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Teachers' Perceptions of Increased Informational Reading Implemented Within the Common Core

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Walden University
2017

Abstract

Teachers' Perceptions of Increased Informational Reading Implemented Within the

Common Core

by

Waverley Parkerson

MA, Walden University, 2009

BS, Troy University, 2005

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

December 2017

Abstract

The educational shift to the common core requires educators to increase the amount of informational text that is used within their classroom. The struggle for whole group use of informational text related to units of study proved to be challenging for teachers at the study site. Guided by constructivist theory that states learners must have the means to construct knowledge and understanding, the purpose of the study was to explore the current practices and needs of teachers in reaction to the increased use of informational texts. The research questions addressed the teaching strategies and guidance that teachers provide for students' learning, what current challenges teachers have, and their needs for better implementation of the Common Core Standards. Eleven teachers from 3rd to 5th grades were interviewed and participated in a focus group. Analysis and organization of the data through its transcription and coding led to the emergence of 4 themes: the need for professional development, time management, integration of curriculum, and creativity in the language arts classroom. The findings inspired the creation of a 3-day professional development to provide teachers with an opportunity to collaborate, create, engage, and learn. This study supports positive social change by providing a resource for teachers to better serve students in having the ability to read for information in an integrated manner. This ability will help students in their educational responsibilities and perhaps future endeavors in understanding societal issues.

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Dedication

To my family: thank you all for the support and encouragement during this journey. To my parents, thank you for instilling in me the desire to always be a better me. Thank you for teaching me to be diligent, hard-working, honest, and dedicated. Thank you for always being there. To my husband, thank you for allowing me the many late nights on the couch and countless hours of no conversation. Thank you for being my rock during this all and for continuously telling me that I could do it. To my children, you are the reason I work so hard. I hope I make you as proud as you make me.

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Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

Teachers are surrounded by texts meant to convey information about the natural or social world; yet, as Duke (2004) noted "many children struggle to comprehend informational text" (p. 40). The Common Core State Standards (CCSS), which impact 46 out of 50 states, including Georgia, require that by graduation, 70% of books read across the curriculum should be informational text (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, 2017). The CCSS address reading standards that integrate literature and informational text. Because of this requirement, greater attention will be placed on informational text and literary nonfiction than before. According to Gewertz (2012), the desire for greater emphasis on informational text was initiated due to research that had been conducted. This research conducted by Gewertz resulted in employers and college instructors finding a lack of skills when it came to students being able to comprehend manuals of a technical manner, historical journals, and a variety of other informational texts that are essential to work success.

Classrooms throughout the country are addressing shift in teaching and learning, a shift that requires educators in all states to conform to the standards while at the same time ensuring that students succeed (www.corestandards.org). Within these classrooms, specifically primary classes, learners are oftentimes submerged in an abundance of narrative texts which is considerably contrasting to the information found in textbooks of the upper grades (Sanacore & Palumbo, 2009).

Informational reading requires skills and a foundation that are different from those needed to read fiction material (Akhondi, Malayeri, & Samad, 2011; Duke, 2004, 2011; Newkirk, 2012). For example, informational text presents different goals and various strategies that must be used in order to comprehend informational text successfully. For students to be successful at reading informational texts, they must first be exposed to the text to benefit from them, and they must also be taught how to read them (Duke, 2004).

With increased exposure to informational text, it is the hope that students are in a better position to handle the reading and writing demands of the advanced area content textbooks in the upper grades. Because of the importance of informational texts in conveying knowledge about the natural and social worlds, it is significant to prepare young children to read and comprehend more advanced content-area texts (Wixson, 2007). It is not known if teachers are prepared enough to make the shift from fictional texts to increased informational texts.

Learners of this informational age need to be able to comprehend and understand the ever-changing information in the world. The challenge is scheduling time to integrate informational reading strategies into content areas that are already crowded with information and content. Educators must put literacy at the forefront of their teaching, and place precedence on the integration of literacy into all content areas. With this new focus comes the need for educators to be skilled in the content area reading strategies while also being experts in an evolving curriculum (Duke, 2011; Newkirk, 2012; Wixson, 2007). Knowing these skills and being able to integrate various teaching strategies are

essential to implement the changes successfully in literacy in today's classrooms. The primary concern is that teachers be sufficiently prepared to implement their prior knowledge of best practices in teaching with regards to informational text.

Today's learners are repeatedly faced with informational texts and writing prompts. This genre includes but is not limited to, textbooks, informational websites, and instruction manuals. New educational standards are compelling educators to teach a curriculum that is more focused on factual, informational reading. Before the implementation of the CCSS, students were asked to read very little informational text. Percentages as low as 7% represent the amount of informational reading for elementary students and middle school is not much higher at 15% (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, 2017). On average, 16 minutes per day is spent reading informational texts in Grades 3 through 5 (Duke, 2000; Jeong et al., 2010).

The focus on informational reading involves more advanced strategies. No longer will students glance and thumb through texts for particular and detached pieces of information. Informational text's purpose is to open learners' minds to a world of learning. Today's learners will need to develop an understanding of the complex texts that are necessary under the CCSS. Educators are being required to balance the new guidelines outlined within the Common Core with current curriculum. Lack of resources that make learning conducive to this new curriculum and training may prove to be difficult in any classroom (Akhondi, Malayeri, & Samad, 2011; Duke, 2000, 2004, 2011; Wixson, 2007).

The Local Problem

School X (pseudonym) is an elementary school with Grades K-5 located in central Georgia and has a population of almost 600 students. Each grade level consists of four classrooms. The school adopted the Common Core during the 2013-2014 school year with limited implementation. Within this same school year there was a deeper implementation of the Common Core, especially in the area of increased nonfiction reading and integration of nonfiction into all subject areas. With the transition, educators felt that the district had placed a lack of emphasis and urgency on the shift to the Common Core Initiative, leaving teachers to transition without the needed resources and training (Konze & March, 2015).

According to the English Language Arts Common Core Standards' key design considerations in 2014, 50% of what third through fifth graders read should be high-quality informational texts. The Common Core suggests that educators focus more attention on reading comprehension in the early grades and greater emphasis on content knowledge in the upper elementary grades (National Research Council, 2012). The standards in grades three through five follow the National Assessment of Educational Progress' (NAEP, 2009) lead in "balancing the reading of literature with the reading of informational text" (p. 4).

NAEP has placed a greater emphasis on informational reading in upper elementary grades. Additional implemented standards demand that a substantial amount of informational reading take place both in and out of the English Language Arts (ELA) classroom (National Assessment Governing Board, 2007).

In School X, similar to other schools in the US, a focus on increased understanding of the content in social studies and science has actually decreased in the past years according to Duke and Block (2012). Duke and Block concluded that "the neglect of informational text in the primary grades constitutes a missed opportunity not only to build social studies and science knowledge through text but also to build knowledge about this type of text" (p. 60). Time spent in social studies and science instruction has decreased in the primary grades, and "no clear increase has been detected in the amount of content focused text used" (Duke & Block, 2012, p. 60). Skills that are easier to master remain as a primary focus within the elementary classroom while skills that prepare learners for the later grades (vocabulary knowledge, comprehension strategies, and conceptual/content knowledge) seem to be neglected (Duke & Block, 2012).

The struggle for both independent and whole group use of informational text within the curriculum proves to be challenging. To start with, there is a lack in the number of copies of informational text in regards to whole group instruction. Deficiencies in materials are evident in the classrooms with averages of 27 students and a majority of fictional texts. For example, in School X, a 4th grade teacher shared that to teach 28 students in her class, she needs an average of 30 nonfiction texts per content topic to effectively teach a given standard (personal communication, December 2014). In a given unit of study on nonfiction text features, there needs to be multiple copies of texts so that students can identify these elements (captions, maps, sidebars, glossary, bold, and underlined words). These nonfiction texts can be broken into smaller parts and used for

identifying cause and effect relationships, context clues, and other skills that must be taught. For example, the *Diary of Anne Frank* was utilized to integrate multiple content areas in a particular 5th grade classroom. During reading, these texts were utilized to identify vocabulary, symbolism, and basic comprehension while also teaching the required social studies content.

Based on conversations held during common planning periods among teachers in Grades 3 through 5, it became evident that teachers in School X are not clear on how they will balance curriculum and classroom libraries. These libraries once favored fiction material including stories, poems, and drama. With the Common Core, there is a greater focus on informational books that kids wan*t* to read (personal communication, October 2014). Teachers at the school, have seen in the past young learners fall in love with fictional stories like *Because of Winn-Dixie*, *Holes, Tuck Everlasting,* and *Bridge to Terabithia.* Teachers must now determine what their nonfiction counterparts are and how to teach them effectively. With the core curriculum requirements and the changes in the type of text required, precisely the emphasis on informational texts, it becomes necessary to study the best strategies to achieve the learning outcomes.

It was also necessary to question whether teachers are adequately prepared for the new task. By determining the needs of the educators, it was a less daunting task for them to implement the increasing teaching of informational text. According to one teacher at School X, "we [educators] are not properly prepared to teach in this manner," (personal communication, December 2014).

In elementary classrooms at the study site, less than 10% of texts available are nonfiction. However, in Grades 3 through 5, the mix of fiction and nonfiction instruction and exposure should be balanced and evenly mixed according to the standards set forth by the Common Core (www.corestandards.org). In order to achieve the balance School X and many other schools demand that districts provide more nonfiction materials. As one of the teachers in School X shared, "if this district wants me to integrate more nonfiction materials, they need to provide it to me" (personal communication, February, 2015).

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

Educators win classrooms in Grades 3 through 5 at School X were and are being required, under the Common Core Standards Initiative, to implement increased amounts of informational texts while also maintaining a balance with fictional materials. During the 2013-2014 school year, School X witnessed an increased informational reading on individual student basis due to school-wide implementations of the Nonfiction Club where students are acknowledged for reading 25, 50, 75, and 100 nonfiction books. However, the struggle for whole group use of informational text within the curriculum proved to be challenging. Educators needed multiple copies of nonfiction books or a large variety of informational texts related to units of study within the curriculum in Grades 3 through 5 so that individual students could utilize the books on an independent basis within the classroom for instructional purposes and curriculum studies. Table 1 is a description of the number of classes in each grade level, the distribution of students and the number of topics in social studies and science where the majority of integration of nonfiction text is implemented.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Grade Level 3 to 5 in School X

Grade Level	Number of Classrooms per Grade	Average number of Students in each classroom	Number of Topics (Units of Study) in Social Studies and Science that require informational texts
3	4	24	24
4	4	28	16
5	4	28	24

The number of informational texts (not to include social studies and science textbooks purchased by the district) on given topics are limited to School X in regard to the amount of informational texts needed to ensure that each grade level, classroom, and students have not only an abundance of books that allow the teacher to integrate this informational text into the curriculum, but enough for each classroom to have equal amounts. Collaboration within the grade-level was significant and a significant part of the school environment. If classes are following curriculum maps developed by the district, as is the case in School X, then units of study are taught during the same period. Because of this, an excess of 100 students need access to these same informational texts. In order to teach effectively with informational texts, students must be able to put their hands on these books (Valencia, 2013). While technology has provided additional resources that are accessible online, School X and the other elementary school within the district operate using their school libraries and hard copy books. In a conversation with the librarian of School X, she stated that, "we choose to continue to offer traditional print vs

e-books because our local library system stated 70% of their patrons prefer paper over electronic" (personal communication, September, 2017).

The issue is not the independent reading of informational text, but the integration within the classroom due to the lack of resources. An example of this occurred (January 2015) at the 4th-grade level. The four classes, with an average of 28 students per class, were studying a unit on ecosystems. The goal of these educators was to have an abundance of nonfiction books that correlate with the unit of study ranging from actual ecosystems, particular species found within the ecosystems, adaptations, and so forth. This does not ultimately mean that there needed to be multiple copies of one book; but, a variety of texts that relate to the unit that is being studied. In order to complete an in-depth study on the grade level for any given unit of study, more than 100 nonfiction texts are needed. This number comes from only one unit of study and within a set curriculum, there are multiple units that require as much, if not more related informational texts.

With the shift to the Common Core Standards the curriculum, instruction and assessment in the classrooms at School X are heading in a direction that takes the focus away from the fictional literature found in current textbook adoptions. Instead, there is greater emphasis on the informational and expository texts, while balancing with the fictional under the requirements of the CCSS. An example on the assessment side, reading response activities and evaluations that once favored fictional pieces are being replaced by constructed response writings and assessments that respond to nonfictional material learned within content areas such as science, social studies, and math. Valencia (2013) stated that newly implemented standards consist of "reading and writing grounded

in information from informational text" and that knowledge will be built through "engagement in content rich text" (p. 183). At this point, it is unknown how educators will promote the opportunity for creativity and deepened knowledge on topics and how learners will respond and allow this creativity and knowledge emerge.

Teachers voiced in the faculty meetings their excitement, but also their concerns about the shift. Teachers questioned if School X was ready for such a change. A lack of professional development opportunities in the district required teachers to be left to determine how this shift would be handled and how it would unfold within their classrooms. Fourth grade teachers voiced concerns about the lack of preparation provided on how to implement the new requirements in regards to increased informational texts (personal communication, 2014). I explored the experiences, challenges, needs, and current practices of teachers undergoing the shift to increased informational text use. It was expected that the teachers would bring with them a variety of strengths while also sharing the challenges and needs that came with this major curriculum shift.

While exploring teachers voices in School X, it was important to indicate that on the national level, teachers expressed the importance of professional development and coaching that was in-depth and in school that would facilitate the revision of their teaching methods. The purpose of the study was to explore the challenges, needs and current practices that teachers in Grades 3 through 5 at School X practiced during the transition to the CCSS, regarding language arts, and more specifically to the increase in informational texts.

Informational texts that are used in day-to-day instruction are scarce in primary classrooms. The 2013-2014 school year started the trend and 2014-2015 school year brought greater focus to informational reading and integration into the classrooms because of the requirements set forth by not only the school district, but also the core curriculum and standards for language arts. School-wide vocabulary was continued, and informational reading was paired with informational writing.

For learners to grow as readers, students need protected time for reading informational texts, access to informational books they find fascinating, and expert facilitators in informational reading and writing (Valencia, 2013). Larger class sizes, budget cuts, lack of resources and training for teaching informational reading and writing, complicates this goal. School X was affected by each of the above, in addition to a lack of urgency within the district. McShane (2013) stated that if the CCSS are going to succeed, educators must acknowledge that it exists outside of a vacuum. Should the implementation fail, states will have wasted both time and resources. This could leave the education system in the US worse than it was before the CCSS.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore the challenges, needs and current practices that educators in Grades 3 through 5 at School X practice during this transition to the CCSS, and more specifically, to the increase in informational texts. The study outcome provided shared expertise and detailed descriptions of classroom implementation on increased amounts of informational texts. While using available resources, it was the hope that educators would be able to incorporate informational

reading into all aspects of the curriculum. With adequate exposure to informational text, focus on the meaning of the words in the text, best practice implementation, research-based strategy use, and the integration of informational writing, there would be a balance in the curriculum, order in the classroom, and enhanced learning opportunities for the students. The CCSS stress a real, focused instruction on informational text with elementary students and it was a goal of this study to learn from the teachers' experiences with the shift and to develop supportive materials that would provide guidance, suggestions, and resources on how to do so with fidelity, confidence, and success.

Definitions

Best Practices: In 2016, www.ed.gov defines this as a decision making process about instructional delivery that integrates professional wisdom and the best available empirical evidence (www.ed.gov).

Core Curriculum: The curriculum under the Common Core is a set of high quality learning standards in the areas of English language arts and literacy, as well as math. The intentions of these standards were to provide learners with the opportunity to graduate from high school with the skills needed to succeed in college, a career, and life. This curriculum and the standards that are connected to them outline the learning of students, what they need to know by the completion of each grade level. It is the goal of the core curriculum (2017) to regain ground in the field of education among our international peers. (www.corestandards.org)

Informational Text: The Reading Framework for the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress described informational text broadly as a primary type of book that

includes exposition, argumentation or persuasive text, and procedural text (National Assessment Governing Board, 2009).

Significance

This study included a "philosophical assumption as well as methods of inquiry" (Creswell, 2003, p. 5). The assumptions that educators were unprepared and in need of professional development and guidance on the implementation of the increased amounts of informational reading guided the direction of the study that was of an exploratory nature. By providing both assumption and inquiry, there was a "better understanding of the research problem" (Creswell, 2003, p. 5).

The implementation of the Common Core Standards Initiative is new in its complete integration into state standards and classrooms at School X. This completed research contributed to the body of knowledge about the needs, struggles, and current practices for teaching informational texts in Grades 3 to 5. The results and data analysis of this study were shared with administration and educators in the local setting that too have been impacted by this educational shift in the use of informational reading and writing. This study provided information and resources to promote the educational transition while meeting the needs of educators in School X. At the conclusion of the study, following the data collection and reviewing literature, it was my hope to develop valuable resources that may provide educators assistance in continued integration of CCSS demands.

Research Questions

The purpose of the study was to explore the challenges, needs, and current

practices that educators in Grades 3 through 5 at School X had and what would make this transition to the CCSS in language arts, and more specifically to the increase in informational texts. The study was guided by the following research questions.

RQ1: To what extent, if any, have teachers changed their teaching to increase focus and integration of informational reading required by the Common Core Initiative?

RQ2: How does the shift to an increased focus on more informational text affect teaching strategies and guidance that teachers provide for students' learning?

RQ3: What are teachers' struggles, needs and current practices to implement the new CCSI expectations with fidelity?

Review of the Literature

The shift into the CCSS was to create learners that can comprehend the material critically, solve problems accurately, and correspond in an efficient manner. Students struggle to read and write within the informational text genre while the CCSS calls for increased amounts of this particular reading and writing. The original theory of constructivism supports what the CCSI is promoting, while the benefits of informational texts are evidenced in previous research pertaining to vocabulary and informational reading (Akhondi, Maylayeri, & Samad, 2011; Baumann, 2009). Researchers provided the benefits and importance of professional development and its relationship to the success of any educational change (Cogshell, 2012; Gewertz, 2012).

Through the use of the Walden University Library and research databases like ERIC and Education Sources, peer-reviewed articles and research was obtained. Keywords used included *informational reading* and *constructivism, Common Core, vocabulary* and *integration of informational text.* The biggest challenge faced was the fact that the increase of informational reading under the CCSI is fairly new and there is not an over-abundance of previous research done.

Informational reading provides an engagement for a reader with real-world happenings and history. In the information age, educators have the opportunity to increase student knowledge by implementing and increasing the integration of reading nonfiction texts. Today's learners come to a classroom with prior knowledge on a menagerie of topics, interests, and information. Informational texts are a vital element in the increased content knowledge of a student. It is crucial for learners to be provided with multiple opportunities to build content knowledge through these informational texts (www.corestandards.org). Realistically speaking, the CCSI will repeatedly challenge both teachers and students that reading should result in deep understanding of the information presented on the text and the absorption of the words and images that are presented as well. The CCSI places such great emphasis on informational text because of the challenge and complexity that these books possess. "These standards are an attempt to dramatically change what students and teachers do in school, by redefining high-level, thought-provoking instruction as the norm for all pupils in all schools (Brown & Kappes, 2012, p. 1). The underlying idea of the shift within the CCSS is college and career readiness. The emphasis on new ways of reading and writing makes sense (Kirst, 2013).

The connection between vocabulary and the comprehension of informational texts can be supported by the literature. In the same sense, the theory of constructivism clearly supports the use of informational text within the classroom setting. The benefits of informational text are also backed by an abundance of research. However, locating recent researchers who supported or rejected the increased amounts of informational text within the Common Core Curriculum proved difficult due to the recentness of this curriculum shift and full implementation into classrooms. In addition, resources on how to effectively implement this trend in today's classrooms also proved to be more challenging to locate.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is supported by the original theories of constructivism (Bruner, 1968; Dewey, 1938; Piaget, 1969, 1972; Vgotsky, 1963). The Common Core Standards were designed to encourage the discovery methods of teaching and to avoid traditional ones. Students are expected to progress from their zone of actual development into the area of potential development (Deulen, 2013).

When an educator searches out a student's understanding, preference, or background knowledge, the process of reading begins to encompass many of the elements of the constructivist theory of education. With this, the teaching becomes student-centered and learners become actively engaged in material that is on-level and of interest because it taps into the prior knowledge and understanding that is present (Doyle, 2011; Jones, 2007; Wiemer, 2002). Educators can search out student needs through questioning, analyzing, and mere conversation.

Vygotsky (1962) stated that when speech and action converge, a great moment occurs in the development of a person's mind. Although learning is guided by standards and multiple objectives, it is the learner and their developmental needs that should drive the instruction. Each student enters a classroom with a foundation of knowledge, ideas, and varied understandings. Because of this, learners do not come to a class as a blank slate, but as a new bundle of knowledge that must be touched and sparked where new knowledge builds on and expands prior knowledge.

According to Piaget (1969), children can be described as active thinkers, interpreters, questioners, and explainers. Within the view of constructivists, students would be allowed and provided the opportunity at each grade level to explore and discover texts that influence reading instruction. Because of this statement, many of the strategies for reading, especially that of reading informational texts, are aligned with the constructivist theory. Piaget (1972) believed learn through the construction logical structures, one after another. Under Piaget's concrete operational stage, learners in Grades 3-5 will begin to explore more complex texts across the curriculum. Students at this age and within this phase are moving towards adolescence and their thinking is a bit more mature. Educators must not underestimate the abilities of these young learners. This is the time and stage where these students should be exposed to more ideas, travel, and multiple enrichment opportunities, including complex, informational texts.

Dewey (1938) called for education to be grounded in real experience. By making informational texts available, students will gain this experience. Vygotsky (1962) introduced the social aspect of learning into constructivism. Bruner (1960) originated

changes within the curriculum that were based on the assumption that the process of

learning is active and social, in which learners construct new perceptions or ideas based

on their understandings and knowledge of a given content. Bruner believed that an

interest in the topic being taught is the best stimulus for learning. In every classroom,

students bring with them their own individual interests. Some of these interests may not

be compatible with typical classroom teaching and learning. Within a constructivist

classroom, students will be provided with the freedom to do, think, reflect, question, and

interact with others and learn based on each of the above theories.

Learners in a constructivist classroom will build or construct meaning by relying

on their background knowledge and their own personal experiences while reflecting on

each of those experiences. Under the theory of constructivism, an educators' primary goal

should be to spotlight the importance of making meaningful connections between prior

knowledge and facts and cultivating new perceptions of newly obtained knowledge in

students. Informational text can provide students with the opportunity to utilize their

background knowledge in a given subject area. "In reading comprehension,

constructivism is reflected in schema-based learning development, which suggests that

learning takes place when new information is integrated with what is already known"

(McLauglin & Overturf, 2012, p. 433).

Concepts should not just be facts that are memorized and regurgitated at a later

time. Concepts in education should be real understanding and knowledge that reflect

cognitive changes. Cognitive changes should permanently change the way learners learn

and think about the facts and information that they are introduced to. Students must learn

how to connect with difficult tasks. Through constructivist theory and informational

reading, educators in Grades 3-5 will improve their knowledge and understanding of

informational reading and will then provide their students with maximum learning

opportunities, allowing them to interact with informational texts that meet the variety of

needs and interests of each student.

Common Core Curriculum

The National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School

Officers (NGA & CCSSO, 2012) claimed that CCSS promote equity among students by

ensuring that no matter where they live, they will be well prepared. Students will be

equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to collaborate and compete with their

peers in the United States and abroad. These standards are unlike the previous state

standards because those states were unique to every state in the country (NGA &

CCSSO, 2012).

According to the International Reading Association, the Common Core Standards

rank near the top of the biggest topics in regard to education (Cassidy & Grote-Garcia,

2012). The shift into the CCSI intends to create learners that can comprehend material

critically, solve problems accurately, and correspond in an efficient manner. This focus is

the biggest shift for educators because they will retool their training (McCracken, 2014).

In today's society, learners must understand and act on skills that demand critical

thinking skills and the comprehension of vital information. These skills, in order to prove

useful in the future, must be embedded in the younger learners today. This shift in

education recognizes the fact that in order to flourish in the newly wired world, students

must first develop a proficiency in new ways of reading and writing in regards to informational texts (Kist, 2013).

This shift in education and the ways of teaching and learning were never promised to be an easy task. There is a great deal of work ahead for all those involved with education today. In order for the CCSI to provide the rewards in which it intends, educators and learners must work together to make this implementation effective, efficient, and meaningful (McLaughlin & Overturf, 2012). This shift in education represents one of the "most sweeping reforms in history" and will provide education the opportunity to "move beyond test prep instruction that fosters shallow learning" (Conley, 2011, p. 17). In order for this educational shift to be successful, educators will need support that allows them access to resources and knowledge that will support efforts of implementation that meet the demands of the CCSI (Conley, 2011).

There are given skills within the new curriculum that entwine skills that learners are being asked to understand within the informational texts that they are being required to read. By integrating this informational reading, students will find it easier to understand the real word texts and situations (Tagliaferro, 2012). Under the CCSI, the rigor of standards is increased in regards to literacy, more complex texts are being integrated into the curriculum, less fiction is being read, and questions that require a much deeper level of thinking are being asked (Yager, Webb, Noppe, & McCaw, 2012). The expectations of students at every grade level are being redefined, placing greater focus on conceptual understandings and procedures in earlier grade levels (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers,

2010). The underlying idea of the shift within the Common Core is college and career readiness.

Reading a text that is sufficiently complex, and texts that push the thinking of the learners in the classroom, is the goal of the Common Core. As the transition is made into this new era of teaching, educators need to produce age-appropriate texts that are simple, yet not simplistic; streamlined, but not necessarily rushed or hurried; and focused, but definitely not narrow. Learners need to be engaged in the complex texts that are placed in front of them. Urge them to read (Porter-Magee, 2012).

With the publication of the CCSI during 2010, the goal has been to create common standards and assessments across the nation. With the CCSI, states are called upon to implement 85% of standards that are driven directly by the CCSI and the remaining 15% can and will be set aside for individual state standards and curriculum (Wolf, Wang, Huang, & Blood 2014). The standards established under the Common Core in the area of English language arts consist of rules that of are high expectations with demand for excessive content knowledge and skills that possess academic rigor and emphasis on skills that will prepare learners for college and future career readiness. Language art standards require students to focus understanding and learning in the areas of complex informational texts, analytic and logical writing of information, research skills, and academic discussion about factual information. The rigor is raised through the utilization of more complex texts.

The CCSI related to English language arts organizes Grades K-5 in specific sections. Within the section pertaining to Grades 3-5, there are a total of 10 College and

Career Readiness (CCR) Standards. These are also known as "anchor standards for reading" (Valencia, 2013, p. 182). The 10 anchor standards under each grade and curriculum pertaining to the CCS-ELA are mirrored in the areas of literature, informational, history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. However, grade-level standards are presented for each individual grade-level.

Valencia (2013) stated, "Grade-Level Standards are best thought of as examples of the Anchor Standards rather than definitive, specific Grade-Level Standards" (p. 183). In order to educate learners during this shift in learning and teaching, Valencia suggested that "teachers provide students with opportunities to transfer the knowledge and skills they have acquired to situations requiring independent reading of new texts" (p. 184). In order to meet the needs and intent of the CCS-ELA, additional resources must be provided.

The CCSI in English language arts are ultimately reliable when it comes to providing learners the opportunities to "work collaboratively, present information, communicate in a variety of ways, and use research to make informed judgments" (Blosveren, 2012, p. 15). While the CCSI identified these skills needed to succeed, it is up to the educators in the classrooms to use their knowledge and instruction to assist learners in mastering the content and skills called for in the Common Core curriculum.

Informational Texts

Students struggle to read and write within the informational text genre (Duke, 2004 p. 40), while the Common Core is calling for increased amounts of this particular reading and writing. The shortcomings found within the language arts and literacy

standards are in the process of being corrected by affirming the need for greater emphasis on informational reading, while balancing this with literature in classrooms (Coleman & Pimental, 2012). The restructuring of curriculum, shifted educational focus, and required changing in teaching strategies and techniques.

According to Green (2012), "The Common Gore State Standards require that students become thoughtful consumers of complex, informative texts—taking them beyond the realm of dry textbooks and self-selected reading" (p. 23). Informational text can build an understanding of various topics across the curriculum and can be utilized to capitalize on individual student interests. Students that progress from the lower to upper elementary grades, they will face the task of reading more challenging texts that "require them to read for information instead of simply reading for the text" (Akhondi, Maylayeri, & Samad, 2011, p. 371). Good readers have the ability to not only construct meaning, but revise and question it. They utilize their prior knowledge to compare and integrate their background knowledge with material in the given text while building vocabulary as well. The relationship between vocabulary and comprehension is causal, that is, vocabulary promotes comprehension (Baumann, 2009).

According to Duke (2004), "Incorporating informational text in the curriculum in the early years of school has the potential to increase student motivation, build important comprehension skills, and lay the groundwork for students to grow into confident, purposeful readers" (p. 44). Without the understanding and true comprehension of the informational text, written interpretations and expression can prove to be discouraging and quite problematic for many students. "Many researchers and teachers consider

writing instruction a means to assist students to express their ideas, as well as unique perspectives and knowledge" (Castle & Ciahk, 2011, p. 106). A primary educational goal of every classroom teacher is to teach students to read nonfiction texts and how to write appropriately within this same genre. Utilizing informational texts in primary classrooms can captivate students' motivation to learn and enhance student achievement (Caswell & Duke, 1998; Gambrell & Marinak, 2009; Job & Dayton-Sakari, 2002). High achievement relies on a student Being able to read complex texts independently and proficiently (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). Students and teachers in the early grades spend more time with informational and expository texts so that the result is a better understanding of the complexity of these informational texts (Flowers & Flowers, 2009).

Much of the CCSS emphasize the importance of informational text across the curriculum. This goal must become a daily component of teaching and teacher modeling. In order for the students to understand the informational texts they are expected to read, they must first hear it (Stead, 2012, p. 489).

Informational literacy is the factor that is crucial to making the learners of today fit for the global society (Keene, 2008). Duke (2004), described society as one where success on a daily basis in relation to school and work, depends on a learner's ability to comprehend the information that is presented. Benson (2002) stated that people today come into contact with more information in a day than people in a lifetime 100 years ago. It is imperative that learners know and understand the importance of informational text as

well as knowing where and how to find this pertinent information to survive (Duke, 2010).

According to Rideout, Foehr, and Roberts (2010), on average a child in the United States spends approximately 4.5 hours a day watching television, 2.5 hours listening to music, and 1 hour playing video games, while spending an average of 4 minutes a day reading nonfiction. This is not adequate time for a child to gain the needed knowledge that informational texts provide a reader. While the above-stated research provides evidence of the lack of informational text in a learner's everyday life, Goodwin and Miller (2013) reported that nonfiction appears to be in short supply in classrooms. Students should be provided with additional informational text, outside of the textbooks, in order to accomplish what is clearly intended to be achieved.

The message that is clearly designed to be relayed is that within the common core literacy standards, students need to do less narrative reading and more informational reading (Newkirk, 2012). While the "failure to build conceptual and content knowledge in the primary grades may not affect reading development in the short term, the long-term results of this failure may be substantial" (Duke & Block, 2012, p. 61). By narrowing a reader's attention too meticulously or centering their focus on only generalizations within fiction material, learners are losing sight of the depth and breadth of the abounding content located within informational texts. Stead (2012) stated, "nonfiction constitutes much of adult reading and writing" and it is "an integral component of the literacies in today's society" (p. 489). The difference and benefit of informational texts lies in the fact that the "focus is placed squarely on the text—not on making connections to outside

experiences or dwelling on prior knowledge" (Greene, 2012, p. 26). According to Duke

(2000), informational reading can be engaging for students and actually motivate them to

read more if it engages their interests and personal curiosities, answers questions they

may have and create a desire for students to dig deeper into given topics. With

informational texts, students should be discovering and investigating by digging deeper

into the content of the book. Informational texts provide learners with "reservoir of

knowledge about the natural, physical, and social world around them" (Greene, 2012).

The outside world, along with school communities, demands the ability of

learners to be able to not only locate, but decipher facts and information critically.

Standardized testing typically contains 50-85% of passages that are of an informational

nature according to Saul and Dieckman (2005). Saul and Dieckman suggested that

because elementary students are not typically exposed to this type of literature,

standardized test scores are lower in this area. The lack of opportunity to learn through

the textural features of informational text is presenting our students with great

disadvantage in testing and life (Maloch, 2008).

Vocabulary and Comprehension

Students can build vocabulary through reading more complex texts (NAEP,

2011). According to the 2011 NAEP Reading Assessments, students who scored highest

in vocabulary also scored highest in comprehension. With increased vocabulary comes

better understanding. Good readers should be able to read both fiction and nonfiction

books while being capable to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words.

David (2010) stated, "because students that know many words can comprehend what they read, they continue to increase their vocabularies and content knowledge through reading" (p. 85). The effects of a strong vocabulary on comprehension are well-established in reading research (Graves, 1986). Learners who typically possess a more sophisticated knowledge of vocabulary will likewise find it easier to comprehend texts better than those with less understanding of the same content vocabulary. According to Adams (2011), the more students read on a particular topic, the more likely they are to be able to read and comprehend that same subject. What is written on a subject is more complex than what is actually said or read about that same subject.

In order for students to understand and comprehend informational books more efficiently, there must be research based on how educators can facilitate vocabulary acquisition within the content areas of the curriculum through the implementation of increased amounts of informational reading. Romance and Vitale (2007) asserted that reading researchers and practitioners have emphasized the importance of content-based reading activities. Such activities are vehicles for developing the applied skills of reading comprehension and thinking skills, as well as fostering meaningful vocabulary acquisition. Wager (2005) showed that a learner's development of vocabulary and content knowledge, and reading comprehension, are highly interdependent.

Ness (2007) stated, "literacy integration does not detract from content coverage but actually improves both comprehension and retention" (p. 230). By utilizing informational texts, there is a connection between what is interesting and what is important, resulting in increased retention across the curriculum while also building the

vocabulary of the learners. Duke and Block (2012) asserted that comprehension and vocabulary are still neglected in the primary grades. It is imperative that educators remember that the vocabulary found in this informational text is the glue that will hold the reading and comprehension together. The basic understanding of words and their meanings is pivotal to the comprehension aspect of reading, especially informational texts (Schmitt, Jaing, & Grabe, 2011). In order for students to maintain and continuously grow in reading, skills such as word recognition, vocabulary, and fluent use of language must be strengthened consistently over a period of time in regards to the reading of informational texts.

Professional Development

Researchers provided the benefits and importance of professional development and its relationship to the success of any education changes (Desimone, 2009; Little, 1993; Snow-Gerono, 2005).Within this study, not only has the voice of educators and their needs been addressed, but the changes, if any, that have already been implemented will be shared as a means to benefit other teachers currently making this educational shift within their own classrooms. Due to the rebalancing of literacy instruction in elementary classrooms because of the CCSI, educators are now faced with the challenge of revising teaching technique and materials. Although the focus demanding the most attention lies within the need for increased informational-text emphasis, the greatest challenge is presented by the need for training on how to read, teach, and learn the material (Gewertz, 2012, p. 12).

Coggshall (2012) implied great importance in the areas of teacher preparation and the shift in the ways they teach, "to meet the more rigorous expectations embodied in new college- and career-ready standards, students will need teachers who teach in a manner that are distinctly different than how most have been teaching" (p. 1). Students must be ensured the best education possible that will allow them to succeed in reaching expectations set by the high-quality curriculum within the Common Core. There are educators making the transition within their classrooms, but there are many that will need substantial training, support and interaction with expert teachers in order to successfully implement the changes within the newly adopted curriculum. This can be done through the increase of critical thinking engagement, a shift in thinking and reasoning, the building of conceptual understanding across grade levels, and the design and implementation of accelerated teaching techniques.

These are all things that could be addressed within appropriate professional development opportunities provided by school districts that have the learners' best interests at heart. In order to successfully implement the changes introduced by the Common Core, educators require guidance, tools, and professional development that will facilitate an understanding of the standards (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2013). This in turn will help the teachers to develop curriculum, lessons, and aligned assessments. Teachers will be able to locate and evaluate if instructional materials are aligned with the Common Core (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2013).

Educator's starting beliefs and knowledge can be shaped with their perceptions of the Common Core. It is imperative that educators are prepared to achieve the goals set

forth in the Common Core Standards. According to Rothman (2011), the promise of the

CCSI is "too great to let it slip through our fingers" (p. 178). While Kendall (2011)

shared equal confidence, declaring CCSI has "shown a readiness to seize on what is best

about standards-based education and at the same time offers hope that the lesson we've

learned won't need to be learned again" (p.824). However, whether or not the CCSI will

succeed or fail depends on the educators, how they respond to the new implementation,

their day-to-day practices, and the professional development that is provided to help them

successfully engage students in a more rigorous curriculum and higher expectations.

The ELA standards that have been implemented by elementary teachers are

resulting in the thought processes of curriculum, instruction, and assessment being

continually challenged (McLaughlin & Overturf, 2012, p. 157). With professional

development opportunities, these challenges are faced with less reservation and more

dedication and fidelity. Teachers must be innovative and creative when they connect

decisions about instructional practice to the research on reading development, particularly

in relation to the demands of the Common Core" (Brown & Kappes, 2012). With best

practice implementation, research-based strategy use and the integration of informational

writing, there will be a balance in the curriculum and enhanced learning opportunities for

the students.

Implications

The final goal of this doctoral study was to learn about current practices,

challenges, and needs of educators in Grades 3 through 5 who implemented the CCSI.

While working to meet this goal, it was my hope to eventually provide teachers in Grades

3 through 5 with resources such as a guiding booklet, information, and possible professional development opportunities that will make the transition to the CCSS and the greater focus on informational texts smooth and doable. I targeted educators that are currently within classrooms and are amidst the shift in curriculum, as well as future educators who have yet to cross the threshold of a classroom door. When the data were collected through interviews and focus groups and analyzed, the professional learning project was structured based on the outcomes of the study and a time frame was be provided for a 3-day learning opportunity.

Summary

The CCSI was developed to provide learners with the opportunity to graduate from high school with skills needed to succeed in college, a career, and life. As a result teachers are expected to teach more informational texts. Teachers at School X felt they were left to implement the new standards of the CCSI with fidelity and without the much needed support in resources and professional development that are needed to teach informational reading. The purpose of this study was to explore the challenges, needs, and current practices that educators in Grades 3 through 5 at School X practice during this transition to the CCSS and the increase in informational texts that is expected under this educational shift.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

While conducting a case study, I learned in depth about the experience of the Elementary School X teachers with the implementation of the CCSI, and specifically with the shift to more informational texts. Merriam (2009) explained that a case study makes it possible to get as close to the subject of interest as possible by being in the natural setting where thoughts, feelings, and desires can be tapped into. Merriam stated that a case study is "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit" (p. 46).

I captured complex action, perceptions, and interpretation. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007), a case study is a "detailed examination of one setting" (p.271). "Having an interest in knowing more about one's practice, and indeed in improving one's practice leads to asking researchable questions, which are best approached through qualitative designs" (Merriam, 2009, p.1). The CCSI is recent and research is needed to learn about the process and the challenges. As I conducted this case study, I was interested in how my sample, up to 11 teachers in Grades 3-5, "interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (Merriam, 2009, p. 5).

Qualitative researchers use comprehensive descriptions from the perspective of the research participants themselves as a means of exploring direct issues and problems (increased nonfiction reading) under study. In this qualitative study, I investigated and questioned how teachers perceive the changes through interviews and focus groups

focusing on teachers' needs/concerns, current practices, CCSI requirements, educational

demands, and resources. The combination of interviews and focus groups provided

qualitative data that allowed for in-depth explanations of the process.

The major types of qualitative research can provide unique perspectives and

varied insights on situations from a plethora of angles. Ethnography, like grounded

theory, can present no preset limiting of what will be observed and no real ending point

in a given study. While ethnography focuses on cultural perception, grounded theory

results from first-hand experience and attempts to explain why and how things happen

and are based on evidence and inference. Because I sought an in depth understanding of

teachers' challenges, concerns and practices in a specific setting, ethnography and

grounded theory were not appropriate. Phenomenology is preoccupied with determining

how and why something is perceived a particular way within the human mind and not

just why something happened (Merriam, 2009). Such a design could be suggested as

future research.

Quantitative data collection usually involves numbers, graphs, and charts.

Qualitative data collection methods deal more so with feelings, perceptions, and other

non-quantifiable elements (Vander Stroep & Johnson, 2010). While the first seek to

generalize, it is the later that seeks an in depth understanding, which is the aim of this

study.

Within this case study, exploration of the educational shift was sought out. As the

researcher, it was my goal to find answers to the research questions at hand while gaining

an understanding of the given research problem from the perspective of the local

population in which it involves and directly affects. With the qualitative data, there was information gained on the human side of this issue that helped to interpret and better understand the reality of the present changes. One of the strengths of this qualitative study was that the research provided a complex and textural description of how teachers are directly impacted by the increased amounts of informational text within their district, school, and classroom.

Setting and Sampling

School X is located within a district that is recognized:

Among the best in the Central Georgia Region. The students are provided with the best facilities and equipment; the schools are staffed by excellent teachers, and the school district is supported by involved parents and an active business community. Nine community members serve on an elected Board of Education. The average teaching experience for the district's teachers is over 12 years. More than 66 percent of the teachers have Master's degrees or higher; 75 have doctorates. Thirty-nine teachers have National Board Certification, three have been designated Georgia Master Teachers, and six administrators have been named High-Performance Principals. (School District X web page)

Purposeful sampling was utilized to select the sample population and to ensure an attempt to reach the population that is impacted by the shift of increased informational reading under the Common Core Standards Initiative. This was a purposeful and convenient sampling because potential participants in this study was selected not only because of their active role in newly implemented demands of the CCSI, but also on their

availability and their desire and willingness to participate in the study. The 11 invited

participants teach 3rd through 5th grade, had varied years of service and different areas of

expertise with regard to subject area and grade level, within the curriculum.

Data were collected through one-to-one interviews and a focus group. An

invitation in the form of a consent letter was provided in person with a stamped envelope

to eleven teachers in Grades 3-5 at School X, who were implementing newly required

standards under the CCSI. Only those who signed and returned the consent letter took

part in the study. Boyd (2011) stated that a sufficient number to achieve saturation is two

to 10 participants. This is backed by the suggestion made by Creswell (1998) who

indicated that "long interviews with up to 10 people" (p. 65) is suitable for a case study.

The sample was appropriate for this study since these teachers were experiencing and

implementing the new curriculum (CCSI) and were the ones who could share the

challenges, struggles, and their current practices. They were currently exploring the

fundamental concepts of this transition. This sample was adequate and reliable since the

fundamental idea for qualitative research is to "provide detailed views of individuals and

the specific contexts in which they hold these views" (Creswell, 2011 p. 111). Semi

structured interviews with open ended questions were grounded in the context of the

research and allowed for data collection to address the research questions. Implementing

the interview and focus group protocols via person-to-person data collection provided

accurate and useful data to address the research questions (Appendix B & C).

To "have any effect on either the practice or the theory of a field, research studies

must be rigorously conducted; they need to present insights and conclusions that ring true

to readers, practitioners, and other researchers" (Merriam, 2009 p. 210). There were

minimal risks for the participants in this study, meaning that the risks were no more than

what would be experienced in daily life. Participants were protected, made to feel safe

and comfortable, and were free to withdraw from this research at any time without

prejudice. The above was explained through a consent letter that was provided in person

to each participant with a stamped envelope. The letter included my contact information

and the participant had a chance to ask questions and decide to either accept or deny the

invitation and then return the letter signed to me. The consent letter also explained the

purpose of the study as well as the expected amount of time desired from each participant

for interviews, focus group and member checking. It was also noted that no payment was

received by any participant. Each participant's right to withdraw from the study at any

time was also be addressed. This consent form was part of a process called informed

consent to allow participants to understand this study and their rights before deciding

whether to take part.

I aimed to avoid deceptive practices, respect the participants and their input, mask

the identity of the participants, and protect sensitive or private information (Creswell,

2012, p. 553). I coded and analyzed the interviews without using any identification or

personal information of the participants, and by completing a member check for

transcribed interviews to guarantee the accuracy of the information collected during the

interviews and focus group. The data collected were stored in a password protected

file/computer. "Confidentiality will be preserved and each participant is a volunteer who

may withdraw from the study at any time and with no ramifications" (Simon, 2011, p.12).

The purpose of this study was to seek answers to the research questions at hand while gaining an understanding of the given research problem from the perspective of the local population in which it involves and directly affects. With the qualitative data, there was information gained on the human side of this issue that helped to interpret and better understand the reality of the phenomenon.

This study "involved research that is honestly reported, shared with participants, not previously published, not plagiarized, not influenced by personal interest, and duly credited to authors who make a contribution" (Creswell, 2012, p. 620). This study allowed collaboration with participants in the most ethical manner possible. It adhered to the regulation and guidelines of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Walden University. The study outcome provided shared expertise and proper implementation. It was my hope as the researcher that the data collected allowed a better understanding and an opportunity to learn about the challenges, needs and current practices which may enhance learning opportunities for the students. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university and then permanently destroyed. It is protected with a password, locked in a file in my home, and there was never a use of actual names.

Participants that agreed to participate in this study, participated in one, 40-50 minute semistructured interview with open-ended questions and in a 1 hour focus group meeting that provided a broad overview of issues and concerns brought to light by the new curriculum implementation. Both were conducted out of the school in a public library and were arranged to take place in a time that suited the participants.

Data Collection

Qualitative data were gathered through individual interviews and focus groups among the eleven invited teachers in Grades 3-5 at School X that signed the consent. Permission for data collection (interviews and focus groups) was granted by the school administration and consent forms were provided in hand by the researcher and signed by each participant. Data collection did not include any data based on student information. Information gathered was general and looked upon as a whole. It was imperative that the interviews conducted were "conversation with a purpose" (Dexter, 1970, p. 136). Semistructured interviews with open-ended questions that address each of the research questions (Appendix B) were conducted with each teacher individually. Merriam, 2009 stated, "Interview is the best technique to use when conducting case studies of a few selected individuals" (p.88). Interviews involved questions regarding teacher struggles, implementations, concerns, and more while providing insight into the needs, thoughts, and perceptions of those participating in the study. By implementing interviews through person to person data collection and focus group protocols, data provided allowed triangulation and contributed to the trustworthiness of the research. According to Creswell (2009), triangulated methods of data collection allow for a more concurrent, convergent, and valid study outcome. Creswell also described triangulation as being the process of corroborating evidence among varying individuals. In this study, triangulation occurred due to the varying years of service and areas of expertise among the invited educators. This provided a spectrum of knowledge with the data collected from individual interviews and focus group.

The purpose of the study was to learn in depth about the challenges, needs, and current practices; data collection included 40-50 minute interviews with all 11 participants and a single, 1-hour focus group with all 3rd through 5th grade teachers who implement the new CCSI. Holcomb (2004) emphasized that "in the absence of so-called hard data, perceptions that are shared by more than one person or group of persons provide a better basis for action." (p.78) Interview data were audio recorded, following prior consent, and notes were taken during the interview process. Drawbacks to recording with digital recorders was device malfunctions as well as the uneasiness felt by the participants that are being recorded. An iPhone or iPad was utilized as a backup device during this time. However, the practice of recording, as stated by Merriam (2009) ensured that "everything said was preserved for analysis" (p. 109). The advantage to jotting notes during the interview is that the researcher was provided with the opportunity to "record his or her own reactions to something the informant says, to signal the informant of the importance of what is being said, or to pace the interview" (Merriam, 2009, p. 109). Through these interviews, I collected demographic data on the participants' professional histories, perspectives and personal experiences with the phenomenon at hand.

Data obtained from focus groups were "socially constructed within the interaction of the group, a constructivist perspective underlies this data collection" (Merriam, 2009, p. 94). According to Patton (2002), "the object is to get high-quality data in a social context where people can consider their own views in the context of the views of others." (p. 386). Data obtained through the focus group and the individual interviews were the primary source of qualitative data collection needed for the understanding of the

phenomenon under study. "Focus groups work best for topics people could talk about to each other in their everyday lives-but don't" (Merriam, 2009, p. 94). The focus group provided an opportunity to learn more about the topic or issue.

The focus group allowed participants to elaborate on the data collected from the interviews. These questions were intended to allow for data to build on the gathered information obtained through the interviews. The questions were meaningful, rich and explanatory in their nature and allowed flexibility for the participants. I conducted a 1 hour-long focus group meeting and one 40-50 minute individual interview with each of the participants where the analyzed data from the interview were discussed and debated in general in the focus group without identifying the specific interviewee. The focus group meeting was open to all of the 11 invited participants that elect to participate in the study. All participants elected to participate in the focus group meeting.

Within this focus group, I encouraged discussion among the participants and promoted more in-depth conversation and understanding. The focus group meeting was held before or after school hours during a scheduled time that was convenient for all participants. The meeting was held in an area outside of School X at a local library where there is no disturbance; therefore, uninterrupted conversation lead to meaningful understandings of the questions and topic at hand. I recorded the data collected, with the consent of each participant, within the 1 hour focus group using a voice recorder and an iPhone/iPad as a backup device.

I personally contacted the 11 teachers who teach Grade 3 to 5 in school X and provided them with a consent letter and a self-addressed stamped envelope. Those who

mailed back the signed consent letter were contacted by phone to arrange for an interview. The interviews and the focus group took place in a public library at a convenient time for the participants.

As an educator within the same district, my familiarity with this newly implemented shift in education is clear. In an attempt to mitigate possible bias I prepared open ended interview questions and shared the interview questions with my committee members for verification purpose and feedback. I also used member-checking and personal review to examine and avoid any bias because of my close involvement with the issue. To avoid possible skew in data collection because of the close relationship between the interviewees, I decided to conduct first the individual interviews, which were treated in high confidentiality and only after completing the interviews I conducted the focus group. Alignment of the research questions and data collected is described in Table 2.

Table 2

Alignment of Guiding Research Question With Data Sources and Analysis Reporting

Research Question (RQ)	Data Source	Data Analysis Reporting
RQ1: To what extent, if any, have teachers changed their teaching to increase focus and integration of informational reading required by the Common Core Initiative?	Interviews Focus Group	Qualitative narrative summary
RQ2: How does the shift to an increased focus on more informational text affect teaching strategies and guidance that teachers provide for students' learning?	Interviews Focus Group	Qualitative narrative summary
RQ3: What are teachers' struggles, needs and current practices to implement the new CCSI expectations with fidelity?	Interviews Focus Group	Qualitative narrative summary

Data Analysis

I gathered and transcribed aualitative data gathered through the interviews and provided back for interviewees for member checking, that allowed me to gain clarification if needed, and allowed the interviewee a chance to review what they shared while establishing the crucial element of credibility. An opportunity was provided to the participants to add any information that may have been overlooked. The transcript of each interview ranged from one to three pages in length. A sample of the transcription and answers to the interview questions can be found in Appendix D.

Following these steps, the transcribed interviews were coded and analyzed. Creswell (2012) explained that analyzing qualitative data "requires understanding how to make sense of text and images so that you can form answers to your research questions"

(p. 236). By utilizing software like Microsoft Word program, I was able to make sense of unstructured information. This software provided a workspace and tools that made it easier to work with the information. Using tools provided by Microsoft such as color coding, highlight, the comment function and more, the classifying, sorting and arranging of information and qualitative data analysis was much smoother. Reading and rereading the transcripts of the interviews allowed me to identify themes, gain a much deeper insight on the data collected and create meaningful and evidence-based conclusions from the interviews.

A similar process was implemented to transcribe and analyze the data collected from the focus group. After reviewing the transcribed report an opportunity was provided to the participants to add any information that may have been overlooked and a chance to validate the data collected. The process of analyzing qualitative data (interviews and focus groups data) helped me determine teachers' perceptions and points of view on the shifts of the Common Core curriculum and the increased use of informational text.

In the event of a discrepant case, there would have been a modification of the interpretation of the transcribed data from interviews and focus groups. This would occur if the participant did not feel as if their voice was interpreted or transcribed accurately. It was my intention as the researcher to keep defensive reactions and controversy from occurring. Discrepant cases that were not clarified by member checking would have been handled by an outside judge, such as my committee members. There were no discrepant cases. "Qualitative validity [trustworthiness] is based on determining if the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant or the readers" (Creswell,

2009, 190). These member checks helped to ensure that the researchers bias did not influence how the findings were portrayed (Lodico et al., 2010).

Limitations and Assumptions

While conducting this research, it was my assumption that all selected persons would answer the questions truthfully. There is an underlying truth and benefit to the curriculum changes being made under the new CCSI. The Common Core curriculum is fairly new to the educational world in the United States. Because of this there is little research on the impact these educational standards and expectations have on the education of our students. This qualitative study with a purposeful sample of convenience and an in depth description of the process and findings allowed readers to decide if the results were generalizable to their own setting while also allowing them the opportunity to replicate the study if they too are interested.

Being a qualitative case study, this study had a few limitations. One is the small sample size. Another is the fact that the data were collected using participants from a single school. This means the results are not transferable; still, I sought to provide a thick description of the setting and the participants to allow transferability based on the readers judgements. In addition, the in-depth study could be replicated in other elementary schools that have experienced the shift of the Common Core curriculum.

Because each of the participants is employed at the same school, there was a level of comfort and trust within the interviews. On the other hand, concerns may arise due to varied experiences and grade-level. Educators may have conflicting thoughts and perceptions. I ensured that each teacher that participated was protected by using

generalizations without the need to use any personal identification element. In this research, information was generalized based on outcomes of the interviews and focus groups. Data were reported as generated themes, ideas, and concerns instead of by name to the faculty and administration of School X. This research allowed for extended collaboration that goes beyond the classroom setting that has the opportunity to impact education as a whole. The value of this research increased due to the knowledge of each participant's input. Time might have been a constraint. Participants needed to be available for an individual interview and the focus group meeting. I am a teacher myself and finding time that meets both the participants' busy schedule and my schedule proved not to be a limitation.

My relationships with teachers in School X was an advantage in making contacts with the teachers, but could also lead to some bias. To overcome this part, I decided to use a semi structured interview and get feedback from my committee members with regard to the questions that were asked. As with all research, in spite of the limitation, it was with great effort, I produced reliable and valid research that was collected in an ethical manner.

Summary of Findings

Through a series of interviews and a focus group session with the 11 consenting participants, the research questions were addressed through multiple, more direct interview questions that elaborated on the over-arching, three, original research questions. In the one-on-one, face-to-face interviews and focus group, educators from Grades 3 through 5 were asked about their (a) experiences and perceptions about the

current implementation of the CCSI in regards to language arts and the additional

requirement for students pertaining to the increase in informational reading and writing,

(b) challenges and barriers in the shift, and (c) support needed by teachers who go

through the transition. The local problem at School X identified for this study is with

deeper implementation of the Common Core, especially in the area of increased

nonfiction reading and integration of nonfiction into all subject areas, educators feel a

lack of emphasis and urgency on the shift. Educators feel ill prepared for the transition

and are lacking resources and training. The 11 participants ranged from 5-25 years of

service with an average of 14 years of experience. Each participant taught various

elementary (K-5) grade levels and all subject areas. A master's of education degree is

held by 10 of the 11 participants. One participant holds a specialists degree while

multiple endorsements have been obtained. Six teachers are gifted endorsed and one

holds a special education endorsement. Two participants held various jobs in journalism

and business prior to obtaining education degrees. These general descriptions are to

ensure confidentiality of the participants.

      Interviews and the focus group were recorded. As interviews and the focus group

were completed and transcribed, they were returned to the participant to ensure that all

data that were collected was clear, concise, and an accurate presentation of information

shared during the interview and focus group. Only the person interviewed received their

transcription of their interview. The process of member checking ensures that the data

provided in this study is accurate and enhances the trustworthiness of the study while

adequately verifying the information gathered and analyzed. There were no discrepant

cases and the information was correctly transcribed and approved by each and every participant.

It is important to remember that the same questions were asked in both the interviews and focus group. The focus group was intended to gain a deeper understanding of the perceptions, concerns, and needs of the educators that presented themselves in the previous interview and to build upon the answers provided earlier in the interviews. The focus group allowed us to dig deeper into the needs and concerns.

When answering RQ1, "to what extent, if any, have teachers changed their teaching to increase focus and integration of informational reading required by the Common Core Initiative?", teacher perceptions about the increase of informational reading required by the Common Core included an ultimate support of the implementation. Educators at School X, in the building have been required to make minimal changes due to earlier implementation and focus on nonfiction reading within the school as early as 2014. This increase in informational texts is perceived by Participant A as "a great tool to increase vocabulary and inferencing skills among students." It was also described by Participant E as an "attempt to increase test scores and improve overall reading levels." While Participant F's overall perception of the implementation is that of "truly beneficial," there are definitely challenges presented, which require a change in how the content and materials are being used and taught. Within School X, there is an overall support for the increase in informational reading at all grade levels because of a previous, school-wide push on nonfiction reading. School X had already "beaten Common Core to the punch in pushing informational reading"

(Focus Group, Participant C).

It was stated in each interview that students at School X are rewarded for meeting milestones of 25, 50, 75, and 100 nonfiction books. These students become a part of the "Nonfiction Club." Educators in grades four and five indicate that "students are expected to read two nonfiction books a week and test on them through the Accelerated Reading Program." Within the 3rd grade classrooms, teachers "highlight a nonfiction book of the month that is based on current standards" (Participant D). Since the implementation of the CCSI, the students have been allowed and encouraged to integrate nonfiction materials other than a textbook into daily instruction. In the focus group, Participant H actually stated that "nonfiction dominates my classroom library."

The most common way that increased informational reading has changed the classrooms of each and every participant is that educators "have less time for novels and fictional stories like fairy tales." This was stated by and reiterated by each of the participants within the focus group meeting. There is an increase in constructed response where students are "explaining their thinking as they are reading." This has required educators to teach new strategies such as R.A.C.E., where students restate, answer, cite text evidence, and explain. This change is evident in each teachers' classroom. It was mentioned in several of the interviews that "reading is a job for students now and less of a joy" (Participant G). In many of the classrooms, "creativity is becoming less evident" because informational reading "doesn't always lend itself to anything other than reading to learn" (Participant H). All participants, in both the interviews and focus group also

indicated that there is a need for "research about useful informational resources" and ways to use the texts that are on the shelves of the library and their classrooms.

While looking at RQ2, "how does the shift to an increased focus on more informational text affect teaching strategies and guidance that teachers provide for students' learning?", the participants expressed that within this transitional time students should be "given strategies to simplify informational reading" (Participant A) and educators need to "research useful informational reading resources" (Participant E). Teachers shared in the focus group that they have used websites like Scholastic that have suggested strategies like posing questions, skimming a text, and connecting the text while applying it to content, background, information, or prior knowledge. Lessons should be taught "about the elements of nonfiction, nonfiction text structure," and students should be provided with "loads of encouragement" (Participant E). "Teacher modeling on how to read informational texts" can also prove to be beneficial during this transitional time (Participant C). Because this is a new way of reading, learning, and teaching, educators must be prepared.

When students are seeing and hearing the teacher, they are hearing fluency, developing connections, becoming motivated to read, and building vocabulary. Informational texts require more "thinking and a deeper vocabulary." With nonfiction, the content vocabulary must not only be introduced, but learned, understood, and mastered. Skills like context clues and inferencing are vital during this transitional time. Teaching informational texts also requires an "upfront knowledge and/or research about the topic being discussed" (Participant A). Online scavenger hunts or "fun facts" provide

some background before new content is introduced (focus group). While fictional reading

provides a "storytelling moment" (Participant F), it is more challenging to do this within

informational texts. This becomes quite challenging. Fictional pieces lend themselves to

be "more entertaining" and it is difficult to always keep the learners engaged"

(Participant G) in regards to informational reading. The biggest difference, as stated by

Participant G is that "students must be guided to reread and focus on vocabulary" while

fictional reading allows students to "visualize and make deeper connections." If

nonfiction is integrated more often into the already crowded curriculum, the task of

"telling the story," visualizing, and making deeper connections becomes positive, less

daunting and more familiar for learners and educators alike.

     RQ3 was used to learn the teachers' struggles, needs, and current practices when

they implement the new CCSI expectations with fidelity. The participants were clear with

their struggles and needs within this time of change. While most participants feel

prepared to implement the increased informational text demands under the Common

Core, lack of time to teach the content and the need for more time in regards to time on

task are repeated concerns among each and every participant. Through discussions during

the focus group, it was shared by many that the content load is great and there must still

be time provided for specials like art, music, computer lab, and PE. Grade levels that are

departmentalized are provided even less time on a daily basis. Statements regarding a

lack of specific preparation from the county or state was repeated more than once by each

participant in both interviews and focus group in addition to the desire for more

professional development on how to teach using informational texts while still being provided the time needed for other content areas.

When making the transition more productive and successful for both educators and students, it was stated by each and every participant that there should be a gradual release instead of expecting a full understanding all at once. The desire for a more balanced literacy program was clearly identified by each and every participant because of the concern that learners would lose the desire to read for enjoyment and would associate reading with something else they MUST do in the already over loaded curriculum.

The triangulation of the data, collected through both interviews and focus groups, captured different dimensions of the same phenomena. While the interviews were much more personal, addressing the specific concerns, needs, and perceptions of a single person, that are grounded in the context of the research, the focus group provided a dynamic that lead to brainstorming, generation of ideas, and a productive meeting of the minds that all have an invested interest in the Common Core and the increased expectations of informational reading in the classrooms. The focus group allowed for elaboration and deeper understanding. This combination of the two served as a way to validate the results and data collected.

Regarding the conceptual framework of constructivism, this study allowed educators and students an opportunity to learn to connect and integrate informational reading into a variety of learning activities. This study, like constructivism, cultivated new perceptions of newly obtained knowledge in both the students and teachers alike.

Under the theory of constructivism, the educators' main goal should be to make meaningful connections and this study aimed to do just that.

The themes that emerged from this data indicated that these elementary school teachers believe that time, professional development, and creativity are important components in the implementation of increased informational reading in regards to the CCSI. The common themes can be easily identified in the sample of the transcripts located in Appendix D. These themes can also be identified in the table below.

Table 3

Identified Themes and Teacher Percentage of Contribution for Grades 3 to 5 at School X

Theme Identified	Percentage of participants whose responses (in both focus group and interviews) supported the identified themes
Professional Development	11 out of 11; 100%
Lack of Creativity	10 out of 11; 91%
Time	9 out of 11; 82%

Regarding time, several participants, in the interviews, voiced their concerns about the lack of time. Increased amounts of time are needed to effectively and efficiently implement these increases in informational reading and writing. The focus group provided the suggestion of implementation of the nonfiction reading/writing into all areas of the curriculum. There was also repeated mention of the lack of preparation and professional development opportunities on how to teach students to read informational text and how to make this transition and create a balanced curriculum in regards to the increased amounts of informational text required under the Common Core. While

educators are accustomed to teaching the stories of award winning fiction materials, there is a concern that the increase in informational reading will take the creativity out of the language arts classroom.

The themes identified within the interviews through the analysis were looked at in a more in-depth manner. While the questions remained the same in the focus group setting and were addressed in the same manner, the participants were able to share their responses and build upon the responses of others, creating a more vivid and accurate picture of the needs, concerns, and perceptions.

As evidenced in the interviews and restated in the focus group, the concern among teachers was time when discussing the increase in informational reading within the classroom. When discussing the need for integration in the focus group, Participant C suggested that "once a week classroom teachers should meet, plan and determine ways that informational texts/reading/writing can be integrated throughout the curriculum." Participant F added to this comment by mentioning even "rotating the integration between social studies and science." Participant A suggested "using informational texts in lieu of the reading anthology." All participants agreed that the schools implementation of the Nonfiction Club also proved beneficial in implementing the increased number of informational texts needed. The suggestion to "provide nonfiction material that correlates with the current content being taught in the classroom for the students to read in order to become members" was also unanimously accepted by all participants (Participant D).

Concerning the need for professional development each of the participants agree that it is much needed. Participant J suggested a "hands-on learning opportunity" and

Participant K added "over a couple of days." There was suggestions for lesson studies in

the classrooms of other teachers, but this idea was not agreed upon by the majority.

Participant E said there was just a need for "ideas and ways to teach what is being asked

of us." "We need ideas and resources" was the concern and need of Participant H.

Participant C added, "We need someone to offer up ways to keep the curriculum

balanced, doable, and somewhat fun for our students."

Through deep and meaningful discussion and the analysis of the data collected

through the interviews and focus group, it became clear that a true learning opportunity

be provided to these participants that are eager and willing to learn and meet the needs of

their students. As a result of the needs raised by teachers, the next stage will be the

development of a 3-day professional development opportunity for School X faculty and

staff that will address a variety of ways to manage time while providing an abundance of

resources to the teachers on how to successfully integrate the increase of informational

reading into their classrooms while also being able to maintain the level of creativity that

has been present in past years. The PD opportunity will provide a direct connection

between the needs of educators and the conceptual framework of this study. Within the

constructivist classroom, learning becomes student centered and learners become actively

engaged in materials directly connected to content curriculum. The goal of the PD, like

constructivism, will be to spotlight the importance of making meaningful connections

between prior knowledge and facts, and cultivating new perceptions of newly obtained

knowledge.

Conclusion

Data were collected in an ethical manner that protected the participants and their identity, while keeping the confidentiality of the data collected at the forefront. Next, I will share the results of the data analysis and share teachers' perceptions of the challenges, needs and current practices in the shift to more informational texts as part of the Common Core. Throughout this next process, I adhered to the recommendation made by Creswell (2012), "Respect the people and places you visit and enjoy the process" (p. 1).

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

Section 3 is a description of the project created to address the problem addressed in this study. Embedded here are the goals of this project and the justification based on the data collected. A rationale for the project is supported by a review of literature that consists of materials located through the Walden Library. The review of literature consists of articles and research pertaining to informational text and the relationship with the common themes of time, professional development, and creativity that were identified during the data collection process. Steps for the implementation of the project are addressed. Also included is a timetable for the implementation a plan for evaluating, and a discussion of the implications of social change that this project intends to bring about. Additional documents pertaining to this project will be added and available within Appendix A of this study.

The decision to develop a PD opportunity was a result of the findings of the study. This opportunity will best meet the needs of the teachers and ultimately, the learners. The ultimate goal of the 3-day PD opportunity is to expand the knowledge of elementary teachers on ways to incorporate informational reading in the classroom. This opportunity will provide the teachers with necessary knowledge and skills to better understand the concepts behind the increases in informational reading within their classrooms as implied by the CCSI. The PD will also provide these educators an opportunity to exchange effective ideas and strategies that may or may not prove beneficial with colleagues and share ideas while creating new ways to engage the learners. Ultimately, this plan will

support the educators as they embark on this new way of teaching. They will find confidence in implementing this increase in informational reading in an effective way throughout the curriculum in ways that save time through the integration of informational text across the curriculum and into all subject areas. Through creative activities that integrate nonfiction that will be presented during the PD, educators will walk away with ways to better engage the learners in this new learning presented under the Common Core. Possible solutions to educators' questions and concerns will be addressed.

Program Outcomes

Elementary teachers will take with them ideas, strategies, and knowledge of the benefits of informational reading across the curriculum and in each classroom. Through this opportunity, educators will learn to effectively and efficiently collaborate with colleagues to establish relationships while also planning and developing activities, and obtaining resources that will lend themselves to student success in regard to the increased demand of informational reading under the Common Core requirements. Elementary teachers will spend time learning with others and developing instructional strategies to deliver content in a concise and effective manner with ease, confidence, and fidelity.

To determine the measurable outcomes, a survey of open-ended questions presented at the end of the 3 days about what they learned that was new, what they want to try, what they did not find useful, and suggestions for future learning opportunities on this topic, will provide clear feedback on the intended results. In this feedback, teachers will have the opportunity to scrutinize the program, offer positive feedback on the goals, objectives, and the overall standard of success. The feedback will provide clarity,

feasibility, strengths, weaknesses, and the overall worth of the professional learning opportunity. The goal of this PD is to develop a minimum of three clear, concise, and detailed lesson plans that will integrate at least three various strategies that can be utilized in Grades 3-5 for informational reading and the integration into the current curriculum. These plans will be submitted to me in addition to the resources that will be needed. I will review these resources for accuracy and distribute both digitally and as a hard copy to each teacher.

Program Objectives

As a result of their previous introduction and implementation of increased amounts of informational reading, elementary teachers will be able to vocalize and share the benefits of this increase and how they currently, and effectively implement it into their classrooms. Elementary teachers will be able to better plan and implement effective instruction into the curriculum by integrating the informational reading into the classrooms. Due to the time spent through collaboration with grade-level partners and cross-grade level partners, educators will leave the expert learning sessions with the required aptitudes and a more profound knowledge, understanding, and overall comprehension for viably executing guideline that will take into account the expansion in instructive perusing. With the professional development training sessions, elementary teachers will understand their roles in the CCSI as they increase informational reading.

Table 4

Professional Development Session Focus and Outcomes

PD Session	Focus	Outcome
Session 1 (Day 1)	Collaboration across grade levels; integration of informational reading across the curriculum	Each educator will provide a resource (website, graphic organizer, article, assessment, etc) that will be distributed and shared with all educators at the end of the PD.
Session 2 (Day 2)	Creativity and integration of informational reading/texts in all content areas (identifying text structures)	Grade levels will share the way in which they currently integrate informational reading, how they encourage/promote informational reading, and how grade levels ensure creativity
Session 3 (Day 3)	Creation of lesson plans, integration of resources collected from Day 1	Educators will have resources and lesson plans in hand to take back to classrooms and implement in their instruction

Rationale

The 3-Day PD was chosen because it most effectively met the needs of the

educators in School X. Participants in the study made it clear that it was their want and

need to support the learning of their students. By offering a professional development

opportunity, educators are able to spend 3 days deepening their knowledge of how to

better manage time, how to integrate informational texts into all areas of the curriculum,

and familiarize themselves with ways to keep the learning creative and new while still

meeting the requirements set forth by the CCSI. This will all be accomplished through

collaboration.

While the development of a teacher resource would have proven valuable, the collaboration among colleagues would not have been evident. It is important to develop a culture of collaboration. "Collaboration is identified as an essential twenty-first century skill, and research supports that professional learning is enhanced by collaboration among teachers" (Morel, 2014, p. 36). Collaborative processes should be promoted and this professional development opportunity does just that over the course of 3 days.

Timetable

The 3-Day Professional Development Training Session based on needs and themes identified during the data collection and analysis stage, will take place the week of August 29, 2017. The professional development will be held during the 3 days of post planning for educators in School X. The 3, consecutive days of training will begin at 8:45 am and run through 3:15. Within this time, there will be breaks and a lunch provided. The plan in its entirety can be viewed within the appendix of this study.

Review of Literature

In the following review of literature, current research obtained through the Walden Library will be shared that will support the themes of professional development, time management, and creativity that were identified during the data collection and analysis process. The PD theme is what inspired and thus resulted in the project that will be produced through this study. The PD will directly implement ways to integrate informational reading into the current curriculum, make nonfiction engaging, creative, and maybe even fun, and create ways to save time.

Through the use of the Walden University Library and research databases like ERIC and Education Sources, peer-reviewed articles and research was obtained. Keywords used included *collaboration* and *professional development, creativity in the Language Arts classroom,* and *integration of informational text.* The biggest challenge faced was the fact that the increase of informational reading under the CCSI is fairly new and there is not an over-abundance of previous research done.

Collaborative Professional Development

PD can be described as an educational experience that relates to a person's work. In education, PD and the achievement of students can be improved and deepened with PD. In order to promote educational gains in both students and teacher, there must be sustainable professional development opportunities that allow for growth in the rapidly changing world of education (Yoo, 2016; Antoniou, Kryiakides, & Creemers, 2015). "Policymakers, community leaders, and parents have a responsibility to ensure that educators within their schools engage in continuous professional learning and apply that learning to increase student achievement" (Mizell, 2016, p. 2). Teachers who embrace professional development recognize that it can be achieved through collaboration with other educators. Traditional professional development practices do not easily lead to collaborative learning (VIF International Education, 2016). A collaborative approach on professional development allows educators to take ownership of their own professional development and learning. With this type of professional development, the personal network of each of these educators expands and teachers receive recognition within their grade-level, school and district. Within many schools, the structures and demands of teaching creates many barriers among the

educators. When educators come together to create an environment that is innovative and collaborative, professional development opportunity will thrive.

According to Keane and Kennedy (2016),

Teachers navigate contradictory landscapes of policy and procedure that can pull them in different directions. This can result in undermining their own engagement, their ability to innovate, and ultimately, their ability to focus on what they know the students need. (p. 5)

PD that is designed in a collaborative manner will allow educators to capitalize on their innovative abilities while staying focused on what is needed by the students and required by the curriculum. Now is the time to create PD that can organically blend the tools, resources and ideas educators are exposed to each day into more impactful lessons and instruction.

Opfer and Pedder (2011) summarized three interrelated and commonly illuminating frameworks: The learning action framework which incorporates proficient advancement exercises, their lucidness, open doors for reflection and time for managed use of new taking in of knowledge; the instructor learning framework that interfaces the instructor's convictions, qualities, and recognitions; and the school/region fundamental setting which would include the school practice, schedule, and strategies (p.378). Teachers clearly value becoming a cohesive group (NRC, 2012). Professional development's ultimate goal is to improve learning for both the educators and the students.

PD is the link between teachers' individual skills and knowledge that should be shared collaboratively and the contribution they, as learners themselves, make to students, classrooms, and schools (Vracar, 2015). A successful PD opportunity should

furnish instructors with the chance to expand their personal insight, share and develop

new teaching strategies, and deepen their understanding of the learning opportunity at

hand (increased informational reading under the CCSI. According to Hirsch (as cited in

Killion, 2012), the Executive Director of Learning Forward, if a school wants to improve

teacher effectiveness, the most powerful tool is PD. Dynamic and viable expert discovery

and learning that takes into consideration instructors concentration on particular needs

inside their classroom has been found to enhance educating rehearses (Stewart, 2014).

With the need to meet more rigorous standards under the CCSI, educators are

going to have to learn to teach in a distinctively different manner. "Students will need

teachers who continually work to deepen their own knowledge of the content so that they

can help their diverse students make multiple connections to the standards" (Cogshall,

2013 p. 1). Educators must be upheld by astounding and proficient adaptations within

their classrooms now and all through their profession in this consistently evolving

vocation.

Creativity in Teaching Informational Literature

With the pressures of the ever changing curriculum and demands placed on

classroom teachers, it proves to be difficult to keep the classroom active and creative.

Education and learning is intended to open a learner's mind, enhance the learning that is

taking place, and engage the learner. Hands-on learning is an incredible approach to

apply an inventive contort to customary course content and connect with understudies on

a more profound level. Backers for dynamic learning concur that the most enduring

learning comes through direct understanding and collaboration with the scholarly, social,

and physical conditions (Edwards, Kemp, & Page, 2014; Nesin, 2012). Dewey (1924) described learning as "something an individual does when he studies. It is an active, personally conducted affair" (p. 390). Educators must learn to teach the way the learners learn best. Active learning is more likely to achieve effective learning that can develop deeper understandings of the content being presented within the classroom.

The center of a student's learning is the classroom. Making sure that a classroom that brims with creativity, both physically and through activates, is the privilege of being a teacher (http://www.fusionyearbooks.com/blog/creative-classrooms/). Being creative has come to be defined as a way that one may invent what did not happen or describe what was not there (Gutkind, 2016). It is a definite possibility to be both informative, yet brilliant and creative, all at the same time. The ultimate goal of a classroom teacher is to have students that are as enthralled by facts and nonfiction just as they are about the fantasies of the make-believe worlds.

With the CCSI, it is imperative that students are provided this opportunity. " If we have the courage to embrace nonfiction reading and writing as an art form, perhaps we will inspire our students to freely speak their minds like King, Lincoln, and Roosevelt" (Sun-Kleinberger, 2013, p. 1). According to the blog, Creative Classrooms (as cited in Guerro, 2016), a classroom that is creative looks and feels different. Such classrooms are an environment where a student is more likely to express personal ideas, think in an unorthodox way, develop creative solutions to problems, and be a faster and more effective learner.

Stories shape lives and in some cases, can define a person. It is the job of the classroom teacher to keep this creativity alive within the language arts classroom. With the increased requirements of nonfiction under the Common Core, this can prove to be difficult. The storytelling aspects of a novel need to be implemented into the presentation of nonfiction material that is taught within the classroom. Nonfiction has a reputation for being very dry; but, it does not have to hold true to that reputation. Educators should find ways to add dialogue, figurative language, and stylistic approaches (Djikic, Oatley, & Moldoveanu, 2013). By using nonfiction to tell a story instead of just restating facts, students will remained engaged in the content and their creativity will soar.

Time Management and Curriculum Integration

Teachers have less time to teach than many people think. Responsibilities and activities such as lunch, breaks, recess, time between lessons, transitioning from classroom to classroom, and non-instructional time accounts for 27% of an average elementary school day (Scholastic, 2016). In some classrooms, that figure can be as high as 40% (Scholastic, 2016). In school, like anywhere, there are new demands and requirements put onto the students and teachers. This is in addition to the curriculum, programs, and expectations that are already in place. Managing time is the greatest challenge facing educators in today's classrooms. Effective time management is one of the skills necessary for success in the classroom; unless a person can manage time, they will be unable to manage anything (Drucker, 1954). This time that must be dispersed in an effective manner begins with a total amount of allocated time.

There must be instructional time on task where the teacher is actively teaching, engagement time for student learning, and academic learning time where what the students have learned can be demonstrated to indicate that the curriculum and content has been mastered. One way that a teacher can save time is through the integration of nonfiction into other content areas. The priorities of an elementary curriculum are ELA and math; science and social studies compete for remaining instructional time among the core content areas (Heafner & Fitchett, 2012). Because there is not time allotted for the reading, it is clear that integrating this new requirement into all areas of the curriculum.

Integration of nonfiction reading into content areas like social studies will allow students and educators a way to make the facts "dance together" (Zarnowski, 2014, p. 7). Zarnowski (2014) provided an example of how this can be done. *Locomotive* by Floca (2013), allows teachers to join various components—principle thought, structure, style, incorporation of visual data, and disciplinary considering—to make a consistent and fulfilling entirety (Bloom, 2013). Dissecting how these components cooperate gives a dynamic state of mind about content, one that spotlights on how creators utilize different content elements of true to life writings to skillfully shape required substance. Nonfiction features in this book are supported and reflected within the CCSS which emphasize the importance of informational texts. "Readers are expected to understand how the main idea of a text is supported through evidence, how authors craft and structure their work, and how information can be integrated from several sources on the same topic" (Zarnowski, 2014, p. 7). By utilizing books like *Locomotive*, educators are allowed to save time and integrate the curriculum and content required in other content areas.

Teachers can design informational reading curricula most powerfully by embedding these skills and literacy materials into the already crowded curriculum of Social Studies and Science (Lloyd & Wertch, 2016).

Social studies is often neglected in the classroom because it is not always tested on the state-mandated tests (Bogdan, King-McKenzie, & Bantwini, 2011; Lloyd & Wertch, 2016; Zarnowski, 2014;). However, informational reading strategies and comprehension are tested. By utilizing the social studies curriculum that is submerging learners in a deeper understanding of the world, educators can embed the informational strategies and comprehension skills into this subject area and develop more in depth lessons while saving time. While not a new idea, integrated curriculum has been around since as early as the 1800s and was set into action by Dewey (1954) who sums it up by stating,

> The child's life is an integral, total one. He passes readily and quickly from one topic to another, as from one spot to another, but is not conscious of transition or break. There is no conscious isolation, hardly conscious distinction… He goes to school, and various studies divide and fractionize the world for him. (p. 9)

By coordinating educational programs, educators are given the chance to make connections with important lessons that plan to exhibit higher-order thinking and encourage figuring out and delving deeper into how to meet the many orders and prerequisites proposed by the CCSI (Honey, 2011). Making the facts dance together is a useful metaphor for thinking about the process of bringing nonfiction to the forefront of all content areas (Heafner & Fitchett, 2012; Zarnowski, 2014;).

Project Implementation

The implementation of this 3-Day Professional Learning Opportunity is the phase where the visions and plans of this study become a reality. This project is the conclusion of research and data collection and analysis. The vision of this project is bases on the needs of educators. The goal of this project is to educate elementary teachers at School X on how to effectively implement the increase of informational reading into their classrooms, to provide them with necessary knowledge and skills to understand this increase, to provide an opportunity to collaborate, to provide support, solutions, and to address the needs and concerns of the teachers.

Evaluation Plan

To determine the measurable outcomes of this project, open-ended questions will be asked that will allow educators to answer questions regarding what they learned, what can be used, what can be improved, and what suggestions can be offered in regards to additional professional learning opportunities. By being able to answer such questions, teachers will have the opportunity to scrutinize and offer positive feedback that will provide a clear and concise outcome to the learning opportunity. This evaluation process will require the researcher to improve areas before presenting elsewhere and to know what parts of the learning opportunity are the most beneficial. The survey will be done by each educators on paper.

Summary

The data collected and analyzed indicated that educators had a desire to collaborate and integrate while keeping classrooms creative. Through the development of

a 3-day professional learning opportunity, teachers will be provided with just that.

Educators will take with them from this learning opportunity and project ideas, strategies,

and knowledge of the benefits of informational reading across the curriculum.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

As the Common Core curriculum sweeps the classrooms across the county and the increases in informational reading have proven challenging, educators can seek comfort in knowing that they are not in this alone. While these requirements with nonfiction have produced questions, concerns, and perceptions related to time management, professional development, and forming a creative nonfiction classroom, the desire for balance in an over-crowded curriculum with high demands proves difficult. While I attempted to address these concerns, there are still evident strengths and limitations embedded.

Following the data collection process and analysis of the data collected through both interviews and focus groups, common themes emerged and a project was developed to address these themes. As a result of the data, a PD opportunity was developed as a way to address these questions, concerns, and the perceptions of educators in Grades 3 through 5 at School X. The PD opportunity directly addresses the common themes that emerged within analysis.

Project Strengths and Limitations

The ultimate strength of this project is that the participants indicated throughout the focus group and interviews that PD was required in order to address the needs and concerns of these educators in regards to increased informational reading under the Common Core. Strengths of this project include the collaboration of educators across grade levels, an engaging learning opportunity that provides and leaves educators with

lesson plans, and resources that can be taken back to classrooms and used to meet the needs of their students. The participants in this study played an active role in the development of these resources which means there is a direct correlation between what they need and what is produced within the PD opportunity. The learners in this PD become actively engaged in material and their interest and direct association with this shift taps into their prior knowledge and understanding (Doyle, 2011; Jones, 2007; Wiemer, 2002). The educators that attend this learning opportunity will assemble a list of resources that will benefit their classrooms and their students while also being the creators of lesson plans that will incorporate current standards and the strategies presented during the PD in a collaborative manner. PD proves to be the most beneficial when it involves collaboration (Attard, 2012; Desimone, 2011; Williams, 2013). This project addresses a current issue in education that is currently affecting the participants of the PD. With PD opportunities that apply to the needs of educators, they are able to become innovative and creative while connecting decisions based on collaboration to the explicit demands of the CCSI (Brown & Kappes, 2012).

Limitations within this project can be linked to the number of participants as well as the limitation of a particular school versus a region or district. I do not believe that the data in any way were skewed. This project also addresses only the Grades 3 through 5 while the implementation of the common core applies to learners in all grades. However, the purposeful sampling used in this study required me to have a target number of participants that ultimately helped to make sense of the problem and the research questions at hand (Glesne, 2011; Hancock & Algozzine, 2011; Leclarc 2012). The

participants in this study did just that. An additional limitation is the time frame. A 3-day

PD may limit the resources and lesson plans that will be provided as opposed to an

ongoing PD. This puts the additional planning on the classroom teachers on their own

time. This project is in no way intended to solve all the problems facing the educators

that are implementing these curriculum changes, but to alter the approaches being used

and building the confidence needed to present the material with effectiveness. While

budgets are tight within classrooms, the cost of a PD also serves as a limitation.

<h3 style="text-align:center">Recommendations for Alternative Approaches</h3>

While it was my choice, as the researcher, to conduct a qualitative study and to

develop a professional learning opportunity as a result of the data collection and analysis,

there are various approaches. While this qualitative study addresses the needs and

concerns of the educators that are experiencing this shift first-hand, a quantitative

approach would provide the actual impact of this shift on the achievement and learning of

the students. While I addressed the needs, concerns, and perceptions of the educators,

how they can make this educational shift successful, and how they can successfully

implement the increased informational reading requirements under the Common Core,

this study does not directly address the effects this shift has or will have on the ones

directly affected.

The research and collection of data guided me to create a 3-day professional

learning opportunity. The development of this opportunity directly correlates with the

needs, concerns, and perceptions that were shared during the collection of data through

the interviews and focus groups. The PD will provide resources and time for

collaboration so that educators, together, can create lesson plans, develop a list of valuable resources, and build a level of confidence and trust across the grade levels. There are definitely ways that the project could have been done differently.

One additional idea would have been to create a manual of sort that provided the educators with a list of ideas and strategies obtained through research. There could have been a handbook of sorts that would list resources that are supported by research. This would have limited the collaboration that is present in the current project.

An active website or blog site could have also been a way to approach this project. This would require that the educators take an active part to add resources, lesson plans and links, and feedback to other educators. This would be an ongoing project that if done and attended to correctly, could benefit the educators for an extended amount of time. Widespread involvement by all educators would be the only way to obtain the results needed.

Scholarship

As I look back at the journey that I began over 3 years ago, I realize that I have grown as a research, a student, and an educator. As a result of this project study, I have gained knowledge through my countless hours of research and reading of scholarly literature. I have developed a deeper understanding for implementation of the CCSI while also developing a understanding for the educators, their needs, concerns, and perceptions. Through discussion posts I have learned to think more critically and reflectively. Time management has been enhanced and I have gained a true respect for the online learning community of Walden University. I have become a confident researcher and as each day

passed, my hesitations and questions with scholarly writing was diminished. Because of this journey, I am a better version of myself.

Scholarship was learned through the hours of feedback provided by my professors and peers. The coursework taught me to research, write in a scholarly manner, think critically and to put things into perspective. Through this journey I have learned to collect and analyze data. I became aware of how to recognize common themes, code them, and even interpret the findings of my own research. The guidance offered was impeccable.

Project Development and Evaluation

By planning the 3-day professional learning opportunity, I realized that there is hard work and an enormous amount of planning put into an opportunity like this. In addition, focus and dedication to the task are critical. With the understanding gained throughout the data collection and analysis part of this study, I was given a deeper understanding and respect for the needs and concerns of the educators involved. The PD opportunity was directly tailored to the needs and concerns of these exact participants through the common themes that emerged. Because of this, their learning and professional growth can be maximized. This PD opportunity must present results and make the biggest impact possible. In order to measure these results and impacts, the perceptions, thoughts and feelings will be targeted through open-ended questions at the conclusion of the PD.

Leadership and Change

A leader must emphasize actions that make change obtainable and smooth. Socrates is attributed with saying that the secret of change is to focus all energy not on fighting the older ways, but building on what is new. By completing this project study, I was able to focus on the new requirements under the CCSI in regard to informational reading. In doing so, I did not emerge myself in questioning why, but dove head first into the ways in which this transition could be made smooth and successful. Special people are needed to truly inspire another. Through my research and completion of this project study, I realize that I am one of those people. Through the hard work, dedication, and time put into this period of my life, I was able to create a study that will change the perception of educators, encourage collaboration among colleagues, and offer confidence in the task at hand. My time spent listening and speaking to educators, colleagues, and friends played a part in my own personal perceptions of this educational shift. My drive and my desire to do great things will ultimately affect others in this same way.

Change requires time. Change requires willingness. Change requires commitment. Change requires understanding. A leader creates a common ground where people can join to face these challenges together. Through the creation of this project, I have created a common ground for educators that will address their needs and concerns and will offer a chance to collaborate, build relationships, and develop an understanding and new respect for the change that is. My vision of becoming a leader has come full circle. I have made a positive change though my contributions, my talents, my knowledge, and my efforts throughout this journey.

Analysis of Self as Scholar, Practitioner, and Project Developer

I have developed and implemented a project that addresses the current needs and concerns of educators. In addition, this project will educate and better prepare these educators for the change within the academic field. This contribution positively affects the school environment. Because of these things, I am able to identify myself as a scholar, a practitioner, and a project developer.

A scholar is one that is always learning. As an educator and a researcher, I am a life-long learner. Therefore, I am a scholar. As a scholar, I have learned how to research, how to collect data and analyze it. I have also learned how to build my opinions and thoughts based on research and the literature obtained through the research. Through this research and project study, I have also learned how to present my findings in a scholarly manner.

I have been an educator for 13 years. This doctoral process has created a drive in me to be better. Because of the life skills taught to me through this rather difficult road, I have become a better teacher and colleague. The research I have done on a topic that I too am directly involved with and passionate about, has created in me a true understanding of what is needed to make this shift smooth, effective, and beneficial to all that are involved. I have established a true voice that is informed and scholarly. My thoughts are more critical and creative. Being an educator is a tough task, but it is most definitely one of the most rewarding.

While I take an active role in my school and district, the biggest thing I have ever done is develop a professional learning opportunity for people that I have looked up to

for many years. As a project developer, I have proven myself as a scholar and successful practitioner among my friends, colleagues, and administrators. The knowledge gained throughout this research and project study and my skills as a researcher and educator allow me to present an opportunity that offers positive social change. It is my goal that this project will serve as a positive tool for educators.

The Projects Potential Impact for Social Change

The decision and inspiration to create this 3-day learning opportunity was a result of the data collected through the focus groups and interviews. This study contributes to the scholarly research on the integration and increased amounts of informational reading under the CCSI. During this data collection and analysis process it became clear that the needs and concerns of these participants could be directly impacted by the creation of this learning opportunity. This PD will offer the opportunity for educators to collaborate, create materials that will make the transition of increased amounts of informational reading a doable task. The implications for positive social change include the entire realm of collaboration and integration in education and the learning organization in its entirety. Educators working together is a vital part of education and together, they create an atmosphere that promotes collaboration. In addition, the positive social change and creation of the project creates opportunities for all to succeed, to clearly define roles and the expectations of all active parties, and improve professional practices. With these opportunities and implications for positive social change, the result will ultimately lead to student achievement, improvement in the preparation for college and career readiness and success in the classrooms under the new expectations of the CCSI.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

At the beginning of this doctoral journey, I was not sure of the direction that I would take. With every course assignment, every piece of literature read my vision and outcome became more and more clear. During my collaboration with the 11 participants in this study, it became evident that their need for PD and the concern for the increase in informational reading could be met through my project. The planning and design of the 3-day professional learning opportunity was created based on the perceptions, needs, and concerns of each participant during the data collection process. While these 11 teachers inspired the creation of this PD, it is my hope that this learning opportunity reaches further than the library of School X and will ultimately impact educators across the district, state, and further. This PD opportunity will build confidence, tap into the knowledge and dedication of the educators that inspired this project.

Conclusion

As I begin the final two paragraphs of my project study, my mind is bombarded with the memories of this path. This journey began more than 3 years ago and has consumed my life in many ways. It has required time, dedication, and sacrifice. There have been baseball games missed, bedtimes that come and go without mom because she is almost finished. There have been countless nights of alone time on the couch while my husband and children sleep. It has been a journey of emotions from fear to frustrations, feelings of accomplishment and even some failures. It has not been easy and has proven to be the most difficult path I have chosen to take. In the same sense, it has been and will continue to be one of the most rewarding experiences. The growth in myself as a person,

a teacher, a colleague, a researcher, a practitioner, a scholar, a program developer and so many other things is just astounding.

Looking back at the coursework throughout my journey with Walden University, I can honestly say and believe that I am a leader of change. My time spent researching, collecting and analyzing data, and creating a project that truly meets the needs of the participants has allowed me to create a project that will represent social change. The project will meet the needs of educators and instill in them the desire for collaboration, creativity, and focus on the management of time. The success of this project weighs on me and my ability to implement it successfully and with concise effectiveness. The students, teachers, and administration at School X will be affected in the most positive way by this project. My heart, time, and belief for a better way will shine through. This project creates a foundation of change, confidence, and hope in a time of uncertainty in the field of education.

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Appendix A: The Project

Professional Development 3-Day Training Session
Goals, Outcomes, and Objectives

Program Goals
   A. Educate elementary teachers on Informational Reading in the classroom.
   B. Provide elementary teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to understand the concept of increases informational reading within the classrooms.
   C. Provide elementary teachers with the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues.
   D. Provide support to elementary teachers as they plan and implement effective ways to increase the use of informational text within their classrooms and across the curriculum.
   E. Provide classroom teachers with possible solutions to the concerns and questions that they have about the increased amount of informational reading.

Program Outcomes
   A. Elementary teachers will understand the benefits of informational reading across the curriculum and in each classroom.
   B. Elementary teachers will utilize their strengths and ideas that prove successful in their own classrooms to collaborate with colleagues to establish relationships and plan for student success in regards to the increased demand of informational reading.
   C. Elementary teachers will spend time learning with others in an environment that is conducive to collaboration and provides the needed time desired by the educators to develop instructional strategies and lesson plans to deliver content in a creative and meaningful way. Collaboration is something that all educators are more than willing to do if provided adequate time to do so.

Program Objectives
   A. As a result of the introduction to the increased amounts of informational reading, elementary teachers will be able to identify the benefits of this increase and how to effectively implement it into their classrooms.
   B. As a result, elementary teachers will be able to plan and implement effective instruction into the curriculum by integrating the informational reading into the classrooms.
   C. As a result of the time spent with colleagues, elementary teachers will leave the training sessions with the necessary knowledge and skills for effectively implementing instruction that allows for the increase in informational reading.
   D. As a result of the professional development training sessions, elementary teachers will understand their roles in the Common Core Standards Initiative in regards to increased informational reading.

Resources that can be used to assist in planning the Professional Development (PD)
These resources were used to develop the ideas, strategies, and activities that are to be used during the PD. They are not used as direct links to anything that will be used directly within the PD.

http://www.weareteachers.com/blogs/post/2015/03/04/don't-skip-the-table-of-contents-9-ways-to-teach-nonfiction-text-features?utm_campaign=RenaissanceAR360&utm_medium=Social&utm_source=PIN&utm_content=Blog+5

http://www.nciea.org/publications/TextStructures_KH08.pdf

http://www.edweek.org/tm/articles/2013/02/20/tln_kriete_plc.html

http://onestopteachershop.com/2014/12/free-resources-for-non-fiction-texts.html

Target Audience
- Elementary School Teachers

Format
A variety of approaches that include:
- Question and Answer Sessions
- Brainstorming
- PowerPoint Presentation
- Demonstration Exercises/interactive
- Activating Strategies
- Cognitive Strategies
- Summarizing Strategies

Timetable
The 3-Day Professional Development Training Session should take place August 2017. The planning should begin by the end of the 2016-2017 school year (May 2017) in order to establish more concrete information for the administration for the training sessions and provide adequate time to prepare and collect resources.

Materials and Equipment
- Name tags for participants
- Pencils, paper, or laptops
- Sticky notes
- Chart paper or poster board, markers, tape
- Links to resources for teaching/implementing informational reading
- Handout

- Audio-visual equipment
- PowerPoint Presentation
- Evaluation Forms
- Flash drives
- Letter of invitation

Professional Development 3-Day Training Session
Agenda

Day 1 Agenda

8:45-9:00	Coffee and muffins ☺

9:00 – 9:30	Facilitator will guide the group in the following activities:
	- Welcome/Inspiration
	- Introductions – facilitator states, "Please introduce yourself by stating your name, the grade level you teach, and one expectation you have for this training session."
	- Icebreaker Activity and video
	    ○ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SFnMTHhKdkw
	    ○ The activity will build group rapport and provide an overview of the objectives for the training.
	- Establish purpose (norms) for why we are teaching informational reading under the CCSI.
	- Facilitator will state the purpose of the training session: "The purpose of the training session is to address the needs, concerns, and problems faced by educators in grades 3-5 in regards to the implementation of increased informational reading within the classrooms and across the curriculum".
	- Facilitator will state the learning goals: "The learning goals are that teachers in grades 3-5 will be better prepared to promote and effectively implement increased amounts of informational text into the curriculum through in depth collaboration."
	.

9:30-12:00	- Facilitator will provide background on research and data analysis. Concerns, questions, and challenges will be shared. - Educators will be provided with nonfiction article and asked to analyze it using various graphic organizers. Articles will be pulled from the website below. http://tweentribune.com/category/junior/ http://outofthisworldliteracy.blogspot.com/p/freebies.html (above is a link for free printable graphic organizers for nonfiction reading skills) - Facilitator will provide instructions for breakout session.

	Breakout Session:
	• Brainstorming Session/Share Mixed grade levels (3-5) will create a list of things they would like to learn and take back to their classrooms from this professional development opportunity. • Groups will collaborate to develop lesson plans and/or ideas to share. Teachers will have access to the internet to locate websites (videos, interactive games, etc…) *must correlate with a standard taught in each grade-level in reading/social studies/science.
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-3:00	• Continued Work Session where groups will continue developing activities and preparing to share with other educators ways to implement the increased nonfiction reading into the classroom and across the curriculum. • Reflection and Sharing (educators to provide feedback of the most useful information of the day, the least useful, and provide suggestions or pose questions)
3:00-3:15	Dismissal and "homework assignment" *all educators will be provided with the task of bringing in one website that will serve as a useful resource within the classroom for teaching informational reading (this can include graphic organizers, articles, assessments, etc…)

Day 2 Agenda

8:45-9:00	Coffee and donuts ☺
9:00 – 9:30	Facilitator will guide the group in the following activities: • Welcome/Inspiration • Collect "homework" • Icebreaker Activity and video • https://youtu.be/RwlhUcSGqgs • Remind educators of purpose (norms) for why we are teaching informational reading under the CCSI. • Facilitator will re-state the purpose of the training session: "The purpose of the training session is to address the needs, concerns, and problems faced by educators in grades 3-5 in regards to the implementation of increased informational reading within the classrooms and across the curriculum".

	• Facilitator will re-state the learning outcomes: "The learning goals are that teachers in grades 3-5 will be better prepared to promote and effectively implement increased amounts of informational text into the curriculum through in depth collaboration." .
9:30-10:30 10:30-12:00	• "Text Feature Surgery" (educators will provided with surgical mask and gloves and an informational text/magazine). They will work together to complete a foldable where they identify the text features of the text. http://storyworksideabook.scholastic.com/2016/04/text-features-surgery?linkId=25029657 **Breakout Session:** • Brainstorming Session/Share continued from Day 1 Mixed grade levels (3-5) will create a list of ideas and resources that are currently used in their classrooms that will benefit the students and teachers. • Groups will collaborate to develop a lesson plan and/or ideas to share. Teachers will have access to the internet to locate websites (videos, interactive games, etc…) • Collect materials
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-3:00	• A representative from each grade-level (3-5) will share the following… *-How does your grade-level integrate informational reading into other content areas* *-How does your grade-level encourage and promote the reading of informational texts among your students?* *-How does your grade-level ensure that the creativity of your teaching and your students' learning is not put in jeopardy due to the increase of nonfiction text?*
3:00-3:15	Reflection and Sharing Dismissal and collection of materials

Day 3 Agenda

9:30-10:00	Mingle with Muffins
10:00-11:00	Facilitator will guide the group in the following activities: • Welcome • Flocabulary (Text Features)

	https://www.flocabulary.com/unit/text-features/video/ • https://youtu.be/RwlhUcSGqgs • Remind educators of purpose (norms) for why we are teaching informational reading under the CCSI. • Facilitator will re-state the purpose of the training session: "The purpose of the training session is to address the needs, concerns, and problems faced by educators in grades 3-5 in regards to the implementation of increased informational reading within the classrooms and across the curriculum". • Facilitator will re-state the learning outcomes: "The learning goals are that teachers in grades 3-5 will be better prepared to promote and effectively implement increased amounts of informational text into the curriculum through in depth collaboration." .
11:00- 12:00 12:00-1:00	• "Create Your Own Nonfiction Magazine" (educators will be provided with materials to create their own nonfiction magazine that includes all the text features. They will create on that correlates with a standard from their grade level in either social studies or science. http://www.teachingwithamountainview.com/2014/02/nonfiction-text-structures-features.html **Breakout Session:** • Brainstorming Session/Share continued from Day 1 Mixed grade levels (3-5) will create a list of ideas and resources that are currently used in their classrooms that will benefit the students and teachers. • Groups will collaborate to develop a lesson plan and/or ideas to share. Teachers will have access to the internet to locate websites (videos, interactive games, etc…) • Collect materials
1:00-2:00	Lunch
2:00-3:00	Finalize lesson plans/units that were created. Each "group" should have a lesson/activity for each grade-level and each of the subject areas (reading/social studies/science).
3:00-4:00	Survey/Q & A/Dismissal and collection of materials *all participants will be provided with the websites submitted from each of the participants on Day 2, any printable for the two activities completed (Nonfiction Text Features Surgery and Create Your Own Nonfiction Magazine) • Provide time for reflection and sharing amongst teachers. Survey:

	-What did you find to be the most beneficial part of the professional development (be specific)? -What did you find to be the least beneficial part of the professional development (be specific)? -What is something that you wish would have been done during the PD? -Is there any suggestions or any additional questions that you would like to pose? -On a scale from 1-5 (five being the best), how would you rate your experience over the last 3 days? -Tell one thing that you will most definitely implement into your classroom immediately.

Letter of Invitation for PD

3rd-5th Grade Teachers,

Please join me in the library from 8:45-3:15 on August 29th through the 31st for a professional learning opportunity. I will share with you my research and study, *Teachers' Perceptions of Increased Informational Reading Implemented Within the Common Core,* based on the data collected and analyzed.

During this 3-Day learning opportunity we will build and deepen knowledge about informational reading, how to integrate it into all areas of the curriculum, and collaborate to develop lesson plans and lessons that can be taken back to your classrooms. Please bring your flash drives, computers, imagination, and collaborative soul. This will be a time of learning and reflection. I look forward to seeing you all.

PowerPoint Presentation for PD

1

2

What is the Common Core...why the change?

-50% of what 3rd-5th graders are reading should be **NONFICTION**!

-nonfiction is typically neglected in early grades (Duke and Block 2012)

-broader range and understanding of informational texts in elementary school prepares them for later grades (vocabulary knowledge, comprehension strategies, and conceptual/content knowledge)

3

What was the purpose of my study and why are you here?

• The purpose of the study was to explore the challenges, needs and current practices that educators in grades 3 through 5 at the study site practice due to the increase in informational texts.

• The research questions address how teachers have changed their methods, how their teaching has been affected, and the struggles and needs of the current implementation.

• The conclusion of this study and the analysis of the data inspired a 3-day professional development opportunity that provides educators with an opportunity to collaborate, create, engage, and learn while addressing the common themes revealed (need for professional development, time management/integration curriculum, and keeping the language arts classroom creative).

4

COMMON THEMES THAT EMERGED THROUGH DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS:

-need for professional development (collaboration)
-need for more time (integration)
-concern about loss of creativity

Attention....all resources that are used will be provided to each of you!

5

Day 1:

- 8:45-9:00 Coffee and Muffins
- 9:00-9:30 Welcome, Icebreaker, Inspiration, Group Activity
- 9:30-12:00 Nonfiction Article Analysis/Breakout Session
http://sarahwheeler.cmswiki.wikispaces.net/Nonfiction+Analysis
    Breakout Session: develop lesson plan/idea
- 12:00-1:00 LUNCH
- 1:00-3:00 Work Session/Collaboration Continued
- 3:00-3:15 Reflection and Sharing, "Homework", Dismissal, and collection of materials

6

Day 1:

-Teachers will participate in an activity that incorporates nonfiction text (this can be taken back to classrooms)

-the link on the previous page will provide the expectations of the "students" (educators participating in the activity (hard copy to be provided as well)

-teachers will collaborate and engage in the development of a lesson plan that does the same (resources should be shared and a list of resources will be provided to all teachers)

7

Grades 2-5   24 cards, each with a text feature definition and activity

Nonfiction Text Features Task Cards

✓ 18 different text features
✓ Addresses CCSS: RI 3.5, 3.7 and 4.7
✓ Use with any nonfiction book!

Breakout Session: educators will work together to create a lesson plan/activity that will integrate informational reading into another content area (this should be able to be taken back to the classroom and adjusted across all grade levels).

8

Day 2:

- 8:45-9:00 Coffee and Donuts
- 9:00-9:30 Welcome, Icebreaker, Inspiration, Group Activity
- 9:30-12:00 Text Feature Surgery/Breakout Session
     http://storyworksideabook.scholastic.com/2016/04/text-features-surgery
     Breakout Session: develop lesson plan/idea
- 12:00-1:00 LUNCH
- 1:00-3:00 Work Session/Collaboration Continued
- 3:00-3:15 Reflection and Sharing, "Homework", Dismissal, and collection of materials

9

Day 2:
-Teachers will participate in an activity that incorporates nonfiction text (this can be taken back to classrooms)

-the link on the previous page will provide the expectations of the "students" (educators participating in the activity (hard copy to be provided as well)

-teachers will collaborate and engage in the development of a lesson plan that does the same (resources should be shared and a list of resources will be provided to all teachers)

10

Kid President's Pep Talk to Teachers and Students
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RwIhUcSGqgs&feature=youtu.be

Text Feature Surgery -students engage in taking apart a nonfiction text

11
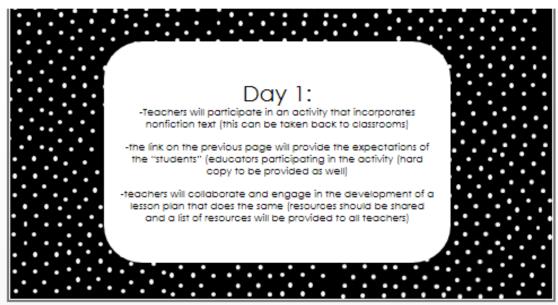
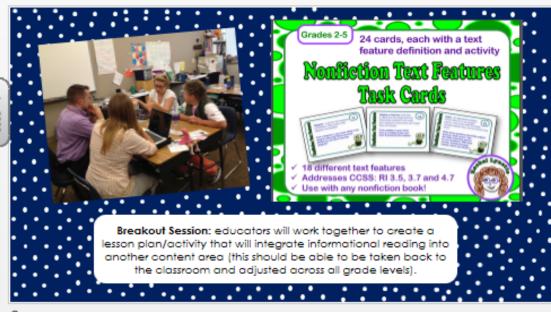# Day 3:

- 8:45-9:00 Coffee and Cupcakes
- 9:00-9:30 Welcome, Icebreaker, Inspiration, Group Activity
- 9:30-12:00 Nonfiction Magazine/Breakout Session
http://www.teachingwithamountainview.com/2014/02/nonfiction-text-structures-features.html
  Breakout Session: develop lesson plan/idea
- 12:00-1:00 LUNCH
- 1:00-3:00 Work Session/Collaboration Continued
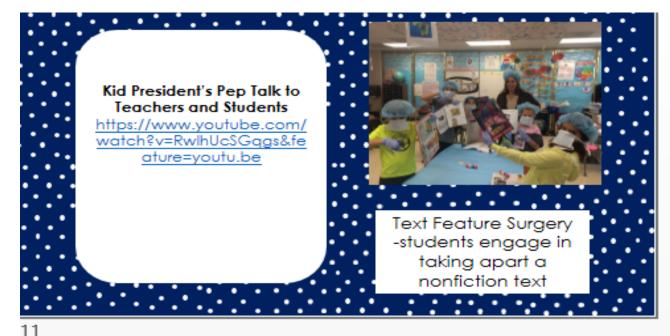- 3:00-3:15 Reflection and Sharing, "Homework", Dismissal, and collection of materials

12

Day 3:

-Teachers will participate in an activity that incorporates nonfiction text (this can be taken back to classrooms)

-the link on the previous page will provide the expectations of the "students" (educators participating in the activity (hard copy to be provided as well)

-teachers will collaborate and engage in the development of a lesson plan that does the same (resources should be shared and a list of resources will be provided to all teachers)
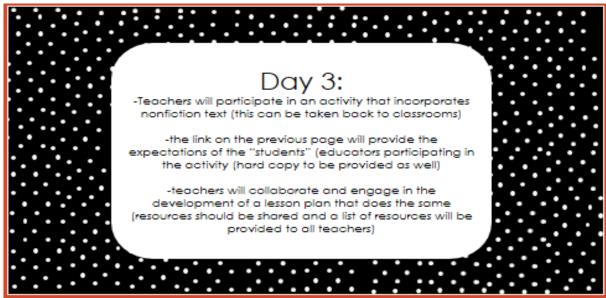
13

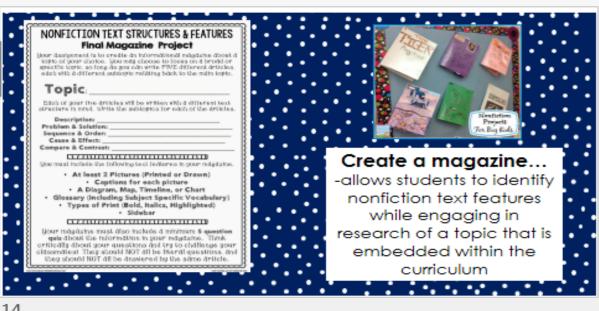### NONFICTION TEXT STRUCTURES & FEATURES
Final Magazine Project

Your assignment is to create an informational magazine about a topic of your choice. You may choose to focus on a broad or specific topic, so long as you can write FIVE different articles each with a different subtopic relating back to the main topic.

Topic: _____

Each of your five articles will be written with a different text structure in mind. Write the subtopics for each of the articles.

Description: _____
Problem & Solution: _____
Sequence & Order: _____
Cause & Effect: _____
Compare & Contrast: _____

You must include the following text features in your magazine.

- At least 2 Pictures (Printed or Drawn)
  - Captions for each picture
- A Diagram, Map, Timeline, or Chart
- Glossary (Including Subject Specific Vocabulary)
  - Types of Print (Bold, Italics, Highlighted)
    - Sidebar

Your magazine must also include a minimum 5 question quiz about the information in your magazine. Think critically about your questions and try to challenge your classmates! They should NOT all be literal questions, and they should NOT all be answered by the same article.

Create a magazine...
-allows students to identify nonfiction text features while engaging in research of a topic that is embedded within the curriculum

14

-What did you find to be the most beneficial part of the professional development (be specific)?

-What did you find to be the lea -What did you find to be the most beneficial part of the professional development (be specific)?

-What did you find to be the least beneficial part of the professional development (be specific)?

-What is something that you wish would have been done during the PD?

-Is there any suggestions or any additional questions that you would like to pose?

-On a scale from 1-5 (five being the best), how would you rate your experience over the last 3 days?

-Tell one thing that you will most definitely implement into your classroom immediately. st beneficial part of the professional development (be specific)?

-What is something that you wish would have been done during the PD?

-Is there any suggestions or any additional questions that you would like to pose?

-On a scale from 1-5 (five being the best), how would you rate your experience over the last 3 days?

-Tell one thing that you will most definitely implement into your classroom immediately.

15

Many Thanks…

Thank you to each and every one of you that participated in the study, dedicated your time and your knowledge. You have each added great depth and insight into this learning opportunity. Thank each of you for your time and participation and the knowledge you have provided in the lessons that have been created. This is serve as a resource that can be added to and manipulated for years to come.

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Appendix B: Interview Protocol

I am a doctoral student studying the challenges, needs and current practices that teachers in grades 3 through 5 at School X practice during this transition to the Common Core Standards, in regards to language arts, and more specifically to the increase in informational texts.

I am studying this topic to help meet the needs of classroom teachers in grades 3-5 while addressing their needs, challenges and concerns. I hope to use this information to provide needed resources, and to determine future professional development or workshops to educator that will lead to successful implementation of these new requirements in School X.

A letter of informed consent that needs to be signed before the interview process proceeds will be provided to each participant. The letter explains the study. All participation information will be confidential. I will be audiotaping the interview and then it will be transcribed to make sure I accurately record all information. I will be asking questions about the implementation and requirements of the Common Core Standards Initiative in regards to increased informational/nonfiction reading. If someone decides later not to participate in the study, they may drop out at any time without repercussions and I will not utilize the data.

All participants will need to sign the informed consent in order to participate in the study.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the study. All questions listed below relate directly to

the research questions.

Interview Questions:

1. How do you perceive the increase in informational reading required by the Common Core Initiative? Can you provide any examples from the transition to more informational texts in your classroom? (RQ1)

2. What are some ways that you have already moved toward increased informational reading? (RQ1)

3. How do the new informational reading requirements change the way you do your job? (RQ 1 and 2)

4. In what ways can you benefit your students during this transitional time? (RQ 2)

5. How do you think teaching informational texts differs from teaching fictional texts? Can you share some educational strategies that you find beneficial? (RQ 2)

6. How prepared do you feel about the implementation of the Common Core Standards Initiative with regards to the increased amounts of expected informational reading/writing within your classroom? (RQ3)

7. What are some concerns, if any, that you have with the increased amounts of informational reading within the current curriculum? (RQ3)

8. What do you think could be done to make the transition into this new learning more productive and successful? (RQ3)

9. What do you feel would benefit you the most in regards to implementing this new set of standards and expectations in regards to informational reading/writing? (RQ3)

10. What do you think about the following statement, "exposing young students to informational text is beneficial; teachers must also teach them how to read it." (Duke, 2004). Elaborate. (RQ3)

Appendix C: Focus Group Agenda

In planning and scheduling a time that is convenient for most people, the focus group meeting will take no more than 1 hour. The setting of the focus group meeting will be open, with good air flow and lighting. All participating members will be configured in a way that they can all see one another. Nametags and refreshments will be provided.

I intend to set some ground rules for the participants that will help to foster participation and keep the session moving along appropriately. The ground rules are as follows: 1. Stay focused on the subject/question, 2. Keep the momentum of the conversation going, and 3. Get closure on each question.

Each participant will be provided with an agenda of how the focus group will flow and information will be recorded for accuracy. A welcome, a review of the agenda, sharing the goals of the meeting, review of the ground rules, introductions, questions, and answers will be concluded with a wrap up.

Facilitation of the session will begin with an introduction of myself followed by an explanation of why this focus group is being held and the need for the recording of the conversations. The agenda will be followed and each and every question will be read carefully and discussion will be held to obtain an answer. All questions and answers will be recorded and notes will be taken. I aim to ensure that all participants are involved equally and that no one person dominates the conversation. Each person

will be given an opportunity to answer the questions asked and elaborate on the

answer before and after. All participants will be thanked and reminded that they will

receive a copy of the report that is generated as a result of the discussion. Immediately

following the focus group meeting, the recording will be checked to make sure that the

group in its entirety was recorded. Additional notes will be added in addition to any

observations made during the meeting. The following is the focus group meeting

agenda

Time allocated: 1 hour

Welcome: If you are present then you have provided a signed consent to participate in this study. I first want to thank you for taking the time to provide your personal challenges, needs, and insight on current practices utilized within your classrooms during the implementation of the new Common Core demands. You will be asked a series of questions. When each question is addressed, I ask that you write a written response that will be submitted to me as data. Your answers will remain confidential. Following this, I will restate the question and open it up for discussion. This is a time to speak openly and honestly about your personal experiences. Again, your answers will remain confidential. This focus group will be recorded. If at any time you wish to remove yourself from the group, you are free to do so. You will each be provided with a report that will be generated with the information gathered from this focus group meeting. I ask that each person remain active and refrain from the domination of one participant. Each of your experiences, all of your challenges, and the importance of your needs are of equal value to me.

       The purpose of this study is to learn about the challenges, needs, and current practices, among 3rd through 5th grade teachers who implement the new CCSI in regards to increased informational reading. In addition, I aim to seek answers to the research questions at hand while gaining an understanding of the given research problem from the perspective of the local population in which it involves and directly effects. With the qualitative data there will be information gained on the "human" side of this issue that will help to interpret and better understand the reality of the phenomenon.

The purpose of the focus group is to provide an opportunity to learn more about the topic or issue. The focus group allows participants to elaborate on the data collected from the interviews. These questions are intended to allow for data to build on the gathered information obtained through the interviews. The questions will be meaningful, rich and explanatory in their nature and allow flexibility for each participant.

Ground Rules: The following ground rules will foster participation while keeping the session moving along appropriately. The ground rules are as follows:

- Stay focused on the subject/question
- Keep the momentum of the conversation going.
- Get closure on each question.

Focus Group Questions: (The final questions will be finalized after all interviews are

conducted transcribed and coded.)

1. Reflecting back to your interviews, please share your thoughts on the Common Core Standards Initiative and your preparation or lack thereof to successfully implement this shift within your classroom.

2. Share your thoughts, insights, or concerns about the increased amounts of informational reading that is required under the Common Core Initiative.

3. As a grade level, what are the changes that you have made to implement the new requirements in regard to the Common Core Initiative and informational reading/writing?

4. As a grade level, what do you feel are the biggest concerns in regards to this shift?

5. As a grade level, what do you feel are the biggest benefits in regards to this shift?

Appendix D: Sample of Data Analysis

1. **How do you perceive the increase in informational reading required by the Common Core Initiative? Can you provide any examples from the transition to more informational text in your classroom? (RQ1)**

A: Informational reading is a ==great tool== to ==increase vocabulary== and inferencing skills with students. I feel as though there is too much emphasis on it and there should definitely be a better ==balance between all genres== in all grade levels.

B: I personally feel that the increase is ==needed.== It creates a ==foundation== for later in life when the students will be required to read ==complex== texts in preparation for college. In my room, students are required to have a nonfiction book from my library with them at all times. The second book from the library can be anything they want. Our district's adopted reading anthology has many informational stories. I also use and incorporate the guided leveled readers from the anthology into my lessons as well.

C: The goal of the Common Core Initiative is to increase information reading so that students are ==prepared== to become individuals that ==are career ready and life-long learners==. In my classroom, I utilize the informational text more so in the areas of Science for ==research purposes==. I think the goal of this increase will ==prove to be beneficial in the long run==, but it is requiring tons of ==adjusting== within the classroom right now.

D: Our school had already beat Common Core to the punch in the push for increased informational reading, so the transition for us hasn't been that difficult. In my opinion, informational is much more ==challenging== to teach and read, but the ==benefits== are worth all educators and learners tackling the challenge.

E: I perceive the increase in informational reading required by the Common Core Initiative as an ==attempt to improve== the reading levels and ==test scores== of our children in the state of Georgia and across the nation. Examples in my classroom exists specifically in the texts that fill my classroom library. Prior to this initiative, I did not typically purchase nonfiction/informational selections. I personally prefer reading fiction, and I always passed that interest to my students. Currently, I am always searching for informational texts to make my classroom library more well-rounded. In addition to reading options, I look for informational reading comprehension passages so my students are familiar with this type of print/text. I have been amazed at the increase in their abilities.

F: I see the increase in informational reading required by the Common Core as an ==extremely beneficial== for children. In general, life will require them to read informational text such as Internal Revenue Service instructions and insurance policies. Even before adulthood, students will be exposed to more complex text. If students are unable to comprehend a middle-school textbook, this could lead to further problems like ==frustration== and a failure to master important standards in the remaining part of their educational career.

In my classroom, students whose favorite genre is nonfiction have had little to no trouble handling the increase in nonfiction reading. However, many students who gravitate more towards fiction as a genre have found the ==transition to be more difficult==. These students

are not accustomed to reading sidebars and other text features, along with studying the glossary and scanning the words in the index.

G: The amount of informational reading required by the Common Core Initiative is a benefit for our students. Through more informational reading, the students are learning more about how to locate and use science and social studies resources to learn. Also, students are learning to refer back to text and reread which will benefit them in higher grades.

H: In regards to reading/ELA, there is less time spent on fictional reading and prized literature is being placed on the back burner in preparation for standardized testing based on informational texts. Teachers are incorporating more informational reading into the core of their lessons. Within our school, Accelerated Reader (AR) is dominated by the nonfiction reading requirements. Students who are not avid nonfiction readers are becoming less and less engaged as readers because they are being forced to read a genre that doesn't naturally appeal to them.

I: The increase seems to have an ultimate goal of being beneficial to learners in the long run. It is obvious that the Common Core is geared to creating life-long learners that are prepared for the real world. The concern for me is that we are driving these students away from books and requiring a reading that we as educators were not taught to teach and as students, we didn't learn in this manner.

J: The goal of the Common Core Initiative is to increase information reading so that students are prepared to become learners that are geared towards more complex text in the upper grades. In my classroom, I utilize the informational text more so in the areas of Science and Social Studies for research purposes. I think the goal of this increase will prove to be beneficial in the long run once educators are trained on how to teach this genre with fidelity. At this moment, students and teachers are ill prepared in adjusting to this goal presented by the Common Core Initiative.

K: ~~As a math teacher, this question is difficult for me to answer. I do not utilize a lot of literature in my classroom so I don't have a clear perception of what this increase means to the classroom teachers.~~ (Because this is a math teacher this comment was not utilized)

Appendix E: Invitation and Consent Letter

CONSENT FORM

You are invited to take part in a research study that will request your presence in a

maximum of two interviews and two focus groups. These meetings are intended to gather

data based on the shift in education in regards to the newly adopted Common Core

Standards Initiative and the increased amounts of informational reading/writing in grades

3 through 5. The purpose of this study is to explore the needs, challenges, and current

practices of educators at Britt David in implementing increased amounts of informational

text into the curriculum set forth by the Common Core Standards in grades 3 through 5.

Your needs, struggles and best practices will be collected and analyzed to better learn

how to enhance the transition to the common core requirements.

The researcher is inviting third through fifth grade teachers that are

experiencing the educational shift that correlates with the newly implemented Common

Core Standards Initiative that will bring insight and perspective to the study.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Waverley Parkerson, who is
a doctoral student at Walden University. You may already know the researcher as a
teacher, but this study is separate from that role.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is to seek answers to the research questions at hand
while gaining an understanding of the given research problem from the perspective of the
local population in which it involves and directly effects. With the qualitative data there
will be information gained on the "human" side of this issue that will help to interpret and
better understand the reality of the phenomenon.

Procedures:
If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:
- participate in one, 40-50 minute, semi-structured interview with open-ended
  questions that will be recorded with an audio recorder.

- participate in one focus group, lasting one hour that will provide a broad overview of issues and concerns brought to light by the new curriculum implementation that will be recorded with an audio recorder.

Transcription of the interviews will take approximately one month. The same is true for the focus group. At the conclusion of the transcription, you will be provided with transcripts of your personal interview for the purposes of member checking. Each participating member will receive a transcript of the focus group as well for the same purpose listed above. Both steps in the member checking process will be done via email. The process of member checking, in regards to the transcripts, should take about 30 minutes per transcript (interview and focus group). Changes, if needed, will be emailed and updated by the researcher.

Here are some sample questions:

- How well prepared do you feel about the implementation of the Common Core

  Standards Initiative with regards to the increased amounts of expected

  informational reading/writing within your classroom?

- What are your thoughts on the increase in informational reading and student

  success?

- How do the new informational reading requirements change the way you do your

  job?

- What are some concerns that you have with the increased amounts of

  informational reading within the current curriculum?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one at Walden University and/or Britt David will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time. There will be no form of compensation offered or provided for your participation in this study

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

There are minimal risks for the participants in this study. Participants will be protected, made to feel safe and comfortable, and will be free to withdraw from this research at any time.

The study outcome will provide shared expertise and proper implementation. It is expected that other schools that are currently embarking on this educational shift are able to conduct this same study. It is the hope that this study will assist other classrooms, schools, and districts make this educational shift more smoothly and with great success. By gaining information from experienced teachers that are experiencing common happenings in the world of education, educators across the county can benefit from this study.

Privacy:

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. The researcher intends to ensure that each teacher that participates is protected by utilizing generalizations without the need to utilize any personal identification element. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via phone or email at parkerson.waverly.c@muscogee.k12.ga.us or 706.527.1610. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 612-312-1210 (for US based participants). Walden University's approval number for this study is **IRB will enter approval number here** and it expires on **IRB will enter expiration date.**

The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep.

Thank You,
Waverley Parkerson
Ed.D Candidate; Walden University

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By signing below, I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Printed Name of Participant

Date of consent

Participant's Signature

Researcher's Signature