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Elementary Educators' Perceptions of Their Knowledge and Motivation to Support Struggling Readers

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Walden University

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Ann B. Price

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Walden University
2022

Abstract

Elementary Educators' Perceptions of Their Knowledge and Motivation to Support
Struggling Readers

by

Ann B. Price

MA, Walden University, 2012

BS, Caldwell University, 2002

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

Walden University

February 2022

Abstract

Despite the implementation of district approved programs at Maplebrook Elementary, a Mid-Atlantic school district, students in third, fourth, and fifth grades continue to show reading comprehension below grade level as measured by standardized test scores and district-created assessments. The goal of this study was to gain teacher perceptions about knowledge and motivation when working with students who continue to struggle with reading. Bandura's theory of self-efficacy was used to guide the research. The research questions addressed teachers' perspectives regarding the role knowledge and motivation play when working with students struggling with reading comprehension and the teachers' levels of confidence in doing so. Participants were chosen through purposeful sampling. Ten elementary educators were interviewed one-on-one via Zoom or phone. A qualitative data analysis software was used to assist in organizing data, which was inductively analyzed to identify the recurring themes. The findings of this study indicated that educators were not prepared to meet the needs of students struggling to read. Participants stated they needed help from the district in the form of professional development to provide support for the literacy challenges. Educators also requested the creation of professional learning communities and stated they could profit from having the district schedule time for teachers to collaborate with colleagues and the reading specialist. This study may lead to positive social change by increasing knowledge about ways educators may address the needs of students struggling to read via professional development and by receiving guidance and motivation from other educational professionals through supportive learning communities.

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Dedication

This research project was dedicated to my husband, Matt, who always believed in me throughout this journey. He always cheered me on and understood the ups and downs of the process. During my days of total frustration, he calmly offered help. My answer was always, "There was nothing you can do, but thank you!" No matter what, he stood by my side and helped when the computer went crazy. He purchased a new computer to make sure I did not encounter any issues. My husband remained positive during this time, and without him, I would not have come as far as I have. Without him, I would not have completed the program and earned a new title. Thank you, Matt, for your support!! Without you, completion of this program would not have been possible.

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Completing this goal was possible due to my mother's belief that ANYONE, especially women, could accomplish the most impossible of tasks! Nothing is impossible. My mother has always been a huge part of who I am today. She is a woman of strength and determination.

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Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

Reading is an essential skill used throughout life in academic and real-life experiences (Paige, 2020; Stevens, 2016). Children enter school with different personal and academic experiences, readiness abilities, and reading levels (Fayez et al., 2016). No matter the level of students' comprehension abilities, teachers are challenged with assisting learners at varying reading levels and increasing comprehension (Wanzek et al., 2017). The focus of this study was teachers' perceptions of their competence in knowledge and motivation for working with students struggling with reading comprehension when implementing the district's literacy curriculum. Educators must possess the knowledge and motivation required to help struggling readers increase reading comprehension by identifying and integrating research-based practices into instruction (Perez, 2017; Sharp et al., 2020). Successful students are led by educators who are motivated and confident in their knowledge to provide the appropriate assistance when working to increase reading comprehension (Connor & Morrison, 2018; Sharp et al., 2020).

Knowledgeable educators have the proficiencies required to help struggling readers increase comprehension because they possess an understanding of effective instructional practices (Berkeley et al., 2016). Knowledgeable educators understand that students struggle to comprehend textual information beyond the primary grades because complexity of the literature used in instruction increases (Coulter et al., 2019). Efficacious educators lay a foundation that assists students with increasing reading

comprehension (Sharp et al., 2020). Knowledgeable educators can lay this foundation because they have a plethora of research-based practices that promote growth in reading comprehension (Bandura, 1995). Educators know, however, that effective instruction requires more than knowledge.

Motivation is another important aspect to consider when working with students who continue to struggle with reading comprehension. According to Goleman (2011), individual motivation is identified as continuously striving to develop and meet the standard of excellence. Motivated educators attain success when helping struggling students. Neugebauer (2016) believed motivation flow is a two-way dynamic that shifts between educators and learners. Educators need to be motivated when delivering instruction, and students need to be motivated during instructional periods (Neugebauer, 2016). Educators must remain motivated and persistent to keep students driven, especially when working with struggling students. Motivated educators encourage students and are successful when helping struggling readers increase reading comprehension. If educators remain motivated, there exists the probability that all learners increase reading comprehension.

Because it is the responsibility of teachers to ensure that students learn and increase their reading comprehension skills, educators must teach grade-level literacy standards, develop and deliver literacy curriculum, and evaluate attainment of literacy standards by all learners (Berkeley et al., 2016; Francois, 2014). Educators must provide effectual instruction through integration of research-based practices and tools because literacy constructs the foundation for life-long success (Stevens, 2016). Delivering

appropriate instruction that aligns with the district's reading curriculum requires educators to possess the knowledge and motivation to continuously deliver instruction to learners at varying levels of competence. Appropriate instruction is delivered when educators are aware of the comprehension levels of learners and have the knowledge and motivation to teach the literacy curriculum (Sharp et al., 2020).

Researchers revealed that teachers' perceptions regarding struggling readers impact their instructional choices and practices (D'Agostino et al., 2016; Moreau, 2014). Specifically, Moreau's (2014) research considered how teachers' perceptions regarding struggling students influenced their expectations, assessments, and instructional practice. Educators who possess in-depth knowledge, effective pedagogical skills, exceptional connection with students, and a high level of efficacy are successful (Ko & Sammons, 2013; Zagyváné-Szucs, 2017). Self-efficacy is a trait needed by educators to assist students at varying levels to achieve academic growth (Canbulat, 2017; Malmberg et al., 2014). Highly effective educators have confidence in their knowledge and motivation to work with readers struggling with reading comprehension when implementing the district's literacy curriculum while meeting and conquering all challenges including the unmotivated or low performing learner (Canbulat, 2017; Ko & Sammons, 2013;).

Definition of the Problem

The problem is despite the implementation of district approved programs at Maplebrook Elementary, a Mid-Atlantic school district, students in third, fourth, and fifth grades continue to struggle and comprehend below grade level as measured by standardized test scores and district-created assessments. Understanding the importance

of students comprehending at grade level and above, the district's goal is to help struggling students. Understanding their knowledge and motivation may play an important role in explaining how educators are working with students struggling with reading comprehension and provide insight into the needs of educators in third, fourth, and fifth grades. Determining what additional assistance educators need when integrating the district's curriculum and prescribed programs is paramount to understanding how teachers may assist struggling readers to gain reading comprehension achievement.

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

Maplebrook Elementary opened in 1985 and had a population for the 2016-2017 school year of approximately 700 students. Standardized test scores for the 2014-2015 school year revealed 29% of students in third, fourth, and fifth grades performed below grade level in reading comprehension (Administration, personal communication, 2015; New Jersey State Department of Education, 2015). During the 2015-2016 school year, approximately 23% of students in third, fourth, and fifth grades scored below grade level in reading comprehension. Based on standardized test scores in 2016-2017, an average of 27% of students in third, fourth, and fifth grades were deemed partially proficient or scoring below grade level in reading comprehension (reading specialist, personal communication, 2017; New Jersey State Department of Education, 2016). During the 2017-2018 school year, there was minimal growth in the reading comprehension scores for students in third, fourth, and fifth grades. Based on standardized test scores in 2017-2018, an average of 26% of students in third, fourth, and fifth grades were deemed

partially proficient or scoring below grade level in reading comprehension (reading specialist, personal communication, 2019; New Jersey State Department of Education, 2019).

Despite the implementation of district approved programs, students in third, fourth, and fifth grades continued to struggle and comprehend below grade level as measured by standardized test scores and district-created assessments occasioning the need to determine educators' perceptions of knowledge and motivation when working with students who continue to struggle. Maplebrook was facing the challenge of finding a way to increase reading comprehension levels for struggling students (Administrators, personal communication, 2018). Based on the need to increase reading comprehension levels for struggling students, the district realized that work was required in this area (Superintendent, Board Meeting, 2018). Understanding an educator's self-efficacy as it relates to knowledge and motivation, despite repeated failure of struggling students, has provided valuable information regarding the confidence of teachers to integrate research-based literacy practices into classroom instruction.

Because both standardized test scores and district created common assessments were showing minimal growth and students continued to score below grade level, discovering what changes or assistance educators needed to help students increase their reading comprehension levels was vital for success (Administrator, Grade Level Meeting, 2018; Administrator, Grade Level Meeting, 2019; Administrator, Staff Meeting, 2018; Curriculum supervisor, personal communication, 2018). Motivation and knowledge are essential when working with struggling students (Biby, 2020; Steensel et al., 2019).

Determining if educators have these traits or qualities is important to assure success when integrating research-based practices. Educators possessing knowledge and motivation allow students to grow and score higher on grade level in standardized test scores, as well as classroom activities and assessments (Biby, 2020; Wilcox et al., 2013).

Although the overall percentage of students in third, fourth, and fifth grades performing below grade level or scoring as partially proficient decreased from the school years 2014-2015 through 2017-2018, children were still struggling with reading comprehension (New Jersey State Department of Education, 2018; Superintendent, Convocation, 2016; Superintendent, Convocation, 2017; Superintendent, Convocation, 2018). The Maplebrook School District had a goal of helping increase reading comprehension for all students who scored as partially proficient (Administrator, Grade Level Meeting, 2017; Administrator, Grade Level Meeting, 2018; Maplebrook Superintendent, Board Minutes, 2017). Understanding the role of self-efficacy of educators as it pertains to perceptions of knowledge and motivation to integrate research-based strategies into instruction when working with students who continue to struggle with reading comprehension could provide valuable information. Because educators who are confident in their abilities to provide effective instruction with the appropriate strategies are successful in helping struggling readers increase comprehension and meet grade level expectations, understanding teacher perceptions regarding knowledge and motivation is vital for success (Biby, 2020; Gerde et al., 2018; Wilcox et al., 2013).

Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature

Based on National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) data, approximately 46% of students nationally in fourth and eighth grades continue to struggle with reading (NAEP, 2017; NAEP, 2018). Data show that approximately 36% of students in fourth grade scored as proficient nationally in 2018. In 2019, there was no significant increase in scores with 37% of students in fourth grade scoring as proficient. In 2018, the increases in students scoring as proficient were minimal. The same results were uncovered for students in eighth grade. Again, there were no significant gains nationally from 2016 to 2018 (NAEP, 2016; NAEP, 2018). In 2017, approximately 34% of students in eighth grade scored as proficient, and 36% scored as proficient in 2019. With approximately 46% of students in fourth and eighth grades continuing to struggle with reading comprehension, understanding the role of a teacher's self-efficacy as it relates to knowledge and motivation when integrating research-based practices into literacy instruction may provide insight as to the changes required to help struggling readers increase understanding.

Educators need to be knowledgeable to provide effective instruction because students who are identified as struggling with reading comprehension in the primary grades continue to struggle in life (Berkeley et al., 2016). Understanding the beliefs of educators as they pertain to knowledge and motivation when working with struggling readers is an area in which minimal research has been completed and the findings are not conclusive (Biby, 2020; Gerde et al., 2018). Yet, there is research on the effect of teachers' beliefs regarding decisions for effective classroom instruction (Gerde et al.,

2018); administration understands that the perceptions of educators have an effect on delivery of literacy curriculum (Al-Tarawneh et al., 2016; Biby, 2020). The role teachers' beliefs play when helping struggling readers increase comprehension is an important factor in selecting effective classroom practices and instruction. Educators need to be confident and knowledgeable when working to help students increase reading comprehension (Gerde et al., 2018).

While educators need to be confident, Alsop (2018) believed some educators lack the required knowledge to teach literacy effectively to a diverse group of learners. If educators do not possess the required skills to effectively deliver instruction, self-efficacy, as it pertains to knowledge and motivation, does not exist (Alsop, 2018). Most researchers believe teachers' perceptions of their knowledge and motivation impact academic development in learners (Berkeley et al., 2016). In addition, some researchers feel there is great value in understanding what teachers believe they know as well as what they believe they do not know (Miller et al., 2016). Many researchers understand the importance of teachers having self-efficacy as it pertains to knowledge needed to implement instruction effectively while working with learners at varying levels of comprehension (Kiel et al., 2016). For teachers to be successful, they must understand the importance of their progression of relevant knowledge to help struggling readers increase reading comprehension (Miller et al., 2016). Educators need to acquire in-depth knowledge of research-based practices and the tools to deliver effectual instruction (MacDonald et al., 2016).

While researchers believe a connection exists between teacher self-efficacy and academic development, they also conclude that student motivation and efficacy are factors associated with teacher efficacy (Gur, 2017). In addition, teachers' attitudes towards change in education and classroom management skills are directly connected to self-efficacy (Baş, 2019; Daniels, 2016). Educators who have had positive attitudes towards work, along with knowledge of effective research-based practices, were found to be efficacious in the classroom (Baş, 2019; Daniels, 2016). Positive educators have had the required outlook and are prepared to meet the needs of a variety of learners.

Educators encounter the challenge of meeting the instructional needs of students learning at diverse levels daily. Many educators are committed to helping these struggling learners and strive to uncover practices and strategies that can be integrated into the general education classrooms (Varghese et al., 2016). An issue arises, however, when educators assume that students have mastered reading skills in the earlier grades and have the comprehension skills needed to read on grade level (Perkins & Green, 2018; Ulu, 2016). Unfortunately, educators assume that basic literacy skills mastered or learned by students in previous years will continue to grow and achieve a high level of accuracy (Swanson et al., 2016). Successful educators in the literacy classroom possess the required self-efficacy, knowledge, and motivation to help struggling readers succeed (Berkeley et al., 2016; Gerde et al., 2018). In addition, educators must demonstrate a working knowledge of research-based practices and tools required to deliver effectual instruction to help struggling readers increase comprehension (MacDonald et al., 2016).

Definitions

The purpose of providing definitions in this study was to clarify some of the key or unfamiliar terms used. While some of the terms might be familiar, it is important to provide the definitions as they apply to this research study to make sure meanings are understood and clear.

Achieve 3000: An on-line software program used along with classroom instruction to improve reading comprehension skills through student involvement; it measures lexile reading levels for students using expository articles with higher level thinking questions. The program consists of articles and skills that can be assigned by the teacher with a focus on a specific skill. Each student reads the same article with the same targeted skill but at their individual lexile level (Urdegar & Miami-Dade County Public Schools., 2014).

Conceptual framework: Concepts based on theories that uphold and enlighten research (Maxwell, 2013).

Curriculum: A route or path of learning that students are required to follow. Curriculum can be outlined by school administration or by governing bodies. Curriculum includes comprehension of primary subjects such as reading, writing, mathematics, and sciences (Effebedi-Hasibaun, et al., 2019).

Literacy: Understanding of a person of what that person is reading. It also applies to writing. Literacy provides individuals with extensive knowledge when integrated into instruction (Keefe & Copeland, 2011).

Pedagogy: A method of integrating instructional practices that are specific to student needs (Akin, 2014).

Professional learning community (PLC): A group of educators who collaborate on a regular basis and discuss teaching practices or tools that are proving effective in the classroom (Hughes & Kritsonis, 2006).

Reading comprehension: Utilizing the necessary strategies for understanding written communication. These components include phonemic awareness, knowledge of phonics, fluency when reading, and understanding of vocabulary. A skilled reader can choose comprehension strategies, as well as recall what was read and make inferences for deeper understanding. Skilled readers can decode words, possess appropriate vocabulary, and infer while reading (Papatga & Ersoy, 2016).

Research-based best practices: Practices educators integrate into instruction that inform the design of academic tools and guide in the modification of instructional procedures (Rosenshine, 2012).

Self-efficacy: A person's belief in their competence to be successful in determining and implementing the steps required to accomplish a desired task (Bandura, 1986).

Struggling readers: A term used by educators to identify students who continue to have difficulty with comprehension skills and do not possess active reading strategies to allow for comprehension and integration of new knowledge into present schemata (Vacca et al., 2021).

Significance

This study comes at a time when students continue to struggle with reading comprehension. National Center for Education Statistics noted that only 44% of students nationwide in fourth grade were reading on grade level in 2017 with no significant change reported in 2019. Based on scores between 1971 and 2017, many students continued to struggle on standardized test scores. It is essential that students are prepared to perform at grade level or above in both reading of fictional and informational texts to meet the requirements of the worldwide community (Amendum et al., 2016; Poole, 2014). Students with comprehension issues will likely continue to experience them, especially when reading nonfiction or informational texts due to the complex vocabulary and material (Coulter et al., 2019; Stevens, 2016). Determining educators' beliefs of their knowledge and motivation may be important in determining why students continue to struggle to read.

Bandura (1977) identified that a lack of confidence will result in a lack of self-efficacy, and the focus of this study was on teacher self-efficacy as it relates to knowledge and motivation of integrating district curriculum expectations and research-based practices into the reading comprehension instruction used with struggling readers. Low levels of self-efficacy in knowledge of integrating proven literacy skills impede a teacher's capacity to skillfully implement research-based strategies in the literacy classroom (Dori, 2017). There exists an overall gap in understanding the literacy curriculum, as well as general education teachers' knowledge of integrating research-proven literacy strategies (Harb, 2017). Understanding teachers' perceptions of their

knowledge and motivation towards achieving goals, along with understanding students' acquisition of skills, are key components in classroom success (Amendum et al., 2016; Mazlum et al., 2015). Teachers' self-efficacy regarding their knowledge and motivation to integrate research-based strategies to help struggling learners achieve the required outcomes during instructional periods plays an important role in helping readers who struggle with reading comprehension (Bandura, 1995).

The goal of this research was to identify the role perceptions of competence and motivation play in a teacher's knowledge and motivation to teach comprehension skills to struggling readers. By examining the responses from teachers relating to these areas, insight is gained into the value of training, confidence in teaching, and the drive needed to work with struggling readers in the literacy classroom. Understanding teachers' beliefs regarding knowledge and motivation provides an opportunity for district offered options to increase teachers' self-efficacy when working with students who continue to struggle with reading comprehension.

Guiding/Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to provide additional information to the pool of research by analyzing the perspectives of 10 elementary school teachers regarding the role knowledge and motivation play when working with students who continue to struggle with reading comprehension. The answers to seven questions shared by educators in third, fourth, and fifth grades provided insight into the beliefs of educators. The research questions for this study were created to discover the self-efficacy of educators to use knowledge and motivation when integrating research-based practices

into instruction in the literacy classroom. In addition, the issue of teacher motivation was addressed due to students comprehending text below grade level. Educators in third, fourth, and fifth grades at Maplebrook Elementary School shared information that provided valuable insight into their knowledge and motivation to teach the current reading curriculum and about the support they need from the administration. The questions that guided this study were supported by Bandura's theory of perceived self-efficacy. A teacher's perspective of self-efficacy as it relates to knowledge and motivation influences their overall performance when working with students who struggle with reading comprehension.

RQ1: How do the elementary teachers in Grades 3 to 5 at Maplebrook perceive their knowledge of teaching reading comprehension skills that align with the district's curriculum with students who continue to struggle in the literacy classroom?

RQ2: How do the elementary teachers in Grades 3 to 5 at Maplebrook perceive their motivation when teaching reading comprehension skills that align with the district's curriculum with struggling reading students?

Review of the Literature

To provide guidance during research, I accessed the Walden University library's online databases such as ERIC, ProQuest, EBSCOHost, Education Research Complete, PsycARTICLES, and Sage. A variety of sources, such as peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and dissertations, were examined. The key search terms used for research included *motivation in teaching, knowledgeable teachers, motivated students, colleague collaboration, professional learning communities, elementary school teachers, struggling*

readers, professional development, teacher perceptions, teacher self-efficacy, effective literacy practices, research-based practices, reading comprehension, teachers' attitudes in literacy, literacy instruction, and reading comprehension. The literature review focused on articles published within the past 5 years. The databases provided peer-reviewed articles on topics that were relevant to the research questions for this study. This literature review incorporated current research that pertained to understanding self-efficacy as it relates to teachers' belief in their knowledge and motivation to work with students who continue to struggle with reading comprehension in the educational setting. In addition, research was included that related to a teacher's knowledge and motivation when integrating the literacy curriculum in the classroom, even after repeated failures by students in third, fourth, and fifth grades. Researchers' findings in the literature review considered the theoretical framework as a basis for exploring the importance of teacher self-efficacy in the classroom to achieve student success. Bandura's concept of self-efficacy played a role in this research because there is a connection between an educator's knowledge and motivation to deliver effective instruction and the success of that instruction (Bandura, 1997).

Reading instruction begins in the primary grades (McKee & Carr, 2016). Educators need to be confident with the process of integrating new knowledge into instruction for elementary students (Amendum et al., 2016; McKee & Carr, 2016). Educators in all grades need to be confident when considering the integration of word study to build vocabulary and increase content knowledge across the curriculum (Chambré et al., 2017). Student acquisition of vocabulary is important for increasing

knowledge and comprehension (Chambré et al., 2017). The easier to master skills are addressed during instruction, but the more difficult domains need to be included to foster increased comprehension in the later years of education (Chambré et al., 2017).

Educators must possess the knowledge and motivation to deliver lessons that lead to success as students begin to master these more difficult skills. Knowledge, confidence, and motivation are paramount for educators to successfully increase reading comprehension of struggling readers (McKee & Carr, 2016).

After three decades of attention focusing on the need to improve reading comprehension in America, little progress has been realized (Connor & Morrison, 2018). According to Fuchs et al., (2021), lack of vocabulary instruction and activation of background knowledge prior to instruction have caused stagnation in comprehension achievement in fourth grade students. Educators' realization and understanding of the importance of students possessing and acquiring effective comprehension skills to attain new knowledge is imperative for success (Ness, 2016). Understanding the role vocabulary and background knowledge play in increasing comprehension is also of value. Students acquire effective comprehension skills when educators are confident and possess the essential knowledge and motivation to deliver effective literacy instruction (Ness, 2016).

A teacher's perception of their knowledge to affect student outcomes has been studied during the last 5 years, but no definitive answer has been reached about the role of self-efficacy. According to Honicke and Broadbent (2016), self-efficacy beliefs of teachers do affect instructional practices, yet in Depaepea and Keonig's (2018) research,

it was found that there was no connection between self-efficacy, instruction, and student achievement. Researchers have determined that teachers with low efficacy who integrated high-quality instructional practices helped students achieve greater levels of academic success in the literacy classroom. On the other side of the spectrum, there is evidence that teacher self-efficacy may result in more superior academic achievement. Engin (2020) determined that teacher's self-efficacy is connected to superior instructional practices. However, most of the research has concentrated on classroom management in primary and secondary classrooms across the curriculum (Engin, 2020; Schaffner & Schiefele, 2017). Affirmation for teacher self-efficacy is given in the study of Smith et al (2020), where self-efficacy of knowledge is directly linked to instructional quality with secondary grade teachers. Thus, limited research exists for studies completed in the elementary settings, and there exists a need for a better understanding of teacher self-efficacy for literacy instruction with children who continue to struggle with reading comprehension.

According to Adams-Budde and Miller (2015), determining what knowledge teachers need to be successful in the literacy classroom is important for students' academic success. It is also important to provide teachers with opportunities that allow for social interaction with peers, such as PLCs, with the goal of increasing knowledge and confidence (Knowles, 1950). Once teachers are confident in their knowledgeable to provide effectual literacy instruction, students grow as learners (Davis et al., 2019). There is hope that this study might offer insight into opportunities for educators to increase teacher self-efficacy of knowledge and motivation to integrate research-based practices

into instruction when working with students who continue to struggle with reading comprehension, which will support the delivery of effective literacy instruction.

Possessing effective reading comprehension skills stimulates student realization of knowledge by constructing and not simply acquiring knowledge (Ness, 2016). For learners to be able to acquire the necessary knowledge, educators must be confident and motivated in their ability to delivery effective instruction. In addition, educators need to be knowledgeable and possess a variety of effectual strategies that increase reading comprehension levels for struggling learners. Success in classrooms requires that educators possess the self-efficacy in their knowledge and motivation necessary to provide effectual instruction to struggling readers.

Conceptual Framework

A researcher's conceptual framework is made up of theories and models that provide detail about a phenomenon and influence the approach followed in research (Lodico et al., 2010). This study was grounded in Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory which suggests that individuals are at the core of their self-development, self-renewal, and adaption. "Perceived self-efficacy is defined as people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performance," (Bandura, 1986, p. 391). Self-efficacy beliefs are characterized as the major push behind behavior, as well as change. In addition, those who possess self-efficacy, may have the knowledge and motivation to integrate research-based practices into instruction when working with struggling readers, may attain individual targets under desirable and undesirable conditions (Bandura, 1977). Bandura's continued research

develops and defends the belief that an individual's abilities affect motivation, as well as success or failures (Bandura, 1986, 1993, & 1997). Bandura's (1977) consistent belief of self-efficacy is a learned self-concept, organized as it is applied to oneself, and not fixed since it is every-changing like desired achievements and goals which are under constant transformation (Bandura, 1977; McAdam, 1986). Bandura (1995) stated that self-efficacy is not only the ability to complete a task but extends to one's belief in having the knowledge to complete any given task.

Bandura (1977) identified constructs of the theory making a connection between major processes that impact cognitive function and the influence these processes have on self-efficacy by determining "how people feel, think, motivate themselves, and behave," (Bandura, 1977, p.118). In addition, Bandura (1995) acknowledged four influences that influence the beliefs of self-efficacy. The foundations that influence self-efficacy are mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological states (Bandura, 1995).

Mastery experience refers to performance accomplishment as it connects to successes or failures when completing an activity. According to Çimen and Özgan (2018), an individual's self-efficacy will increase during successful tasks and decrease during failures. The vicarious experience refers to the outcome achieved from watching others as they undertake a new task and are affected by either a successful or unsuccessful achievement (Won et al., 2017). Social persuasion refers to all negative or positive feedback received after a task is completed (Won et al., 2017). When positive feedback is received for a completed task, often self-efficacy increases while negative

feedback will lower self-efficacy. Physiological and emotional states are the final influences on self-efficacy. Feelings such as stress, fatigue, anxiety, and tension play a role in one's ability to judge performance in the Maplebrook Elementary setting. Emotional states, both positive and negative, influence perceptions of one's ability to successfully complete tasks (Bandura, 1995). The self-efficacy of educators in the elementary setting goes beyond the ability to accomplish a task; it incorporates the perception and belief in one's ability to successfully complete a given task no matter one's emotional state (Bandura, 1977, 1997). Educators who perceive themselves as having the knowledge and motivation to teach the district's curriculum are inclined to be successful.

Bandura's (1995) self-efficacy theory is widely used for educational research. Based on the conceptual framework of self-efficacy as defined by Bandura (1977), teacher's self-efficacy plays an important role when choosing research-based practices and delivering lessons. Based on this study, understanding the perceptions of educators at Maplebrook Elementary as it pertains to knowledge and motivation in the literacy classroom plays an important role in learning. Self-efficacy of elementary school educators in a classroom has both positive and negative results. Educators who possess high levels of self-efficacy concentrate more on academic learning and adaptations and can provide the necessary assistance to learners (Bandura, 1993). In addition, educators who possess a significant level of self-efficacy are motivated to persist when working with struggling students (Bandura, 1977; Çimen & Özgan, 2018). Others cautioned that educators with considerably higher levels of self-efficacy can be more opposed to make

changes in the way tasks are approached or accomplished (Heath, 2017). Bandura (1993) also believed that educators with low self-efficacy are at greater risk to criticize students, choose to divert from academics, and have little motivation to complete tasks. Additionally, educators with little self-efficacy for knowledge and motivation for teaching reading comprehension are more likely not to adjust instruction to help struggling learners (Gerde et al., 2018). The personal challenges that struggling learners possess are likely to be viewed by educators as internal and having nothing to do with them. Lastly, owning low efficacy will have educators feel inadequate in their knowledge and motivation to work with students (Bandura, 1993). Prior successes when finishing a task increase self-efficacy, whereas failures lower self-efficacy (Çimen & Özgan, 2018). Educators who perceive they possess the knowledge and motivation needed to help students increase reading comprehension are more likely to be successful. On the other hand, educators who are not confident in their knowledge and motivation to help struggling readers are less likely to be successful.

The teacher self-efficacy construct has effects on the learning environment. Teacher self-efficacy is predictive of elements in the learning environment, such as individual student achievement (Shahzad & Naureen, 2017).). In addition, student motivation and personal efficacy play a role in achievement. Teacher self-efficacy contributes to decisions, goal setting, individual efforts when delivering instruction, student engagement, and an educator's goals (Shahzad & Naureen, 2017).

When an educator is not confident in his or her content knowledge, student achievement can be negatively affected and becomes evident when students score below

grade-level on standardized tests and district created assessments. Bandura (1993) believed that teachers who lack self-efficacy in knowledge and motivation use unproven methods to assist in student achievement since they do not have the confidence in their ability to choose effective research-based practices. On the other hand, educators with high efficacy use effective or proven strategies to grow and improve student achievement (Holtge et al., 2019). Educators possessing low self-efficacy for knowledge and motivation deem their influence on student achievement is less important than other factors and do not believe it is necessary to incorporate research-based practices during instructional periods.

Self-efficacy as it relates to one's knowledge and motivation is vital for effective classroom instruction (Bandura & Schunk, 1981). It is important to understand how educators' knowledge and motivation to integrate research-based practices into instruction impacts instruction for students who are not increasing comprehension or attaining a required skill after multiple attempts. Motivation plays a role in students' success since educators who are knowledgeable and motivated deliver effective instruction in the literacy classroom (Sahito & Vaisanen, 2018). Lacking knowledge and motivation can lead educators to choose ineffective instructional practices that do not align with learners' abilities and restrict the acquisition of new understanding. When educators are not knowledgeable and motivated, students are not motivated and acquisition of knowledge is limited (Sahito & Vaisanen, 2018). There exists, however, a relationship between teacher and student self-efficacy. Efficacious teachers affect student outcomes. Students taught by educators who consider themselves efficacious experience

high levels of achievement compared to students who are taught by educators with low efficacy (Cansoy et al., 2018).

Self-efficacy in teaching reading comprehension is expanded through positive experiences during effective classroom instruction and furthers growth for both teacher and students in the learning environment (Wyatt, 2018). The key to increasing self-efficacy in any situation requires the acquisition of a high level of knowledge (Bandura, 2006). Educators must have the drive to continuously increase instructional knowledge, as well as understand how struggling learners will benefit from research-based instruction (Hoekstra & Korthagen, 2011; Varghese et al., 2016). Upon entry into the educational profession, teachers do not possess all the knowledge required, which causes gaps in instructional approaches (Khalid & Husnin, 2019; Wahlgren & Aarkrog, 2021). This gap represents a divide between self-efficacy and effective instruction (Wahlgren & Aarkrog, 2021). In addition, motivation when working with students who struggle with reading comprehension affects student achievement (Engin, 2020; Robertson et al., 2014). Educators need to be presented with opportunities to increase knowledge through social interactions with peers during professional development (PD) or possibly through the creation of PLCs, which allows for growth when teaching reading comprehension to struggling readers (McGrath, 2009; Owen, 2016). Unless educators are provided with positive opportunities to master or develop educational skills, poor self-efficacy in teaching reading comprehension exists and has the potential to decrease instructional processes (Wyatt, 2018).

Implications

In this qualitative descriptive case study, I examined the self-efficacy of educators in third, fourth, and fifth grades regarding their knowledge and motivation to integrate research-based practices into instruction when working with struggling readers, even when students continue to score below grade level on standardized tests and district-created common assessments. In addition, understanding the knowledge and motivation of educators as they work with students who continuously struggle, no matter what practices are integrated into instruction, provides valuable insight. Districts need to provide opportunities for teachers to gain the expertise required to teach literacy skills and research-based strategies that will increase reading comprehension (Vernon-Feagans et al. (2018).

This study has the potential to serve as a model for educators by highlighting the importance of self-efficacy as it relates to knowledge and motivation to integrate research-based practices into instruction when teaching students struggling with reading comprehension. Furthermore, sharing how successful classrooms consist of educators who are confident in their knowledge and motivation to deliver effective reading curriculum instruction can provide the catalyst for change in personal beliefs. Despite failure, teachers confident in their teaching approaches and motivated to instruct struggling students can increase reading comprehension if they possess the knowledge required to integrate the appropriate research-proven strategies (Sharp et al., 2020). Another implication of this study is educators' understanding the importance of possessing the knowledge and motivation necessary to identify and support struggling

young readers in the classroom to ensure future success (Campaign for Grade Level Reading, 2015). Educators who are confident in their ability to help students who comprehend below grade level and have the knowledge to choose effective research-proven strategies that address the shortcomings of students have the key to future academic growth (Mason, 2013; Sharp et al., 2020).

The goal of this study was that the findings will result in the development of a project that provides teachers with the opportunity to share and discuss with peers and colleagues effective research-based strategies proven to work in their literacy classroom with struggling readers. During these conveniently scheduled sessions, educators can choose literacy strategies shared by colleagues that can be incorporated into classroom instruction based on the needs of their individual learners. The project developed is in the form of professional development (PD) sessions where educators share and gather information about reading comprehension strategies to use with students who continue to struggle. Maplebrook could provide opportunities throughout the year where teachers can meet and share information that will help educators who lack knowledge and motivation needed to deliver effective instruction to struggling readers. The practices that I included are applicable for instructional purposes in the literacy classroom. Research has uncovered that continuing PD is required for professional growth and is required during a period of implementation (Gupta & Lee, 2020).

The purpose of this study was to promote positive social change by identifying the knowledge teachers feel they need to teach struggling readers and to determine how teachers can stay motivated to teach reading comprehension to struggling readers when

immediate results are not visible. Understanding individual self-efficacy as it relates to knowledge and motivation to integrate research-based practices into instruction provides opportunities for educators to meet with colleagues and share ideas on how to increase confidence. Having the opportunity to participate in PD and PLCs will provide the opportunity for educators to increase both self-efficacy and motivation. Motivated and knowledgeable educators will have the confidence to create more effectively in the classroom, as well as have the confidence to request assistance when needed (Sharp et al., 2020).

Summary

Parents expect their children to be taught and to learn the skills necessary to succeed in school and beyond (Yoleri, 2021). Maplebrook Elementary continues to experience a problem with students in third, fourth, and fifth grades struggling with reading comprehension and scoring below grade level on standardized test and district created common assessments. Despite the integration of a variety of tools and practices into literacy instruction, students continue to struggle. Understanding how teachers remain motivated when teaching struggling readings will provide insight into methods that can be shared and help staff. In addition, understanding the self-efficacy of educators as it relates to knowledge and motivation to integrate research-based practices into instruction while implementing the reading curriculum with struggling readers will provide insight on what PD or administrative support educators need to increase their self-efficacy regarding the teaching of reading comprehension skills. It is important that educators have the self-efficacy of motivation and knowledge required to be effective in

the classroom to help struggling readers increase reading comprehension levels (Sharp et al., 2020).

Included are three other sections in addition to the introduction that provide details on the Methodology, the Project, Reflections and Conclusions. The Methodology section provides details on methods used to collect and analyze qualitative data from seven open-ended questions shared during Zoom or phone interviews for participating teachers in third, fourth, and fifth grades. In addition, information on the selection and justification of number of participants is explained. Details on the procedures for gaining access to participants are explained, as well as methods used to establish researcher-participants relationships.

Details relating to purpose, goals, learning outcomes, and target audience are presented. In addition, another review of the literature is presented that is thoroughly researched and includes how the search was conducted. A description of the study is included in this section with an explanation of potential barriers and potential solutions. The roles and responsibilities of all participants are included. The potential for social change and implications are also discussed.

Reflections and conclusions are components of the final study. Project strengths and limitations, as well as alternative approaches for problems and solutions, are covered in the final study. This section includes a reflective analysis regarding personal learning and growth as a scholar, practitioner, and project developer. A reflection is included to explain the importance of the study and what was learned during this research.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

The nature of this study was qualitative in method and design. Yin (2014) determined that using the qualitative design is beneficial when a study or project consists of a small number of participants. I chose a qualitative descriptive case study design to explore self-efficacy as it pertains to knowledge and motivation of educators to integrate research-based practices into instruction when working with students who continue to struggle with reading comprehension. This design allows for the “how” and “why” questions to be asked (Cohen et al., 2017). Case studies use open-ended questions to explore and to provide in-depth information from individuals based on an activity or process (Cohen et al., 2017). This study was a qualitative descriptive case design with the single purpose of understanding the role the perceptions of teachers in third, fourth, and fifth grades play when working with struggling students. Educators need to understand their individual self-efficacy as it relates to knowledge and motivation to integrate research-based best practices into instruction in the literacy classroom with students who continue to struggle with reading comprehension. Based on the purpose of this study, I chose the qualitative descriptive case study design because it the study involved a limited number of participants from one elementary school and used an interview protocol shared as open-ended during a Zoom or phone interview.

Justification for the Qualitative Design

The qualitative case study design was selected because it would allow for a thorough investigation of the perceptions of educators in third, fourth, and fifth grades as

they relate to the role knowledge and motivation play when working with students who continue to struggle with reading comprehension. The qualitative design allowed me to understand the beliefs of educators regarding their knowledge and motivation to teach struggling readers (Creswell, 2014). The data from educators in third, fourth, and fifth grades were collected at a time and manner that was most convenient for the participants. Specific data were collected through the inductive data analysis procedure and broader themes were identified. From there, I interpreted the resultant data with the goal of understanding the information shared by each educator.

Other Research Designs

Creswell (2012) identified the five approaches for a qualitative design as ethnography, phenomenology, narrative, grounded theory, and case study research. The ethnographic design was considered for this research study but not chosen. Creswell (2012) characterized the ethnographic design as one that describes views of the participants in a single setting over a long time. The ethnographic design focuses on a specific social group or system (Cohen et al., 2017; Creswell, 2012) and would not have been a suitable choice for my research. The ethnographic design requires the collection of data through observations over a longer time to get a true sense of a situation (Cohen et al., 2017; Lodico et al., 2010). Observations are not usually completed in one appointment and require the researcher to arrange two to three additional convenient times to observe. While an initial observation takes approximately an hour, the ethnographic design would require multiple observations and could take weeks to gather the required information. My goal was to make the process as convenient as possible for

all participants. I assured the participants of my willingness to provide support throughout the process in the cover letter that was shared with them through email. Using Zoom or phone interviews to ask seven open-ended questions as the primary data source eliminated an ethnographic approach. In addition, observations require multiple visits would not have been possible due to the unavailability of educators in the district.

The next approach considered for this research study was the phenomenological research design. Creswell (2012) stated the phenomenological research design focuses on the commonality of human experiences within a specific group. This design resembles the case study in that both scrutinize a small number of participants and the experiences of all participants from their point-of-view (Cohen et al., 2017; Lodico et al., 2010). The two designs differ as the case study is used to look at the perceptions or viewpoints of the participants whereas the phenomenological design is used to look at experiences or real-life events of all participants, and the researcher is required to remove personal experiences (Creswell, 2012). This design was not used because the goal of the research was to seek the perceptions of educators regarding their self-efficacy related to knowledge and motivation to integrate research-based practices into instruction when working with students struggling with reading comprehension and did not involve observations that would lean towards real-life events.

A narrative research design provides descriptive details for each participant by describing their lives or experiences (Cohen et al., 2017; Creswell, 2012). This type of qualitative research focuses on first-person experiences. The life of each participant is the emphasis (Cohen et al., 2017; Lodico et al., 2010). With the case study design, perception

of each participant is gathered and analyzed. The first-person experience does not allow the researcher to analyze information because the participants would not be telling their story or life experience. The narrative research design does not consider point of view as was the case in this study design and was therefore not selected.

The grounded theory approach is like a case study design in that coding of details or collected data is required (Cohen et al., 2017; Creswell, 2012). In this design, the researcher “generates a theory of a process, action, or interaction shaped by the views of many participants,” (Creswell, 2012, p. 63). The grounded theory approach was not used because a larger number of participants were not included nor would a new theory have been generated (Cohen et al., 2017; Lodico et al., 2010). I planned on collecting “detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time” (Creswell, 2012, p. 227). Ten educators participated in my study, which is fewer than required for the grounded theory design. The data were collected from Achieve 3000 information and interviews with participants.

Information was gathered from participants through Zoom or phone interviews sharing the same seven-open ended questions to determine teacher self-efficacy of knowledge and motivation to integrate research-based practices into instruction when integrating the district’s curriculum and working with struggling readers. Data regarding strategies covered, as well as how students were performing on comprehension skills during usage, were gathered for one marking period from participants for the Achieve 3000 Program. In addition, I investigated the self-efficacy of educators as it pertains to individual knowledge and motivation to integrate research-based practices into

instruction when incorporating the Achieve 3000 Program into classroom instruction. Data on the progression of students with literacy strategies/skills that align with the district's curriculum was linked to teachers' perceptions of their ability to use the program effectively. The case study design aligned with the purpose and number of participants. Based on the protocol developed and personal constraints of potential participants, I chose a case study design.

Participants and Setting

I obtained a signed letter of cooperation from the district's superintendent to collect data for this study through Zoom or phone interviews sharing the same seven open ended questions with all potential participants, as well as data from the Achieve 3000. Participation in the study was on a voluntary basis. The elementary school used in the study consists of approximately 56 educators/professionals (including special education, physical education/health, librarian, technology, music, art, reading specialist, psychologist, occupational therapist, and administrators). A total of 19 educators met the criteria to participate in this study because they teach literacy in third, fourth, and fifth grades as well as use the Achieve 3000 program in instruction, which aligns with the district's curriculum. All professionals who voluntarily chose to participate were included in the study. The objective was to have approximately 10-12 participants. Special education teachers who were coteaching and working with general education teachers were included because they provide support in the general education classroom and were responsible for integrating the district's reading curriculum. This study took place through Zoom meetings and phone interviews with educators from a mid-Atlantic

school district. There were 10 participants in this study from Maplebrook Elementary. The same seven open-ended questions were asked of third, fourth, and fifth grade teacher. Prior to meeting with the participants, I reviewed Achieve 3000 data as they related to student performance on reading comprehension strategies that aligned with the district's curriculum.

Purposeful sampling was used because teachers in third, fourth, and fifth grades were asked to participate. According to Creswell (2012), when performing a qualitative research project, purposeful sampling is the best method for choosing participants and location. While a total of approximately 19 educators were invited to participate, the research focused on the responses of 10 professionals from this group who chose to participate in the study. The demographic information requested from teachers was grade taught, number of years teaching, and level of education. Table 1 outlines the number of years taught, grade level and educational level for all participants.

Table 1*Participants Demographics*

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Years taught</i>	<i>Educational level</i>
A	4	5	Bachelor's degree
B	5	9	Bachelor's degree
C	4	10	Bachelor's degree
D	5	21	Bachelor's degree
E	5	19	Bachelor's degree
F	3	22	Bachelor's degree
G	3	10	Master's degree
H	3	12	Master's degree
I	4	23	Master's degree
J	4	18	Master's +30

The participants in this research had a variety of educational experience ranging from 5 to 23 years. Three of the participants were third grade teachers, four of the participants were fourth grade teachers, and three were fifth grade teachers. Most participants had earned a four-year degree or a Bachelor's degree. Two of the educators had a Master's Degree and one of the two specialized in Special Education. Only one educator had a degree at the Master's +30 level, and she also had a reading specialist certification. Most of the participants in this research had a total of 10 or more years of experience at different grade levels since assignments change.

This elementary school was chosen due to its accessibility and because approximately 15% of students were struggling with reading comprehension. Educators in third, fourth, and fifth grades were also chosen since they meet daily with struggling readers. Each literacy classroom had an average of 22 students with approximately three struggling readers in each class. I do not supervise any of the participants but have a congenial professional relationship of mutual trust with those participating. My role in this school setting is as a classroom teacher with no administrative role and I am not a part of the literacy department. I currently teach mathematics, science, and social studies in the same district and have no connection with any participants. Department meetings are separate, and I do not interact on an educational or personal level with any participant. I do not have any role in making decisions with any participant. All participants were chosen since they work with students at varying levels of competence and were responsible for daily integrating of the district's reading curriculum. These educators were all familiar with the expectations of the curriculum and the district.

Selection of Participants

Participants in this study were regular and special education teachers in third, fourth, and fifth grades that were familiar with the district's reading curriculum and expectations based on a mandated pre-service seminar that outlines this information in detail. The names of all potential participants were obtained from the school's principal. Having the names of only educators who teach literacy in third, fourth, and fifth grades provided me with the information needed to access email address. While all teachers in third, fourth, and fifth grades were asked to participate, there was no guarantee that all

would agree to participate. Since there were four to five educators or classes in third, fourth, and fifth grades, the goal was to get three to four teachers from each grade to volunteer to participate. Teachers in grades 1 and 2 were not invited to participate since the focus of the study was on third, fourth, and fifth grades, and not early readers. In addition, school psychologists and case workers, occupational therapists and daily special teachers in physical education, health, art, music, and library do not teach the reading curriculum and were not included in this study.

Participants were selected through purposeful sampling, which is used in qualitative research to recognize and select pertinent details linked to an area of concern (Cohen et al., 2017; Palinkas et al., 2013). This type of selection chose participants based on the purpose of the study, as well as area of interest. All teachers in third, fourth, and fifth grades were familiar with the district's expectations and curriculum. For this reason, they were able to provide feedback on self-efficacy as it relates to knowledge and motivation when integrating research-based practices into instruction while working with struggling readers. Participants who chose to be a part of this study work in the elementary setting and were responsible for teaching reading comprehension to students in third, fourth, and fifth grades daily. Input from participants was valuable since different perceptions based on grade-level experience were provided. Each participant provided a full range of information regarding self-efficacy as it pertains to knowledge and motivation when integrating research-based practices that align with the district's reading curriculum into instruction. These differences provided valuable information on the knowledge and motivation educators possess when working with students who

continue to struggle with reading comprehension while integrating the district's reading curriculum.

Protection of Participants' Rights and Confidentiality

When conducting research that uses human participants, researchers need to consider all ethical guidelines. In compliance of Institutional Review Board (IRB) regulations, all research data in hand-written or typed format were kept on a password protected computer as well as in a locked drawer at home. I made sure that all names or other participant-defining information were removed immediately from any document. During the collection of data or sharing of findings, no one's name was divulged. All information gathered was confidential and each participant was identified by a number. Identities were furthered safeguarded since I am the only one who has knowledge of those who participated in Zoom or phone interviews; there were no questions or other identifying markers. Participants were informed that type-written notes from Zoom or phone interviews to open-ended questions and Achieve 3000 data would be locked in a safe and secure file drawer in my home office, and only I would have access to any of the information shared. I am the only one who has knowledge of the participants' names.

These steps were necessary to protect the rights of all participants, as well as maintain accountability as required by the National Institute of Health (NIH). Once I received IRB approval, data collection began. As required prior to data collection, NIH training for the Protection of Human Research Participants was completed on September 22, 2018, Certificate No. 2949253.

Accessing Participants

Prior to accessing participants and the collection of data, approval was obtained from Walden University's IRB No. 02-27-20-0271070, as well as the district's Board of Education Superintendent. Permission to collect data from Achieve 3000 and completing Zoom or phone interviews sharing the same seven-open ended questions with all prospective participants was requested from the school's principal. Prior to the collection of any data, a letter outlining the purpose of this study was delivered to the superintendent of the district (Appendix B). After approval from the superintendent, a separate letter was hand delivered to the principal requesting approval to solicit participation from the professionals in his school (Appendix C). When I delivered the letter to the principal, I shared an overview of the study and answered questions regarding the study or the participation of educators in the school. In addition, I provided a copy of the proposed questions to be used for the Zoom or phone interviews sharing the same seven-open ended questions to both the Superintendent and Principal and elucidated any additional questions that needed clarification.

Even though the school had 48 educators and 2 administrators, 10 teachers agreed to participate in the research. An email containing a letter of consent was shared with 19 teachers in third, fourth, and fifth grades explaining that I am working on a study for my Doctoral Program at Walden University and requested participation. Details about the study and its purpose were explained in the Letter of Consent, as well as a description of the process. I ensured that participation was solely voluntary and explained in my letter of consent that no compensation would be offered in any form. Potential participants

were asked to reply to the email that they wanted to participate in the study. All educators who replied via email that they were interested in participating were contacted to set up a convenient time and place to complete a Zoom or phone interviews. In addition, those participants who decided to answer the seven open-ended questions independently were provided a copy of the questionnaire via email. In addition, a request was made to each participant to share data from the Achieve 3000 on-line program that provided details on articles shared with students and literacy strategies covered by the program. This information included literacy strategies covered for one marking period, a listing of articles used for instructional purposes, as well as students' changes in lexile levels. This information was shared via email to my personal account. The names or identifiers of students were not included in the information shared with me.

All 10 educators in third, fourth, and fifth grades who agreed to participate were included in the study. After participants shared their preferences for Zoom or phone interviews, I began to contact each participant to schedule interviews. Within a week, I began the interviews and shared the same seven open-ended questions with each participant during our meetings. Prior to the start of the individual interviews, I requested written consent from the participants to record answers to all open-ended questions, which was outlined in the original letter of consent shared with all potential participants. While meeting via Zoom, I was able to manually write field notes. Field notes are an important part of qualitative research since they enhance data and add rich context (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018). A field note form was created (Appendix G) and allowed for annotated remarks during Zoom interviews and were based on observations of

participants. When utilizing field notes in a qualitative study, the researcher closely observes the environment. In addition, impressions of physical environment can be an important piece of information and included in research details. During Zoom interviews, it was possible to take field notes based on facial expressions and body language and movements when answering a question since cameras were turned on for each participant who chose this form. When transcribing responses to interview questions, intonation can provide insight to the researcher on participants' perspectives or beliefs that were not verbalized (Dongle & Scallen, 2015). Physical or body language responses to questions during Zoom interviews were noted. My field note collection began with listing the geographic location of each participant and providing an identifying number for each. Date and time of interview were recorded. The overall demeanor of participants, as well as non-verbal behaviors, lack of eye contact, or hand wringing was noted for Zoom interviews. In addition, field notes increase both rigor and trustworthiness of data collected from interviews. Taking field notes allows the researcher to reflect on answers to open-ended questions and potentially identify biases made prior to collection of data. Researchers are able to gather information that develops an impression of the participant and their beliefs. Lastly, I reflected on the interview and added any additional notes. The information shared from participants during interviews to all research questions were transcribed verbatim from recordings. Zoom interviews were recorded verbally but I did not video record. During phone interviews, I put the call on speaker and recorded all responses. These recordings were played and replayed from the recorder to make sure all information was transcribed correctly.

Data Collection

The procedures for collecting data in this qualitative case study were selected to satisfy the research design and to answer questions related to teachers' perspective of knowledge and motivation when working with students who continue to struggle with reading comprehension. The research design and questions on theories were explained in the literature review. I used the interview protocol since this form of data collection provides rich data. Information was gathered over a five-week period. Open-ended questions were asked of third, fourth, and fifth grade teachers. Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, it was not possible to meet in person with participants. Each participant was given the choice of completing interviews by Zoom or phone.

Zoom or Phone Interviews

The participants consisted of three third grade teachers, four fourth grade teachers, and three fifth grade teachers. Data were collected through individual interviews with each participant. After gaining approval from each participant, a recorder was employed to record responses for accuracy. All interviews took place at a convenient time for all either through Zoom or phone interviews and lasted from 30 to 45 minutes. In addition, during Zoom or phone interviews, I was able to ask clarifying questions regarding teacher's self-efficacy as it relates to knowledge and motivation to integrate research-based practices into instruction when integrating the program into instruction. The data or information gathered from each grade was reviewed separately. After each Zoom or phone interview, I made myself available to participants to answer any questions. Participants did not have any questions at the end of the interviews. I played

the tapes from each interview multiple times to guarantee accuracy of transcription. Transcription of tapes was completed within 24-36 hours of each interview. Educators' audiotapes were created during the interviews with consent from participants. Member checking was employed by sharing the findings with participants for accuracy.

During Zoom interviews only, notes were written in the form of field notes. The field note form was used and assisted in gathering both verbal and non-verbal rich data. Questions generated during the Zoom interviews were included in my field notes. The collected data was secured in a locked desk drawer in my home office and will be retained for a five-year period.

Interview Protocol

The overarching research questions were as follows:

RQ1: How do the elementary teachers in Grades 3 to 5 at Maplebrook perceive their knowledge of teaching reading comprehension skills that align with the district's curriculum with students who continue to struggle in the literacy classroom?

RQ2: How do the elementary teachers in Grades 3 to 5 at Maplebrook perceive their motivation when teaching reading comprehension skills that align with the district's curriculum with struggling reading students?

The research questions guided the one-on-one interviews. During each interview, additional questions were generated based on answers to research study questions to clarify answers and gather additional details. Educators had the opportunity to share and expand on their beliefs on the role motivation and knowledge played while working with struggling readers. I did not interrupt educators as they were sharing answers but asked

for clarification on answers as needed. Participants were cooperative when asked for clarification. These Zoom and phone interviews afforded the possibility to collect data linked to the research study questions and Achieve 3000 data shared. Typed field notes and transcripts from each interview provided a tool for organizing data for analysis. Lastly, I analyzed the information shared regarding the literacy skills covered for one marking period, the integration of the Achieve 3000 program into instruction, as well as through the answers to open-ended questions.

Data Collection Process

Each potential participant in third, fourth, and fifth grades was invited to participate in my research project. An email was sent to each potential educator explaining the research and protocol for collecting data. Purposeful sampling was employed to choose participants who taught literacy. Everyone who agreed to participate was included in this study.

Field notes, which were based on observations gathered during one-on-one interviews, were transcribed along with answers to research questions. Additional questions generated based on answers to research questions were included in the information gathered. Member checking was used, and findings were shared with each participant for accuracy and validity. All data collected from participants were kept in a locked file drawer in my home office and will be kept there for a five-year period. After the five-year period, all collected data will be destroyed.

Based on everyone's individual preference, meetings were scheduled through Zoom or phone interviews. Participants were allowed to decide which mode was

convenient to them. I asked open-ended questions regarding knowledge and motivation when working with struggling readers to all teachers who agreed to participate. Data from the Achieve 3000 on-line Program, which is a program that generates lexile leveled articles and activities for each student individually, were also requested. Each teacher in third, fourth, and fifth grades, who volunteered to participate, was asked to share information generated by Achieve and contained specific information for an entire marking period, which was approximately 10 weeks. Participants were cooperative and shared any information requested. Participants were asked to share the Achieve data to Zoom or phone interviews. The report contained details on which articles were accessed and used for literacy instruction for the marking period. In addition, information was shared through this report that outlines which literacy strategies were covered in each article.

Role of the Researcher

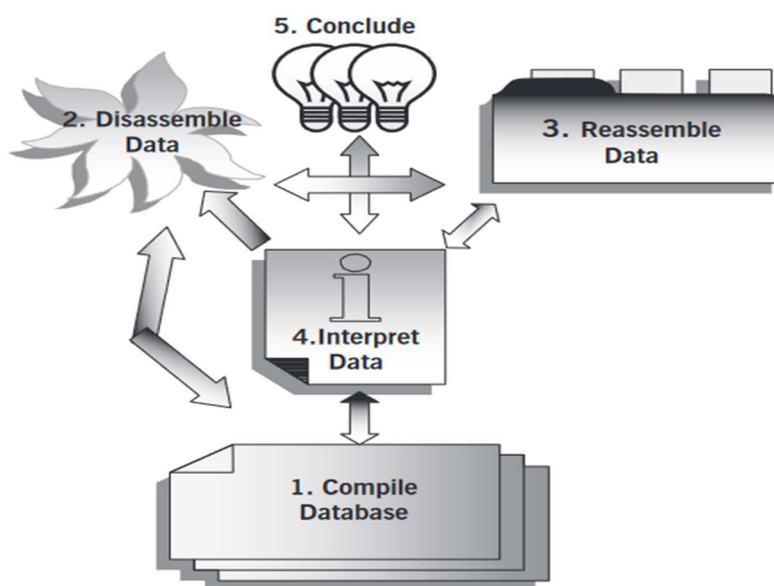
The role of the researcher in a qualitative research design is to answer all questions participants have, as well as to address concerns that exist between the researcher and participants. This topic of this research project has been a discussion for educators in all grades for a number of years. As the researcher, it was important for me to be a part of the one-on-one interviews without any preconceived assumptions regarding individual responses. Creswell (2009) stated that the researcher needs to be able to bring personal values to the research. It was important that the researcher focus on one concept or phenomenon only, as well as consider the context of participants. During the interviews, I stayed on topic and assured all participants all data collected would be

kept confidential and no judgement based on responses would be made. Creswell (2009) stated it was also the role of the researcher to not only collect participant meanings but understand them as well. I made interpretations of data and validated the accuracy of findings.

My relationship with participants in the study was as a teacher in the same district. I am not and have never been an administrator or supervisor over any participant and hold no authority over any participant. I do not have a personal connection with participants.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data can be analyzed in many different ways. In this qualitative case study, I used Yin's (2011) approach to analyze data from Zoom or phone interviews sharing the same seven open-ended questions. I analyzed Achieve 3000 data and used member checking. Yin (2014) shared the five steps required for data analyses in a qualitative study. Yin stated the steps required to analyze word-based data are (1) compiling, (2) disassembling, (3) reassembling, (4) interpretation, and (5) narration.

Figure 1*Yin's 5 Steps for Qualitative Data Analysis*

The first step in analyzing was compiling and sorting all data collected, which means putting collected information in an understandable or logical order. Answers to opened ended questions, field notes, and Achieve 3000 data were collected from participants. The data compiled helped to develop groupings of information. The compilations of these data were considered the database. The next step in analyzing data was dissembling or breaking down the compiled data into smaller components or pieces. I reread interview transcripts and divided the data into categories that explain or describe the focus. This step helped reduce and eliminate invariant themes. This step was accompanied with assigning labels or codes to each component or piece. The disassembling process was repeated multiples times as part of the testing of codes. The third step considered reassembling the data and core themes. During this step,

adjustments were made by placing the data into organized lists. The relationships and comparisons were derived. In the fourth phase, data were interpreted and patterns were uncovered based on the interview transcripts. During this step, all collected data were reassembled and examined to construct additional interpretation of information and became a part of the research. In the fifth step conclusions were derived in narrative form from the entire study and happened over time after considering and analyzing all collected data. To protect against developing a biased view, participant interviews were coded and analyzed. At this point, I examined the findings to make sure that the multiple forms of collected data led to similar conclusions.

Three types of data collection were used for my research project. Zoom or phone interviews, field notes, and Achieve 3000 data were included. The field notes and interviews provided rich, informative information. Data sources included transcriptions from interviews, field notes, and data regarding literacy strategies covered in the literacy classroom. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the perceptions of educators as they pertain to knowledge and motivation when working with struggling readers. To organize and categorize the massive amount of data collected in a qualitative study, the researcher needs to determine the best method to accomplish this task (Creswell, 2014). I reviewed and organized the data to effectively analyze the information collected. I set up a binder to collect and hold all recorded and typed responses of Zoom or phone interviews, Achieve 3000 data and consent letters. Within this binder, I created sections to hold all answers to questions through Zoom or phone interviews with third, fourth, and fifth grade teachers. I created a second section to hold

all Achieve 3000 data, and a third section to hold all consent emails from participants including the superintendent, school principal, and an auditor for the study. Copies of the signed letters from the superintendent and school principal were included in the study as Appendix C and Appendix D, respectively. To maintain confidentiality, copies of signed participant and auditor letters were not included as part of the final study. I ensured that participation was solely voluntary and explained in my Letter of Consent (Appendix C) that no compensation would be offered in any form. Potential participants were asked to reply to the email that they wanted to participate in the study.

Analyzing and interpreting data in a qualitative study allows the researcher to choose from multiple methods or programs (Creswell, 2014). Analyzing data in a qualitative study is more difficult than a quantitative design due to the textual format (Creswell, 2014). The researcher needs to look at the different layers of information provided by the participants. In addition, the qualitative design generates a massive amount of data, which makes it difficult to organize without developing systematic methods for collecting and categorizing (Creswell, 2014). The researcher needs to be thorough when reviewing the data gathered from all participants and understand all information gathered through open-ended questions that may not be used when reporting the findings (Creswell, 2014).

Data Analysis Procedures

I connected with all participants individually through a Zoom or phone interview. A total of seven educators consented to Zoom interviews, and three educators consented to phone interviews. During my one-on-one interviews, I gathered data regarding teachers'

beliefs of knowledge and motivation when integrating the reading curriculum and working with students who continue to struggle with reading comprehension. Data sources included field notes and transcripts for Zoom interviews and data from transcripts for phone interviews. Achieve 3000 information shared by educators in third, fourth, and fifth grades with articles assigned and skills covered by each article were also examined.

Each data source was analyzed independently and triangulated at a later time. The field notes from Zoom meetings were reviewed for repetitive verbal and non-verbal actions. While the phone interviews provided only verbal data based on answers to open-ended questions, the Zoom interviews provided both verbal and non-verbal information. During all Zoom interviews, cameras were on for both the participants and me. Since I was able to see each participant during interviews, demeanor and intonation were considered when analyzing data from Zoom interviews. The field notes were analyzed and became part of the collected data.

Prior to reviewing and analyzing data gathered, I used a priori coding, which were codes developed before examining collected qualitative data based on the theoretical framework, personal schema, or interview questions (Patton, 2002). A priori coding assists to create initial or beginning codes based on the information being sought for coding the responses through Zoom or phone interviews. I created a priori codes before data collection and they were developed based on ideas of certain aspects of the problem being examined or studied (Yin, 2015). All coding was accomplished by a priori coding since it was based mostly on interview questions and schema. This step was followed by coding of the data. Transcription of all data required recurrent listening and reading of the

information shared and identifying commonalities with responses. I began initial coding (Yin, 2017).

All initial codes were based on the beginning codes that were developed prior to collecting data and based on the information being sought. At this point, open coding, which was the process of segmenting data into single words or small phrases, was used to break down the data into distinct parts to determine similarities and differences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Open coding helps the researcher define and develop categories based on their likenesses and differences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Axial coding, which was the process of making connections of data based on likenesses and differences, was used to identify categories and themes, represent data, and interpret the results that emerged while examining data and staying grounded in the conceptual framework of Bandura's self-efficacy belief (Yin, 2017). Axial coding also allows researchers to reassemble the information collected from smaller words or codes into broader categories (Yin, 2017). At this point, connections between codes were determined and overarching themes were developed. Thematic analysis identifies and describes implicit or implied and explicit or explained ideas from the collected data (Neuendorf, 2016). Emerging codes were set up and continued until saturation of data was reached and no new themes emerged from the data (Creswell, 2014). Emerging themes were inductively created based on the data collected in qualitative research while reviewing and studying information from all participants since an efficient method of analyzing data was needed (Graneheim et al., 2017). The Atlas.ti software program helps to consolidate mass amount of data and field notes that required close study and analysis. The program assisted me in analyzing this

large quantity of textual data shared by educators. Atlas.ti helps in organizing, reassembling, and managing all collected data in a systematic manner.

After each individual interview notes and recordings were transcribed and emailed to each participant for member-checking. The purpose was to ensure that each participant's responses to seven open-ended questions were captured correctly (Appendix D). Afterward I imported the generated data from the interview responses into the Atlas.ti software. Participants received a copy of their transcribed interview notes. Each participant was asked to verify the findings for accuracy and provide changes or additions if needed. All adjustments to transcribed interview responses were made. I transferred all interview data after member checking into understandable language for Atlas.ti software to manage data analysis. Transposing this data required converting the transcribed data into a survey format on Microsoft Excel and adding Atlas.ti prefixes to column headers to make them readable to the Atlas.ti software. The next step was to import the generated interview data into the Atlas.ti software. I imported the data sources into the Atlas.ti software and used the documentation to ensure the validity of the interview data from participants and uncover meaning to answer the research questions. I performed a content analysis of the transcribed interview data in the Atlas.ti software to detect themes that aligned with the conceptual framework.

Emerging themes were unrealistic goals, need for PD, inadequate resources, modifications in instruction, confidence, motivation, content knowledge, and rigorous standards. To develop fewer themes, multiple themes by grade were examined. The major themes that emerged were teachers' needs, teachers' confidence, and teachers'

perceptions. The ideas that were chosen for the emerging themes directly relate to the teachers' beliefs based on the responses to open-ended questions that connect to knowledge and motivation. In addition, educators provided a document containing a list of Achieve 3000 articles used during instruction. This document also contained a listing of the literacy strategies covered by each article. Reviewing or examining the district's literacy curriculum and strategies scheduled for the marking period uncovered that educators were able to align Achieve 3000 articles and skills. Reviewing this document allowed me to determine which specific skills were covered and which articles were used to deliver the instruction. Based on answers to interview questions, educators shared their feelings about the integration of the Achieve 3000 program into instruction and communicated overwhelmingly their desire for assistance when utilizing the program. Educators also shared their need for guidance when working with students who struggle with reading comprehension and requested assistance from the district. Educators communicated their belief that the reading specialist can provide this help. They felt that they were not prepared to work with struggling students along with students at other literacy levels.

Triangulation of Data

Triangulation of data involves the gathering of information from open-ended questions posed during Zoom and phone interviews, Achieve 3000 data, and field notes gathered. Gathering data from different sources and methods augments the credibility, reliability, and validity of the study (Yin, 2014). Answers to open-ended questions through Zoom or phone interviews, field notes collected during Zoom interviews, and

Achieve 3000 data ensured triangulation of data by establishing commonalities for emerging patterns as well as confirming the findings of my study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Reviewing the list of articles shared with students based on grade level, the skills covered by each article, and the district's literacy curriculum, allowed for the connection between answers to interview questions and the data shared regarding the Achieve 3000. These connections were required for valid findings. During the development of research questions and data collection protocol for Zoom or phone interviews and Achieve 3000 data, I engaged with three peers with advanced educational degrees in Language Arts to review all instruments. I asked these professionals to view the articles and the literacy strategies covered by each article. I asked them to determine if there were any deficiencies in the utilization of the program and the articles employed for instructional purposes. They deemed that educators covered the required literacy skills as prescribed by the district's curriculum. These individuals were also asked to review the wording of questions, determine there were no biases in questioning, verify research question alignment, and assert an appropriate participant pool was utilized in the study. The purpose of these steps was to gather feedback and potentially revise and improve all instruments, which would further strengthen the data collected (Yin, 2014).

Member Checking

Stahl and King (2020) believed that credibility of data includes sharing, including, and discussing varying data and claimed that comprehending inconsistencies in data and data sources to be illuminative and important within research. For the purpose of member-checking, each participant was emailed a transcript of their responses and

invited to review for accuracy of responses and confirm within a two-week period (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This provided enough time for participants to verify the findings were accurate. After three weeks, I contacted two participants who had not confirmed the accuracy of my findings and asked for verification. Both participants confirmed accuracy of transcriptions within a three-day timeframe.

During member checking, each participant received a draft of the findings to their personal emails of the interview questions for review and accuracy (Creswell, 2014). Prior to each interview, I shared that I would send a transcription of the interview, as well as the findings. The transcript from each interview was shared approximately 2 weeks after the interviews. A second document that contained notes taken during interviews, along with my analysis of answers to interview questions, was shared with all participants approximately 3 to 6 weeks after the interview for another review (member checking). Based on the responses from all participants, the information and interpretations shared in the transcripts were accurate.

Discrepant Cases

Yin (2017) believed that it was valuable to make comparisons between sources and data continuously and watch for negative or discrepant data. Discrepant data are data that contain contradictions or inconsistencies in information gathered from data sources (Yin, 2017). After analyzing the responses to open-ended interviews questions, two discrepant cases were revealed. All 10 participants were asked what support they needed to stay motivated when teaching struggling readers. Two of the 10 expressed that they did not need any additional support. These two teachers felt they were prepared and had

everything they needed. Based on their statements, they did not want or need additional support while others felt additional support was needed. These discrepant cases will not affect the findings of my study. Since most felt that they would like to be provided with more PD to help struggling readers, further discussion about the need will be discussed.

Trustworthiness and Credibility

Yin (2015) examined the importance of trustworthiness and credibility in qualitative research and suggested that a recommendation be given to researchers that constructing transparency and adherence to evidence be noted in research. Based on Yin's (2015) beliefs, research procedures and all data will be made available to all participants, peers, and my doctoral committee for review at any time. Transparency was accomplished by sharing individual responses to questions from Zoom or phone interviews, in an emailed document containing the answers to seven open-ended questions. These emailed documents allowed each participant to review my findings and further allowed for verification of my results. Considering a methodical approach for the research process was important to establish an arduously organized study. To avoid any biases, I developed a systematic approach which required consistent self-reflection. I created a research journal to help with reflection as ideas and thoughts that emerged during the process. Detailed data were collected and tested for consistency from a variety of sources. The data were used to draw conclusions. Saturation was established after observing duplication of themes while analyzing the data.

Findings

Data for this study focused on the perspective of educators in third, fourth and fifth grades as they relate to working with students who continue to struggle with reading comprehension. I wanted to understand the perspective of teachers regarding the role confidence and motivation play when working with struggling readers while integrating the district's literacy curriculum. In addition, since the district purchased a license for the Achieve 3000 program, determining teacher beliefs and confidence when integrating this program into instruction was important. Asking participants the same seven open-ended questions during Zoom or phone interviews and collecting Achieve 3000 data provided insight on teacher beliefs regarding knowledge and motivation for my project study. Educators felt the Achieve 3000 program provided them with articles that aligned with the district's curriculum, which was helpful. In addition, the program also provides articles at the varying reading levels of all students, both gifted and struggling. Viewing the Achieve information shared, it was evident that educators used the program and assigned articles that aligned with the district's curriculum for one marking period. The collection of these data allowed me to discover teachers' perspectives regarding motivation and knowledge when working with struggling readers. Many educators felt that they were knowledgeable in choosing materials and methods but often felt unprepared or overwhelmed when working with readers who continued to struggle. Others felt that motivation waivered when working with struggling readers since there was little to no increase in reading comprehension skills based on assessments. Educators felt that while the district provides PD, it is focused on technology. Educators in third,

fourth, and fifth grade felt that PD designed to help teachers working with struggling readers was overlooked and needed. Quotes supporting themes have been shared in this section. Table 2 is an overview of responses to the research questions shared by educators regarding their beliefs of what role knowledge and motivation play when working with struggling readers. Below are some important findings related to the two research questions asked of participants. Table 2 provides a summary of the findings and includes key themes.

Table 2*Research Findings*

Research Questions	RQ1: How do the elementary teachers in Grades 3 to Grade 5 at Maplebrook perceive their knowledge of teaching reading comprehension skills that align with the district's curriculum with students who continue to struggle in the literacy classroom?	RQ2: How do the elementary teachers in Grades 3 to Grade 5 at Maplebrook perceive their motivation when teaching reading comprehension skills that align with the district's curriculum with struggling reading students?
Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Positive beliefs about knowledge -Comfortable teaching struggling readers -Need assistance with developing lessons when working with struggling readers -Curriculum requirements -Colleague collaboration -Need Professional Development designed to help educators with struggling readers -Collaborate with reading specialist -Collaborate with colleagues -Time consuming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Motivation lacking -Overwhelming at times -Time consuming -Assistance needed -Professional Development needed -Collaborate with reading specialist -Collaborate with colleagues

Table 2 provides details on the overarching themes uncovered during my interviews with participants. Based on the answers to the open-ended questions, educators in third, fourth, and fifth grade had common responses. The one common theme expressed by all was time. Time for collaboration with colleagues and reading specialist was important to participants since this provides opportunities to gain new knowledge and feel more confident when teaching literacy to struggling students. The answers to open-ended questions by educators who participated in this study were supported by the theoretical framework. Bandura's theory of self-efficacy was visible in that educators understood the role that knowledge and motivation played when working with struggling readers. A priori coding was used based on the theoretical framework, personal schema, or interview questions and assisted in creating beginning codes. Initial codes were based on the beginning codes that were developed prior to collecting data. Open coding was used to break down the data into distinct parts to determine similarities. Open coding helped define and develop categories based on their likenesses and differences. Axial coding was used to identify categories and themes, represent data, and interpret the results. Connections between codes were determined and overarching themes were developed. Emerging codes were set up and continued until saturation of data was reached and no new themes emerged from the data. Emerging themes were inductively created based on the data collected in qualitative research. The Atlas.ti software program helped consolidate the data and field. The program assisted in analyzing this large quantity of textual data shared by educators.

Based on the information shared during one-on-one interviews, seven of the ten participants stated that it was important for the district to provide assistance when working with students who were struggling with reading comprehension. Participant H stated “Working with students who continue to struggle makes me feel incompetent. I wish I could get additional help.” Six participants expressed that they were overwhelmed due to the demands made by district. While the district had a prescribed curriculum to follow for each marking period, eight of the ten felt that they were teaching to the quarterly assessment developed by the district to gather data on student growth. The district administers assessments each marking period that aligns with the curriculum. It was felt by participants that they had to concentrate on assuring students did well on these assessments rather than on making sure students were getting the instruction needed. These same educators stated that since some of the articles used in the assessments covered material or topics students were not exposed to, it was necessary to search and supplement instruction with self-selected articles that would provide schema to students prior to administering district testing. Participant D stated, “Some of the articles are about topics the students have never studied. I find it necessary to develop schema prior to assessments, especially for struggling readers.” For this reason, educators felt they spent too much time searching for materials that should be provided by the district. Eight of the participants felt they were judged based on the outcomes of the assessments and students needed to excel to prove their competence. These participants felt they could not focus primarily on the needs of struggling readers. Participant J stated, “At times I feel so much of my time is focused on teaching the prescribed skills and I just

don't have the times needed to work with students who need so much help." Participant E stated, "I would like to have additional materials to share with those who get it while I work with those who do not." Seven of the ten participants felt additional PD was needed to help with integrating the Achieve 3000 program. Participant B stated, "While the district offers PD opportunities, it is not focused on struggling readers. PD opportunities targeting skills and strategies to utilize with struggling students is definitely needed." PD could include experts modeling lessons designed to help struggling readers by integrating the program into instruction as well as providing additional materials to integrate into lessons. Nine of the ten participants felt it was extremely important to create PLCs within each grade. Participant F stated, "I would love time to work with those on my grade level to get new ideas. Unfortunately, we do not seem to have time to do this." Participant G stated, "It would a huge benefit to have the reading specialist be a part of grade level PLCs to also help develop lessons that target struggling readers. These communities would create a forum for educators to meet and share ideas on how to help all students, including those who struggle with reading comprehension.

The emerging themes confirmed the varied perspectives of participants as they relate to knowledge and motivation when working with struggling readers. Emerging themes indicated that the participants understood the need to work with struggling readers. Based on the findings, most participants were confident in their abilities to work with struggling readers but needed additional help from the district when students continue to struggle. Participants overwhelmingly felt that when the district shared the curriculum requirements for literacy, additional proven tools and strategies should be

shared as a protocol. While the district purchased a license for the Achieve 3000 Program, educators were left to find additional lessons and materials to use for instructional purposes. Educators also needed to create assessments to determine student proficiencies on each skill taught. Having to gather or create materials that will aid students who were struggling readers was time consuming. Educators in third, fourth, and fifth grades requested scheduled time with the reading specialist to assist in developing and sharing proven strategies to help with struggling readers. While some opportunities existed to do this, most felt that additional scheduled times were necessary to address the needs of all students.

Quotes supporting themes have been shared in this section and provided varied perspectives regarding the role knowledge and motivation play when working with students struggling with reading comprehension. Emerging themes indicated the need for collaboration with colleagues as well as the need for additional PD. Educators in third, fourth, and fifth grades were very cooperative and open discussing their knowledge and motivation when working with students who continued to struggle. While educators had a positive attitude regarding working with all students, it was evident that they were open to additional PD as well as the creation of PLCs. Participant A stated, “I become overwhelmed at times due to lack of student progress. It would be helpful to have the reading specialist push into classrooms and help struggling students.” If they were available during literacy instruction periods, having her work with struggling students in a small group during this time would be so helpful.

Research Questions

RQ1: How do the elementary teachers in Grades 3 to Grade 5 at Maplebrook perceive their knowledge of teaching reading comprehension skills that align with the district's curriculum with students who continue to struggle in the literacy classroom?

Data collected from one-on-one interviews and field notes were the primary source for the findings to this research question. The perspective of participants regarding individual knowledge for teaching reading comprehension that aligns with the district's curriculum for struggling readers' uncovered key themes of *Need for Professional Development*, and the *Need for the Creation of PLCs*. Other themes such as the *Need for Reading Specialist's Collaboration* and *Lack of Collaboration Time* emerged. Educators expressed the need for assistance in classrooms with students at varying levels of comprehension.

Through my research, it was uncovered that no matter how confident a teacher felt, eight of ten participants welcomed assistance in the classroom setting to help with struggling readers. Participant B stated, "It would be so helpful if the reading specialist could come into the classroom and we could work together. This would be a great learning experience for me." Seven of the ten educators felt they were knowledgeable when choosing reading strategies to help struggling readers but were still concerned since there are one or two students who just do not get it. Participant I stated, "Having the opportunity to participate in professional development was so important when working with struggling students. I have to work with students at varying levels of comprehension, and this is tricky. Some suggestions or help to do this is welcomed."

While some educators believed they need help, others felt they do not get the help needed. Participant E stated, “I attend district provided or mandated professional development, and I do not feel I get anything out of it. Many of the offerings do not cover my questions or needs. I need suggestions to help my struggling readers.” Out of the ten educators interviewed for my research, all felt that PD was very important. Participant J stated, “I am all for, and really embrace, professional development.” Participant C stated, “I welcome professional development, but most of it is technology based. I want professional development that will help me help struggling readers.” Seven out of ten educators shared that they increased their knowledge when the district brought in a specialist for the Achieve 3000 Program. Participant C stated, “I find it so helpful when someone from Achieve 3000 comes in and provides professional development. I always look forward to these sessions.” Participant B stated, “I would like to see a lesson geared toward the struggling reader.” Participant J shared, “I am confident in my ability to use the Achieve 3000 Program and find it has become easier over the years to navigate. It was helpful to learn new things about the program. I would still, however, like to see lessons geared toward struggling readers.” Educators wanted to help all students succeed and would like additional PD to accomplish this goal but felt PD did not focus on students struggling with reading comprehension.

Out of the 10 teachers interviewed for my research, eight felt that PLCs were needed on their grade level. Participant G stated, “When I had a student who was struggling and I just can’t seem to help, working with my colleagues was a benefit. They can share strategies that had worked for them.” The creation of PLCs provides an

opportunity for educators to meet with peers and discuss issues within their literacy classroom. Participant C stated, “Working with other educators can be beneficial. At times I feel I am all alone and there was no help. I find myself looking for new strategies.” One educator felt that while teaching a lesson utilizing a variety of materials and approaches, one or two students were not successful. Participant B stated, “No matter what I do, there is always that one student who just doesn’t get it. It becomes very frustrating since I feel I am on my own.” Having a PLC formed with colleagues would provide educators with another resource to both gather and share ideas.

Based on answers to one-on-one interview questions, educators shared their desire to work with the reading specialist. Educators appreciate the opportunity to meet and ask questions, as well as gather valuable information to be used in the literacy classroom. While all felt they were knowledgeable of different reading strategies, eight admitted that they felt a little uncertain at times, especially when working with struggling readers. Educators felt they worked hard to help struggling readers increase comprehension skills. Participant A stated, “I had the ability to assess students’ abilities and determine what strategies should be integrated into instruction to provide assistance.” Participant B stated, “I work with students are varying levels of comprehension, and I use a variety of strategies. At times there were just one or two students who continue to struggle. At times like this I would love to have the reading specialist provide assistance.” One educator in third grade did not feel totally confident in her ability since she felt it was difficult to choose the right literacy strategies since each student responds differently to instruction and practices. Participant G stated, “There are times that one student just doesn’t get it,

and I have to continue to research and discover something else to try.” Educators welcome the opportunity to work with the reading specialist and ask for guidance, or suggestions. In addition, nine participants thought it would be beneficial to have someone model lessons that incorporate proven strategies. Having the reading specialist available to assist in classrooms and work with students who struggle would be beneficial for the struggling student. This would allow the struggling student to meet with an expert in the field and work with these students in a small group allowing for more individual time.

Educators also shared their belief that they did not have enough time to work with colleagues and share lessons and ideas on teaching literacy lessons. Eight out of the ten educators expressed their beliefs that time was a huge issue. They felt it was important to schedule time to meet on a weekly basis with colleagues. Participant A stated, “We or I need time to meet with colleagues to get their input. I am teaching a lesson and am not confident in what I am doing since there are students who continue to struggle. I need someone to talk to about my lesson.” Since lack of time was a major issue with so many teachers in third to fifth grades, the overall consensus was that time to meet with colleagues was important to help educators develop lessons that integrated proven strategies to help struggling readers. Educators in these grades also welcomed the opportunity to see the reading specialist model a lesson that targets the struggling reader.

Based on the answers shared regarding knowledge teachers possess regarding reading comprehension skills aligning with the district’s curriculum, 3 participants in third grade, 3 participants in fourth grade, and 3 participants in fifth grade shared that they were confident in their ability to choose the right literacy strategies to help

struggling readers. Based on the findings of my study, PD was created as my project. Educators will be provided training and resources to use with a variety of students at varying levels of instruction. The reading specialist will be invited to participate in PD sessions to model and share best practices to educators in third, fourth, and fifth grades.

While seven participants were confident in their knowledge to work with students who continue to struggle with reading comprehension, one participant was not as confident due to her inexperience teaching literacy. This participant believed assistance was needed from the district. Participant A stated, "I follow the district's curriculum and use the resources shared, but still feel I need more experience and help." Those seven who were confident in their knowledge to work with struggling readers were still requesting additional assistance from the district. Participant H stated, "I am always open to additional help when teaching literacy. Someone may have the potential of sharing something new." Others felt that while the district did invest in programs such as Achieve 3000, it was insufficient in its offerings and additional instruction materials were needed. The program provides instructional materials with non-fiction articles but does not offer much in the form of fictional articles. Since the district's curriculum consists of both genres, additional tools are requested by educators. PD opportunities, as well as creating PLCs, will provide additional time for educators and the reading specialist to share ways to integrate the Achieve 3000 program successfully into instruction, thereby increasing the knowledge of all educators. Not only will the educators benefit, but students will benefit since educators are exposed to a variety of skills and strategies. When educators are knowledgeable, they have the skills needed to help struggling students.

RQ2: How do the elementary teachers in grades 3 to grade 5 at Maplebook perceive their motivation when teaching reading comprehension skills that align with the district's curriculum with struggling reading students?

Data collected from one-on-one interviews and field notes were the primary sources for the findings to answer research Question 2. The perspective of participants regarding motivation for teaching reading the comprehension skills that align with the district's curriculum uncovered the key themes of Need for PD and Need for the Creation of PLCs. Other themes such as the Need for Reading Specialists' Collaboration and Lack of Collaboration Time emerged. Educators expressed the need for assistance in classrooms with students at varying levels of comprehension. Based on the answers provided by participants regarding motivation when working with struggling readers, I uncovered educators had different methods or intrinsic feelings to keep themselves motivated. It was stated,

I stay motivated working with my struggling readers and see the progress that they make with their Achieve articles. Seeing my students who were struggling begin the get it helps keep me motivated and continue to work with other students.

Developing opportunities for PD will provide teachers with opportunities to learn new strategies to integrate into instruction. Even though educators were finding ways to stay motivated when utilizing the Achieve 3000 program while working with struggling readers, during PD sessions educators have the opportunity to meet with program experts who had unlimited knowledge. These presenters can share new details about the program.

Presenters from Achieve can also share ideas on how lessons should be organized.

Participant C stated, “I find it beneficial to watch the presenter share how to deliver an effective lesson utilizing all the components of the Achieve Program. It motivates me to want to utilize the program more for instructional purposes.” PD sessions can provide an opportunity for the reading specialist to meet with educators at each grade level during pre-determined times and share strategies and resources, as well as answer any questions educators had about struggling readers. While educators continuously try to help struggling readers, their motivation can diminish since some learners continue to struggle no matter what steps are taken. Participant D stated, “When creating and teaching lessons, I make sure to use different modalities to work with students. Even though I do this, there are always one or two students who cannot grasp the new skill. I feel defeated.” Participants in third, fourth, and fifth grade shared that they would like PD offerings from the district with both the reading specialist and Achieve presenters. Participant F stated, “The district offers after school PD, but it is technology based. While technology is a part of the classroom environment, I would like to see offerings that align with the district’s literacy curriculum offered as well.” They understand the need to help struggling readers but admit additional assistance was needed and welcomed. Again, educators expressed the need for lessons modeled by the reading specialist and Achieve presenters.

Participants felt it was important to develop PLCs on each grade level. Having the opportunity to meet and speak with peers was one of the most common statements made by participants. Participant E stated, “I welcome the opportunity to meet with the teachers

on my grade level. This gives me the opportunity to share both successes and failure. It also provides an opportunity for me to ask for help.” By meeting with grade level teachers, the prospect arose to speak with colleagues who were teaching the same skills at the same levels and provided the opportunity to increase individual motivation and knowledge. Seven of the participants felt more motivated to go back to the classroom and try something shared by colleagues who had worked with struggling readers. Participant J stated, “My grade level peers are so upbeat and willing to share. It was contagious, and I can’t wait to continue working with my struggling students. I had new hope.”

The results from my research showed that seven participants remained motivated when working with students who continued to struggle with reading comprehension. Participant A stated, “With new programs being implemented, I am always motivated to utilize them and choose the right strategies for each student.” Two participants felt defeated at times when working with students who continue to struggle. Participant E stated, “I try and try and try but at times do not feel that I am making any progress with a few students. At times it was difficult to not give up.” Having additional options to choose from provides more choices to teachers. Seven educators felt motivated after meeting with colleagues and sharing strategies and practices that worked well with other struggling students. These meetings provided opportunities to answer questions and share additional tools for the classroom. Nine of the ten participants felt that collaborating with colleagues was motivating since they shared strategies that worked with students while using the Achieve 3000 Program. Since time was minimal, other educators continued to research independently to find answers to their problems. Those that continued to look

for new ways of teaching literacy have become overwhelmed with all that is available and are unsure which practices to choose. Having the opportunity to meet with peers will provide a forum to meet and share new ideas and ask for assistance.

When questioned, participants also felt that having the reading specialist meet and share ideas based on students' individual needs provides a much-needed support and motivation to continue working with struggling readers. Participant D stated, "When I work with the reading specialist I feel like I am getting great advice. She is sharing proven strategies, which motivates me. My research also uncovered that most educators reached out for the reading specialist or spoke with colleagues to help with motivation. Participant B stated, "It also motivates me by speaking to colleagues, such as my grade level, and the reading specialist to hear a different perspective and receive other strategies or resources. It motivates me to try new things that my colleagues suggest."

Nine of the ten participants in the study voiced their opinions that the biggest issue when working with students who continued to struggle with reading comprehension was lack of time. One educator stated, "With all the demands made in the educational field, there was never enough time to do everything I want. Working on lesson plans and developing lessons that are creative and hold the attention of students, takes so much time." While interviewing all the participants, Participant F expressed her feeling that there were only 24 hours in a day and 7 hours in the school day, and there was just not enough time to do it all. This participant stated, "While I can control most of the factors in my life, I cannot control the fact that there was not enough time in a day." She went on to say, "I would like to see the district carve out time for collaboration, not just with my

grade, but across the grades.” All three grades tried to meet weekly or periodically to work together but don’t feel it was enough. Eight of the ten participants wanted additional time scheduled by the district so they can meet, collaborate, plan, and share ideas. While they met at times, the participants did not feel they were given enough time to collaborate. Participant C stated, “While we meet as a grade level whenever we can, there was just not enough time in a day or week,” A third grade participant believed, “We all had families outside of school, which makes it even more difficult to meet. Some had to rush out for family commitments.” Time to collaborate with colleagues was an issue due to the demands of the job and the personal commitments of most. During these interviews, educators expressed their desire for additional collaboration time to be scheduled.

Table 3 shares comments made by participants on their beliefs of knowledge and motivation when working with struggling readers. These comments provide insight into the beliefs of participants.

Table 3*Perceived Knowledge and Motivation*

Educators are confident in their ability to work with struggling readers.

Educators are overwhelmed by the number of strategies and are not confident when choosing the best practices.

Educators are motivated when working with struggling readers.

Educators can lose motivation when working with students who continue to struggle. They continue to try many different practices without success.

Educators were comfortable when sharing their beliefs regarding knowledge and motivation.

Educators feel working with the reading specialist and colleagues are valuable and provide important connections.

The Achieve 3000 Program provides non-fiction articles and makes it easy to choose articles that align with the strategies needing additional attention or coverage with struggling readers.

Educators are motivated to choose articles of interest from Achieve 3000 that align with the district's curriculum and at the reading level of struggling readers.

Educators are confident in their knowledge to choose articles from Achieve 3000 that align with the district's curriculum and at the reading level of struggling readers.

Educators in third, fourth, and fifth grade were confident in their knowledge when teaching literacy. They found it beneficial to have had the opportunity to share ideas and beliefs with colleagues and reading specialist. Participants shared that the Achieve 3000 program was very helpful since it consisted of articles based on lexile level and was skill based. Participants were confident when utilizing this program since all articles are leveled and available for all reading levels.

Bandura (1993) stated that individual self-efficacy affected the level of security people had in themselves. It was evident that a teacher's level of security or comfort of choosing and integrating varying literacy strategies into instruction was impacted by knowledge and motivation. By developing and offering PD opportunities, formation of PLCs, scheduled sessions with the reading specialist, as well as time to collaborate with colleagues, educators will have the opportunity to share and integrate appropriate strategies, tools, and practices to help struggling readers. Overall, educators expressed their frustration with lack of time to meet and collaborate with reading specialist and peers.

Interview Discussions

Utilizing the interview protocol in determining how confident and motivated educators felt was insightful. At the beginning of the interviews, educators were positive and shared how confident and motivated they were when working with students who continued to struggle with reading comprehension skills. Moving into the interviews, educators became more comfortable and began to share insightful information. While many of the educators continued to state that they were confident and motivated, others shared how overwhelmed they become when working through the demands of the district's curriculum. These educators felt so much was on their plates, and they were left with the task of researching and finding tools to integrate into instruction that were proven to help struggling readers. While PD was offered by the district, most felt that the offerings were not on topics needed to help struggling students. Most of the PD offered is related to technology. Much of their time was spent through trial-and-error finding

materials to integrate into instruction. All did find value in integrating PD and collaborating with colleagues. Table 4 provides a list of educators' needs shared during our one-on-one interview sessions.

Table 4

Needs of Educators

Educators are confident in their ability to work with struggling readers but would welcome additional assistance from the district in the form of proven tools.

Educators would welcome PD with proven strategies, tools, and practices to help with struggling readers at varying levels.

District provided materials that align with the literacy curriculum would be welcomed.

Educators requested planning time with grade level teams to collaborate and share proven practices, strategies, and tools that worked well with struggling readers.

Develop Professional Learning Communities with grade level educators to share proven practices and strategies.

Schedule additional time to observe lessons that incorporate the Achieve 3000 articles into literacy instruction with both district staff and Achieve personnel.

Schedule additional time with the reading specialist to help when working with students who continue to struggle.

Participants in the study expressed the need for additional time for planning, meeting with colleagues, meeting with the reading specialist, and PD. Educators felt overwhelmed due to all the demands placed on them as educators. Participants wanted scheduled time to meet with colleagues, create PLCs, schedule PD, and reading specialists. Participants felt that having scheduled opportunities to learn new practices and share ideas would be beneficial.

Validation of Findings

According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research is interpretive, as well as being influenced by the researcher. The researcher's beliefs and background can influence the way findings are interpreted and validity and credibility of the research findings must be safeguarded. Through triangulation of data, member checking, and auditing, validity and credibility can be protected. Member-checking was accomplished by sharing a copy of Zoom or phone transcripts with each participant. Each participant shared that the interpretations were accurate. Triangulation of data was accomplished by interviewing and collecting data from educators in third, fourth, and fifth grades. In addition, data were collected based on field notes collected during both Zoom and phone interviews measuring body language and intonation of participants to questions. All data will be examined by a reading specialist not affiliated with my research to help determine if the results shared were grounded in the data, if biases were eliminated, if appropriate themes were identified, and if the strategies used confirmed the credibility of the findings of my research (Creswell, 2014). These checks are crucial in confirming the evidence of the credibility and accuracy of this research study.

Assumptions

Prior to the collection of data, some assumptions existed regarding this study. The first assumption that existed was that all teachers in third, fourth, and fifth grades would be willing to partake in this research study. The resulting conjecture prior to the data collection component of this research study was that the volunteers in Maplebrook Elementary who participate would provide invaluable information regarding their

perceptions of self-efficacy as it relates to knowledge and motivation to integrate research-based practices into instruction when implementing the district's reading curriculum while working with struggling readers. In addition, the belief that all educators would share details regarding the support needed from the district to potential help increase their knowledge and motivation allowing for more effective instruction was another assumption. Another assumption was that everyone would provide valuable details regarding the role knowledge and motivation play when working with struggling readers, and it would be shared through PD.

Conclusion

By utilizing a qualitative descriptive case study approach, I was able to determine the self-efficacy of educators in third, fourth, and fifth grades on their knowledge and motivation to integrate research-based practices into instruction when implementing the district's reading curriculum while working with students who continue to struggle with reading comprehension. Teachers shared their perception of what is needed while working with struggling readers. Participants stated that the district did provide PD, but it was technology based and wanted PD geared towards helping struggling readers. I gained approval from Maplebrook Elementary's Superintendent to access potential participants to ask open-ended questions during Zoom or phone interviews sharing the same seven open-ended questions and Achieve 3000 data from participants. These data collection documents provided insight into the self-efficacy of educators in the literacy classroom, as it relates to knowledge and motivation, to integrate research-based practices into instruction when working with students who continue to struggle with reading

comprehension when integrating the district's reading curriculum. I clearly explained to all participants that participation was on a voluntary basis and opting out at any point during the study was permitted. All responses to open-ended questions were analyzed in two phases. The first phase identified themes based on responses, and the second phase combined and compared themes to prepare for coding. Purposeful sampling was used to collect data from educators in various roles throughout the school. I acquired powerful insight from educators on their perceptions of how knowledge and motivation impacted their instruction when working with students struggling to become more proficient with reading comprehension. Information gathered from Zoom and phone interviews from the same seven open-ended questions and Achieve 3000 data regarding teacher's perspective concerning the role knowledge and motivation play when working with struggling students will be shared with educators. Educators shared their belief that additional assistance was needed when integrating the Achieve 3000 Program into instruction. While they felt the program was effective, additional assistance in the creation of lessons integrating the program was needed, especially when working with struggling readers. Some educators were confident in their abilities to work with struggling readers and the Achieve 3000 Program due to its design, but believed that additional PD was needed to make sure it was being used optimally. Participants expressed their concern that the district did not offer PD designed to help with struggling readers. Most PD focused on technology. Section 3 consists of detailed elements of the project, a second literature review that aligns with the project, and details for sharing a presentation of the results.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to understand the perspective of educators in third, fourth, and fifth grades as it relates to the role their knowledge and motivation play when working with students who continue to struggle with reading comprehension. To achieve this goal, I used a qualitative case study to gather insight into the perspective of teachers in third, fourth, and fifth grades about how prepared they were when working with struggling students as well as what they needed from the district to help better prepare them. The qualitative case study proved to be instrumental in highlighting how important teachers felt it was to be knowledgeable and motivated when working with students who struggle with reading comprehension. In addition, educators placed value on identifying the needs of all students, as well as the importance for the literacy curriculum department to provide additional resources specifically designed for struggling readers. Based on information gathered from educators in third, fourth, and fifth grades, most educators felt that the Achieve 3000 Program was a valuable tool when working with students who struggled with reading comprehension because articles can be chosen that focus on specific skills such as comparing and contrasting, inferring, or problem and solutions. Unfortunately, I was unable to gather field notes from all participants as was originally planned due to COVID19. Face-to-face, one-on-one interviews were not possible but Zoom meetings and phone interviews did allow me to collect some field notes. The data collected were thoroughly examined and the results analyzed and evaluated against recent research.

I had the opportunity to discuss the results of my study and share the conclusions with trustworthy colleagues and two elementary reading specialists. These individuals were not participants in my research project. Each offered feedback about the potential of future PD opportunities for educators in third, fourth, and fifth grades. These individuals were also consulted to reduce any research bias while developing the project.

The sections of this paper that follow provide a complete description of the project along with the goals and justification for each component of the project. A literature review that supports the project and the plans for potential implementation are also included. Potential resources, as well as existing supports required for implementation of the project were explored in this section. An outline for the implementation of a potential project was shared along with a schedule for execution.

Goals of the Project

After considering the best way to address the concerns of educators in third, fourth, and fifth grades, the project for my study offers PD and additional instructional resources for educators to help support struggling readers. While the district offers PD to educators, participants requested PD specifically targeting strategies, skills, and websites that are geared for struggling readers. The project consists of two parts. While the primary component is PD, assistance in creating PLCs for educators in third, fourth, and fifth grades is a part of the project as well.

One of the major comments made by educators was the need to have demonstration lessons sharing strategies for teaching reading comprehension to struggling readers. In addition, a need for lessons demonstrating the integration of the

Achieve3000 Program into instruction targeting struggling readers was also shared. By viewing demonstration lessons executed by another educator or an individual trained in the application of the Achieve 3000 Program and knowledgeable on the subject of reading strategies proven to help struggling readers would be beneficial in any literacy classroom. The main concern shared by participants was not having the time to research tools needed to work with and help struggling readers. By developing a shareable Google document containing recommendations for tools, strategies, and websites to consider for use would provide another tool for educators to choose the best strategies or tools to integrate into instruction when working with struggling readers.

Rationale

When determining which genre was suitable for the project, I considered many options. Developing an evaluation report, PD options, and a curriculum design were considered as potential projects. An option that aligned with my research questions on teacher perspectives as they relate to motivation and knowledge when working with struggling readers was needed. The purpose of this study, as well as the project, was to provide additional assistance to educators who work with struggling readers. Each genre was carefully considered.

An evaluation report was considered but did not fit the project. The goal of this study was to determine the type of support educators need in the literacy classroom in third, fourth, and fifth grades. The Maplebrook district has been using the Achieve 3000 Program for approximately 7 years and has indicators in place to check for use and effectiveness. An evaluation report was not appropriate for the project because I was not

evaluating a program but looking for the perspective of educators regarding knowledge and motivation when working with students who continue to struggle with reading comprehension.

A curriculum design was also considered for the project but did not fit the project goals. The district has a designed curriculum created for third, fourth, and fifth grades that is expected to be covered each marking period. In addition, common assessments were developed by the curriculum department and are given to students at the end of each marking period. The district creates and stands behind its curriculum design. The project was intended to address teachers' needs when integrating the district's curriculum into instruction and not to make changes to current district school policy.

The final genre considered was PD. I designed a PD in response to the data analysis that aligns with the district's culture and potential to reach other districts as well. Based on the school day and teachers' schedules, time for PD is often scheduled by the administration during teachers' preparation period. By scheduling times during preparation periods or scheduled in-service days, a teacher's schedule will not significantly change, which will make it possible for teachers to not have to work beyond the current contractual timeframe. Offering PD during the preparation period or scheduled in-service days is something that is commonly done, and contractually, educators can have one preparation period per week for this type of meeting. In-service days are also common in the district at various times throughout the school year.

The project will follow the school calendar with offerings on in-service days or on an as needed basis. At the end of each session, a questionnaire will be shared with

educators asking for an evaluation of that day's PD and what type of PD they would like to experience in the future. Based on the answers to the questionnaire, additional PD sessions will be scheduled monthly or during in-service days. Educators will have the opportunity to participate if there is an interest.

Providing PD during a preparation period or in-service day works well for elementary teachers because it will be provided at a convenient time. Many teachers at this level have small children and have child-care to consider. Providing PD after school may not work with their personal schedules. In addition, the opportunity arises to address the research questions and the needs shared.

Review of the Literature

To collect appropriate articles for the literature view, I referred to academic journals, peer-reviewed journals, educational journals, and textbooks available through Walden University. In addition, I used the databases provided by Walden University's online library. These databases included ERIC, Educational Research, ProQuest, and EBSCO. The phrases entered during this research included *teacher knowledge*, *teacher motivation*, *struggling readers*, *literacy strategies*, *professional development*, *professional learning communities*, and *teacher collaboration*.

The first literature review incorporated current research that pertained to understanding self-efficacy as it relates to a teacher's belief in knowledge and motivation to work with students who continue to struggle with reading comprehension in the educational setting. The research included relates to a teacher's knowledge and motivation when integrating the literacy curriculum in the classroom even after repeated

failures by students in third, fourth and fifth grades. Literature and research support the need for PD to provide educators with the knowledge and motivation required to work with students who continue to struggle with reading comprehension (Martin et al., 2017).

The literature review in Section 3 supports the data analysis process and the results of my study with current articles in the educational field. The reoccurring theme found during research was the importance of educators having content knowledge to be successful. Educators can acquire knowledge while developing motivation by school districts providing opportunities for PD. Darling-Hammond and DePaoli (2020) stated that it was crucial to improve PD to increase student achievement and educator quality. According to Pacchiano et al., (2016), educators who received appropriate PD were more effective when working with students at varying levels of comprehension. Educators afforded a minimum of 10 hours of PD outlining strategies to integrate instruction had more confidence in the classroom (Merga et al., 2020). Identifying the deficiencies in PD caused researchers to further study the elements of effective PD (De Simone, 2020).

History of Professional Development

A search of the literature indicated findings from mid-20th century to early 21st century. National attention on PD for educators began in the 1950s since school administrators wanted to close the existing gap between Soviet and American student achievement (Lieberman & Miller, 2009). In 1965, President Lyndon Johnson signed The Elementary and Secondary Education Act which authorized funds to go directly to PD for educators. Educators were perceived as needing additional training to close the gap. Staff development was established and is continued today as PD days or sessions. In the 1990s

researchers and policy makers shared the essential role educators' play in growing student achievement. In the mid-1990s, Little (1993) declared PD lacked intensity and failed to motivate teachers both emotionally and intellectually. U.S. researchers continued to research the elements of constructive PD (Schachter et al., 2019). Methods for keeping educators in the profession as well as maintaining motivation were needed.

Robinson (2019) believed one-time workshops or PD opportunities had little impact for change. In order for individuals to gain significant knowledge, they need the opportunity to try what had been learned as well as having time to discuss their new found knowledge with colleagues. Bautista and Ortega-Ruiz (2017) stated, "Effective PD needs to be intensive and sustained and involves significant number of contact hours over long periods of time." When educators were given a longer period of time to work on new strategies, a better understanding of content and pedagogies were conceivable.

Professional Development

According to Pacchiano et al., (2016) activities presented in a PD session must be effective to meet the needs of educators as well as providing opportunities for on-going collaboration among colleagues. Educators also should have a say in the development of PD opportunities (Martin et al., 2017). Schachter et al., (2019) believe that effective PD should incorporate five features: (1) content focus, (2) active learning, (3) coherence, (4) sustained duration, and (5) collective participation. Incorporating all five steps in a PD session provide the opportunity to share activities that align to any classroom. Pacchiano et al. (2016) believed designing an effective PD session is dependent on the effectiveness of the incorporated activities. When creating a session, the end result of improving

student learning should be considered (Dasoo & Muller, 2020). The first consideration when developing PD is the specific learning outcomes (Schachter et al., 2019).

PD in the area of best practices in literacy is a key component for helping teachers increase knowledge and motivation. Administration should consider offering in-service training that supports collaboration among colleagues. PD can be offered in personal learning communities and on-site PD. The most effective PD is job-embedded training and allows educators to grow professionally through collaboration with colleagues (Reed & Eyolfson, 2015). Job-embedded PD that focuses on content is more likely to increase teacher knowledge and successive teaching than one-time training. Derrington and Kirk (2017) examined the effect of job-embedded PD on elementary teachers' students' state test scores. According to Smilgiene and Masiliauskienė (2019), job-embedded PD piloted in the classroom allows teachers to integrate new practices with the likelihood to continue to use the newly acquired educational approaches. Utilizing the job-embedded approach, teachers can improve their professional knowledge, as well as the study of children's acquisition of knowledge.

According to Cavazos et al., (2018), it is best to integrate new learning during practice. PD promotes learning through exposure to new ideas and concepts (Ekinici & Acar, 2019). Educators have shared individual satisfaction with proposed PD opportunities. While PD is effective, educators should be provided with choices in the training they attend to choose training that is useful and appropriate for their needs (Ekinici & Acar, 2019).

My goal was to encourage the integration of both PD opportunities and PLCs at each grade level. These offerings provide opportunities for educators to collaborate and share feedback about topics to be covered in follow-up sessions (Phillips & Phillips, 2016). These two learning opportunities will be structured to meet the needs of educators at convenient times. Future sessions will be driven by the needs of all participants. Ekinci and Acar (2019) stated the participants of PD should have the opportunity to provide feedback on how to further support colleagues on a day-to-day basis. Evaluation information offers insight into learning processes of participants in the session (Darling-Hammond, 2014; Thompson et al., 2020). Analyzing the success of PD opportunities, as well as feedback from participants permits the facilitator to review results and prepare for future offerings to meet the needs of participants (Desimone & Garet, 2015; Phillips & Phillips, 2016; Thompson et al., 2020). Teachers must be equipped with the tools, as well as possess the knowledge and motivation needed when working with students who continue to struggle with reading comprehension. Providing opportunities to gather needed knowledge to use when working with struggling students is vital in the educational setting.

Professional Learning Communities

PLCs are growing in popularity in many school districts across the continent. When developing a PLC within the school, social and human commitments are needed from all participants (Gray & Summers., 2016). To create successful PLC commitments with participants, openness to improvement, respect, shared knowledge, a sense of efficacy, and support from administration must be included (Gray & Summers, 2016). A

positive culture where educators willingly work together to construct opportunities for student learning is necessary. The path to developing an effective learning community means educators are dedicated to the task of learning for all students with goals that lead to this endeavor (DuFour et al., 2016; Kramer & Schuhl, 2017).

Educators are more likely to be accountable for the achievements of each student when they work with colleagues collaboratively (Antinluoma et al., 2018; Da Fonte & Barton-Arwood, 2017; DuFour et al., 2016). To construct a collaborative and collective accountability for student achievement, researchers believe there are certain factors to consider: teacher empowerment, developing purposeful collaboration, precise feedback, and trust (Donohoo, 2017; DuFour et al., 2016). When educators have the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues, they increase their self-efficacy by gaining knowledge and skills required to meet the needs of each student (Darling-Hammond, 1996). Creating a safe collaborative learning community where educators learn from colleagues and take risks is a fundamental step in building a high-performing educational environment (Buffum et al., 2018; Donohoo, 2017; DuFour et al., 2016).

Buffum et al., (2018) stated, “Collaboration does not happen by invitation or chance; instead, frequent team time is embedded into the contractual day” (p. 12). It is a mutually dependent process that impacts teaching and learning in the educational setting (DuFour et al., 2016). Collaboration time that is focused on analyzing student work, creating assessments, scrutinizing standards, developing lesson, conveying proven practices, and analyzing data (Moore, 2018).

Both Donohoo (2017) and Buffum et al. (2018) shared research stating that educators who collaborate for the benefit of the students are in a position to realize success. Creating an environment that feels safe allows educators to take risk and develop a successful educational environment. Collaboration must be planned and embedded into the contractual day at a duration and time convenient for all. In addition, administration must be on board to creating this collaborative environment (Antinluoma et al., 2018; Gray & Summers., 2016).

The Project

The project (see Appendix A) will start with a step-by-step presentation to share the findings of this study to both administration and faculty members. The project aligns with the responses to research questions identified in the methodology section of this project study. To implement this project, a Google Slide presentation was developed and is ready to be shared with building administration and faculty members.

Implementation

Prospective Resources and Existent Support

There exist a few prospective resources and supports in place to help implement this project. First, I will meet with the reading specialist for assistance to help with my endeavor to develop and create PD for educators in third, fourth, and fifth grades. Since the reading specialist has access to data for each grade from both district created standardized assessments and the Achieve 3000 Program, valuable information will be collected to help with the development of PD by grade level. This data outlines the strategies in which students continue to struggle. Based on needs, PD will be developed

and offered. PD will be offered and scheduled during preparation periods or in-service days making it possible for all educators in third, fourth, and fifth grades to attend and participate.

The next offering for educators third, fourth, and fifth grades will be the implementation of PLCs by grade. To have a successful collaborative community, it is necessary to have buy-in by all. The goal is to have a few educators expressing an interest in leading PLCs for their grade levels. Everyone needs to be comfortable and willing to participate. I will engage the help of the reading specialist to work with each grade to develop a format for PLC. With the help of the reading specialist, each grade will determine how often they will meet and the format for each meeting. The reading specialist will be able to assist educators on each grade level to understand which strategies and skills the students need help. In addition, the reading specialist could assist educators in developing a strong collaborative group by working with educators in the beginning stages of their PLC. I will request that the reading specialist be available periodically to help and guide educators when working with students who continue to struggle with comprehension.

A Google Document containing a list of lessons incorporating proven strategies and website will be developed by educators and shared with educators in third, fourth, and fifth grades, This will be a living document and will be continuously shared and updated. Educators will be able to add a resource used successfully in their classroom. In addition, assistance and support by the reading specialist will be available during and after training. The undertaking of gathering proven practices that align with the district's

curriculum will be a group effort of teachers in third, fourth, and fifth grades. In addition, the reading specialist can meet with educators in third, fourth, and fifth grades and model lessons integrating these proven practices. Through consistent and constant feedback from my chairs at Walden University, ensuring the findings were accurate and supportive of the project was guaranteed.

Potential Barriers

Several possible obstacles that could prevent one or both modules of the project from happening exist. The first obstacle could be the perspectives and beliefs of administration and faculty members. The second obstacle that exists could be the willingness of educators to participate in PD and use the recommendations shared during these meetings. In addition willingness of educators to participate and create PLCs in third, fourth, and fifth grades is needed. Since the goal is to have the educators in each grade participate in both components of the project and integrate strategies and skills shared, if educators are unwilling to participate on one or both, this could be an obstacle towards success. The last obstacle that exists could be the lack of support from administration in allowing educators time during the contractual school day or in-service days to participate in either component of the project module. Since the goal of this project study is to offer support that educators' request or need, these obstacles must be addressed. Table 5 outlines the foreseen obstacles and possible suggestions.

Table 5*Recommendations, Potential Obstacles, and Solutions*

Recommendations	Anticipated	Solutions
Have the reading specialist work with educators in Grade 3, Grade 4, and Grade 5 to create PD based on the needs of struggling readers	Negative beliefs by faculty in the usefulness of PD offered and developed by the district	Provide proven strategies and training to help educators work with struggling readers in Grade 3, Grade 4, and Grade 5
Have the reading specialist work with educators in Grade 3, Grade 4, and Grade 5 to create a Professional Learning Community where sharing and collaboration are highlighted	Insufficient time during the school day for educators to collaborate	Make sure that educators in Grade 3, Grade 4, and Grade 5 are allotted the time during preparation period or in-service days to work together with the reading specialist to share

The recommendation to help educators focuses on the need for time. Based on answers to one-on-one interviews, educators requested additional time to meet and collaborate with colleagues, time to create PLCs and additional PD time. The biggest hurdle is lack of time. Time needs to be scheduled where and when educators have the time to meet.

Proposed Timetable for Implementation

Once approval is obtained for this Project Study, a meeting will be scheduled with administrators to determine the best timeframe to disclose the findings of my study. The implementation of the project will take place in several different stages. The first stage will be to meet with the reading specialist and begin to determine, based on data gathered from both standardized testing and Achieve 3000, the needs of students in third, fourth,

and fifth grades. Based on these needs of students, with the assistance of the reading specialist, PD sessions will be created to help educators by sharing proven practices. Once the sessions are designed, an email will be distributed with the appropriate grade levels to share the topic, time, and location for PD. The projected time to conclude these modules is over a 3-day period of in-service or grade level meetings.

The second component to my project will be the development and implementation of PLCs. Again, the implementation of the project will take place in several different stages. The first stage will be to meet with the reading specialist and request assistance to determine the steps needed to create successful grade level PLCs. Together, I will share with educators in the third, fourth, and fifth grades how collaborating improves both student achievement and teacher self-efficacy since new skills and knowledge will be shared during these meetings. Educators will learn from each other while developing a safe, collaborative setting. While the goal of PLCs is to empower teachers, one teacher will be the lead and all educators need to be active participants. At the beginning stages of the PLCs, the reading specialist will assist each grade level with the set-up of plans on how often to meet, how to determine the skills to be covered during these meetings, and the format for sharing successes. Once each grade is comfortable with its collaboration, the reading specialist will let the grades work together independently. If any grade feels they need assistance in the future, the reading specialist will step in and help. The projected time to conclude these modules is 3 months.

Role and Responsibility

My primary role and responsibility is to share the findings of this study with administrators in the building. My presentation will communicate the results of the study, as well as present suggestions for implementation of PD and PLCs. I will answer any questions or reservations addressed by administrators. Once the administrators agree to execute my suggestions presented during this presentation, I will let them know that I back this decision and will take a lead in the implementation of these suggestions. The next step after acceptance of my Project Study will be to contact the reading specialist to explain the project and the role the reading specialist will assume during implementation.

Project Evaluation

A vital step in the evaluation of the project is to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the project. Another important step of the project is to disseminate findings that inform the needs of stakeholders and steps to implement requested PD and PLCs. As PD and PLCs are developed and created, I will closely monitor both. I will ensure that the needs of all educators will be met, based on their responses to open-ended questions. This will be accomplished by observing the PD sessions and PLCs during their implementation periods and providing support as needed. Feedback from participants will be requested during a faculty meeting. While educators will be asked to fill out a questionnaire at the end of the PD expressing the effectiveness, educators will also be able to leave anonymous feedback by leaving a message in a suggestion box in the teachers' lounge. Index cards and pens will be left by the suggestion box making it convenient for educators to write an anonymous feedback as well as share suggestion or

comments to improve PD and PLCs. Providing the opportunity for anonymous feedback will lead to individuals sharing details they did not want to divulge in an open meeting. Feedback from faculty meetings and anonymous suggestions will provide details on my next steps. Nese, et. al. (2020) believed that obtaining feedback from stakeholders increases and builds trust for potential support and future offerings of PD.

The next steps will involve the need for additional PD topics or changes to the format of PLCs. Evaluation will be based on educator concerns and needs. Literacy supports will be based on the needs and concerns expressed by the educators. Hopefully, there will be positive outcomes as educators share their insights for working with students who continue to struggle with reading comprehension. As educators become more confident in both the PD offered by the district and the format of the PLCs, strategies and practices that align with student needs will emerge, allowing for student growth. With on-going PD and PLCs, educators may become more comfortable taking risks by integrating proven strategies. When educators are comfortable with their knowledge and abilities, students may become comfortable as well. The district may attain the desired benefit of positive growth in literacy for struggling readers. Educators who support these efforts may be evident during staff meetings as they share their positive experiences and the knowledge they have gained to work with struggling readers.

Implications for Social Change

This study has the potential for contributing to social change by supporting educators and administrators in identifying needs for guidance while working with

students who continue to struggle with reading comprehension. Through questioning, I have identified the frustration educators experience when working with struggling readers. Educators felt that much was required of them to help these students, but they also expressed that the district has not provided the support they need to help the struggling readers since most PD focuses on technology. The PD sessions will provide educators with the opportunity to work collaboratively so that they do not feel they are working alone. By engaging the reading as a support in the presentation of strategies that assist struggling readers, Kane and Rosenquist (2019) investigated how the use of content area specialists improved instructional practices. The results indicated that using specialists, such as a reading specialist, is the fastest form of support for teacher learning and changes in instructional implementation. Educators may find that they have a professional available with whom they can work to develop a more effective learning environment.

Implications for Local Community

This study addresses the needs of Maplebrook Elementary School educators by developing opportunities for educators in third, fourth, and fifth grade to share ideas on developing and creating PD and PLCs. The reading specialist will be able to establish and implement the same resources for kindergarten, first, and second grades, if so requested. Having the opportunity to implement these learning opportunities for educators at all grade levels will benefit the entire school. Students who struggle with reading comprehension in all grade levels may benefit with academic success. The potential exists to share the findings of this project study with the middle school within the district.

Implications Outside the Local Community

Although this study focused on concerns revealed by educators at Maplebrook Elementary School, the conclusions and implications are consistent with constructing a learning environment designed to assist educators when working with students who struggle with reading comprehension. For this reason, the conclusions and recommendations of this project can be shared with all educational communities including both middle and high school environments. In addition, the opportunity exists to share the importance of PD and PLCs with districts throughout the county or state.

Conclusion

In Section 3, details regarding the project study, a Google Presentation outlining concerns, beliefs shared by participants regarding the role knowledge and motivation play when working with struggling readers, and a plan that addresses the needs of educators in third, fourth, and fifth grades were shared. This section also includes suggestions on how to address the concerns of educators as well as potential obstacles to be contemplated. An extensive literature review supporting the importance of PD and PLCs were reviewed. Section 3 also contains the justification for the project, a proposed implementation schedule, and methods to evaluate the project. The implications for promoting social change through the consideration of educators' perspectives were described in this section. In the next section, I will present the strengths and limitations of the project. I will also share my reflections as a scholar, a project creator, and a practitioner.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

The purpose of my research project was to understand the perceptions of educators at Maplebrook Elementary as they pertain to the role knowledge and motivation play in the literacy classroom while working with struggling readers. The perspectives of educators in third, fourth, and fifth grades regarding strengths and weaknesses, as well as the support needed to gain knowledge and motivation when working with struggling readers, led to an understanding of how to proceed with PD and PLCs. Speaking with the participants taught me about the needs of educators when it comes to their desires to help struggling readers. The data gathered can be valuable to both educators and administrators because both groups have a goal of increasing the reading comprehension of all students as outlined in a district initiative. After evaluating the major components of my project, including its strengths and limitations, I share recommendations for continued research are shared.

Strengths of Project

This project provides several positive outcomes based on the information shared by participants in third, fourth, and fifth grades. It was evident that even though educators become overwhelmed at times when working with struggling readers, they are willing to participate in PD and PLCs to increase knowledge. Based on information shared during one-on-one interviews, teachers will welcome suggestions from colleagues because their opinions are valued. Al Otaiba et al. (2016) noted that when teachers participated in PD focusing on proven strategies, students demonstrated increases in reading comprehension.

This study may assist administrators and teachers with developing on-going collaborative PD that aligns with the district's curriculum and teachers' needs and helps struggling students. A strength of the project is the creation of a Google document that teachers in third, fourth, and fifth grades can share. This document will make it possible for teachers to view and copy successful lessons and websites to help develop creative and effective lessons. The design of the project, alignment with current research, and informative data collection from educators in third, fourth, and fifth grades who continue to work with students who struggle with reading comprehension are also strengths of this study. The openness and honesty of teachers answering open-ended questions made it easy to determine what changes are required to address the issue of students reading below grade level. The data were supported in the literature review included in Section 3. The components of the project are designed to focus on the concerns of all participants shared during our in-depth one-on-one interviews.

The project provides the opportunity for educators to meet the requirements of the district's curriculum by participating in PD, grade-level PLCs, and collaborating with colleagues by sharing ideas. The project addresses the need to share ideas and work together to help increase the integration of research-proven practices in the literacy classroom. Educators will have flexibility in the PD they choose based on individual interests or needs. PLCs will provide the opportunity for educators to share ideas and practices that have worked with all students in their classrooms. The reading specialist will be able to work with educators in a variety of manners creating specific PD to meet the needs of educators and work with each PLC to provide needed support (Polly et al.

2017). PD will be a continuing theme and can occur monthly or as needed. The PLCs can occur on a weekly basis so that educators keep abreast of the practices that colleagues are integrating into instruction based on the district's curriculum. The main strength of this project is that it may provide educators in third, fourth, and fifth grades the opportunity to increase knowledge and motivation when working with struggling readers by sharing what is working well for them.

Limitations of the Study

One limitation of the study is the need for teacher buy-in of the project to guarantee success (Guskey, 2017). Because teachers are overwhelmed with the need to meet the needs of students at varying levels and cover the curriculum, participating in PD and PLCs might be too much added pressure. Their inclination to participate is essential for a successful project (Guskey, 2017). Because the study was limited to only one elementary school, additional research may include how other elementary school teachers feel about PD and PLCs. It might be feasible to include middle school literacy teachers to determine their beliefs as well. By widening the scope of participants, a better perception of how educators at other levels feel about PD and PLCs may provide a better overview (Admiraal, et al. 2021)). Understanding how additional elementary school teachers and middle school teachers of literacy feel would provide another layer of information.

Potential Alternate Approach

The small number of participants in this study was the main limitation and makes it impossible to share the beliefs of all educators regarding the role knowledge and motivation play when working with struggling readers in third, fourth, and fifth grades

(Admiraal, et al. 2021). While participants from each grade were included, having all educators in third, fourth, and fifth grade participate would have provided additional strength to the study. Unfortunately, not all invitees chose to be part of the study. The findings of this study should encourage administrators in other schools and districts to determine the merit of the PD provided and how it aligns and meets the needs of staff at all grade levels. To address the limitation of PD offered by the district, administrators could instruct the reading specialist to attend staff meetings and lead discussions regarding literacy practices and goals. A second recommendation would be to have literacy curriculum heads lead PD sessions and share their expertise on proven practices. Additional research may highlight new methods for generating teamwork for each grade level.

The perspective of educators in third, fourth, and fifth grades regarding the role knowledge and motivation plays while working with students who continue to struggle with reading comprehension was the focus of my study. While educators' perspectives are valid and important, it is also important to understand the perspective of students in the literacy classroom because they are the ones learning new skills (Gaumer et al., 2017). In addition, understanding the beliefs of administrators is important when considering teamwork among staff and continuing to have a valued working environment. Using a qualitative case study for this research was best because it provided in-depth insight into the beliefs of educators.

Scholarship

The research experience showed me that there are numerous steps in the process, and these steps must be performed in an orderly fashion because they build off each other. As I was identifying my research problem, I went through many drafts and changes. Crafting research questions that aligned with my theoretical framework and determined the data collection route required many changes along the way. The methods employed for data collection were chosen because they provided the opportunity to collect rich data based on the research questions. Conducting research was a time-consuming and mind-numbing task requiring much investigation to answer my research questions. One discovery during this investigation was that while I developed open-ended research questions, other questions surfaced based on answers shared. In-depth discussions occurred because of these rich answers. As I met with each participant, I had to keep my opinions to myself and not interject into responses. I had to allow the participant to share views during these one-on-one interviews. During these interviews, I realized the importance of following procedures and not straying off task. The final realization during this process was the importance of organization. I had pages and pages of notes, as well as recordings taken during the one-on-one interviews. Developing an orderly system to manage all the notes and recordings was imperative for success.

Project Development and Evaluation

The design of my project commanded explicit modules for completion. It was necessary to clearly describe the project and its modules along with setting obtainable goals. Based on the nature of the project, a genre was chosen. Through data collection

and data analysis, the relationship to the project findings was revealed. Scholarly justification to connect the project to the problem was then ascertained. I performed a comprehensive literature review to gather recent research that supported the focus of the project. Choosing the needed resources for the project development proved to be educational. To accomplish this task, it was necessary to determine what practices and support for educators were in place as well as any possible obstacles that might exist. When developing the project, I kept in mind the schedules of educators. Consideration was given to the timetable required for execution of the modules of the project for each grade. The overall goal of my project was to implement a plan that would be beneficial to all educators in third, fourth, and fifth grades.

Leadership and Change

The doctoral program along with the project study provided an opportunity to address the need for PD and PLCs for educators. The role that knowledge and motivation play when working with students who continue to struggle was a topic on the minds of most educators. Blotnicky et al. (2015) believed that teacher s' self-efficacy leads to beneficial student outcomes. Uncovering ways to help educators is essential for the success of both educator and student. PD that aligns with teachers' needs is beneficial to all. I have volunteered to facilitate PD in the past and will consider leading in the future. During the process of developing my project study, I learned how educators were overwhelmed due to the demands placed on them every day. Providing supports that will help alleviate these feelings of being overwhelmed will make a difference and can result in positive student achievement in reading comprehension.

Analysis of Self as Scholar

During my time as a doctoral student, I must express that the process was challenging and, at times, overwhelming. During this process, I have learned much about scholarly writing. Teaching writing in the elementary setting did not help prepare me for this task. As I began the process, I discovered how little I knew about scholarly writing. Working through draft after draft would bring on moments of anxiousness. This was a daunting task, which I found must be worked on piece by piece. I discovered the importance of organization as well as time management. I found that there were times when I just could not work on my research project anymore and took a step back. I also found out that as a scholar it was okay to step back and refuel to continue. One of the most important things I learned as a scholar was that it can be done. I can finish and get my doctorate degree. I have benefited from this process in many ways and have learned much about myself and the process. I have also learned about the importance of not giving up. There are times I felt defeated and somehow found the strength to continue. I am very happy that I did.

Analysis of Self as Practitioner

As a practitioner, I have learned a variety of new skills. One of the most important skills I acquired was to let people speak first and listen intently. While completing one-on-one interviews with educators in third, fourth, and fifth grades, I found it was very important to sit back, listen closely, and allow each teacher to speak without interrupting. Allowing educators to answer each question completely, and then ask additional questions based on answers allowed me to gather valuable information. Also, during this

process, I communicated with my building administrator to share this project with educators. He was extremely helpful and interested in what I planned to do. I felt he would be a resource if needed. From this experience, I have increased my confidence as an educator and an individual. I listen to what people had to say and used this shared information to increase my knowledge and strengthen my practices professionally.

Analysis of Self as a Project Developer

Through the development of this project, I uncovered a feeling of anxiety that the educators in third, fourth, and fifth grades would not welcome or volunteer to participate in my research. I also understood that educators in the elementary setting worked even harder this school year due to the pandemic. I understood the general feeling of these educators and hoped that they would see the value in participating. I worked through my fears and continued to create a project that would benefit and meet the needs of educators. This project was designed to help educators teaching students who continue to struggle with reading comprehension by developing project components that would assist them in the literacy classroom. Based on my research, a project was developed that would meet the needs of educators both on a more formal structure, PD, and an informal structure, PLCs.

The Project's Potential Impact on Social Change

Literacy educators are responsible for making sure students are achieving success with reading comprehension and beyond. To do this, it is important that educators are provided with opportunities to participate in both PD and PLCs. Teachers all over the country were more apt to change to more effective instructional approaches when they

engaged in PD methods that influenced their beliefs about student learning practices (Polly et al. 2017). Administrators would be prudent to develop and share these opportunities with all educators to increase confidence and knowledge. Hur et al. (2015), Kleshman (2016), and Polly et al. (2017) stated that teacher confidence and beliefs influence student learning. PD and PLCs work across grade levels as well as content areas. The potential exists to create PD and PLCs not only by grade, but also by content areas. In addition, there exists the potential to increase teacher consciousness of the significance of developing PLCs on every grade level to support each other in the literacy classroom. PD and PLCs, if appropriately developed, could go beyond the elementary setting, and move into both middle and high schools. The opportunity also exists to increase awareness of PLCs outside the literacy classroom. Sharing with educators at all levels of education the successes of such an endeavor will help increase student achievement across the curriculum. These successes could be shared with other districts. Sharing the positive impact that PLCs have had on other educators and students at varying levels will provide much needed support. Educators in other districts, communities, or counties could benefit by their increase in knowledge and motivation gathered through effective PD and PLCs. In addition, students could reap the benefit of educators who are well informed regarding practices and strategies that are proven to help struggling students.

Implications, Applications, and Direction for Future Research

Since reading comprehension is one of the most important skills a child needs for success, the information shared in this research project is relevant. It is very important

that students develop strong comprehension skills in the early years of their elementary education. Children need to be able to read and comprehend while reading, use the internet, and communicate with others. Educators are held responsible for the successes of students in the learning environment. For children to be successful, educators must be both knowledgeable and motivated. One way to assist educators in increasing knowledge is by providing appropriate training. My project was designed to help educators increase knowledge by working with colleagues, as well as participate in appropriate PD. The educators in my study showed a desire to participate in PD, as well as create grade level PLCs. Additional research is needed that supports the value and importance of creating PLCs and working with colleagues to share ideas and practices that are proving to work in the individual classrooms. In addition, further research is needed to determine the benefits of PD in the educational setting.

Increases in student reading comprehension scores can be attained by best or proven practices which are identified by educators through PLCs. The recommendations made by educators can be shared and applied by other districts experiencing literacy issues. This study provided insight on ways to support educators, as well as potential methods to increase reading comprehension by integrating best or proven practices into instruction. The concept of successful classroom instruction was shared based on the suggestions and recommendations made by educators.

Further research can address reading comprehension shortcomings as outlined by district created assessments and standardized test scores. Current programs and results from testing scores can continually analyze the needs of struggling readers. The

implications of positive social change incorporate a far-reaching effect for literacy instruction for learners at all grade levels. Proficient reading comprehension skills in the lives of all students can assist learning across the curriculum and can affect opportunities for the next generation of learners.

Conclusion

In this final section of my project, I identified a local problem in the literacy classroom and shared my experiences as a practitioner, researcher, and project developer when designing a project to assist educators. Based on the information supplied by educators during one-on-one interviews, a project was designed with the needs of educators in mind. Based on the responses of participants in this project study, I determined that PD and PLCs were the best methods of increasing the knowledge of educators when working with students who struggle with reading comprehension. PD would be designed based on the needs expressed by educators. PLCs would be created by grade level and would provide educators with the opportunity to share with colleagues what works well in their classrooms. PD would be offered during school training sessions which are scheduled throughout the school year. PLCs would be at the discretion of each grade and would be scheduled on a weekly, bi-monthly, or monthly basis. This journey is coming to an end, and the staff at Walden University has been very supportive all along.

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Appendix A: The Project

Professional Development and Professional Learning Communities Training Plan

Instructions for Implementation

Objectives of Project

- A. Develop a professional development plan including appropriate activities that model 21st Century methods.
- B. Develop a Professional Learning Community for third, fourth, and fifth grades where teachers are provided with the opportunity to collaborate and share ideas.
- C. Cultivate an atmosphere among teachers where communication and collaboration are welcomed and comfortable.
- D. Develop a bank of resources that literacy teachers can both add to as well as pull from to integrate into instruction.

Implementation of Project

- A. Teachers will voluntarily participate in 3 days of professional development.
- B. An overview of the project will be shared with participants through the attached Google Presentation.
- C. After the Google presentation, a previously selected volunteer teacher will model a lesson.
- D. After the completion of the modeled lesson, teachers will have the opportunity to ask questions of the presenter as well as to collaborate with peers to gain an understanding of how to integrate the practice into the literacy classroom.

- E. Day 2 will focus on the creation of Professional Learning Communities and will follow the same procedures.
- F. After Day 2, teachers will be invited to ponder on the professional development and share successes and components in need of enhancement.
- G. In order to continue with additional assistance, a Google Doc will be shared with all teachers as a source of ideas. Teachers will be able to share successful lesson plans.
- H. In order to continue with collaboration, a schedule will be created and shared for teachers to meet with peers and share ideas.

Purpose

The project for my study is the development of Professional Development and the creation of Professional Learning Communities for educators in third, fourth, and fifth grades to help educators prepare to meet the needs of students who struggle with reading comprehension. When teachers are offered professional development that shares proven strategies to be integrated into the literacy classroom, students demonstrated increases in reading comprehension Al Otaiba et al. (2016). The purpose of the professional development is to provide educators with literacy materials and examples of proven strategies that had been integrated in the literacy classroom as well as develop a sense of community among educators with the goal of helping struggling students. In addition, professional development can provide a forum for educators to connect and communicate with colleagues and reading specialists. With the implementation of professional development, the goal is to form PLCs for educators in third, fourth, and fifth grades. By creating a PLC within each grade, educators will have the opportunity to collaborate and share with peers the practices and materials that are working well within the literacy classroom and providing success for struggling students. The success of my project will be evident by its acceptance and implementation.

Audience

The first group of participants for my project will be both building administrators and the reading specialist. During this initial meeting, I will share a Google Presentation that outlines the findings of my research study as well as recommendations for changes within the building. After meeting the first group and gaining approval to move forward,

I will meet with educators in third, fourth, and fifth grades. The second group will participate in PD meetings. This type of project is relevant since it was developed based on data gathered during one-on-one interviews. This project is vital since it supports the district's initiative to increase reading comprehension for students who continue to struggle with reading comprehension based on both standardized test scores and district created common assessments.

Professional Development Training for Educators in Grade 3, Grade 4, and Grade 5

Course of Study	Activities	Materials	Timeline
Day 1 Explore Achieve 3000	-Sharing the study results -Navigation of the Achieve 3000 Program -Choose Achieve articles -Share modeled lesson -Share proven strategies -Share/select strategies	-Whiteboard -Erasable markers -Laptop computers -Sign in sheet -Agenda -Share a Live Google Doc with each grade to create a document with literacy materials -Evaluation Form	In-service Day 6 hours
Day 2 Literacy	-Exploration of literacy websites: - ReadWriteThink	-Whiteboard -Erasable markers -Laptop computers	In-service Day 6 hours

Websites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Reading Rockets -Readworks -Into the Book - CommonLit - Read Theory - Starfall - Choosito 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sign in sheet -Agenda -Handout of websites -Evaluation Form 	
Day 3 Creating PLCs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What are PLCs? -Breakout by grade level to create a PLC -Recap what was learned -Discover PLCs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Whiteboard -Erasable markers -Laptop computers -Sign in sheet -Agenda -Article about PLCs -Evaluation Form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-service Day 6 hours

Professional Development and Professional Learning Communities Schedule

The following is a schedule for the 3-day PD and PLCs. These opportunities will be scheduled during Maplebrook's staff development days.

Day 1:

8:45 – 9:00	Registration
9:00 – 10:30	-Independent exploration of the Achieve 3000 Website -Discuss individual findings while exploring -Achieve 3000 presenter share a pre-developed lesson utilizing the website
10:30 – 10:45	BREAK
10:45 – 11:45	-In grade level groups, choose an Achieve 3000 articles that aligns with a specific grade level literacy skill
11:45 – 12:30	LUNCH
12:30 – 1:30	-Each group share their article and lesson with whole group
1:30 – 2:15	-Participants ask questions of presenters -Dissemination of events of the day
2:15 – 2:30	-Participants complete evaluation and wrap up

Day 2: Exploration of Websites

8:45 – 9:00	Registration
9:00 – 10:45	-Assignment of a website – ReadWriteThink, ReadRockets, Readworks, Into the Book – by grade-level. -Creation of lesson by grade-level-Questions or comments
10:45 – 11:00	BREAK
11:00 – 12:00	-Sharing of Lessons
12:00 – 1:00	LUNCH
1:00 – 2:30	-Each group share their website and the lesson created with the whole group -Begin to develop “Literacy Resources” live Google Doc
2:30 – 2:45	-Participants ask questions of presenters -Dissemination of events of the day -Participants complete evaluation and wrap up

Day 3: Creating PLCs with Colleagues

8:45 – 9:00	Registration
9:00 – 9:30	-In grade level groups discuss what each teacher know and what is the purpose of a PLC
9:30 – 10:15	- In a whole group setting discuss what teachers know and what is the purpose of a PLC -In a whole group setting discuss the benefits of a PLC

10:15 – 10:45	Share the articles “Building Pedagogical Content Knowledge within Professional Learning Communities” by Guanglun Michael Mu. Teachers will read independently
10:45 – 11:15	As a whole group, teachers will discuss the article sharing understanding of the purpose of a PLC
11:15 – 11:30	BREAK
11:30 – 12:00	-Meet as a grade level and discuss the pros and cons of PLCs
12:00 – 1:00	LUNCH
1:00 – 1:45	-Teachers meet in grade level groups and discuss the creation of a PLC -Teachers develop a convenient schedule for meeting as a group
1:45 – 2:30	-Each grade level will independently choose one teacher as the grade level leader -As a whole group, each grade level will share their plan for creating a PLC
2:30 – 2:45	-Participants ask questions of presenters -Participants complete evaluation and wrap up

Presenter Notes -- Welcome:

WELCOME Administrators and Reading Specialists!!

Based on my research project, I will provide details about the Project Study, share the details of my research, and discuss the next steps. Lastly, I will provide an overview for the professional development plan for educators in third, fourth, and fifth grades each day.

Purpose

- Based on the data collected for one-on-one interview questions and current research
 - Support all educators when working with struggling readers
 - Provide teachers with strategies and materials to help when working with struggling readers
 - Promote collaboration among colleagues
 - Assist educators in creating Professional Learning Communities with grade level peers.



Presenter Notes: Slide provides all details.

Project Study

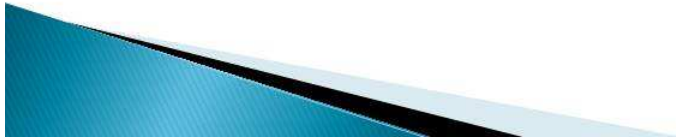
- Purpose of the study is to understand the role motivation and knowledge play when working with students who continue to struggle with reading comprehension.
- Findings of the Study
 - Educators need assistance to develop effective lessons, choose websites that will help improve literacy instruction, and develop Professional Learning Communities by grade level
- Recommendations of the Study
 - Provide professional development that aligns with the needs of students and teachers
 - Share websites that provide support when working with struggling readers.
 - Develop a Live Google Doc that educators can share lessons, proven practices, and videos to help when working with struggling readers.



Presenter Notes: Slide provides all details.

Goals and Objectives

- Develop professional development that aligns with the needs of teachers.
- Share proven strategies and model an effective lesson with teachers.
- Allow teachers to explore and discover new websites that align with individual needs.
- Create a Google Doc (living) where teachers can both share and utilize lessons, strategies, and videos that align with individual needs.
- Ensure that teachers are confident in their individual knowledge and motivation when working with students who continue to struggle and have all needed tools for the literacy classroom.



Presenter Notes: Slide provides all details.

Professional Development Plan

- Day 1 – Explore Achieve 3000 and Modeled Lesson
 - Objective: Explore the Achieve 3000 Program, navigate the site and articles, view a lesson utilizing the Achieve 3000 Program
- Day 2 – Exploration of a variety of literacy websites
 - Objective: Explore websites and discover a variety of articles and strategies to integrate to the literacy classroom
- Day 3 – Creation of Professional Learning Communities
 - Objective: Discuss the purpose of PLCs and have third, fourth, and fifth grades break up by grade level and develop a plan for their individual groups.



Professional Development (Cont'd.)

At the end of each PD day, participants will have the possibility to:

- Ask questions of the presenter
- Collaborate with peers
- Reflect on the day and the lesson shared
- Share their opinions and feelings about PLCs



Presenter Notes: Presenter will explain to the participants what will be covered over the 3 days of professional development.

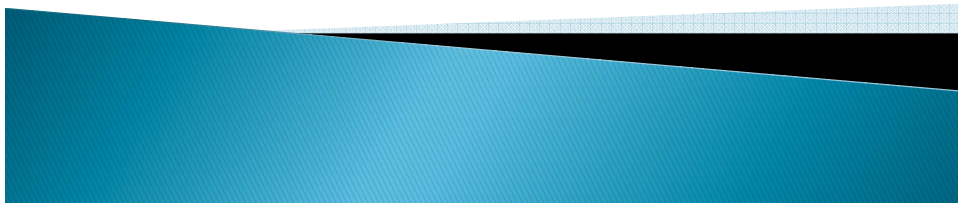
Day 1
Professional Development



Title Slide for 3-Day Professional Development.

Day 1 – Professional Development

Registration -- 8:45 – 9:00



Day 1 – Professional Development

9:00 – 10:30

- Independent exploration of the Achieve 3000 Program
- Discuss individual findings
- Presenter share a lesson utilizing the Achieve 3000 Program



-Presenter Notes:

WELCOME all participants!!

-Presenter will ask participants to log onto their computers and open the Achieve 3000 Program.

-Presenter will instruct participants to explore the program independently by looking at articles and determining which skills are covered by the article. Choose one article, read it, answer the questions that follow the article, and determine the skill covered.

-Presenter will instruct participants to share their findings and thoughts on the program and article they explored – strengths and weaknesses.

-Presenter will present a pre-selected article and lesson utilizing the Achieve 3000 Program and model the lesson to the group.

-Presenter will ask if participants have any questions or comments.

-Presenter will dismiss all participants for a 15 minute break.

Day 1 – 10:30 – 10:45

BREAK



Presenter Notes:

-Presenter will explain that participants will be broken into grade level groups and will be working with Achieve 3000.

- Presenter will break the participants by grade level into groups.
- Presenter will ask each group to choose an article on grade-level from the Achieve 3000 Program, determine what skill(s) is/are covered in the article and also develop a lesson to be shared with the whole group.
- Presenter will dismiss all participants for a 45 minute lunch period.

Day 1- 11:45- 12:30

LUNCH



Day 1- 12:30- 1:30

- Share grade-level created lessons with the whole group

**Presenter Notes:**

-Presenter will explain that each grade level group will sharing the lessons developed by each grade..

-Presenter will ask for volunteers to share their lesson. The presenter will ask each group to share the title of the article, the reason this article was chosen, the skill or skills covered.

-Presenter will then have each group share their lesson with the whole group.

-Presenter will ask for comments or questions from the participants after all groups present their lessons.

Day 1- 1:30 - 2:15

- Participants ask questions of presenters
- Dissemination of events of the day

**Presenter Notes:**

-Presenter will ask if anyone has comments or questions on anything presented that day and answer all questions.

-Presenter will give his or her feedback on the day and share that the next day the participants will be exploring a variety of websites and share their findings by grade level as well as a whole group.

Day 1- 2:15 - 2:30

- Complete evaluation and wrap up



Presenter Notes:

-Thank all for participating!!

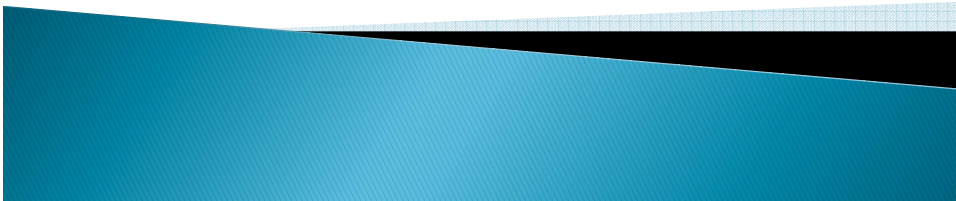
-Presenter will hand out the evaluation sheet for the day and ask participants to complete the form and turn it in when completed.

Day 2
Exploration of Websites



Day 2 – Exploring Websites

Registration -- 8:45 – 9:00



Day 2 – 9:00 – 10:45

- Educators in third, fourth, and fifth grades will explore the following websites independently:
 - ReadWriteThink
 - ReadRockets
 - Readworks
 - Into the Book
- Educators come together on grade-level and share findings
- Educators share as a whole group their findings



-WELCOME all participants!!

-Presenter will explain that third, fourth, and fifth grades will work together as a grade and explore the websites.

-Presenter will ask each grade-level to determine which websites align with grade level and can be used in the classroom.

-Presented will ask each grade-level to share what they discovered about each website and how it can be used in their classroom.

-Presenter will share as a whole group what they discovered about each website – positives and negatives.

-Presenter will ask if anyone has questions or comments. Questions will be answered by participants or by presenter.

Presenter will dismiss all participants for a 15 minute break.

Day 2 - 10:45 - 11:00

BREAK



Day 2 - 11:00 - 12:00

- Assignment of a website - ReadWriteThink, ReadRockets, Readworks, Into the Book - by grade-level.
- Creation of lesson by grade-level
- Questions or comments



Presenter Notes:

-Presenter will explain that each grade level will be assigned a website and choose an article. Utilizing the website and article each grade level will develop a lesson.

-Presenter will assign Grade 3 ReadRockets website, Grade 4 ReadWriteThink, and Grade 5 Readworks.

-Presenter will explain that utilizing the website, each grade will choose one article and create a grade-level lesson to be shared with participants.

-Presenter, will dismiss for 1 hour lunch.

Day 2 - 12:00 - 1:00

LUNCH



Day 2 - 1:00 - 2:30

- Grade-level lesson sharing
- Questions or comments



Presenter Notes:

- Presenter will explain that each grade-level will share their lessons.
- Presenter will ask for a grade-level volunteer to share their lesson with the whole group.
- Presenter will share a “living” Google Doc titled “Literacy Resources” organized by grade level. Each grade level will be given the opportunity to add websites that are rich in skills, strategies, and articles to integrate into instruction. At the end of the professional development, ALL docs will be meshed into one doc and shared with all third, fourth, and fifth grade students. Since this is a “living” doc, educators will continue to add additional resources to this doc.
- Presenter will ask participants to share what they added to the doc and explain why?
- Presenter will ask if anyone has questions or comments. Questions will be answered by participants who created and shared their lessons or by presenter.

Day 2- 2:30 - 2:45

- Complete evaluation and wrap up



Presenter Notes:

-Thank all for participating!!

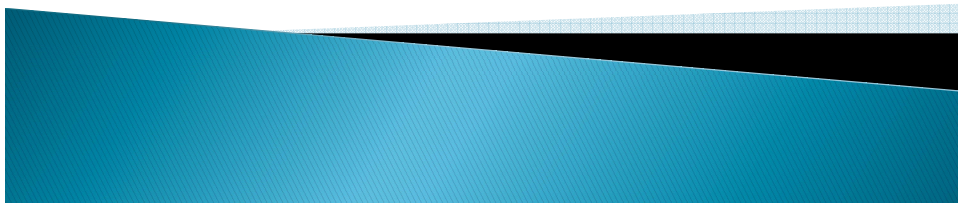
-Presenter will hand out the evaluation sheet for the day and ask participants to complete the form and turn it in when completed.

Day 3
Creating Professional Learning
Communities



Day 3 – Professional Learning Communities

Registration -- 8:45 – 9:00



Day 3 – 9:00 – 9:30

- Discuss Professional Learning Communities



Presenter Notes:

- WELCOME everyone!! Presenter will explain that participants will be broken into groups and will come back together to discuss PLCs:
- Presenter will break participants into grade-level groups where each will discuss:
 - What they know about a PLC.
 - What is the purpose of a PLC?
- Presenter will ask if anyone has questions or comments before breaking into groups. Questions will be answered by participants or by presenter.

Day 3 - 9:30 - 10:15

- Whole group discussion of PLCs
 - Purpose
 - Benefits

**Presenter Notes:**

-Presenter will bring all groups together and discuss what they shared about PLCs with their group.

-Presenter will ask teachers what they know about a PLC and participants will discuss as a whole group.

-Presenter will ask teachers what are the benefits of a PLC and participants will discuss as a whole group.

-Presenter will ask if anyone has questions or comments. Questions will be answered by participants or by presenter.

Day 3 – 10:15 -- 10:45

- Article – “Building Pedagogical Content Knowledge within Professional Learning Communities” by Guanglun Michael Mu.
- Highlight facts



Presenter Notes:

-Presenter will explain that an article regarding PLCs will be handed out to everyone for discussion.

-Presenter will hand out the article, “Building Pedagogical Content Knowledge within Professional Learning Communities” by Guanglun Michael Mu.

-Presenter will ask participants read the article independently.

-Presenter will ask participants highlight at least THREE newly discovered facts about PLCs and/or three interesting facts about PLCs.

-Presenter will ask if anyone has questions or comments. Questions will be answered by participants or by presenter.

Day 3 - 10:45 -- 11:15

- Discuss article - "Building Pedagogical Content Knowledge within Professional Learning Communities" by Guanglun Michael Mu.
- Share findings from article



Presenter Notes:

- Presenter will ask the whole group discuss their understanding of the purpose of a PLC.
- Presenter will ask volunteers to share the items highlighted in the article.
- Presenter will ask volunteers to share their feelings about the creation of PLCs.
- Presenter will ask if anyone has questions or comments. Questions will be answered by participants or by presenter.
- Presenter will dismiss all participants for a 15 minute break.

Day 3 - 11:15 -- 11:30

BREAK



Day 3 - 11:30 -- 12:00

- Discussion of pros and cons of a PLC
- Share group discussions

**Presenter Notes:**

-Presenter will explain that participants will be broken into grade level groups to discuss their views of PLCs and concentrate on making a list of both pros and cons.

-Presenter will ask participants break into grade level groups and discuss their personal views of the pros and cons of PLCs.

-Presenter will ask one person from each grade-level group share their discussion regarding the pros and cons of PLCs.

-Presenter will ask if anyone has questions or comments. Questions will be answered by participants or by presenter.

-Presenter will dismiss all participants for a 45 minute lunch break.

Day 3 - 1:00 -- 1:45

- Discuss the creation of PLCs
- Creating a schedule

**Presenter Notes:**

- Presenter will explain that participants will be broken into grade-level groups and will discuss how they could create a PLC within their individual grades.
- Presenter will break participants into grade-level groups where they will discuss the creation of a PLC.
- Presenter will explain that each group will have a “LEADER” who will run the meetings.
- Presenter will instruct each group to choose one individual who will be the “Leader” of grade-level PLC.
- Presenter will instruct each group to determine a convenient schedule for meeting as a group – does your group want to meet weekly, bi-monthly, monthly.
- Presenter will ask if anyone has questions or comments. Questions will be answered by participants or by presenter.

Day 3 - 1:45 -- 2:30

- Sharing of PLC plan



Presenter Notes:

- Presenter will bring groups back together for a whole group discussion.
- Presenter will have a volunteer from each grade level to share their plans for creating a PLC – who is the leader and how often do you plan to meet.
- Presenter will ask if anyone has questions or comments. Questions will be answered by participants or by presenter.

Day 3 - 2:30 -- 2:45

- Complete evaluation and wrap up

**Presenter Notes:**

- THANK everyone for participating in the Professional Development.
- Presenter will hand out the evaluation sheet for the day and ask participants to complete the form and turn it in when completed

Literacy Resources

Grade 3 Resources

<u><i>Title of Site or Lesson</i></u>	<u><i>Skill/Strategy</i></u>	<i>Link</i>

Grade 4 Resources

<u><i>Title of Site or Lesson</i></u>	<u><i>Skill/Strategy</i></u>	<i>Link</i>

Grade 5 Resources

<u><i>Title of Site or Lesson</i></u>	<u><i>Skill/Strategy</i></u>	<i>Link</i>

Evaluation Form

Date of Course: _____

Title of Course: _____

Facilitator: _____

Please share your overall opinion of the training sessions you attended. Your opinion is important since it provides the opportunity to develop additional professional development opportunities. Based on the scale below, please place a check in the appropriate box.

Poor 1 2 3 4 5 Excellent

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	Comments
Overall quality of instruction						
Relevance of Training						
Relevance of Material						
Overall Evaluation						

Please answer the following questions to help improve future offerings:

Would you recommend this professional development to colleagues? Please explain your answer.

What professional development sessions would you like to see in the future?

Appendix B: Interview Questions for Maplebrook Elementary Faculty

Please check the correct choices below:

Section 1:

1. Years of teaching experience:

- 1-5 6-10 11-15 16-20
 21-25 26-30 More than 30 years

2. Education:

- BA Masters Masters +30
 PhD/EdD

Section 2:

1. What skills do you believe you have to choose the right literacy strategies when working with struggling students?
2. Describe your motivation for choosing the right literacy strategies when working with students who continue to struggle with reading comprehension.
3. If a student continues to struggle with a strategy introduced in the literacy classroom, how do you stay motivated?
4. How confident are you when integrating the Achieve 3000 program into instruction when working with students who continue to struggle with reading comprehension?
5. How confident are you when choosing the Achieve 3000 articles that are aligned with the district's curriculum and are used for instruction when working with students who continue to struggle?

6. How do you stay motivated when integrating the Achieve 3000 program into instruction when working with students who continue to struggle with reading comprehension?
7. What support do you feel you need to become more motivated when teaching students who struggle with reading comprehension?