group member record responses on chart paper. Groups will present recorded responses.

Unpack the Grade 3 Integrated Curriculum

- Peruse the theme unit, "Our World", and 9 subthemes
- Read and discuss the contents of the first subtheme unit, "Rules".
- Identify the approach with the approaches presented in the content integration video.
- Begin the process of planning the first week of school by planning the first day of school.

First Day of School

- In viewing the unit on rules, plan in your groups what would the first day of school look like?
- Lesson plan template – 5E Model (Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and Evaluate)
- What will be the first order of business?
- Include specific rules, procedures, relationship building activities, etc.
- What constructivist integrated curriculum practices will be utilized?
- What resources will you need?

Questions to Consider When Planning Integrated Lessons

- Are your lesson plans developed using NNPS curriculum framework, VDOE, website and SOL blueprints?
- What is the learning target?
- Do your lessons provide opportunities to foster collaborative learning with emphasis on problem-solving, independent thinking, collaborating and communication?
- Are small group lessons/activities differentiated to meet student's needs?
- Do your lessons challenge and motivate students by activating prior knowledge and building upon previous skills/strategies?

Questions to Consider When Planning Integrated Lessons

- Will your lessons promote cooperative learning, problem-solving, & communicating by using Total Participation Techniques e.g. whiteboards, turn & talk, quick writes, etc.?
- Will you use frequent *Checking for Understanding* strategies throughout the lesson?
- Do your lessons promote higher level questioning, such as "prove it", "why", "justify your answer", tell me more, etc.?
- How will you assess student learning?

Role Play

In your groups, plan and teach a lesson for the first day of school to present to the group.

During the presentations others will observe the constructivist integrated practices implemented and be prepared to share in whole group discussion.

Small Group Planning and Closing Activity

- Using the 5E Model, small groups will work on planning the first week of school. Refer to the “questions to consider when planning”.
- Closing Activity – Review learning goals
- Exit Card Activity – Distribute card and have teachers respond to the following:
 - Strengths of the training
 - Areas in need of improvement or concerns
 - Questions or comments

Integrated Curriculum Professional Development

Day 2
By
Charlene Bazemore

ICPD – Day 2

Goals

- Introduce and practice strategies for building classroom communities
- Discuss and analyze various methods to assess student learning and student portfolios
- Discuss, model, and create integrated curriculum lessons.
- Continue planning for the first two weeks of school.

Morning Meeting

Morning Meeting sets the tone for respectful learning and establishes a climate of trust.

Morning Meeting is made up of four sequential components and lasts up to a total of a half hour each day.

The components intentionally provide opportunities for children to practice the skills of greeting, listening and responding, group problem-solving, and noticing and anticipating.

Morning Meeting 4 Sequential Components

The four components of Morning Meeting are:

- **Greeting:** children greet each other by name, often including handshaking, clapping, singing and other activities.
- **Sharing:** students share some news of interest to the class and respond to each other, articulating their thoughts, feelings, and ideas in a positive manner.
- **Group Activity:** the whole class does a short activity together, building class cohesion through active participation.
- **News and Announcements:** students develop language skills and learn about the events in the day ahead by reading and discussing a daily message posted for them.
- **View model lesson of morning meeting**
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xtb8w3a5FHW>

Morning Meeting

- Morning Meeting merges social, emotional, and intellectual learning. It motivates children by addressing their need to feel a sense of significance and belonging, and the need to have fun.
- Roxann Kriete and Carol Davis (2014), “The Morning Meeting Book”, 3rd Edition
- Demonstration Lesson – Conduct a morning meeting with participants to model the steps.

Student Portfolio

Student portfolio will consists of:

- Reading Assessment Data
- Writing Assessment Data
- Performance Assessment Data of Content Area
- Student Projects (Rubric of assessed projects)
- Can Include DVDs of student presentations

Collaborative Planning

Pull up district's IC Theme Unit

Work Session in small groups

1st Marking Period – Subtheme 1: Rules and Laws

Examine the essential questions, topics of learning, objectives and standards

The facilitator will assist and monitor groups
Open Discussion - groups will share ideas

Questions to Consider When Planning Integrated Lessons

- Are your lesson plans developed using NNPS curriculum framework, VDOE, website and SOL blueprints?
- What is the learning target?
- Do your lessons provide opportunities to foster collaborative learning with emphasis on problem-solving, independent thinking, collaborating and communication?
- Are small group lessons/activities differentiated to meet student's needs?
- Do your lessons challenge and motivate students by activating prior knowledge and building upon previous skills/strategies?

Questions to Consider When Planning Integrated Lessons

- Will your lessons promote cooperative learning, problem-solving, & communicating by using Total Participation Techniques e.g. whiteboards, turn & talk, quick writes, etc.?
- Will you use frequent *Checking for Understanding* strategies throughout the lesson?
- Do your lessons promote higher level questioning, such as "prove it", "why", "justify your answer", tell me more, etc.?
- How will you assess student learning?

Closing Activity – Day 2

- Closing Activity – Review learning goals
- Exit Card Activity – Distribute card and have teachers respond to the following:
 - Strengths of the training
 - Areas in need of improvement or concerns
 - Questions or comments

Note: Use ICPD website to post strategies and practices and provide support to classmates.

Integrated Curriculum Professional Development

Day 3

By

Charlene Bazemore

ICPD – Day 3

Goals

- Conduct informal conversations with teachers of how they are progressing in teaching the integrated curriculum and teaching practices
- Analyze and compare work samples of students' reading below, on, and above benchmark
- Practice utilizing Interactive Achievement, a computer-based assessment and teaching tool, and develop assessments and practice lessons to assess student learning.

Planning, Collaborating, and Teaching

- Teachers are at the end of the 1st marking period and have taught two of the subtheme integrated units. Discussion and group input will address the following:
- Where are we now? For this session, teachers will bring samples of lesson plans, student work, assessments used (formal/informal)
- Planning and Collaboration – How is this working at your school?
- Teaching Integrated Lessons – What are teachers noticing about teaching practices? Following timelines? What's going well? What are areas of concern? What do you need help on?

Student Behaviors, Differentiated Instruction, and Reading Progress

- Discuss student behaviors and adjustments to third grade
- Differentiated Instruction: How are teachers accommodating students' learning needs?
- The number of students reading below benchmark –
- The number of students reading on benchmark –
- The number of students reading above benchmark –

Examining Student Work

Whole Group Activity – Examine student work samples

- Gallery Walk – Teachers will examine student work samples
- Use the “questions to consider when planning” on the next two slides as a guide for this discussion
- Small Group Activity – Share what you noticed
- Whole Group Activity – Discuss and compare findings

Questions to Consider When Planning Integrated Lessons

- Are your lesson plans developed using NNPS curriculum framework, VDOE, website and SOL blueprints?
- What is the learning target?
- Do your lessons provide opportunities to foster collaborative learning with emphasis on problem-solving, independent thinking, collaborating and communication?
- Are small group lessons/activities differentiated to meet student's needs?
- Do your lessons challenge and motivate students by activating prior knowledge and building upon previous skills/strategies?

Questions to Consider When Planning Integrated Lessons

- Will your lessons promote cooperative learning, problem-solving, & communicating by using Total Participation Techniques e.g. whiteboards, turn & talk, quick writes, etc.?
- Will you use frequent *Checking for Understanding* strategies throughout the lesson?
- Do your lessons promote higher level questioning, such as “prove it”, “why”, “justify your answer”, tell me more, etc.?
- How will you assess student learning?

Interactive Achievement (IA)

- IA– A computer-based assessment and teaching tool (New to the district). For technical support, an ITC specialist will be invited to this session. The facilitator will select three reading objectives that teachers will develop practice lessons and/or assessments.
- Review of the resources, selecting items to assess student learning, learning objectives, SOL objectives, how to manipulate the program, set up and administer assessments or practice lessons, and review reports
- Reading – Develop quick checks, practice activities, and assessments to administer to students based on level of learning, district expectations, and state standards of learning.

Collaborative Planning

- Teachers will continue planning subthemes Unit 3: Shaping Our World and Unit 4: Measuring Our World (2nd marking period).
- Reminder: Refer to “questions to consider when planning IC lessons”.

Closing Activity – Day 3

- Closing Activity – Review learning goals
- Exit Card Activity – Distribute card and have teachers respond to the following:
 - Strengths of the training
 - Areas in need of improvement or concerns
 - Questions or comments

Note: Use ICPD website to post strategies and practices and provide support to classmates.

Integrated Curriculum Professional Development

Day 4

By

Charlene Bazemore

ICPD – Day 4

Goals

- Discuss and share integrated curriculum teaching practices
- Bring reading data to show and discuss students’ reading progress
- Revisit IA onTRAC to discuss pros and cons and discuss and share student reports
- Examine student work samples
- Unpack and plan integrated lessons for subtheme five
- Conduct one practice lesson for participants to critique

IC Pedagogical Practices

Group Activity

- Small group/large group – Teachers will bring samples of integrated curriculum subtheme lessons taught and share experiences in small group.
- Look at the theme unit to determine if goals, objectives, timelines were met. On chart paper groups will take one of the lessons and assessed, and how students performed.

Reading Progress

Reading Progress

- Small group/large group - Let's look at where students are now. Teachers will examine and analyze reading data and share student's progress and next steps.
- How are students progressing in reading and comprehending grade level text? How do you know?

Student Progress

Small group/large group

- Examine student work samples to determine if reflective of students' reading ability. Explain
- Status of Interactive Achievement – Are teachers utilizing? What are the pros and cons of the program? Examine reports.

Collaborative Planning and Teaching

- Activity 5 – Teachers will refer to the “questions to consider when planning IC lessons”.
- Small groups will review and discuss the integrated curriculum (2nd Semester, third marking period) – Subtheme Unit 5: Making Choices and Unit 6: Exploring Our World
- Activity 6 – Teachers will unpack and plan integrated lessons for subtheme five, and conduct one practice lesson for participants to critique

Closing Activity – Day 4

- Closing Activity – Review learning goals
- Exit Card Activity – Distribute card and have teachers respond to the following:
 - Strengths of the training
 - Areas in need of improvement or concerns
 - Questions or comments

Note: Use ICPD website to post strategies and practices and provide support to classmates.

Integrated Curriculum Professional Development

Day 5

By

Charlene Bazemore

ICPD – Day 5

Goals:

- Analyze student work, portfolios, and IA onTRAC reports
- Examine and discuss students' reading progress
- Plan and Collaborate

Student Portfolios and IA

Gallery Walk

- Bring in 3 student portfolios of a student reading below, on and above benchmark and 1 Interactive Achievement reading report.
- Questions for Discussion
 - Are students making growth as expected?
 - How do you know?

Planning and Collaboration

- Unpacking the curriculum – Fourth marking period – Unit 7: Individual Contributions; Begin planning integrated curriculum lessons
- Refer to “questions to consider when planning IC lessons”

Closing Activity – Day 5

- Closing Activity – Review learning goals
- Exit Card Activity – Distribute card and have teachers respond to the following:
 - Strengths of the training
 - Areas in need of improvement or concerns
 - Questions or comments

Note: Use ICPD website to post strategies and practices and provide support to classmates

Closing Activity – Day 5

- Closing Activity – Review learning goals
- Exit Card Activity – Distribute card and have teachers respond to the following:
 - Strengths of the training
 - Areas in need of improvement or concerns
 - Questions or comments

Note: Use ICPD website to post strategies and practices and provide support to classmates.

Integrated Curriculum Professional Development

Day 6

By

Charlene Bazemore

ICPD – Day 6

Goals

- View video clips of teachers and discuss practices
- Discuss how teachers will prepare students for end of year testing
- Present feedback from post evaluation, compare and analyze
- Discuss and plan next steps
- Celebrate completing program – certificates, cake and drinks

Final Activities

- **Activity 1:** Start by showing a brief clip of teacher participants in their classroom setting delivering instruction. Show some of student projects. View, discuss, and share, constructivist practices, content integration, student progress, and teacher practices.
- **Activity 2:** Present feedback from post evaluation and discuss
- **Activity 3:** The integrated curriculum and SOL test preparation
- **Activity 4:** Next steps – Are teachers ready to incorporate service learning for the next school year?
- **Activity 5:** Celebration/graduation – present certificates

A1.6 Post Evaluation

The Integrated Curriculum Professional Development (ICPD) Program Post Evaluation

Surveying Participants' Views of the ICPD program – Please complete the post program evaluation by selecting one item for each question. Thank you, third grade teachers for participating in the ICPD program.

1. Which of the following best describes the Integrated Curriculum Professional Development Program? **(Select one.) ICPD supported me in the following:**
 - To communicate new ideas for me to consider using in my classroom
 - To provide an opportunity for me to learn from other teachers
 - To help me understand how to teach the third grade integrated curriculum
 - To help me apply/implement strategies for teaching the third grade integrated curriculum in my classroom
 - Not clear

2. Which of the following statements best describes the usefulness of the ICPD program? **(Select one.)**
 - It was a good start.
 - It was a good start, but I have a lot of questions.
 - It was a good start, and I look forward to using the new ideas in my classroom.
 - It provided everything I need to use the new ideas in my classroom.
 - I don't think that these ideas will work very well in my classroom.
 - It's too soon to tell.

3. Indicate the extent to which the ICPD program met your professional needs. **(Select one.)**
 - It addressed my professional learning needs completely.
 - It addresses some of my professional learning needs.
 - It did not address my professional learning needs.
 - This professional development did not help much because I was already familiar with this topic.

4. To what extent was the ICPD program aligned with the school district's goals for improving instruction? **(Select one.)**
 - The ICPD was very closely aligned with goals for instructional improvement.
 - The ICPD was somewhat aligned with goals for instructional improvement.
 - The ICPD was not aligned with goals for instructional improvement.
 - The ICPD was inconsistent with goals for instructional improvement.

5. Which of the following statements best describes the support that you received from your principal to participated in the ICPD program? **(Select one.)**
 - The principal strongly encouraged me to participate.
 - The principal encouraged me to participate.
 - The principal tried to discourage me from participating.
 - I did not discuss the professional development with the principal prior to participating.

6. Which of the following statements best describes the support that you received from your principal to apply what you learned in the ICPD program in your classroom? **(Select one.)**
- The principal has encouraged me to apply what I learned in my classroom.
 - The principal has encouraged me to apply what I learned in my classroom and has offered to help.
 - The principal has not encouraged me to apply what I learned in my classroom.
 - I have not discussed what I learned with the principal.
7. Which of the following statements best describes the likelihood that you will apply what you learned in the ICPD program in your classroom? **(Select one.)**
- I have already (practiced/applied) (skill/practice) in my classroom.
 - I have already (practiced/applied) (skill/practice) in my classroom, and it seemed to work well.
 - I have already (practiced/applied) (skill/practice) in my classroom, but it was not appropriate for my students.
 - I look forward to (practicing/applying) (skill/practice) in my classroom in the next few weeks.
 - I look forward to (practicing/applying) (skill/practice) in my classroom sometime later this year.
 - I would like to (practice/apply) (skill/practice), but I do not have the materials that I need.
 - I do not think that these things will work with my students.
8. Which of the following statements best describes how the ICPD program compares with other professional developments in which you have participated during the past year? **(Select one.)**
- I have already applied the strategies in my classroom.
 - I have already applied the strategies in my classroom, and it seemed to work well.
 - I have already applied the strategies in my classroom, but it was not appropriate for my students.
 - I look forward to applying the strategies in my classroom sometime later this year.
 - I would like to practice the strategies, but I don't have the materials I need.
 - I don't think that these things work with my students.

Appendix B: District's Integrated Curriculum Unit



District's Curriculum Pacing Guide

Integrated Third Grade
Grade 3**Course Description**

In the third grade curriculum presented here, students will see the world through the following 9 themes: Rules and Laws, Places & Populations, Shaping the World, Measuring the World, Making Choices, Exploration, Contributions, and Meet Virginia. The Social Studies, Science, Math, and English curricula have been divided based on the natural connections to themes. In addition, some contents in a theme also have significant connections.

Math

While learning mathematics, students will be actively engaged, using concrete materials and appropriate technologies such as calculators and computers. Students will be fluent in the basic addition facts through the tens table and the corresponding subtraction facts. Concrete materials and two-dimensional representations will be used to introduce addition and subtraction with fractions and the concept of probability as chance. Students will use standard units (U.S. Customary and metric) to measure temperature, length, liquid volume, and weight and identify relevant properties of shapes, points, line segments, rays, angles, vertices, and lines. Students will investigate and describe the identity and commutative properties for addition and multiplication.

Science

The third-grade standards place increasing emphasis on conducting investigations. Students are expected to be able to develop questions, formulate simple hypotheses, make predictions, gather data, and use the metric system with greater precision. Using information to make inferences and draw conclusions becomes more important. In the area of physical science, the standards focus on simple and compound machines, energy, and a basic understanding of matter. Behavioral and physical adaptations are examined in relation to the life needs of animals. The notion of living systems is further explored in aquatic and terrestrial food chains and diversity in ecosystems. Patterns in the natural world are demonstrated in terms of the phases of the moon, tides, seasonal changes, and the water cycle, and animal and plant life cycles. Geological concepts are introduced through the investigation of the components of soil.

Social Studies

The standards for third-grade students include an introduction to the heritage and contributions of the peoples of ancient Greece and Rome and the West African empire of Mali. Students should continue developing map skills and demonstrate an understanding of basic economic concepts. Students will explain the importance of the basic principles of democracy and will identify the contributions of selected individuals.

1st Marking Period

Estimated Time	Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions	Topics	Standards
Unit 01 Rules and Laws				
24 days	<p>Math: We can describe and measure the same thing in different ways.</p> <p>Analyzing data can reveal patterns that allow us to predict change in order to make decisions.</p> <p>Science: Scientific knowledge develops through investigations that include predictions, observations, and experiments.</p>	<p>Math: How do we use math to understand and organize our community?</p> <p>Science: How do we explore natural events and laws?</p>	<p>Math TSW</p> <p>a) tell time to the nearest minute, using analog and digital clocks; and</p> <p>b) determine elapsed time in one hour increments over a 12 hour period.</p> <p>TSW identify equivalent periods of time, including relationships among days, months, and years, as well as minutes and hours.</p> <p>TSW read temperature to the nearest degree from a Celsius thermometer and a Fahrenheit thermometer. Real thermometers and physical models of thermometers will be used.</p> <p>TSW</p> <p>a) collect and organize data, using observations, measurements, surveys, or experiments;</p> <p>b) construct a line plot, a picture graph, or a bar graph to represent the data; and</p> <p>c) read and interpret the data represented in line plots, bar graphs, and picture graphs and write a sentence analyzing the data.</p> <p>Science TSW plan and conduct investigations in which</p> <p>a) predictions and observations are made;</p>	<p>3.11, 3.12, 3.13, 3.17</p> <p>3.1, 3.3</p>

Estimated Time	Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions	Topics	Standards
	<p>Social Studies: Rules and laws contribute to the order, security, and safety of society.</p>	<p>Social Studies: Why do people create rules and laws for themselves?</p>	<p>b) objects with similar characteristics are classified into at least two sets and two subsets; c) questions are developed to formulate hypotheses; g) data are gathered, charted, and graphed (line plot, picture graph, and bar graph); h) temperature is measured to the nearest degree Celsius; i) time is measured to the nearest minute; j) inferences are made and conclusions are drawn</p> <p>TSW investigate and understand that objects are made of materials that can be described by their physical properties. Key concepts include a) objects are made of one or more materials; b) materials are composed of parts that are too small to be seen without magnification; and c) physical properties remain the same as the material is reduced in size.</p> <p><u>Social Studies</u> TSW recognize the importance of government in the community, Virginia, and the United States of America by: a) explaining the purpose of rules and laws; b) explaining that the basic purposes of government are to make laws, carry out laws, and decide if laws have been broken.</p>	<p>3.10, 3.11, 3.12</p>

Estimated Time	Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions	Topics	Standards
			<p>c) explaining that government protects the rights and property of individuals</p> <p>TSW explain the importance of the basic principles that form the foundation of a republic form of government by:</p> <p>a) describing the individual rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; and equality</p> <p>d) describing how people can serve the community, state, and nation.</p> <p>TSW recognize that Americans are a people of diverse ethnic origins, customs, and traditions, who are united by the basic principles of a republican form of government and respect for individual rights and freedoms</p>	
Unit 02 Places and Populations				
<p>19 days</p>	<p>Math: Representing and comparing quantities can help explain relationships.</p> <p>Estimation can be a useful method for solving problems.</p>	<p>Math: How do we count and represent numbers?</p>	<p>Math: TSW</p> <p>a) read and write six digit numerals and identify the place value and value of each digit;</p> <p>b) round whole numbers, 9,999 or less, to the nearest ten, hundred, and thousand;</p> <p>c) compare two whole numbers between 0 and 9,999, using symbols (<,> or =) and words (<i>greater than, less than, or equal to</i>).</p> <p>TSW The student will</p>	<p>3.1, 3.19, BEGIN 3.4</p>

Estimated Time	Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions	Topics	Standards
	<p>Science: Environments sustain and renew life.</p> <p>Social Studies: Maps use images, symbols, and mathematics to represent locations in our physical world.</p>	<p>Science: What characteristics do environments share?</p> <p>Social Studies: How do people identify where they live?</p>	<p>recognize and describe a variety of patterns formed using numbers, tables, and pictures, and extend the patterns, using the same or different forms.</p> <p>TSW estimate solutions to and solve single-step and multistep problems involving the sum or difference of two whole numbers, each 9,999 or less, with or without regrouping.</p> <p>Science: TSW investigate and understand that environments support a diversity of plants and animals that share limited resources, a) water-related environments (pond, marsh, swamp, stream, river, ocean) b) dry-land environments (desert, grassland, rain forest, and forest) c) population and community</p> <p>TSW investigate and understand that natural and human influences can affect the survival of species. c) the effects of fire, flood, disease, and erosion on organisms;</p> <p>Social Studies TSW develop map skills by a) positioning and labeling the seven continents and five oceans to create a world map;</p>	<p>3.6, 3.10</p> <p>3.5, 3.6</p>

Estimated Time	Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions	Topics	Standards
			b) using the equator and prime meridian to identify the Northern, Southern, Eastern, and Western Hemisphere. e) locating specific places, using a simple letter-number grid system. TSW read and construct maps, tables, graphs, and/or charts.	

2nd Marking Period

Estimated Time	Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions	Topics	Standards
Unit 03 Shaping Our World				
21 days	<p>Math: Mathematical operations on numbers help us to solve problems.</p> <p>All operations have inverses.</p> <p>Identifying similarities and differences in geometric constructs helps us solve real world problems.</p> <p>Science: Living organisms interact with the environment and each other in both unique and cyclical ways.</p>	<p>Math: How do we use numbers and geometry to solve problems?</p> <p>Science: How do our actions affect how plants and animals live?</p>	<p>Math TSW estimate solutions to and solve single-step and multistep problems involving the sum or difference of two whole numbers, each 9,999 or less, with or without regrouping.</p> <p>TSW recognize and use the inverse relationships between addition/subtraction and multiplication/division to complete basic fact sentences. The student will use these relationships to solve problems.</p> <p>TSW a) investigate the identity and the commutative properties for addition and b) identify examples of the identity and commutative properties for addition.</p> <p>TSW identify, describe, compare, and contrast characteristics of plane and solid geometric (circle, square, rectangle, triangle, cube, rectangular prism, square pyramid, sphere, cone, and cylinder) by identifying relevant characteristics, including the number of angles, vertices, and edges, and the number and shape of faces, using concrete models.</p> <p>TSW identify and draw representations of points,</p>	<p>FINISH 3.4, 3.2, 3.20, 3.14, 3.15, 3.16</p> <p>3.8, 3.1, 3.5, 3.1</p>

Estimated Time	Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions	Topics	Standards
	<p>Social Studies: Ancient cultures impact our modern world in a variety of ways.</p> <p>Choices that people make can be influenced by their environment, by available resources, and by economics.</p>	<p>Social Studies: How have contributions from ancient Greece inspired our world today?</p>	<p>line segments, rays, angles, and lines.</p> <p>TSW identify and describe congruent and non-congruent plane figures.</p> <p>Science TSW investigate and understand basic patterns and cycles occurring in nature. b) animal and plant life cycles.</p> <p>TSW plan and conduct investigations in which k) natural events are sequences chronologically.</p> <p>TSW investigate and understand relationships among organisms in aquatic and terrestrial food chains. a)producer, consumer, decomposer b) herbivore, carnivore, omnivore c) predator and prey</p> <p>TSW plan and conduct investigations in which a) predictions and observations are made; b)objects with similar characteristics are classified into at least two sets and two subsets;</p> <p>Social Studies TSW explain how the contributions of ancient Greece have influences the present world in terms of architecture, government (direct and representative), and sports.</p>	<p>3.1, 3.6, 3.4, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9</p>

Estimated Time	Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions	Topics	Standards
			<p>TSW read and construct maps, tables, graphs, and/or charts</p> <p>TSW develop map skills by a) locating Greece b) describing the physical and human characteristics of Greece c) explaining how the people of Greece adapted to and/or changed their environment to meet their needs.</p> <p>TSW explain how producers in ancient Greece used natural resources, human resources, and capital resources in the production of goods and services.</p> <p>TSW recognize that because people and regions cannot produce everything they want, they specialize in what they do best and trade for the rest.</p> <p>TSW identify examples of making an economic choice and will explain the idea of opportunity cost (what is given up when making a choice).</p>	
Unit Number and Title: Unit 04 Measuring Our World				
25 days	<p>Math: Standard measures allow people to share common understandings about their world.</p> <p>Fractions are symbolic representations of parts to wholes.</p>	<p>Math: How do we use fractions and measurements to make sure we measure fairly?</p>	<p>Math TSW a) name and write fractions (including mixed numbers) represented by a model; b) model fractions (including mixed numbers) and write the fractions' names; c) compare fractions having like and unlike denominators, using words and symbols.</p>	3.3, 3.7, 3.9

Estimated Time	Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions	Topics	Standards
	<p>We can describe and measure the same thing in different ways.</p> <p>Science: Living organisms interact with the environment and each other in both unique and cyclical ways.</p> <p>Standard measures allow people to share common understandings about their world.</p> <p>Social Studies: Ancient cultures impact our modern world in a variety of ways.</p>	<p>Science: What is the relationship between humans and natural resources?</p> <p>Social Studies: How have contributions from ancient Rome inspired our world today?</p>	<p>TSW add and subtract proper fractions having like denominators of 12 or less.</p> <p>TSW estimate and use U.S. Customary and metric units to measure</p> <p>a) length to the nearest 1/2 inch, inch, foot, yard, centimeter, and meter;</p> <p>b) liquid volume in cups, pints, quarts, gallons, and liters;</p> <p>c) weight/mass in ounces, pounds, grams, and kilograms;</p> <p>Science</p> <p>TSW investigate and understand the water cycle and its relationship to life on Earth</p> <p>a) the energy from the sun drives the water cycle</p> <p>b) processes involved in the water cycle (evaporation, condensation, precipitation)</p> <p>c) water is essential for living things</p> <p>d) water supply and water conservation</p> <p>TSW investigate and understand the major components of soil, its origin, and importance to plants and animals including humans.</p> <p>a) soil provides the support and nutrients necessary for plant growth;</p> <p>b) topsoil is a natural product of subsoil and bedrock;</p> <p>c) rock, clay, silt, sand, and humus are components of soils;</p>	<p>3.9, 3.7, 3.1</p> <p>3.1, 3.6, 3.4, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9</p>

Estimated Time	Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions	Topics	Standards
			<p>d) soil is a natural resource and should be conserved.</p> <p>TSW plan and conduct investigations in which</p> <p>d) volume is measured to the nearest milliliter and liter;</p> <p>e) length is measured to the nearest centimeter;</p> <p>f) mass is measured to the nearest gram;</p> <p><u>Social Studies</u></p> <p>TSW explain how the contributions of ancient Rome have influences the present world in terms of architecture, government (direct and representative), and sports.</p> <p>TSW read and construct maps, tables, graphs, and/or charts</p> <p>TSW develop map skills by</p> <p>a) locating Rome</p> <p>b) describing the physical and human characteristics of Rome</p> <p>c) explaining how the people of Rome adapted to and/or changed their environment to meet their needs.</p> <p>TSW explain how producers in ancient Rome used natural resources, human resources, and capital resources in the production of goods and services.</p> <p>TSW recognize that because people and regions cannot produce everything they want, they specialize in what they do best and trade for the rest.</p>	

Estimated Time	Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions	Topics	Standards
			TSW identify examples of making an economic choice and will explain the idea of opportunity cost (what is given up when making a choice).	

3rd Marking Period

Estimated Time	Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions	Topics	Standards
Unit Number and Title: Unit 05 Making Choices				
18 days	<p>Math: The cost of various choices can influence our decision making.</p> <p>Science: Living organisms interact with the environment and each other in both unique and cyclical ways.</p> <p>Human's use of natural resources affects environments and ecosystems.</p> <p>Social Studies: Ancient cultures impact our modern world in a variety of ways.</p>	<p>Math: How do we determine the cost of our wants and choices?</p> <p>Science: How do our wants impact the world?</p> <p>Social Studies: How have contributions from Mali inspired our world today?</p>	<p>Math TSW determine, by counting, the value of a collection of bills and coins whose total value is \$5.00 or less, compare the value of the bills and coins, and make change.</p> <p>Science TSW investigate and understand different sources of energy; a) the sun's ability to produce light and heat energy; b) sources of energy (sunlight, water, wind) c) fossil fuels (coal, oil, natural gas) d) renewable and nonrenewable energy sources</p> <p>TSW investigate and understand that natural and human influences can affect the survival of species. a) the interdependency of plants and animals; b) the effects of human activity on the quality of air, water, and habitat;</p>	<p>3.8</p> <p>3.11, 3.10</p> <p>3.2, 3.6, 3.4, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9</p>

Estimated Time	Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions	Topics	Standards
			<p>d) conservation and resource renewal.</p> <p><u>Social Studies</u> The student will study the early West African empire of Mali by describing its oral tradition (storytelling), government (kings), and economic development (trade).</p> <p>TSW read and construct maps, tables, graphs, and/or charts</p> <p>TSW develop map skills by a) locating West Africa b) describing the physical and human characteristics of West Africa c) explaining how the people of West Africa adapted to and/or changed their environment to meet their needs.</p> <p>TSW explain how producers in West Africa used natural resources, human resources, and capital resources in the production of goods and services.</p> <p>TSW recognize that because people and regions cannot produce everything they want, they specialize in what they do best and trade for the rest.</p> <p>TSW identify examples of making an economic choice and will explain the idea of opportunity cost (what is given up when making a choice).</p>	
Unit 06 Exploring Our World				

Estimated Time	Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions	Topics	Standards
25.5 days	<p>Math: Standard measures allow people to share common understandings about their world.</p> <p>Space can be defined through numbers and measurement.</p> <p>Multiplication is one way we can combine numbers to solve problems.</p> <p>Analyzing data can reveal patterns that allow us to predict change in order to make decisions.</p> <p>Science: The use of machines allows us to produce work more easily, faster, or on a larger scale than without.</p> <p>Many natural events are cyclical and can be represented through patterns.</p>	<p>Math: How do we find solutions to math problems on a large scale?</p> <p>Science: How do advances in science knowledge and technology help us explore and solve problems?</p>	<p>Math TSW estimate and use U.S. Customary and metric units to measure d) area and perimeter.</p> <p>TSW a) measure the distance around a polygon in order to determine perimeter; b) count the number of square units needed to cover a given surface in order to determine area.</p> <p>TSW recall multiplication facts through the twelve tables, and the corresponding division facts.</p> <p>TSW represent multiplication and division, using area, set, and number line models, and create and solve problems that involve multiplication of two whole numbers, one factor 99 or less and the second factor 5 or less.</p> <p>TSW recognize and describe a variety of patterns formed using numbers, tables, and pictures, and extend the patterns, using the same or different forms.</p> <p>TSW a) investigate the identity and the commutative properties for multiplication.</p> <p>Science TSW investigate and understand simple machines and their uses. a) types of simple machines (lever, screw, pulley, wheel and axle, inclined plane, and wedge); b) how simple machines</p>	<p>3.9, 3.10 , 3.5, 3.6, 3.19, 3.20</p> <p>3.2, 3.8, 3.1</p> <p>3.3, 3.5, 3.6</p>

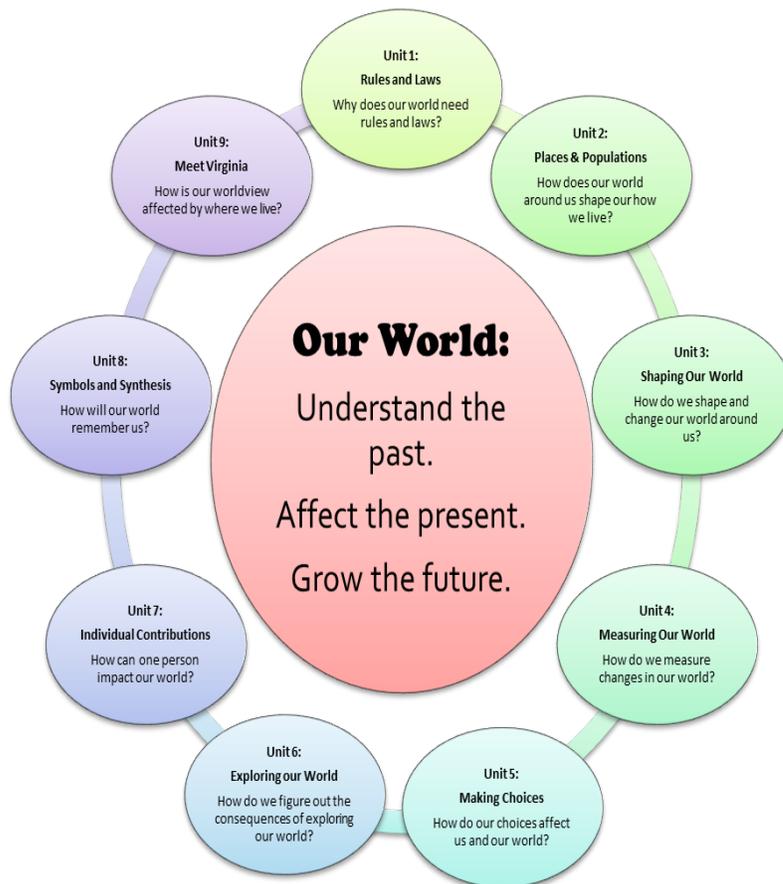
Estimated Time	Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions	Topics	Standards
	<p>Social Studies: Exploration expands our understandings of the world.</p> <p>Explorers can be motivated by economic, patriotic, scientific, or other reasons.</p>	<p>Social Studies: What are the results of exploration?</p>	<p>function; c) compound machines (scissors, wheelbarrow, and bicycle); d) examples of simple and compound machines found in the school, home, and work environment.</p> <p>TSW investigate and understand basic patterns and cycles occurring in nature. a) patterns of natural events (day and night, seasonal changes, phases of the moon, and tides);</p> <p>TSW plan and conduct investigations in which k) natural events are sequences chronologically.</p> <p>Social Studies TSW study the explorations of the Americas by a) describing the accomplishments of Christopher Columbus, Juan Ponce de Leon, Jacques Cartier, and Christopher Newport; b) identifying the reasons for exploring, the information gained as a result of the travels, and the impact of the travels on American Indians;</p> <p>TSW develop map skills by c) locating the countries of Spain, England, and France; d) locating the regions in the Americas explored by Christopher Columbus (San Salvador in the Bahamas), Jacques Cartier (near Quebec, Canada), Juan Ponce de Leon (near St. Augustine, Florida), and Christopher Newport (Jamestown, Virginia).</p>	

Estimated Time	Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions	Topics	Standards
			TSW read and construct maps, tables, graphs, and/or charts.	

4th Marking Period

Estimated Time	Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions	Topics	Standards
Unit 07 Individual Contributions				
14 days	<p>Math: The likelihood of an event can influence the way we make decisions.</p> <p>Social Studies: Serving society by working for positive change is an essential part of a successful republic.</p>	<p>Math: How do we determine the likelihood that our contributions will make a difference for our world?</p> <p>Social Studies: How do we show that we value and appreciate our basic principles?</p>	<p>Math TSW investigate and describe the concept of probability as chance and list possible results of a given situation.</p> <p>Social Studies TSW explain the importance of the basic principles that form the foundation of a republic form of government by b) identifying the contributions of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, Rosa Parks, Thurgood Marshall, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Cesar Chavez; c) recognizing that Veterans Day and Memorial Day honor people who have served to protect the country's freedoms</p>	<p>3.18</p> <p>3.11</p>
Unit 08 Symbols and Synthesis				
10 days	<p>Science: Permanence and change are an escapable part of life.</p> <p>Social Studies: Humans interact with the world around them by making choices.</p>	<p>Science: How has what I've learned this year changed my view of the environment?</p> <p>Social Studies: How has what I've learned this year changed my view of society?</p>	Synthesis of Standards	All

Estimated Time	Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions	Topics	Standards
Unit 09 Meet Virginia				
7 days	<p>Social Studies: Geography, climate, and natural resources affect the way people live and work.</p>	<p>Social Studies: How does where people live influence how they live?</p>	<p>Math TSW revisit concepts that they struggled with, practicing concepts that they need more time with, and/or applying skills they learned in 3rd grade.</p> <p>Social Studies TSW demonstrate knowledge of the physical geography and native peoples, past and present, of Virginia by b) locating and describing Virginia's Coastal Plain (Tidewater), Piedmont, Blue Ridge Mountains, Valley and Ridge, and Appalachian Plateau.</p> <p>TSW demonstrate knowledge of the physical geography and native peoples, past and present, of Virginia by c) locating and identifying water features important to the early history of Virginia (Atlantic Ocean, Chesapeake Bay, James River, York River, Potomac River, Rappahannock River, and Lake Drummond and the Dismal Swamp</p>	<p>Varies, based on student data.</p> <p>VS.2b, VS.2c</p>



Appendix C: Letter to Building Administrator

Date:

Dear _____,

My name is Charlene Bazemore and I am a student in the doctoral program at Walden University. I am conducting a research project on the effectiveness of the integrated curriculum in regards to students' reading achievement in Grade 3. I have been granted permission from Walden University (approval #01-02-239138) and the school district review boards to conduct the study. Please view the attached document granting me permission to conduct the study.

A part of the data collection process will involve me interviewing some of the third grade teachers in your building after school. Please know that information collected will be used for the study only. No names of people or school sites will be mentioned in the study. I am asking for your support in this process. I am available to meet with you or arrange a telephone conference to discuss the details of the study and address questions or concerns. You can also contact me at Charlene.bazemore@waldenu.edu

Thank you for your cooperation. At the conclusion of my study, I will present you a copy of the study.

Sincerely,

Charlene Bazemore

Appendix D: District's Approval Letter

March 20, 2014

Ms. Charlene Bazemore
[REDACTED]

Dear Ms. Bazemore:

It is my pleasure to inform you that the Research Authorization Committee (RAC) has approved your research titled *Teachers' Perceptions of an Integrated Third Grade Curriculum's Effects on Students' Reading Achievement*. Please include a copy of this letter in any communication with staff involved in your study.

Your research interests must remain confined to the provisions outlined in your approved research request application. Authorizations for additional research or changes in your current procedures must first be submitted to the RAC for review. While the RAC has approved your study, the school principal may elect on the behalf of school staff not to participate. It is important that you collaborate closely with principals regarding all aspects of your study.

As with all research conducted in [REDACTED] Public Schools, participants must voluntarily agree to participate, and should feel no pressure from a supervisor or you as the researcher to participate.

The RAC mandates that all research applicants use pseudonyms in place of the names of students, staff, schools, and/or the school division in any documentation produced from your study. The use of pseudonyms in your study must include any mention of [REDACTED] City as this would inadvertently identify the school division. This precaution is taken to ensure the safety and anonymity of all students and/or staff participating in the study, safeguard the division from analyzes produced from inaccurate and/or faulty methodologies, and add to the rigor and integrity of all reported results.

I wish you much success on your work, and look forward to reading the results of your final study. The RAC requests a final draft of all research be submitted to the chairperson upon completion. Please feel free to contact me at [REDACTED] or at [REDACTED] - [REDACTED] with any additional questions.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

Research Authorization Committee Chair

Appendix E: Participant's Letter and Consent Form

Date:

Dear _____,

My name is Charlene Bazemore and I am inviting you to participate in a study. I am a student in the doctoral program at Walden University. The purpose of the study is to find out the perceptions of a third grade teacher regarding the effectiveness of the integrated curriculum in regards to students' reading achievement in Grade 3.

An invitation for you to volunteer to participate in the study was extended to you because you are a third grade teacher currently implementing the integrated program in this Virginia school district. I, Charlene Bazemore, am the researcher conducting the study. You may ask questions about the study, possible risks and benefits, and your rights as a volunteer participant. I am available to speak with you in person or by telephone. My contact information is [Charlene.bazemore@\[REDACTED\]](mailto:Charlene.bazemore@[REDACTED]). The information below is the **informed consent form** to allow you to understand the study before deciding to participate. Please read the form carefully.

Informed Consent

About the Study

The school district implemented an integrated curriculum program this school year to improve student achievement in the content areas. Third grade students struggle in reading and comprehending printed text in the content areas. This study seeks to find out if implementing the integrated curriculum will improve students' reading achievement.

Participants' Qualifications

To qualify for the study you must be a third grade teacher currently implementing the integrated curriculum program and meet the following criteria listed. You must be 21 years or older to participate in the study. Teacher participants must (1) have two or more years of teaching experience, (2) attended the district's integrated professional development, and (3) have been implementing the district's integrated curriculum since the program was implemented in the beginning of the 2011 school year.

Researcher's Role

My role is to collect data directly from third grade teachers about the program and students' progress. My relationship will be professional, respectful, and ethical measures will be taken to protect participants.

Procedures

If you decide to participate in this study will be asked to voluntarily participate in a one-time interview and complete a teacher feedback of students' work form. You will be provided a copy of the interview questions and teacher feedback form a week in advance.

For the interview, your permission is needed to:

- Conduct an interview of no more than 60 minutes
- Allow the researcher to audio record your interview
- Review the interview transcription for accuracy

About Volunteering for the Study

Participating in the study is solely done voluntarily. You are not obligated to participate in the study. You will not be treated differently if you decide against participating in the study. Your decision will be respected and honored whether or not you want to be involved in the study. Should you agree to participate, you have the right to change your mind at any time or refuse to answer questions that you consider are too personal. If circumstances change at any time, please notify me at Charlene.bazemore@[REDACTED]. Also, if you have questions regarding the study or your rights, please contact, Dr. Leilani Endicott, irb@waldenu.edu.

Risks and Benefits of Your Participation

There are low risks in collecting information from the participants' perceptions of the IC program in regards to third grade students' reading achievement. Teacher participants may develop low stress from being interviewed. Teachers may experience stress if they report less favorable information about the program. Risks will be anticipated and minimized in which the researcher will work to establish rapport with the participants and the data collection process is comfortable and natural. The participants' identities will be confidential. Participants will be made aware that they have the right to quit the study at any time.

There are several benefits for the participants. Participants will be provided a written copy of the study. Participants can learn about the IC program from the literature review and final project. Participants can learn what other teacher participants think from sharing their perceptions and can learn how their perceptions compare to the responses of the other participants. More benefits are teachers learn some evidence-based strategies for improving teacher practice and student learning for third grade students struggling to read and comprehend grade level content text. In addition, the study may promote social change by providing educators an IC approach to study for helping struggling third grade students improve their reading and comprehension skills.

Compensation

The researcher is obligated to inform you that there is no prize, reward, or compensation for participating in the study.

Confidentiality

The study will not disclose your name or the school. This information is confidential. All information collected will be used for the research study only.

Contact Information and Questions

If you have any questions or concerns at any time during the study, please contact me via email at Charlenebazemore@[REDACTED]. The approval number for the study is #01-02-0239138 and it expires on January 1, 2015.

Consent

Your signature is needed on this document, which grants me permission to interview you and visit the school site. Signing the consent form means (1) you have read the information presented and understand the nature of the study and can make a decision about your role in the study. You will need to keep a copy of the consent form for your records. **Please inform me of your decision within the next 10 business days.**

Thank you for taking the time to review this letter and consent form.

Sincerely,

Charlene Bazemore

Your Written or Electronic Signature means you understand and agree with the terms described:

Teacher's Written or Electronic Signature:

Print Name: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's Written or Electronic Signature:

Print Name: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix F: NIH Certificate

Bazemore, Charlene, NIH



Appendix G: Bazemore's Integrated Curriculum Interview Protocol

The interview protocol contains thirteen questions listed to provide information needed in support of answering the guiding research question, "What are teachers' perceptions of the third grade integrated curriculum in regards to grade three students' reading achievement?"

1. How did teachers infuse reading across the integrated curriculum?
2. How has your experience in working with the integrated curriculum affected students' reading levels?
3. What lessons did teachers learn from infusing reading across the integrated curriculum?

Thank you for participating in the study. As a part of the data collection process, an interview will be conducted, in which you will respond to the following questions. A copy of the interview questions were emailed to earlier. Responses will be tape recorded and transcribed. The interview data is confidential and the participant's name will not be disclosed in the study. You will receive a transcribed copy of the interview data to verify the accuracy of the information you provided.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Bazemore's Integrated Curriculum Interview Protocol

1. What are your perceptions of the integrated curriculum professional development training?
2. Did the professional developments affect your teaching practices? Please explain.
3. What is a typical day like in your practice of integrating reading across the curriculum?
4. What teaching strategies did you use to integrate reading across the curriculum?
5. What resources do you use to infuse reading across the curriculum?
6. Describe the support systems in place for infusing reading throughout the integrated curriculum.
7. In utilizing the integrated curriculum and reading instruction, how did you monitor student learning?
8. To what extent do you collaborate with team members about infusing reading instruction across the curriculum?
9. What information do you share in your team meetings about content integration and reading instruction?
10. What are significant factors for integrating reading across the curriculum?
11. What did you notice about your students' interactions in learning how to read using the content integration process?
12. Describe the barriers for infusing reading instruction across the curriculum.
13. What suggestions would you recommend for improving the program?

Appendix H: Teacher Feedback of Student Work

NOTE: Tables 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 are the responses obtained from the 13 teacher participants.

Directions: There are 5 tables presented in this form for you to complete. Please read each category and record your responses. Table 10 requires information about student participation in service learning. Please indicate your response by placing an "X" in selected column.

Table 6 **Reading Journal Performance Chart**

List reading skills reinforced through journal response work	<p>Comprehension-comparing/contrasting, inferring, main idea, noting details, drawing conclusions, character traits, predicting, retelling, summarizing, synthesis</p> <p>Making Connections</p> <p>Vocabulary</p>
List criteria used to assess reading journal work	<p>Anecdotal records</p> <p>Checklists</p> <p>Classroom Presentations -Allowing students to share what they wrote and hearing their explanations to check for understanding</p> <p>Rubric</p> <p>Student Conferences</p>
Description of students' overall performance of reading journal work	<p>1 Teacher Reported: Most students presented little detail to support answers when working independently. They often needed prompting from teacher to present satisfactory to near satisfactory work.</p> <p>9 Teachers Reported: Most students made good to satisfactory growth throughout the year.</p> <p>3 Teachers Reported: Majority of students used graphic organizers and gave good information; a few struggled because they would not use graphic organizer.</p>
List additional information you wish to add	NONE

Table 7 **Reading Level Performance**

Reading Levels	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9	T10	T11	T12	T13
Above	5	0	4	6	5	20	5	4	4	9	5	17	5
On	9	5	8	8	7	5	11	12	14	8	13	5	18
Below	8	15	9	10	9	0	6	7	2	4	3	2	1
Total # Students	22	20	21	24	21	25	22	23	20	21	21	24	24

Table 8 **Student Social Studies Performance**

List social studies project and report assignments	<p>Flip books</p> <p>mapping projects (create a map of the classroom)</p> <p>Creating a 3D Map of the world using a balloon (labeling all continents, oceans, and hemispheres)</p> <p>Creating an exchange system to model the economics of Mali</p> <p>Written Reports on Mali, Rome, and Greece</p>
List criteria used to assess social studies project and report assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checklists • Rubrics
Description of students' overall performance of projects and report assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most students performed adequately with appropriate support at home or in class
List additional information you wish to add	NONE

Table 9 Student Science Performance

List science project and report assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design a simple machine • Phases of the moon using chalk/paper • Phases of the moon using Oreo cookies • Flip books • Reports on specific animals and their habitat, their role in the food chain, and any adaptations
List criteria used to assess science project and report assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rubrics • Checklists • Observations
Description of students' overall performance of projects and report assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most students performed adequately with appropriate support at home or in class
List additional information you wish to add	NONE

Table 10 Service Learning Participation

Students Participating in Service Learning Project	Please Respond by placing an "X" in the box you select.
All Students Participated in a Service Learning Project	X Teachers 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13
Most of the Students Participated in a Service Learning Project	X Teachers 7 and 8
Half of the Students Participated in a Service Learning Project	
Less Than Half of the Students Participated in a Service Learning Project	
No Students Participated in a Service Learning Project	X-Teacher 4 – time did not allow for SL project

Appendix I: Peer-Reviewer's Letter and Guidelines

Dear Ms. _____,

My name is Charlene Bazemore and I am a student in the doctoral program at Walden University. I am conducting a research project on the effectiveness of the integrated curriculum in regards to students' reading achievement in Grade 3. I am asking for your support by volunteering to peer-review my study. You were selected because of your knowledge of the district's integrated curriculum, professionalism, and the ability to provide an objective point of view.

Your role will involve conducting a critical analysis of my data collection and providing feedback of how I capture and interpret third grade teachers' perceptions of the effects of an integrated curriculum in regards to students' achievement in reading. All data collected for the study is confidential. The expectations of a peer reviewer are (1) not to discuss the contents of this study with anyone other than the researcher, (2) not make contact with any of the participants about the study should you learn their identity, (3) to provide feedback that is objective and pertains to the study only, and (4) not to discuss feedback information you provide for this study to others.

Your identity will remain confidential. Please do not include any comments which you would not want to be seen by the participants or which could identify you as the reviewer. Other than myself, my doctoral chair will be aware of your identity.

I have developed peer review guidelines for you to critically appraise my study. The peer review guidelines are from the critical review form developed by Letts, Wilkins, Law, Steward, Bosch, and Westmorland (2007). Please provide a brief description to following sections of the critical review form.

Title of study: Teacher's Perceptions of an Integrated Third Grade Curriculum's Effects on Students' Reading Achievement

Purpose of Study

- Was the problem clearly stated?
- Was the research question clearly stated?
- Was the rationale clearly communicated?

Literature

- Did the literature review present relevant background information? (should include previous studies, literature related to the problem, gaps in current knowledge and research, justifying a need for the study)

Methodology

Study Design

- Was the study design stated?
- Was the rationale for using the study design presented?
- Were the methods of data collection presented?

Sampling

- Was the process of purposeful selection described?

- Did the researcher indicate how and when the decision was reached that there were sufficient depth of information and redundancy of data to meet the purpose of the study?
- Was the sample described in such a way that the reader understands the key characteristics of the teacher participants?

Data Collection

- Was there a clear and vivid description of the important elements of the study that are connected with the data?
- Were the methods of data collection presented?
- Were the procedures for data collection clearly described?
- Was there relevant information about the teacher participants that explains why they were selected?

Data Analysis

Analytical Rigor

- Did the researcher describe how the findings emerged from the data?
- Different methods are used to analyze qualitative data. Were these methods presented with clear descriptions?
- Were these methods appropriated for the study?
- Did the researcher summarize the major findings of the analysis in this section?
- Were the findings consistent with and reflective of the data?

Auditability

- In developing a decision trail, did the researcher present a process for identifying codes, themes, and relationships from the data collected?
- Did the researcher present adequate information about the analyses and the rationale used to describe the interpretation of the data?
- Did the researcher report how data was transformed into codes, themes, and interrelationships that provide a clear picture of the integrated curriculum program under study?
- Did the steps in auditing the analyses process provide clear evidence that the findings are representative of the data as a whole?

Overall Rigor

- Did the researcher present evidence of the four components of trustworthiness, which are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability?

Conclusions and Implications

- Were the conclusions appropriate given the findings of the study?

The peer review process is timely and requires an extensive amount of reading. Your contribution is valuable and greatly appreciated. Thank you for your cooperation and support.

Sincerely,

Charlene Bazemore, Researcher
 Doctoral Student at Walden University

Curriculum Vitae

Charlene L. Bazemore

Personal Information: Telephone Number – (XXX)-XXX-XXXX Cell (XXX)-(XXXX) Email
Address

Assistant Principal II Skills

- Teaching and leadership professional with over thirty years of experience.
- Highly skilled and focused educational leader possessing a strong commitment to students, staff, and parents, and ensuring a safe and orderly learning environment.
- Dynamic visionary leader and robust team player with a demonstrated record in collaborating with stakeholders, increasing student achievement, and maintaining academic excellence

Current Employment

Assistant Principal II –XX Elementary School

2010 National Blue Ribbon School

August 2008 – present

- Assists the school principal in the general administration of the school.
- Assists with interpreting and enforcing all school board policies and administrative regulations.
- Assists in developing, administering, and evaluating the elementary school curriculum and instructional programs at the assigned school.
- Assists the school principal with supervising and monitoring student attendance, counseling, child studies, assessment and other pupil services.
- Assists in coordinating transportation, custodial, cafeteria, and other support services at the assigned school.
- Coordinates standardized student-testing programs in the school.
- Counsels students and administers disciplinary action when necessary.
- Conferences with parents of students on a regular basis concerning discipline, academic achievement, and any other parental concerns.
- Assists with organizing and supervising the school's extracurricular program, intramural programs, & after school tutorial programs.
- Assists the school principal in the supervision & performance evaluation of all staff assigned to the school.
- Performs classroom observations and conferences with teachers to improve the instructional program.
- Assists in the preparation of the master schedule, student schedules, school calendar, & other schedules as requested.
- Assists in preparing and administering the school's budget and finances. Maintains an archive of model content lessons that align with the technology curriculum scope and sequence for teachers to use across

Experience

Assistant Principal II

VA Public Schools

August 2001 – July 2008

Assistant Principal I –
August 1999 – July 2001

Elementary School Teacher
Teacher of the Year 1996 and 1999

Education

Doctor of Education

Minneapolis, MN

Expected completion date: April 2015

Concentration: Administrator Leadership for Teaching and Learning

Walden University,

M.A., Education, May 1986

B.A., Education, May 1976

Concentration: Communication, Public Relations

Elementary Education, endorsement for grades NK-4

Leadership Affiliations

HOPE Foundation Leadership Training

2005-2008

2002-2003

VA Public Schools

Virginia

Co-Facilitator for the Regional Staff Development Council

Presenter - Teacher Training on Effective Time Management

Presenter - Beginning Teacher Mentorship Training (Pathwise Induction Program)

1993-1999

VA Public Schools

Virginia

HOPE Foundation Leadership Training

2005-2008

VA Public Schools

Virginia

Professional Membership

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

Local Elementary Principals' Association