

2018

Perceptions and Experiences of Teachers and Literacy Coaches' Literacy Instruction

April Jessup Giddens
Walden University

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April Jessup Giddens

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the review committee have been made.

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Walden University
2018

Abstract

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by

April Jessup Giddens

MA, Northwestern State University, 1998

BA, Northwestern State University, 1996

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

March 2018

Abstract

The literacy rate in Louisiana remains lower than the national average. This is especially true at Rosewood Elementary School (pseudonym), a D-rated school on a scale of A-F. The problem is that teachers are unsuccessful in trying to improve students' literacy test scores, despite several targeted efforts to give them tools to make these improvements. The purpose of this study is to explore the literacy practices, beliefs, and professional development of teachers at Rosewood Elementary. The conceptual framework of this study included Clark and Peterson's cognitive process teacher model, which focuses on teachers' thought processes and their behaviors in the classroom and guides the questions about these processes. The key research questions involve 3rd-5th grade teachers' and literacy coaches' perceptions of their current professional learning on and support for effective literacy instruction, as well as the literacy coaches' perceptions of teachers' needs and struggles with teaching literacy. This case study includes sequential data collection including a survey, interviews, and classroom observations from 9 purposefully selected literacy teachers in Grades 3-5 and 2 literacy coaches, all from Rosewood Elementary School. Constant comparative data analysis was used for interview and observational data, and descriptive analysis was used for the survey. Findings include both teacher and coach perspectives. Training on classroom management and differentiated instruction was needed. A 4-day professional development was developed to address these needs. Implications for social change with improved literacy instruction include an increase in student literacy rates as well as teachers' self-efficacy in literacy instruction.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this to my husband, Mike, and my children, Hannah, Timothy, and Emma Rose. You were my encouragement and inspiration throughout this process. I believe that “With man this is impossible, but not with God; With God, all things are possible” (Mark 10:27, NIV).

Acknowledgments

I must thank my mother and my first teacher, Louise Thaxton, for the constant reminder that I can achieve anything. Your consistent example of hard work and determination influenced my life. Thank you to my sisters, Shawn, Ginger, Anna Lea, and Beth. Each of you taught me patience and perseverance.

I would also like to acknowledge my committee chair, Dr. Amy White. Thank you for the encouragement and support throughout this process. The emails, phone calls, and countless hours you spent guiding me through this journey were a blessing. I could not have done this without your support and reassurance.

I would like to thank my second chair Dr. Laquisha Brown Joseph and my URR Joel Goodin for your feedback and support. Your dedication and commitment to seeing me succeed are greatly appreciated.

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Section 1: The Problem

Literacy is a concern for educators across the state of Louisiana, as well as in the local school district. Yet, literacy scores throughout Louisiana lack improvement according to the Louisiana Department of Education (Louisiana Believes, 2015). Only one-third of the students that took the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Assessment in the Spring of 2015 scored mastery or higher on the reading and English portion (Louisiana Believes, 2015). Literacy rates among adults in Louisiana further indicate a problem, as 20% of the population is considered illiterate (Proliteracy, 2016).

The National Center for Educational Statistics and the Institute of Educational Sciences (NCES) showed that Louisiana students perform below the national average. They reported that 37% of the students taking the fourth grade standardized test performed at a level considered “below basic” in literacy skills, ranking Louisiana 44th out of 52 states and provinces in the United States (NCES, 2016). These literacy rates triggered several literacy initiatives in the state of Louisiana, including Ensuring Literacy for All, K-12 Literacy Pilot Project, and Reading First (Picard Center for Child Development, 2016).

Included in Louisiana’s Adolescent Literacy Plan are five core components. They include leadership and sustainability, standards-based curriculum, assessment system, instruction and intervention, and professional learning and resources. The plan is part of a response to intervention (RTI) plan developed in Louisiana (Louisiana Believes, 2009). Certain schools in Louisiana have been equipped with literacy coaches, who support and

encourage literacy across all content areas, as well as target specific strategies to increase literacy scores. According to Louisiana Believes (2011), the Comprehensive Literacy Plan and literacy coaches have been in place in Louisiana for 6 years, but schools are still struggling with students' literacy levels (Louisiana Believes, 2014).

Definition of the Problem

In one rural, low-performing school, teachers are struggling to improve literacy scores in Grades 3-5. Teachers have thus far been unsuccessful in trying to improve students' literacy test scores despite several targeted efforts to give them the instructional tools to make these improvements.

A teacher at Rosewood Elementary (RES; pseudonym) claimed that she had tried every strategy she knew, but was still unsuccessful in increasing literacy achievement at the study site. Another teacher explained that because the students are so far behind in their reading skills, it is twice as hard to remediate their skills. Students are missing basic literacy skills that make it difficult to be successful. Due to a transient population of students at RES, teachers also feel it is difficult to make progress.

RES has taken action to emphasize the importance of literacy in all classrooms by including it in the School Improvement Plan. According to the plan available online by RES, the school goal is to increase literacy proficiency for students in Grades 3-5 (Rosewood Elementary School Improvement Plan, 2015). The district also provided professional development on literacy via a supervisor at RES. According to documentation from the 2014-15 school year at RES, a district supervisor provided literacy professional development five times throughout the school year (Smith, 2015).

Improving students' literacy and test scores is a recognized priority throughout the school. In order to improve test scores, teaching essentials must be met.

Effective professional development could directly impact proximal student learning as well as have positive outcomes for teachers (Learning Forward, 2011). Some professional development was offered in the RES district to teachers, through a grant. Over the last 5 years, the school has been a part of the Striving Leaders Comprehensive Literacy (SRCL) grant. This grant program began in 2006 and allocated up to \$25,000,000 dollars, each, for eight winning grants. Louisiana was given over \$24,000,000 in 2014 and more than \$23,000,000 in 2013 (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). The SRCL grant funds schools in Louisiana and focuses on improving reading and writing for all children from birth to the 12th grade (Louisiana Believes, 2013). This grant dictates what professional learning must take place at the school.

According to a District School Board report in 2013, most of the SRCL required professional learning opportunities centered on the use of commonly used specific programs such as *iSteep*, *DIBELS*, and *MIMIO* (Louisiana Believes, 2015). Although the SRCL grant provided some professional development, additional professional development may be needed for teachers to fully utilize these methods for improving literacy scores in this rural, underperforming school.

The district has provided limited effective literacy professional learning in the last 3 years. Ellsworth, Glassett, and Shaha, (2015) stated that professional learning positively influences student achievement, noting that longer professional learning led to more improvement in student achievement Teachers need literacy professional

development that assists them in learning how to address all reading levels to meet the needs of every student. Continual changes in education necessitate teachers be provided with professional learning opportunities (Sagir, 2014).

Teachers at RES were offered district professional learning that gave an overview of the reading curriculum and standards, but training in explicit literacy instruction has been sparse. The Common Core State Standards implementation started in Louisiana in August 2013. Two days of district-level professional learning focused on the new curriculum. This professional learning was a workshop that included the presenters passing out PowerPoint notes and then reading those notes to the teachers. The workshop lasted 2 consecutive days, for 3 hours each day, and was an overview of the new English Language Arts Common Core State Standards. Professional learning focused on Close Reading strategies was provided in one grade level meeting, lasting 1 hour, at the school on September 24, 2013 (Rosewood Elementary School, 2013). In November 2013 and January 2014, there were two professional learning workshops focused on the Four-Square writing graphic organizer and deconstructing the state testing writing prompts apart. Four-Square writing is an organizational strategy used to improve comprehension and writing (Hail, Hurst, Pearman, & Wallace, 2007). These workshops lasted 1 hour each and attendance was required of all English language arts teachers on staff. Learning Forward (2015) noted that meaningful professional development should occur several times per week among established teams at the school level. In these district workshops, there was limited teacher input and no evaluations were conducted according to an email from a district supervisor.

According to the district school board, on August 6, 2014, the district conducted professional learning on the Close Reading technique, as well as vocabulary, in order to improve literacy instruction. The literacy integration specialists (literacy coaches) led the scripted professional development. These 1-hour, lecture style workshops required participation from all teachers in the district. Although these mandated workshops and professional learning opportunities cover a multitude of topics, targeted, explicit literacy instruction has been minimally covered over the last 5 years. Teachers completed a survey at the end of the professional development, but the results were not analyzed and could not be located.

In August of 2015, the district supervisors again prescribed what the literacy integration specialists (LIS) were required to present with regard to professional development during the district-mandated professional development day. This professional development day occurred the day before students arrive to school year. The district supervisors chose the topics that would be presented to the teachers according to the sessions they participated in during the Louisiana Teacher Leader Conference.

These professional development topics were developed from the sessions attended by the (LIS) during Teacher Leader Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana, in June of 2015. Each LIS participated in numerous professional development sessions over a 3-day period, presented by the Louisiana Department of Education as well as teachers throughout Louisiana (Louisiana Believes, 2015). The LISs then presented these topics during professional development. Although the district dictated what professional development was offered to the teachers before school, there was no survey at the end of

the workshop for the participants to rate the professional development.

Previous required professional learning has not led to improved student achievement according to state standardized test scores (Louisiana Believes, 2015). Teachers' perceptions and experience of their literacy knowledge have not been collected or analyzed in the district. Due to repeated low literacy test scores and a lack of professional learning opportunities, the proposed project study is both necessary and useful.

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

The State of Louisiana rated Rosewood Elementary School (RES) as a low-performing school, or *D* school, with a school performance score of 51.1 out of a possible 150 score. This rating was accurate because the overall school scores from state standardized testing in 2015 showed that 89% of the students in Grades 3-5 scored below grade level on the state standardized test in English language arts and are not entirely prepared for the next grade level (Louisiana Believes, 2016). According to Louisiana Believes (2015), language arts contains reading comprehension, writing, and conventions of language items on the test.

A disaggregation of the school-level data from 2012-2014 showed that literacy scores on the iLEAP test, a criterion referenced test that contains norm-referenced test items, dropped each year. Data from 2012-13 and 2013-2014 show that 48% of students in the school scored "proficient" in English language arts, leaving 52% not reading on grade level (Louisiana Believes, 2015).

Effective literacy professional development has a positive influence on teachers and literacy in the classroom (Thomas, 2015). Although effective professional development is a process that takes time, Berit, Denise, and Eileen (2015) expressed that when teachers are provided with this type of professional development, student achievement increases. In Louisiana, literacy is a critical, necessary goal. Therefore, they developed a Louisiana Literacy Plan (Louisiana Believes, 2011). The goal of the Louisiana Literacy Plan for Professional Development includes: developing a culture of literacy, professional learning communities, high quality classroom instruction, school improvement priorities and goals, ongoing assistance and support, and evaluation of that professional development (Louisiana Believes, 2011). Louisiana's Striving Leaders Comprehensive Literacy (SRCL) grant, a funding source for literacy in Louisiana, reinforces the ideas of the Louisiana Literacy Plan with a focus on high-quality professional development (Louisiana Believes, 2015).

Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature

According to the 2015 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results, only 36% of students in 4th grade and 34% of 8th grade students scored "proficient" or above. When compared to scores in 2013, there was no change in Grade 4 scores, but Grade 8 scores decreased (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). Louisiana students scoring proficient in Reading were 29% of 4th graders and 23% of 8th graders (Louisiana Believes, 2015). These proficiency scores are well below the national scores (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015).

Combating the problem of low literacy, Louisiana has chosen to implement the Louisiana Literacy Plan: Literacy for All (Louisiana Believes, 2011). This plan was designed for student in Grades pre-kindergarten through adulthood. The purpose was to increase literacy rates across Louisiana. Schools were required to implement this plan using research-based strategies. The instructional model is grade specific to meet the needs of learners at different points in their education (Louisiana Believes, 2011).

In 2011, Louisiana revised its Comprehensive Literacy Plan to include Emergent, Elementary, and Adolescent Literacy Plans. A literacy-focused team, the Louisiana State Literacy Team (SLT), was established to assist in increasing literacy in Louisiana. A detailed outline of each literacy level was included. The components of the Adolescent Literacy Plan were:

- leadership and sustainability
- standards-based curriculum
- assessment system
- instruction and response to intervention (RTI)
- professional learning resources (Louisiana Believes, 2011, p. iv)

The appendices included teacher resources such as:

- resources for English language learners and students with exceptionalities
- state actions for improving adolescent literacy
- district actions for improving adolescent literacy
- a school literacy capacity survey

- a sample professional growth plans (PGP) template, and references (Louisiana Believes, 2011, p. 1).

In addition to grant funding, state education representatives have attempted to address the low literacy research findings by providing schools with literacy coaches. These coaches have the potential to serve as change agents in the schools, but duties vary from school to school and district to district (Gambrell & Morrow, 2011). Although plans and programs have been implemented, the majority of the students in Louisiana continue to score “below level” on literacy assessments (Nguyen-Dufour, 2013).

The teachers at Rosewood Elementary School (RES), the research site, have argued that they tried numerous strategies, but have not been successful in raising students’ reading levels to on grade level or higher. The literacy coaches claimed they offer coaching to support those teachers, but the students still do not perform on grade level (District Supervisor, personal communication, August 18, 2015). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to gain understanding and seek the teachers’ and literacy coaches’ perceptions and experiences relating to the training they have received, and the literacy instruction supports they still feel are missing at RES.

Definition of Terms

Close Reading: A reader paying close attention to the author’s words and using their past experiences and thought processes to interpret the text (Beers & Probst, 2013).

Guided Reading: Teachers working in small groups to target lessons based on students observed needs (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012).

Metacognition: Thinking about thinking (Chekw, Divine, Dorius, & McFadden,

2015).

Reading Fluency: The speed and accuracy a person reads a text (Frankel, Gadke, Malouf, Reisener, & Wimbish, 2014).

Significance of the Study

Howe, Kupczynski, and Mundy (2015) and Ellsworth, Glassett, and Shaha (2015) emphasized that professional development should be ongoing, sustained, and evaluated for effectiveness. At Rosewood Elementary School (RES), the limited professional development for effective literacy practices has not yet reached that level, as evidenced by literacy scores (Louisiana Believes, 2015). This gap indicates teachers may not have what they need to effectively teach literacy to students in Grades 3-5 at this Louisiana school.

I provided an analysis of the teachers' experiences with literacy training and their perceived needs for training and support in order to improve and increase student achievement in literacy. Depending on the teachers' needs, the current professional development, materials, and/or instructional strategies may need revisions in order for the teachers' needs, as well as the academic needs of the students, to be met in classrooms each day. This would also make professional development more targeted and specific to the individual teacher's needs.

Ellsworth, Glassett, and Shaha (2015) pointed out that effective professional development improved student performance. Students and teachers in both the school and district could benefit from the results of this study. I used the data collected in this study was used by the researcher to analyze current professional development and may

help develop new training aimed at improving literacy instruction at the district level. An increase in effective professional development could result in a greater increase in student achievement, and impact student self-confidence, classroom academic progress, and school performance scores across the district in all grade levels. The impact this could have on students in the district could be extensive. The social change that might occur would be the improvement of teacher confidence, increases in effective teaching, improving student achievement, and ultimately improving the school culture and the community's support of that school. The future impact of the study could show that when the number of students reading on grade level rises, the potential of high school dropout rates declines. Literacy directly impacts the community and future generations (Petrick, 2014).

Research Question

I designed the research questions to explore the teachers and literacy coaches' perceptions of literacy instruction, experiences, and their needs to improve literacy instruction. Each of these questions were answered through participants' responses to an online survey, individual interviews, and classroom observations. I used these questions to identify the literacy needs of the participants.

The questions are as follows:

- What are 3rd-5th grade teachers' experiences with teaching literacy skills to students?
- What are 3rd-5th grade teachers' self-reported perceptions of their current professional learning and support with literacy instruction?

- What do 3rd-5th grade teachers believe they need to teach literacy effectively?
- What are the literacy coaches' perceptions of teachers' needs and struggles with teaching literacy?

Review of the Literature

I conducted a review of the literature to analyze the current research on effective literacy instruction. I searched for peer-reviewed journals, books, and previously published dissertations using Walden Thoreau, ProQuest, Education Research Complete, ERIC, Google Scholar, and Teacher Reference Center databases. The search included the terms: *literacy, effective literacy instruction, literacy coaches, teaching literacy, effective literacy strategies, literacy based instruction, adolescent literacy, professional development, scaffolding, differentiated instruction, collaboration, metacognition, metacognitive processes, history of literacy instruction, barriers to teaching, barriers to effective instruction, metacognition, commitment, motivation, and best practices in literacy instruction*. The literature was organized in the following themes/sections: conceptual framework, the historical context of literacy, and effective literacy instruction.

Conceptual Framework

Clark and Peterson (1986) created the cognitive process teacher model. A model for teacher thought and action shows that a teacher's thought process can determine and dictate their behaviors in the classroom. With literacy instruction, it is important to examine the teacher's thought processes and their inclusion/exclusion of teaching strategies, as well as that of literacy coaches. Teacher behavior is one focus of this framework; the framework is also used to assess how teacher behavior, student behavior,

and student achievement are connected (Clark & Peterson, 1986).

Research on teachers' thought processes began in the 1960s. This research highlighted the conceptual aspects, or mental thoughts, of teaching. Dahllof and Lundgren (1970) and Jackson (1990) each contributed to the research on the mental process that teachers experienced in the 1960s and 1970s. Due to this research, the National Institute of Education was founded at Michigan State University in 1976. This was an institute for research on teachers (Clark & Peterson, 1986).

One major goal of teacher research was to understand why teachers teach the way they do. According to Clark and Peterson's teachers' thought processes model (1986), there are two domains: constraints and opportunities. The constraints portion of the model includes teachers' thought processes. Teachers' thought processes include:

- teachers' interactive thoughts and decisions
- teachers' theories and beliefs
- teacher planning (Clark & Peterson, 1984, p.14).

Teachers' thought processes reflect the conceptualization of the thought process more than the actions of the teacher and can present procedural issues for researchers (Clark & Peterson, 1986).

Teachers' actions and their observable effects include:

- student achievement
- students' classroom behavior
- teachers' classroom behaviors (Clark & Peterson, 1986).

Teacher's actions are measurable. Teachers' actions and their observable effects

indicate the way teachers behave in the classroom and how that behavior impacts students. Student classroom behavior, student achievement, and teachers' classroom behavior are reciprocal; each is related to the other (Clark & Peterson, 1986). The original research did not investigate the reciprocal nature of the relationship. Teachers' thought processes and actions are affected by constraints and opportunities (Clark & Peterson, 1986). This conceptual framework is appropriate to the study because teachers' thought processes impact their behavior in the classroom. The teachers' behavior has a direct correlation to student achievement. The research questions focus on Clark & Peterson's (1986) model by analyzing teacher professional development, which is intended to impact teacher behavior, resulting in improved student achievement.

Historical Context

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

On January 2, 2002, President George W. Bush passed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (Diorio, 2015). One of the stated goals of NCLB was to close the achievement gap between all students in the United States (Diorio, 2015). The enactment of the NCLB Act triggered discussions among educators and stakeholders about student performance, teacher evaluations, accountability, and curriculum, in order to improve education. Testing and tests scores created extensive changes in the way schools report student progress yearly (Diorio, 2015).

In December 2015, the Obama administration effectively ended NCLB, when they signed into law the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The difference between the ESSA and NCLB Acts is that the NCLB focused on meeting the instructional needs

of all students, whereas the ESSA focuses on ensuring students are college and career ready (U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

History of Literacy Instruction

The International Reading Association, now the International Literacy Association, claimed that over the last 50 years, literacy has changed (Alexander & Fox, 2004). The 1950-1960s is known as the era of conditional learning. This was partially due to the baby boom after World War II. The baby boom increased the number of children in America, which then led to an increase in the number of children that had difficulty reading. This led to more research on children's literacy.

The 1960-1970s was an era of natural learning. Natural learning focused on linguistics, but later it focused on psycholinguists, which resulted in new research on reading. The late 1970s to the early 1980s was labeled, the era of informational processing, which led to theoretical transformations in reading. Funding for early reading was initiated as well as research on the human mind (Alexander & Fox, 2004).

The mid-1980s through the mid-1990s was entitled the era of sociocultural learning. Students were recognized as individuals. Knowledge was identified as having a variety of aspects. The mid 1990s to current day is the era of engaged learning. Technology and student motivation began to take center-stage, as different forms of text were available to students. Although literacy has changed over the decades, there are commonalities. These include the community involved in reading and the outside forces that affect trends in reading instruction. These trends, as early as the 1970s, are at the forefront in current research. They involve the physiological, sociological, and

psychological shifts in education, and maturation in the field over time (Alexander & Fox, 2004).

Review of Current Literature

Literacy

In reading classrooms, there are an array of components that are widely used in to teach independent reading. Afflerbach, Cho, Crassas, Doyle and Kim (2013), Cervetti and Hiebert (2015), and Konza (2014) all note the following essential components: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Sitthitikul (2014) pointed out that phonics cannot only be used for younger, beginning readers or for older students that are new to the English language or struggle with decoding words. Child, Clark, Jones, and Reutzel (2014), stated that these five essentials should be taught through explicit instruction in order to be effective.

Teaching reading includes critical decisions in strategies and curriculum and the essential role of the teacher to make those decisions (Barksdale, Bauml, & Griffith, 2015). Many teachers are unprepared, do not take the time needed to effectively plan for literacy instruction, or do not have the knowledge needed to effectively teach literacy (Spear-Swerling, & Zibulsky, 2014). Illiteracy causes long-term effects which include: poverty, unemployment, drug abuse, and incarceration (Brakle, Richardson, & St. Vil, 2014). Williams (2014) believed that to prevent these possible effects, we must ensure middle and high school students are literate before they leave high school.

Daily life requires different levels of literacy to accomplish tasks (Cowan, 2009). According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), 30,000,000 high

school students, 18% did not graduate in 2014 (NCES, 2016). Literacy provided a pathway to additional opportunities, such as further education and increased job opportunities, that those in disadvantaged communities with high illiteracy rates did not have (Ntiri, 2013). The need for increased literacy among all students in the United States is critical to improving negative social effects associated with illiteracy (Ntiri, 2013).

Effective Literacy Strategies

Effective literacy strategies are critical for the success of students. According to Cummins, Howe, Kupczynski and Mundy (2012), there are five necessary components of effective reading instruction that include phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, each of which can improve instruction (Cummins et al., 2012). In upper elementary, guided reading, cooperative learning, graphic organizers, and questioning and cueing promote effective reading instruction (Finnegan and Mazin, 2016).

Guided Reading. Ledger, Montero, and Newmaster (2014) and Petscher, Reutzel, and Spichtig (2012) noted that guided reading was an effective reading strategy for early readers to increase print literacy in students. Guided reading occurs in the classroom when the teacher models fluent, accurate reading and then allows the students to attempt to read. With the teachers' close attention, guided reading allows teachers the opportunity to target and assist students in specific areas of instructional needs.

Guided reading also incorporates differentiated instruction (Cydis, Haria, & Meyers, 2015). Students become engaged readers thinking more in depth about a text

due to the teacher-led instruction. They can break apart words and participate in thoughtful discussions to better understand the text. Students learn to track their own learning. Teachers continually assess students' knowledge throughout the school year. These assessments allow teachers to form and reform groups, ensuring that they best meet all students' literacy needs (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012).

Although guided reading may seem like the answer for all reading problems, Fountas and Pinnell (2012) stated that the reality of guided reading is that teachers must understand the 'why' they are teaching as well as the 'how' they teach it. Fountas and Pinnell (2012) also claimed that guided reading cannot be another group activity, but must be targeted reading instruction that includes thinking inside the text, thinking past the text, and thinking about the text. Teachers must make effective decisions about what and how they will teach guided reading so that it is effective (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012).

Queuing and questioning. Dean (2012) wrote that 80% of a teacher's interactions with students involve queuing and questioning. Cotton (2001) claimed that 35-55% of instructional time is spent on questioning. Gambrell and Morrow (2011) supported this by noting that some best practices in adolescent literacy instruction include surveying the text, brainstorming to activate students' knowledge, and asking questions about the lesson to focus students' interest and set the purpose for reading the text. Although teachers ask questions throughout their lessons, the level of questioning in numerous classrooms is considered lower level. Cotton (2001) specified that 60% of the questions asked in classrooms are lower level questions, with only 20% of those asked considered higher-level cognitive questions. Teachers often ask lower level questions

that require students to answer with simple recalled information, not challenging them to apply their thinking (Elsner, Haines, & Tofade, 2013). The level of a teacher's questions can predict student performance (Şahin, 2015).

Follow up questions can lead to an increase in learning, if the teacher identifies the specific reading needs of the student. Asking these higher-level questions allows for effective classroom discourse (Bruce-Davis, Gilson, Little, & Ruegg, 2014). Fisher and Frey (2014) seconded that thought, noting that struggling readers usually rely on their prior knowledge to answer questions. When asked text dependent questions, students had to go back into the text to find the answers. Therefore, the students were reading and understanding more of the text. Questions can be effective if they are higher level and text dependent, but in many classrooms, questions are lower level and recall basic knowledge to answer.

Close Reading. Close reading was highlighted in the Common Core State Standards (Core Standards, 2016). Sisson and Sisson (2014) pointed out that close reading can bring students closer to their learning targets. Close reading consists of the reader observing what the author has written, not placing his or her own personal thoughts onto what they read, focusing on the experience in the text, and not making judgments or misinterpret what the author has written (Beers & Probst, 2011).

Beers and Probst (2011), Fisher and Frey (2014), and Serafini (2013) listed the key features in close reading as short, complex passages, repeated reading, annotation, text-dependent questions, and discussion of the text including argumentation. The goal of using these features or strategies when implementing close reading in the classroom is

for the learners to be able to create meaning from what they have read, as well as from their metacognitive processes (Beers & Probst, 2013). Unfortunately, Chen, Daniels, and Hamby (2015) suggested that many adolescent students are not taught to think critically about how they read and write.

Close reading was designed to bring the reader closer to the text, therefore increasing their level of critical thinking skills. Fisher and Frey (2014) listed a study of struggling readings in an after school program that showed improvement in students' scores after completing an afterschool program that was based on close reading strategies. These students not only showed improvement in comprehension, but teachers also reported an improvement in their understanding of close reading strategies (Fisher & Frey, 2014). Through the use of close reading, students build capacity for higher-level text (Lapp, Grant, Johnson, & Moss, 2013).

Vocabulary. Simply identifying critical vocabulary in a story is not enough to ensure student success (Brown, Forbush, Kraft, & Lignugaris, 2016; Gambrell & Morrow, 2011). Teachers must model a strategy for students to retain content and then be able to apply that skill (Brown, Forbush, Kraft, & Lignugaris, 2016). Research tells us that we must first know a word's etymology. For example, 90% of the words in the English language, with more than one syllable, are Latin based, while the other 10% are Greek-based. Student knowledge of Greek and Latin word parts is powerful in all content areas, not just in a reading class (Newton, Newton, Padak, & Rasinski, 2008).

One prerequisite to teaching vocabulary is extensive time and planning by the teacher. Newton, Newton, Padak, & Rasinski (2008) point out that although adding

vocabulary to the curriculum will require additional planning, the introduction of vocabulary for 10-15 minutes per day can immerse the students in Greek and Latin roots. Consistent time devoted to vocabulary is a ‘must’ in order for content knowledge attainment, but this may be a struggle for some classroom teachers (Newton, Newton, Padak, & Rasinski, 2008; Khamesipour, 2015).

Vocabulary is presented in text by authors, but struggling readers will not be able to understand the text if they cannot decipher the difficult words, or those words surrounding the challenging word (Flanigan, Hayes, & Templeton, 2012; Greenberg, Hall, Laures-Gore, & Pae, 2014). A student’s understanding of vocabulary words influences their ability to comprehend the text (Fisher, Frey, & Shanahan, 2012). Students often blame the complex words when you ask them why they have difficulty reading the passage, but it is up to the teacher to teach them the conventions of the text so that they can better understand the text (Fisher, Frey, & Shanahan, 2012). Increasing a students’ vocabulary will have a positive impact on their comprehension (Brown, Forbush, & Kraft, & Lignugaris, 2016).

Metacognition. Metacognition is an important process in literacy instruction. A student possessing the ability to read, think about ways to approach a text to better understand it, understanding the task, and then choosing the correct method to successfully complete the task has mastered the decision-making function or their own metacognition (Gambrell & Morrow, 2011). Chekwa, Divine, Dorius, and McFadden (2015) point out that metacognition is thinking about thinking. Students must think about their thinking. In other words, why do I think that, why did I interpret this text that way,

etc. Using metacognitive strategies in reading has a profound effect on student achievement (Dube, Kane, & Lear, 2014; Eker, 2014). Furthermore, Heidari, Mirzaei, and Rahimi (2014) state that using metacognitive strategies is an effective predictor of a students' reading comprehension level.

Teaching students to use metacognition has a positive impact on students' critical thinking skills as well as academic achievement (Cummings, 2015; Njoku & Onyekuru, 2015). It allows students' to understand how a small bit of information fits into the bigger picture of the concept they are learning (Njoku & Onyekuru, 2015).

Metacognition supports both "below level" and "above level" students by challenging them to think critically. This challenge propels them to success in academics (Chekwa, Divine, Dorius, & McFadden, 2015). Teachers, however, must teach metacognitive processes explicitly in order for students to attain success (Chekwa, Divine, Dorius, & McFadden, 2015). Students often do not recognize what they do not know. Teaching metacognitive processes allows the students to have a better understanding of their strengths and weaknesses (Dunbe, Kane, & Lear, 2014). Njoku and Onyekuru (2015) point out that there is also a direct correlation between metacognition and motivation to learn. Motivation plays a critical role in reading success (Cabral-Márquez, 2015).

Motivation. Many students lack the motivation to learn or read. Gambrell and Morrow (2011) suggested that motivation is a student's interest, dedication, and confidence in their ability to read. There are six reported keys to motivation that include interest, confidence, dedication, persisting, valuing knowledge from reading, and values for the future (Gambrell & Morrow, 2011). Although some texts may not interest a

reader, if they are dedicated, they will read the text anyway (Gambrell & Morrow, 2011). Dedication is a type of motivation that involves reading because it is part of the assigned curriculum (Gambrell & Morrow, 2011).

Confidence allows one to believe in oneself, knowing that they will be successful in the attempt to read. Coombs (2016) pointed out that oftentimes, reading materials that are in classrooms are not interesting to students. If students believe that others identify them as struggling readers, they are also less likely to take educational risks (Coombs, 2016). Cabral-Márquez (2015) noted that students' personal achievement and their experiences is the number one indicator of student self-efficacy. If a student does not believe they can read well, they are less likely to set higher goals for themselves and increase their reading ability (Cabral-Márquez, 2015).

In many classrooms, students lack motivation because the text is too difficult Cabral-Márquez (2015). It is simpler for students to read an easier passage, but their reading level will not increase if students do not experience and practice more complex texts (Fisher, Frey, & Shanahan, 2012). It is vital that teachers increase motivation in their classrooms, but they often struggle to do this. According to Fisher, Frey, and Shanahan (2012), teachers must generate success for each student in order to motivate their students. The students must experience continuous success in the classroom.

Collaborative Learning. When students are allowed to work collaboratively with a group or partner on their same reading level, they increase their learning potential because they teach the skills to someone else (Gambrell & Morrow, 2011). Small group settings help students that are reading below grade level in reading by implementing a

student-centered approach by the teacher (Cydis, Haria, & Meyers, 2015).

Collaborative learning also improves literacy achievement in children with Attention Deficit Disorder; however, many teachers lack the professional development to implement this strategy in their classrooms (Murphy, 2015). Although some programs have incorporated collaborative learning in preservice teacher preparation because they recognize its value in the classroom, many have not (Broomhead, Draper, Jensen, & Nokes, 2012). Although cooperative learning can be effective, not all students learn best through this learning style (Kamboj and Singh, 2015). It is important that teachers use different teaching strategies to ensure that all students specific learning style is met (Kamboj & Singh, 2015; Onder & Silay, 2015). It is difficult to meet individual learning styles in cooperative learning groups (Onder & Silay, 2015). Gavriel (2014) and Chan, Chen, Hsia, and Jong (2014) also emphasize that managing the groups and grouping flexibility for individual learning styles can be an issue for teachers. When setting up the groups, it is critical the teachers understand their students and which students work best in groups and which students do not (Xiaoqing, 2015).

Professional development is necessary for the successful implementation of cooperative learning groups. If training is explicit and targeted, the teacher is more likely to have success (Alonso, Cecchini, Fernández-Río, Méndez-Giméne, & Saborit, 2016). In order for cooperative learning to be successful in the classroom, teachers must collaborate with each other (Jolliffe, 2015). Sustained collaboration among teachers is required for cooperative learning be effective in the classroom (Jolliffe, 2015).

Differentiated Instruction. In order to effectively meet the literacy needs of each student, teachers must differentiate their instruction (Broach, Laster, Marinak, McDonald Connor, Walker-Dalhouse & Watts-Taffe, 2012; Valiandes, 2015). Morgan (2014) and Tippett and Tobin (2014) asserted that differentiated instruction is when teachers adjust their planning and classroom strategies to meet the specific needs of every student in an inclusive classroom. Students' differing needs, not just academic, can be met by differentiating the instruction given to them (Valiandes, 2015). Differentiated instruction is based on Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the zone of proximal development. This concept focuses on the notion that students benefit from working on a task at their cognitive level. Vygotsky's (1978) theory of the zone of proximal development is the difference between what a student can do independently versus what they can do with help (Vygotsky, 1978). This type of instruction is not only important to the success of lower level students, but higher-level students as well. When students achieving at or above grade level are academically challenged, they will strive to achieve more (Morgan, 2014).

Dixon, Hardin, McConnell, and Yssel (2014) and Morgan (2014) stated that by differentiating instruction, the teacher is attempting to maximize student learning and abilities. Unfortunately, the one aspect of differentiated instruction that causes the most complications is time. Ample time is required to plan and gather materials needed to adequately meet the needs of students (Acosta-Tello & Shepherd, 2015). As a result, teachers often struggle to use this important instructional method.

Differentiation using technology.

Using differentiation in instruction occurs in a print classroom, but differentiated instruction in the twenty-first century also includes technology, which may create further barriers for teachers (Morgan, 2014). DeSantis (2013) stated that it is difficult to advance in education without technology. New literacies, the knowledge of technology and how to navigate literacies, are prevalent in the 21st century and teachers must become aware and knowledgeable about them (Karchmer-Klein & Shinas, 2012). Technology can improve students' reading achievement by providing text as well as specific, targeted skills at each student's specific reading level (Karchmer-Klein and Shinas, 2012; Spencer & Smullen, 2014). New literacies also promote potential changes in how teachers assess students, and understanding that literacy is a moving target, always progressing and changing (Karchmer-Klein & Shinas, 2012).

Barriers to Effective Literacy Instruction

Teachers face many barriers when teaching literacy in the classroom (Creasey, D'Santiago, Lee, & Mays, 2016). Some of these barriers include a lack of resources, unfamiliar technology, ineffective training, limited pedagogical knowledge, time, and classroom management (Creasey, D'Santiago, Lee, & Mays, 2016). Each of these struggles can diminish a teacher's effectiveness. Although these struggles may require more time, professional development, and resources, teachers must know what each student needs to become a more effective reader (Ediger, 2014).

Technology access and training can be a barrier to effective classroom instruction. Digital literacy is rapidly becoming an integral part of the classroom each day (Mckee-Waddell, 2015). Although there are extensive options and opportunities to use

technology in the classroom, many educators do not take advantage of this for a variety of reasons (DeSantis, 2013). Included in the reasons are teachers who are unfamiliar with the technology, and those who do not participate in or have opportunities for professional development. Teachers may also incorporate technology with little thought as to how that technology can impact student learning (Smullen & Spencer, 2014).

Classroom management affects students' learning and can be a barrier to effective instruction (Landmark, Montague, Stough, & Williams-Diehm, 2015). A teacher's confidence with classroom management can have a direct relationship to their success (Balci & Sivri, 2015). Akalin and Sucuoglu (2015) pointed out that a teacher who lacks effective classroom management has increased difficulty impacting student learning and differentiating instruction. In order to positively influence student learning, classroom management must be effective (Cummings, Martinez, Ormiston, & Skiba, 2016). Poor classroom management not only effects students' achievement, but also student motivation (Arens, Morin, & Watermann, 2015).

Teachers in low income areas are often not given sufficient professional development opportunities (Aber, McCoy, Rasheed, Torrente & Wolf, 2015) There is often a lack of time to attend professional development due to the additional demands teachers face during the school day (Herdeiro & Silva, 2013). Malik, Nasim, and Tabassum (2015) stated that both new and seasoned teachers need professional development to improve teaching practices. Unfortunately, often teachers' needs are not considered when planning professional development (Herdeiro & Silva, 2013). Each of the barriers has an impact on teacher success and student achievement.

Professional Development Resources

Teachers want professional development to be both effective and collaborative (Akiba & Liang, 2016). Collaborative professional development can occur as professional learning communities or professional learning in schools and districts (Stewart, 2014). Teachers feel that when they can collaborate, it encourages strength in their ability to teach effectively and implement those strategies learned during the professional development (Akiba & Lang, 2016; Jao & McDougall, 2015). Professional development should be constant, focused, and centered on specific content that meets the needs of the teachers (Chong & Kong, 2012).

All teachers should teach literacy in their classrooms to promote successful readers and writers, but they need effective professional development to be effective (Greenleaf & Heller, 2007). Hanzuk and Kennette (2014) pointed out many ideas from professional development, for various reasons, are never implemented in the classrooms. Teachers may become overwhelmed when professional development is offered because of the amount of information or they may not know how to implement the strategies taught (Hanzuk & Kennette, 2014). Evelein and Korthagen (2016) emphasized that professional development has not been effective for teachers because those providing the information focused more on what they want the teachers to know rather than how the teachers learn. The reality of some professional development includes overwhelmed teachers, lack of leadership, lack of materials, and lack increased workload of teachers (Catarci, Fiorucci, & Gameda, 2014).

Ensuring literacy strategies learned from professional development are implemented in the classroom is essential. Targeted, specific literacy professional development is one of many ways to improve literacy and a teacher's professional growth (Bergmark, Brezicha, & Mitra, 2015; Hanzuk & Kennette, 2014; Thomas, 2015). Dixon, Hardin, McConnell, and Yssel (2014) emphasized the importance of differentiated professional development that addresses each specific teacher's needs. Offering professional development that allows teachers to see strategies modeled, while working collaboratively with each other, has the potential to make clear improvements in teacher self-efficacy as well as student achievement (Lai & McNaughton, 2016).

Teacher Collaboration/Professional Learning Communities

Hall and Wallace (1993) define collaboration as “a way of working where two or more people combine their resources to achieve specific goals over a period of time” (p. 103). Teacher collaboration, or professional learning communities (PLCs), occurs when a small group of participants that engages in self-reflection and professional development to improve their practice or beliefs (Gerdes & Jefferson, 2015). These communities have the potential to positively impact teacher development and the school environment (Bohler, Gallo, Richardson, & Sheehy, 2015; Peppers, 2015). Chong and Kong (2012) pointed out that collaboration among teachers included teachers meeting and working together, but also included everyone accepting the responsibility of student learning for every student in the school, not just those in their classroom. Teachers working together improve student achievement, but it also helps them modify their daily lessons and adjust to challenges (Chong & Kong, 2012; Jao & McDougall, 2015; Kafyulilo, 2013).

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) also assist in developing relationships and support among teachers and staff (Abawi & Lalor, 2014; Gerdes & Jefferson, 2015). Creating a place where teachers can come together to share their struggles as well as successes opened the door to support and assistance (Abawi & Lalor, 2014). PLCs agree on a common goal, teacher improvement and student achievement, and all members work toward that goal (Jao & McDougall, 2015). An increase in teacher collaboration can also result in increased student achievement (Akiba & Liang, 2016; Grissom, Farmer, McQueen, & Ronfeldt, 2015). Although Daly, Moolenaar, and Slegers (2012) pointed out that a possible cause for a student increase in achievement is teacher confidence, there is a link between teacher collaboration and an increase in student achievement (Grissom, Farmer, McQueen, & Ronfeldt, 2015).

Sustainability of professional learning communities can be a challenge for teachers and administrators (Bohler, Gallo, Richardson, & Sheehy, 2015). Teachers also have a schedule that limits time to meet and collaborate (Jao & McDougall, 2015). Differing attitudes about students, learning, and professional development can also become a barrier to successful collaboration. However, schools should continue to provide professional development opportunities for all teachers (Jao & McDougall, 2015).

Scaffolding

Scaffolding literacy involves a sequence of explicit steps that an educator should follow in order to assist students in achieving literacy skills (Ankrum, Genest, & Belcastro, 2014; Rodrigues & Smith, 2014). Scaffolding literacy instruction involves a

balanced literacy approach (Rodrigues & Smith, 2014). Balanced literacy is the use of a variety of reading and writing strategies to teach students literacy (Caros, Lambert, Robinson, & Towner, 2016). These strategies include: whole group reading and writing, small group reading and writing, independent reading and writing, and leveled books. Whole group instruction is instruction provided to the entire class. Small group instruction focuses on the teacher working with a small group of students (Bell & Smetana, 2014). Ankrum, Belcastro, and Genest (2014) and Kuhn, Rasinski, and Zimmerman (2014) suggested that scaffolding can be used as an introduction to teaching literacy or as an enrichment strategy to extend the learning. Scaffolding, when used as part of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, allows a student to move toward independence in their learning (Bakker, Eerde, & Smit, 2013; Nordlof, 2014; Rassaei, 2014). Bakker, Eerde, and Smit (2013) argued scaffolding should be effective, but temporary. They demonstrated extensive use of scaffolding, without the release of responsibility to the students for independent work is not effective. A teacher's knowledge of how to scaffold could pose a problem if ineffective. Professional development training is necessary to ensure success and effective implementation (Ankrum, Belcastro, & Genest, 2014).

The problem of ineffective literacy instruction is evident throughout scholarly work. The review presented literature about literacy, effective literacy strategies, and discussed barriers to effective literacy instruction, professional development resources, teacher collaboration, and professional learning communities, as well as scaffolding and detailed effective literacy instruction strategies.

Implications

The findings of the study may inform literacy teachers, literacy coaches, and district administrators of the practices currently used to teach reading as well as professional development needs for literacy teachers. This study may affect students if the literacy teachers, coaches, and administrators use the data collected to improve instructional practices in the classrooms. The study could directly influence the district and school by addressing and informing teaching practices. The study may also influence the current professional development opportunities and content by providing the data collected to guide the professional development offered. This study could lead to an improvement in literacy instructional practices, which may increase student achievement, and teachers' confidence in delivering literacy instruction.

The findings of the research may benefit the current students who perform below grade level by providing teachers with the instructional methods they need to increase literacy proficiency. By answering the research questions, students may benefit, as well as teachers, and literacy coaches may better understand the literacy instructional weaknesses and determine a path to increasing student achievement in the future.

A possible project that could stem from this research would include extensive professional development targeted at effective literacy instruction. A minimum of three days to conduct professional development could be developed to guide teachers in using effective literacy instruction with their students. The findings of the research would determine the content and focus of the professional development. Another possible project that could come from the research is a position paper. This project study could

present the findings and advocate for a specific direction or focus for professional development. Curriculum revisions may also be suggested as a result of the study. These curriculum revisions might include more effective instructional strategies integrated into each lesson. Each of the possibilities could enhance a professional development for the district and help meet the needs of the teachers and students in both the district and state.

Summary

In the United States, 66% of the students in 4th grade are reading “below level” (NAEP, 2013). When looking closer at the data, 80% of the students in high poverty areas score below proficient in reading. The increasing number of students with “below level” literacy scores is cause for alarm and investigation. According to school professional development agendas, limited targeted professional development was offered to teachers (Personal communication, May 18, 2015). Therefore, this study looks to examine the instructional practices in reading/language arts classrooms in Grades 3-5. The purpose of this study is to identify English language arts teachers’ and literacy coaches’ needs, professional development needs, and effective literacy strategies to construct professional development centered on the data in an effort to improve literacy instruction and student achievement.

The review of literature focused on effective literacy instruction as well as barriers to that instruction. The conceptual framework for this study, Clark and Peterson’s (1986) cognitive process teacher model, focused on teacher behavior, student behavior, and student achievement. The literature detailed the practices of literacy, effective literacy strategies, literacy resources, teacher collaboration/professional learning

communities, and scaffolding. The literature review also discussed barriers teachers face in teaching literacy, and the broader problem of limited resources, ineffective professional development, and technology limitations.

Section 2 will introduce the case study, the participants and the instruments that will be used to collect data.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to investigate English language arts teachers' and literacy coaches' perceptions of effective literacy strategies for the classroom and professional development. I collected both Likert-scale survey and qualitative data, which fully answered the research questions. The purposeful, homogenous sampling of participants included literacy teachers and coaches from (RES). In order to gain access to participants, I notified all stakeholders in accordance with the requirements of IRB. These same expectations were used to ensure the ethical treatment of human beings. I collected data from a survey, interviews, and classroom observations.

Research Design and Approach

A case study design was appropriate to investigate the kinds and types of support needed by English language arts elementary teachers to effectively teach literacy skills. A case study with sequential data collection was appropriate for this study because it allowed me to collect identified teachers' perceptions of their own experience with literacy training and their needs for effective literacy instruction. The case study method provided a comprehensive examination of the teaching practices at the research site and brought understanding of specific issues. The only case for this project study was RES. The case study method provided an in-depth understanding of a group of people (Yin, 2014). The case study was written on the perceptions of teachers and literacy coaches concerning the needs for effective literacy instruction and teacher development.

A grounded theory design was considered for this study because one of the research questions examines instructional strategies within RES. However, the current system was the focus and not on generating a new theory or concept as grounded theory is designed to do (Yin, 2014). Similarly, a phenomenological design was also considered. In this approach, researchers attempt to understand events or interactions in a certain occurrence (Biklen & Bogdan, 2007). This theory was rejected because it requires a broader scope of information from the participants than the research questions are seeking. Finally, an ethnographic design was also considered for this study. The approach would look at the how cultural groups act and interact with each other (Creswell, 2012). This research design was not accepted because the focus of the research is on teachers' experiences with literacy instead of a focus on ethnic groups. Furthermore, an ethnographic design was not deemed appropriate because it will not require extended periods of time and generally explores cultural groups or other phenomena in situ (Creswell, 2012).

Participants

Examining the teachers' perceptions of effective literacy strategies at a low performing school calls for a purposeful, homogenous sampling to insure the best informants are selected to answer the research questions. This sampling was appropriate for this study because all the participants in the study had the same defining characteristics and work at the research site. Purposeful, homogeneous was the appropriate sampling frame as it allowed me to sample a site based on the teachers in one group at the research site. The participants were upper elementary English language arts

Reading teachers in Grades 3-5 and literacy coaches at RES, the research site. This criterion was appropriate because the teachers that teach literacy to the students at the research site have experience with and knowledge of the challenges of students who have scored below grade level. I chose teachers with the direct knowledge of effective literacy strategies in the classroom through purposeful homogenous sampling.

The sequential data collection required two samples of participants. I invited all English language arts teachers in Grades 3-5 ($N=9$) to take the electronic survey. This case study was location bounded to RES, and there were only nine English language arts teachers on campus. I invited the entire population of teachers in Grades 3-5 to participate. Although there were nine literacy teachers in Grades 3-5 at the research site, six of those were asked to participate ($N=6$). There were three uncertified teachers, hired as long-term substitutes in the spring that were eliminated from participation. Two literacy coaches were also invited to participate and both of those coaches chose to accept the invitation.

The participants for the interviews included six English language arts teachers and two literacy coaches at RES. All teacher-participants were certified in elementary education. This was appropriate as this school because the literacy data reported comes from Grades 3-5, and teachers in Grades 3-5 at the research site participate in standardized testing and work with those students. This small number of teachers made the data easier to manage and provide the depth of investigation needed to adequately explore the problem.

The Parish School Board had no policy or procedure for conducting research in the district. The superintendent and the supervisors approved my study after reviewing the proposal. I wrote a detailed letter to the district superintendent and supervisors. Included in the letter was: why I chose Rosewood Elementary School, what I hoped to accomplish there, the individuals who will be part of the study, how I would report the results from the findings, and what participants may gain from the study. The superintendent and district approved the study in writing. After the superintendent's approval, I obtained permission from Walden University and the IRB.

An informed consent letter was included in the IRB application. The informed consent letter detailed how I intended to protect the confidentiality of all the participants. The letter demonstrated the ways the study would benefit the students at the research site and showed how my position as a literacy coach could impact the study and how I intended to minimize this.

Once all approvals were obtained, I proceeded with the selection of the participants for the study. The participating district provided email addresses of potential participants. I sent an initial contact letter to participants via their school email. In the letter, I introduced myself and told them that I would be contacting them with information about participation in an upcoming study. Each participant was asked if they would prefer future communications to be sent to their personal email account, school email account, or in person. Every participant selected his or her personal email account.

To establish a researcher-participant working relationship, both teachers and literacy coaches at the research site received a letter. This letter outlined the procedures

for the study for those involved. The letter explained to each participant that this study is part of my doctoral program. I clarified that I was conducting this study as a student-researcher and participation would not affect their job at the research site or in the district. Establishing trust was vital to the success of the interviews.

The first step I took to ensure the protection of the participants was obtaining permission from Walden University's IRB. To explain possible risks and benefits of participation in the study, the participants received an informed consent letter. This informed them that they were guaranteed certain rights such as confidentiality and the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Protections for participants included the anonymity of the electronic survey instrument and the confidentiality of the interview data.

I emailed informed consent information to each participant. The participants asked for a face-to-face meeting, which was held at the research site after school hours. Teachers asked questions about the research and I answered their questions. Each teacher and both literacy coaches that were present submitted the informed consent forms so they could participate. Participants were identified by an assigned pseudonym. Presenting the participants with an informed consent form, following all procedures outlines in the IRB approval, and answering any questions the participants had ensured that protective measures were taken for all participants in the study.

All of the participants chose to be interviewed on campus, which guaranteed their comfort. The survey portion of the study was conducted on paper and was anonymous.

Storing the copies in a locked cabinet protected the raw data, and the use of pseudonyms instead of names further protected participants.

Data Collection

This case study consisted of a sequential collection strategy to collect data through anonymous surveys, through confidential interviews, and classroom observations. Multiple forms of data provided the depth of information needed to determine the perception of teachers concerning their use of literacy instruction and what they needed to become more effective in their literacy instruction.

Survey Sequence

Teachers' perceptions of professional development were a key component of this study. These answered the research question about 3rd-5th grade teachers' perceptions of their current professional learning and support with literacy instruction. To identify the professional development needs of the teachers and coaches, I collected data sequentially.

I collected Likert-type survey data from participants to identify materials, professional development, or support needed to increase literacy achievement in the classroom at the beginning of the study. I used Learning Forward's Standards Assessment Inventory (Learning Forward, 2015), with permission (Appendix C). Standards for Professional Learning are the focus of this survey. I used this 50 question survey to identify the teachers' perceptions of professional learning, the successes and challenges they face each day, collected data on the quality of professional learning, and determined if the district and school provided teachers with the necessary professional development. I administered the survey was administered via paper and pencil. The

responses from the survey identified areas where teachers felt the professional development was not effective and guided the interview protocol (Appendix D).

[transition]

The Learning Forward standards were purposefully created in response to a need for standards in professional development. In 2001, Standards for Professional Learning was released, acting as a guide for profession learning for educators. In 2003, the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory created a measure of professional development between the school and the Standards for Staff Development (Southwest Educational Development, 2003). The Standards Assessment Inventory 1 (SAI) was then redesigned to ensure alignment with the new standards. This alignment required a psychometric study to evaluate the reliability and validity of the survey. Learning Forward conducted a large-scale study in order to redesign and evaluate the reliability of the Standards Assessment Inventory 2 (SAI2) (Learning Forward, 2012). Content validity was established with 82 participants who both participated in the survey and agreed to be interviewed about the content of the survey (Denmark & Weaver, 2012). The study was conducted to validate the instrument showed that the SAI2 measures factors that do reflect professional development in schools (Learning Forward, 2012). Along with AdvanceEd, a pilot study was conducted in January and February of 2012. Based on the research, SAI2 is a valid measure of the effectiveness of professional development (Jones, McCann, & Vaden-Kiernan, 2009; Denmark & Weaver, 2012).

The concepts measured by the Standards Assessment Inventory II are the effectiveness and quality of professional development provided by a school or district.

The SAI2 was designed to measure this (Jones, McCann, & Vaden-Kiernan, 2009). The answer choices include: *Never, Seldom, Sometimes, Frequently, Always, and Don't Know* (Learning Forward, 2011). Participants that selected *Don't Know* or who skipped the item are excluded from the denominator in the calculations of the percentages (Learning Forward, 2011).

The survey is divided into seven sections. The sections include: learning communities, leadership, resources, data, learning designs, implementation, and outcomes. Each section contains seven items, except for the data section, which contains eight questions. These items ask participants for responses from *Don't Know* to *Always*. The concepts measured by the survey are aligned with the purpose and framework of the study because it identifies current perceptions of professional development in the district. The framework of this study focuses on teachers' thoughts and beliefs (Clark & Peterson, 1986) and this survey allows the teachers to present their thoughts on the district professional development.

Observation Sequence

I conducted classroom observations, which further helped triangulate the findings and determine what literacy practices were used by teachers. The qualitative observation tool was the district literacy walkthrough *look-fors* (see Appendix B for more information on the literacy walkthrough *look-fors*). Each observation lasted approximately 30-45 minutes. I looked for specific literacy strategies, or lack thereof, that teachers used in the classroom. I documented the observation data on observation protocol forms as well as handwritten notes. The notes were written on the forms as well as additional paper for

notes. The data will be kept for 5 years following the study, as required by Walden University.

Interview Sequence

Biklen and Bogdan (2007) stated that interviews are a conversation between two or more people where the purpose is to gain information from the other person. Interviews, a form of qualitative data, provided specific insight into teachers' interpretation of literacy instructional practices in their classrooms. Interviews from English language arts teachers and literacy coaches in Grades 3-5 at the research site provided an opportunity for them to expand on their needs to improve literacy instruction.

I used Yin's (2014) recommendations of different levels of questions to derive interview questions. Level 1 questions ask the interviewee specific questions. Level 2 questions are questions asked of an individual case. Level 3 questions ask questions across multiple cases about the pattern. Level 4 questions seek answers to an entire study and level 5 questions about policy suggestions that ask questions beyond a specific case. For example, if a majority of participants reported they thought the professional training provided was sufficient, the interview protocol would have been modified to include more probing questions about how they actually use the information provided at the training, and whether or not they believe the strategy was effective with students. This protocol was not revised after reviewing the data collected by the survey. Yin (2014) pointed out that most questions in case studies should be Level Two questions, which ask about an individual case or single case study.

The interview protocol included a header to document information about the interview. I listed open-ended questions that allowed the participants to see the questions, with the first question serving as an icebreaker. The other questions were based on the research questions, allowing interviewees to elaborate when needed. After each question, there was a space for me to write notes after they answered. I memorized the questions and the order they were asked so that the transition between questions was seamless. The closing allowed participants to add anything they would like to say as well as allow me time to thank the participants and assure them of confidentiality (Creswell, 2012).

The interview questions were validated through peer review. In order to be an expert in the content analysis, the reviewer was certified in teaching reading to Grades 3-5. They had at least five years of classroom experience and a great understanding of the content. These reviewers did not participate in the study.

The data were cataloged in files under lock and key. The survey results, transcripts of the interviews, and observation data were separated and filed. A cataloging system was established in each category (survey, interview, and observation) to keep track of the data, but also to point out emerging understanding. The system was a living system, that grew and changed as new information and data were collected.

The role I held within the district, at the time of data collection was as a literacy coach at the local high school. I attended professional development with some of the teachers and literacy coaches at the research site. The professional development offered by the district separated high school participants from elementary and middle school

participants, so there have been no common professional development opportunities in the last year. This role might have made some participants feel obligated to participate, but through the email, I clearly pointed out that their participation was completely voluntary. I have no supervisory role over any of the participants. I also had some biases. I had preconceived ideas about what the problems with literacy instruction could be. Therefore, I carefully reported what the data showed. I made sure that the data drove the study, not my thoughts. I kept a journal of my notes during the research process noting any observations, which might have skewed my perception of the data, so those were accounted for in the final data analysis. While all bias cannot be removed, all reasonable measures were taken to allow the data to drive the findings, and not pre-existing biases.

Data Analysis

Constant comparison data analysis was used when analyzing the survey, interview, and observational data. I gathered data, sorted it into categories, then collected additional data, and compared that new information with the emerging categories. For example, I gathered the survey data and looked for themes. I then coded the interview data and compared that information with the emerging categories from the survey data. Next, I gathered the observational data and compared it with both the survey data and the interview data. This process developed categories slowly, but it was important to compare data on each of the data collections, survey, observation, and interview, with each other. I connected the categories by comparing data to incidents and

examples I found in the other forms of data. Themes were established among all the sources of data, survey, interview, and observation.

The conceptual framework guided this thought process. The cognitive process model, which explains the relationship between the teachers' thought process and their actions, was evident when analyzing the data. It was important to use multiple perspectives with both the teachers and the literacy coaches, allowing for different viewpoints to be presented in the data. This also allowed for their perspectives to be compared to what was actually seen in the classrooms through the observations. For example, the teachers expressed they had little knowledge of effective literacy strategies, and the observations confirm this. The conceptual framework also guided the themes in the research. The teachers' beliefs expressed in the interviews were strongly aligned with the classroom observations.

The survey focused on collecting data on the teachers' perspectives on the professional development from the district and the school. The interview questions were focused on the teachers' and coaches' perceptions of their needs and barriers in effective literacy instruction. Then, the observations provided clear data on what literacy strategies were used in the classroom. Each of these helped determine the instructional practices, needs, and perceptions of teachers and coaches at RES.

Survey Data Analysis

The Learning Forward Survey begins with the end in mind (Killion, 2016). Teachers agreed on a date to complete the Learning Forward Standards Assessment Inventory. Six English language arts teachers completed the survey via written form at

the research site, after school hours. Each teacher rated the district on his or her perceptions of the professional development that was offered during the 2016-17 school year. They rated each question asked on a scale from zero to five. Each number on the scale represented a level of agreement: 0, *Don't Know*, 1, *Never*, 2, *Seldom*, 3, *Sometimes*, 4, *Frequently*, and a 5, *Always*.

The teachers completed the survey via paper and pencil, and returned it the same day, in a plain, unidentifiable envelope to ensure anonymity. After collecting this written data, I compiled it into one Excel spreadsheet sorted by question numbers. The response to each question was tallied to create a mean score for each response. For example, all six teachers that participated rated Question 1 with a 0-5. By calculating a mean score for each response, I identified the strongest and weakest points of professional development offered by the district and the school.

Observation Data Analysis

Classroom observations were conducted using the literacy walkthrough form. These walkthrough observations took place on a date and time chosen by the teacher. They lasted 30-45 minutes each. I took notes in addition to the checklist items on the walkthrough form. Data were analyzed according to the literacy walkthrough form. In order to ensure validity, face-to-face meetings were also offered to the teachers to answer any questions and ensure accuracy in notes and observational data. All participants chose to attend a face-to-face this meeting.

Each component on the checklist was marked as Yes (the teacher used the strategy during the observation), No (the teacher did not use the strategy during the

observation, but could have), Not Observed (the teacher did not use the strategy). Each teachers' Yes, No, and Not Observed marks were tallied and a mean was determined. The data were then organized on a spreadsheet according to items on the walkthrough form.

Interview Data Analysis

Six English language arts teachers and two literacy coaches each selected the location of their choice for the interview portion of the study. I recorded the interviews on a recording device. A paid transcriber transcribed each recording. The transcriber signed a confidentiality agreement prior to transcribing the interviews. Each participant received an interview transcription via personal email account for transcript checking, to ensure the transcriptions were accurate. Then, the coding procedure was applied to each transcription.

I used the process of hand analysis of qualitative data (Creswell, 2012). I read through the data and marked it by hand. I chose this method to have a hands-on feel for the data. I added extra wide margins so that I could write notes in the outer margins.

When coding the transcripts for themes, I read each transcript carefully to obtain a sense of the materials. Next, I listened to the audio recordings while reading the transcripts to confirm they were accurate. During the third read, I took notes on the outer margins about topics and statements that stood out to me, or that were repetitive. I coded the data in order to determine and assign code labels or text segments in both the interviews and observation data. After coding the data, I identified themes that were used to report the findings. I coded the data by organizing and sorting it and constantly

comparing, expanding and collapsing codes. The codes emerged from the data collected and were used to create themes. Coding allowed me to reduce the information and group it into themes. I then read for a fourth time and highlighted the text that stood out, and it matched the themes written in the margins. I highlighted the text so that I would be able to review the themes to ensure accuracy. Lastly, I used coordinating sticky notes to match the highlighted color codes of the themes. For example, the theme discipline and classroom management were highlighted in blue, therefore I used blue tabs to indicate where those statements were so that they could be easily referenced when checking back through the transcripts.

I used triangulation to determine consistent themes from the survey, interviews, and observation data. The survey, interview, and observations were the best instruments to provide information about the perceptions of English language arts teachers and literacy coaches regarding literacy instruction and the needs of students. I used the survey to establish teacher experiences and thoughts on professional development and to answer the second research question that seeks to find the 3rd-5th grade teachers' perceptions of their current professional learning and support with literacy instruction.

Discrepant data, or any data that does not agree with the resounding themes reported, was handled appropriately. I reported any discrepant cases found within the data, in the findings. An analysis of discrepant cases broadened the research.

Member checking by each participant/member allowed participants to certify that my conclusions of the interview accurately represented the answers they gave during their interview. Each participant was also given the opportunity to add additional

information if needed (Creswell, 2012). I typed conclusions for each interview transcript and emailed those to the participants. No participant noted any errors or additions to the conclusions I sent.

Data Analysis Results

The categories and themes identified from the analysis of the survey, observation, and interview responses aligned with the literature review presented in Section 2. Table 2 reflects the categories and themes identified in the data analysis.

Table 2

Categories and Themes Identified in Data Analysis

Categories	Themes
Classroom management	Lack of support from administration Little assistance with discipline Lack of professional development Assistance with discipline problems Frustration
Differentiated Instruction	Lack of time to plan for all the different needs Lack of support at home from parents Lack of support from administration with the differing student needs Lack of materials and resources to meet the differing needs of students Desire for students to succeed
Professional development	No classroom management PD No support with students with high needs No direct instruction on literacy Could not identify effective instructional strategies Generic Professional Development that is not targeted at needs Low-level students Lack of time to collaborate with colleagues

The themes that emerged from the codes include: classroom management, lack of professional development, lack of support, lack of parental involvement/support, frustration with administration/job, and best practices in literacy instruction. Three predominant themes emerged: *classroom management*, *differentiated instruction*, and the *need for professional development*. These themes are related to the research

questions that guided the project study. Examples of the participants' statements support the emergent themes are included.

Survey Results

Table 3

Survey Results

Survey Categories	Average
Learning Communities	2.14
Leadership	2.49
Resources	2.46
Data	2.21
Learning Designs	1.70
Implementation	2.00
Outcomes	2.86

Note. The survey results were tallied into categories established by Learning Forward. Survey responses ranged from 0 (less likely to occur) to 5 (more likely to occur).

The survey results noted that teachers felt the least support or knowledge in Learning Designs. The Learning Designs component includes professional learning support, teachers having the opportunity to observe each other, teachers having input in professional learning, targeted professional development that supports student learning, and teachers' needs are considered when professional development is planned.

These data point out the needs of the teachers were not considered when professional development was planned. A glaring theme noted from this data was the lack of professional development and support the district offered the teachers. Most

teachers indicated on this survey that they had been provided with little to no professional development or training during the school year.

Interview Data Analysis Results

The teachers' and literacy coaches' perceptions of their struggles and needs for effective literacy instruction was articulated in the interviews. Both literacy coaches noted classroom management as a concern during the interviews. One coach interviewed (Participant 2) stated that, "The teacher continued to teach the kids when they are doing things they should not be doing and they do not stop and redirect them. They just keep on going...and the students are not learning." Another literacy coach (Participant 4), stated that "Discipline is a daily disruption. There are constant disruptions."

Themes

A major theme that developed during the data analysis was *classroom management*. This theme emerged after transcribing the interviews. This major theme grew because every participant noted this as a concern. One participant (Participant 1) noted that classroom management was a daily struggle. One coach (Participant 2) noted that she did not see any classroom management strategies being implemented in most classrooms. Another coach (Participant 3) noted that teacher had trouble getting students attention and establishing rules and procedures in the classroom each day.

Another major theme that was developed through data analysis was differentiated instruction. Each teacher noted that lower level students were a challenge in their classrooms. Every participant stated that meeting students' individual needs was a struggle. One teacher (Participant 5) even said that so many students are on many

different levels in one room and that teachers were expected to do too much. Another teacher (Participant 6) stated that she spent hours at home trying to create activities and lessons that would meet the individual needs of the students, but still felt as if she was not meeting those needs.

The third theme that developed after data analysis was *professional development*. Teachers lacked the knowledge and opportunities to effectively meet the needs of their students. Although three participants noted they had been to Kagan training, they felt as if it was not enough. One participant (Participant 5) stated that she was frustrated because she felt like it was up to the teachers to learn things for themselves. Also, a participant said they felt as if they were not heard as far as their professional development needs.

There were codes that were mentioned, that did not form a theme, yet yielded insights that are notable. These were lack of support, lack of parental involvement/support, frustration with administration/job, and best practices in literacy instruction. These were combined and collapsed into another theme, labeled professional development and differentiated instruction. For example, the teachers felt the lack of support was with classroom management and professional development. Three of the eight participants noted the lack of parental support. Two of the participants, though, felt they had strong parental involvement. Participants' comments on best practices in literacy instruction ultimately led back to the theme of professional development. Teachers did not know best practices because they have had no professional development on literacy strategies. This is aligned to the conceptual framework because the teachers'

lack of knowledge affected their actions, which in turn affected student achievement.

The teachers do not have the knowledge of effective literacy strategies and therefore there were not evident in their interviews.

Observational Data Analysis Results

Table 4

Observation Data Results

Category	Results
Explicit vocabulary instruction is purposeful and ongoing.	5 of 6 classrooms
Classroom behavior management system creates a positive learning environment.	3 of 6 classrooms
Pacing is appropriate during both whole group and small group instruction.	5 of 6 classrooms
The teacher fosters student engagement during the lesson.	5 of 6 classrooms
Teacher used scaffolding during the lesson.	2 of 6 classrooms
Differentiation used in the lesson.	1 of 6 classrooms
What literacy strategies were used in the lesson?	Probing questions (2 classrooms) and scaffolding (1 classroom)
What resources were used in the lesson?	Anchor charts (2 classrooms), pictures (1 classroom), text passages (3 classrooms), worksheets (5 classrooms), questionnaire (2 classrooms), Elmo (1 classroom), Smart Board, interactive notebooks (1 classroom)

These results illustrate that the majority of the classrooms were using explicit vocabulary instruction, appropriate pacing, and fostering engagement during the lessons.

The results also show that there was a lack of differentiation and scaffolding in classrooms and a classroom management behavior system that creates a positive learning environment. There was also only one classroom that exhibited literacy strategies during the observation.

The following data was collected during the classroom observations with the Literacy Walkthrough (Appendix B). Explicit vocabulary instruction is purposeful and ongoing was observed in five of the six classrooms. Classroom behavior management system creates a positive learning environment was observed in three of the six classrooms. Pacing is appropriate during both whole group and small group instruction was observed in five out of the six classrooms. The teacher fosters student engagement during the lesson was observed in five out of the six classrooms. Teacher used scaffolding during the lesson was observed in two out of the six classrooms. Differentiation was used in the lesson was observed in one out of the six classrooms.

Findings Based on Data

Three themes emerged among all three points of data after it was collected and analyzed. One theme that emerged was that teachers do not feel adequately trained in the area of differentiation of instruction in the classroom. A second theme that emerged was that teachers are struggling with classroom management. A third theme was that the teachers feel literacy professional development and collaboration time was not offered enough and not targeted to meet their needs in the classroom. This was salient data due to the fact that all those interviewed noted these as issues and it was also noted in the observational data.

The outcomes noted in the data show that both the teachers and coaches felt that classroom management is a weakness and there is a need for training. Teachers and literacy coaches also acknowledged a lack of professional provided to the teachers. Both teachers and literacy coaches also pointed out that differentiation is needed, but not evident in the classroom and teachers do not feel they have enough training in this area. The problem of low literacy at the research site can be attributed to these factors.

Table 5

Correlation of Themes to Research Questions

Research Questions	Instrument used to collect data	Emergent Theme
RQ 1 What are 3rd-5th grade teachers' experiences with teaching literacy skills to students?	Interviews and Observations	PD, CM, DI
RQ 2 What are 3rd-5th grade teachers' self-reported perceptions of their current professional learning and support with literacy instruction?	Surveys and Interviews	PD, DI
RQ 3 What do 3rd-5th grade teachers believe they need to teach literacy effectively?	Interviews	PD, CM, DI
RQ 4 What are the literacy coaches' perceptions of teachers' needs and struggles with teaching literacy?	Interviews	PD, CM, DI

Note: Classroom management (CM); differentiated Instruction (DI); and Professional Development (PD).

In order to answer research questions, survey, interview and observational data were collected. The first research question focused on the teachers' experiences teaching literacy to students was demonstrated both observational and interview data. The observational findings indicated possible reasons for the low literacy performance at the research site could be from the lack of differentiation, classroom management systems, and scaffolding in the classrooms. Although the teachers pointed out in the interviews that they knew the students were weak in the area of reading, differentiation to meet each student's individual needs was only observed in one classroom.

Research question number two focused on teachers' self-reported perceptions of their current professional learning and support of literacy instruction was answered through the survey results and interviews. Specific information about how teachers perceived the training offered to them and how it has or has not influenced their teaching, helped guide the questions asked during interviews. It also allowed me to further probe teachers on how they attempted to improve literacy practices.

The third research question asked 3rd-5th grade teachers about their needs in teaching literacy effectively. The interviews provided the data needed to answer this question. Teachers responded with ideas for increasing their abilities through both professional development and support. They desired support from both the district and the school administration. They believed this would increase their ability to teach literacy effectively.

The fourth research question focused on the literacy coaches' perceptions of teachers' needs and struggles with teaching literacy. It was answered in the interview

data with the literacy coaches. The interviews allowed the literacy coaches to expand on their opinions in the area of teachers' needs. They each stated that support and additional professional development were needed. Each also stated that they would like additional professional development so that they could better assist the teachers they coach.

The conceptual framework for this study was Clark and Peterson's (1986) cognitive process model explained the relationship between the teachers thought processes and their actions in the classroom. This framework guided the data interpretation by using the teachers' actions to review their answers on the survey and during the interviews. For example, when a teacher pointed out that they were weak in an area, or lacked knowledge in an area, that showed in the observation. Teachers and coaches noted that classroom management was a struggle. This was also evident in the classroom observations. The teachers who thought that they were not effective with classroom management struggled with discipline during the observations. The results also showed the same with differentiated instruction. They lacked knowledge and time, which influenced their actions in the classroom. There was little to no differentiation in any classroom observed.

Validity

Transcript checking of the interviews, by participants, established data quality. After the transcription of each interview, I emailed the transcript to each participant. Participants had one week to review the transcription and point out any discrepancies. There were no reported discrepancies from any participant. I also met with teachers after their classroom observation to ensure the data collected was accurate. Some provided

clarification on why they chose the activities they chose, but most approved of the observation data without additional information.

Data were also triangulated with the surveys, observations, and interviews in order to corroborate the identified themes. The themes established from the analysis were consistent with classroom management, lack of professional development, and lack of implementation and knowledge of differentiation. There were no discrepant cases in this study. All participants and data collected led to these findings.

Consistency of Findings

The literature on the topic pointed out that poor classroom management; lack of differentiated instruction, and ineffective professional development can be causes of low literacy. The conceptual framework for this study, The Teacher Conceptual Model, focuses on the teachers' thought process and their actions relate to that (Clark & Peterson, 1986). This model directly related to the study as the results showed that teachers' perceptions of their knowledge influenced their daily classroom decisions. One example of this was when the teachers stated in their interviews that they did not have time, or know how to differentiate instruction in their classrooms. This lack of knowledge and thought process has a direct impact on student achievement because their observable actions show that they do not implement differentiated instruction in the classroom.

The literature pointed out that effective literacy strategies should be used in the classroom. The strategies most noted were guided reading, queuing and questioning, close reading, vocabulary, metacognition, and motivation. Vocabulary was the only

literacy strategy observed in some of the classrooms. The teachers also stated that they needed more training on effective literacy strategies. This confirms that the teachers do not have knowledge of effective literacy strategies, and therefore are not implementing them in their classrooms.

Collaborative learning was noted as being an effective form of instruction. In almost all classrooms, the teachers were using some form of collaboration. During the interviews, three teachers noted that this was the only type of professional development they had received. The students worked together on lower level assignments in most of those classrooms, with higher-level questions and activities found in only one classroom.

Professional development for teachers is crucial to guarantee the success of both the teacher and the student (Alonso, Cecchini, Fernández-Río, Méndez-Giméne, & Saborit, 2016). Effective professional development emerged from the literature as a potential barrier to effective literacy instruction. Through each form of data collected, this was noted as an issue for the teachers and the coaches.

Dixon, Hardin, McConnell, and Yssel (2014) emphasized that professional development on differentiated instruction had a positive influence on the teachers' efficacy. Self-efficacy is the teachers' belief that they understand and can implement differentiation in their classroom. Differentiation is needed in the classroom to ensure academic success of all students (Valiades, 2015). According to the data, each teacher and literacy coach noted that differentiation was a struggle for the teachers in the classroom. They lack the time and knowledge of how to plan.

Another barrier to literacy instruction found in the literature was classroom management and discipline. These were also noted as concerns both by teachers and literacy coaches. Successful classroom management is a crucial component in student success (Hirn, Lewis, & Mitchell, 2017). Professional development for teachers that focuses on classroom management has a positive impact on students' academic success (De Boer, Doolaard, Harms, Korpershoek, & van Kuijk, 2016). Despite the number of years a teacher has been teaching, many are still in need of classroom management professional development (Landmark, Montague, Stough, & Williams-Deihm, 2015).

The literature also pointed out that technology was a barrier to effective literacy instruction (Creasey, D'Santiago, Lee, & Mays, 2016). The survey, interview, and observation data did not align with this. Neither teachers nor literacy coaches noted this as a problem. In each classroom, the teachers had Smart Boards, computers, and Elmo projectors. They did not note professional development was needed in the area of technology. Although technology is a barrier to some, it was not a barrier at the research site.

This study confirmed that classroom management and a lack of professional development are barriers to literacy instruction. It also confirmed that differentiated instruction is difficult to manage for teachers, but necessary for the success of the students. Although technology was a barrier found in the literature, this study did not find it as a barrier to instruction. Although collaborative learning was noted in the study as being used, the rigor of work the students were completing varied, making the effectiveness of the groups different in each classroom.

Project

The findings of the research revealed a need for focused professional development in the areas of differentiated instruction and classroom management. The most appropriate project to address the problem is a series of two, two-day professional development opportunities for the teachers at the research site. These trainings will occur over a four-day period. Two days will focus on classroom management and two days will focus on differentiation in the classroom. Each professional development will provide the teachers with targeted, applicable strategies and activities.

Conclusion

The case study research was designed to investigate teachers' and literacy coaches' perceptions and experiences at the research site. The sample for the study was a purposeful, homogenous sampling. The participants for the survey were all certified literacy teachers and coaches in 3rd-5th grades at RES. The participants for interviews and observations were six certified reading/English language arts teachers, two from each grade level from third grade through fifth grades, and two literacy coaches. The participants came from one research site.

The data collection consisted of a survey, observations, and interviews. The survey was Learning Forward's SAI survey (Learning Forward, 2015). The descriptive information gained from the survey drove the completion of the interview protocol. The interview questions were open-ended and the interview was semi structured (Creswell, 2012). The observations were recorded on a literacy walkthrough form as well as thorough notes taken. Credibility and validity of the data were ensured through data

triangulation and member checking (Bilken & Bogdan, 2007; Creswell, 2012). The findings were reported.

The findings of this research revealed the need to increase teacher support through professional development. Section three will introduce a project that was developed as a result of the findings in this research, provide a review of literature related to the project, and discuss each part of the project.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

The focus of the project study was the perceptions and experiences of six English language arts teachers and two literacy coaches and their needs for effective literacy instruction. The purpose of the study was to (a) identify current professional development offered to teachers at the research site, (b) identify and examine current literacy strategies used in the classroom, and (c) identify both teachers and literacy coaches' perceptions of effective literacy instruction. Findings from the study revealed that all participants felt they had little professional development and lacked knowledge in both classroom management and differentiated instruction.

The findings from the study validate Clark and Peterson's (1986) teacher cognitive process model that states the teacher's thought process can determine and dictate their behaviors in the classroom. The teachers stated that they had little professional development training in Reading and English language arts strategies. They specifically noted needing assistance in classroom management training and differentiated instruction.

The literature on effective literacy instruction in the classroom and the results of this project study at the research site highlighted the need for the support of these teachers in both classroom management and differentiated instruction. The next section includes the project. In the project I included information that will address the problem, the goals of the project, and the rationale of how the problem will be address through the content of the project. Additional sections contain lists of the resources needed, existing

support, potential barriers, and the implementation timetable. I presented the review of literature, followed by the roles and responsibilities of teachers and presenters are listed. The section concludes with the project evaluation and implications for social change.

Description and Goals

Findings from the data analysis revealed that, although the teachers had varied levels of experience and knowledge of literacy instruction, their needs were similar. The major themes that emerged were lack of professional development, lack of knowledge in how to differentiate instruction, and support and professional development in classroom management. I created this project to facilitate the growth and development of English language arts teachers.

I will enlist the support of both school and district personnel to implement the proposed RASE Project (Reaching All Students Effectively). I designed the RASE Project to meet the needs of the English language arts teachers through structured, targeted activities. The activities will include a series of workshops as well as collaboration with colleagues and literacy coaches. The project will take place over two, 2-day professional development opportunities. Monthly support professional development meetings will be held throughout the school year. Literacy coaches and supervisors from the district will facilitate the professional development sessions.

The professional development will begin before the school year, but support will last throughout the year. The goals for the professional development include: facilitating teacher growth and development, assisting teachers develop effective instructional classroom management skills, providing support for teachers, assisting teachers improve

instructional practices to increase student achievement, and assisting teachers develop effective skills in differentiating instruction.

The desired outcomes of the professional development include:

1. Teachers will become familiar with classroom procedures as well as the COMPASS rubric for Louisiana teachers, specifically component 3C, managing classroom behaviors
2. Teachers will collaborate with their peers to develop a classroom management plan to be implemented in their classrooms
3. Teachers will become familiar with differentiated instruction and develop lesson plans that include specific differentiated instruction strategies.

The objectives for the professional development sessions include:

1. As a result of the professional development, teachers will create a classroom management plan
2. As a result of the professional development, teachers will demonstrate effective teaching strategies
3. Teachers will develop lesson plans that include differentiated instruction.

Rationale

The absence of professional development and support for English language arts teachers emerged as a concern during the study. I chose this project to address the problem because professional development is an effective form of increasing the knowledge of teachers. Effective professional development that focuses on practiced-

based instruction positively effects teachers' implementation in the classroom (FitzPatrick, McKeown, & Sandmel, 2014).

Teacher lack of professional development, need for additional training and support in classroom management, and also desire for professional development in differentiated instruction was pointed out in the data analysis in Section 2. I chose this project genre because it has been shown to be affective with instructing teachers. Professional development is critical for educators to introduce and reinforce effective strategies (Luther, Richman, Shady, 2013). In order to provide research-based literacy instruction, professional development is the best strategy to increase teachers' knowledge (Spear-Swerling & Zibulsky, 2014).

The research problem was addressed through this project by targeting the areas the data uncovered. These included both differentiated instruction and classroom management. The professional development addresses this issue by provided more than one day of training and coaching. It will encompass 1 year of monthly support and professional development.

Review of Literature

Teachers need professional development to stay abreast of both content and pedagogy in the teaching profession (Bautista, Bull, Múñez, & Ng, 2016; Rodesiler, 2017). This statement captures the thoughts of both the teachers and literacy coaches that participated in the study from which the RASE project evolved. Professional development is used to improve educators' knowledge (Justice, Mauck, O'Connell, Piasta, Schachter, Spear, & Weber-Mayrer, 2017). The literature review for the proposed

projected related to providing professional development and support for teachers and coaches with literacy instruction. The following key terms were used to guide the literature review search: *classroom management, issues teachers face in the classroom, effective literacy instruction, professional development, differentiated instruction, differentiated instruction in the classroom, classroom differentiation, effective differentiated instruction, collaboration, classroom management strategies, classroom management training, effects of classroom management on literacy instruction, effective classroom management, and effective professional development*. These key words and combinations allowed for saturation in the literature review.

Based on my analysis of the research, professional development is appropriate in addressing the needs of the teachers at the research site. The findings of my study were consistent with the known literature on the subject. The literature review contains the reasons why this study confirmed what is known about teachers' and literacy coaches' perceptions and experience with literacy instruction. Two points were highlighted: classroom management and differentiated instruction.

Professional Development. Both new and experienced teachers need professional development in classroom management. Although they received some preservice training, many teachers do not feel prepared for the classroom (Landmark, Montague, Stough, & Williams-Diehm, 2015; Coddling, Feinberg, James, Kleinert, & Silva, 2017). Teachers have limited professional development and experience with classroom management (Hirn, Lewis, & Mitchell, 2017; Bywater, Hickey, Hyland, Kelly, Leckey, McGilloway, & O'Neill, 2017). Teachers need knowledge and support with

classroom management issues to be effective in the classroom (Chow, Gordon, Mahany, Moore, Oliver, & Wehby, 2017; Bywater, Hickey, Hyland, Kelly, Leckey, McGilloway, & O'Neill, 2017; Sowell, 2017). Kunter, Seiz, and Voss (2015) stated that professional development in pedagogical knowledge increases a teacher's potential to maintain effective classroom management.

Professional knowledge of classroom management strategies is important for teacher success (Cayci & Ersozlu, 2016; Englehart, 2013). Training classroom teachers in effective classroom management strategies is key to reforming education (Mwaba, Roman, & Topkin, 2015). Professional development should be targeted and specific to ensure teacher success (Blazar & Kraft, 2017; Quek, 2013). Effective professional development for teachers has an impact on student achievement (Lewis, Romi, & Salkovsky, 2016; Sowell, 2017).

The teacher-identified needs informed my choice about providing professional development to the teachers. These needs helped me focus on the topic of differentiated instruction and were based on teachers' and literacy coaches' interviews and classroom observations. Research also supported these identified needs. Differentiation is difficult for teachers because it involves a new way of thinking about instruction, one that meets the needs of every student in their classroom (Tippett & Tobin, 2014). The professional development on differentiated instruction should be consistent and ongoing (Gaitas & Alves Martins, 2017; Godwin, Suprayogi, & Valcke, 2017; Dixon, Hardin, McConnell, & Yssel, 2014; Wu, 2017). After the professional development, teachers should then implement differentiation in the classroom (Dixon, Hardin, McConnell, & Yssel, 2014;

Wu, 2017). Extensive professional development, focused on differentiated instruction, has a positive effect on teachers' ability to implement those strategies in the classroom (Wan, 2017; Salar & Turgut, 2015; Morgan, 2014; Firmender, Reis, & Sweeny, 2013).

Enhancing teacher quality can be accomplished through professional development (Herron & Suanrong, 2014; Tippett & Tobin, 2014). Both new and experienced teachers need professional development focused on differentiated instruction (Wu, 2017; Firmender, Reis, & Sweeny, 2013). Teachers must update their knowledge and skills regularly (Herron & Suanrong, 2014). Teachers should also collaborate to share ideas and activities to better meet the needs of every student they teach (Wu, 2017; Tippett & Tobin, 2014).

Teachers note that differentiated instruction is difficult to implement in the classroom due to lack of professional development (Kincade, Solis, & Turner, 2017). Professional development should be targeted at differentiated instruction and ongoing in order to provide support for teachers (Tippett & Tobin, 2014; Morgan, 2014). When professional development meets these guidelines listed above, teachers interviewed noted that they feel more confident and implement more strategies in the classroom (Morgan, 2014).

Classroom Management

Teachers have the most impact on classroom management (Egeberg, McConney, & Price, 2016). Each interviewee at the research site noted that classroom management was an issue in their classrooms or the classrooms they observed. Teachers often identify classroom management as an area of concern (Chow, Gordon, Mahany, Moore, Oliver, &

Wehby, 2017). Classroom management consists of establishing and maintaining order in the classroom (Allanson, Rawlings, & Notar, 2017; Garwood, & Vernon-Feagans, 2017; Hirn, Lewis, & Mitchell, 2017). Dealing with student behavior is one of the most challenging responsibilities for teachers (Hoang, Lan, & Nhung, 2016). Lack of classroom management is one of the top three reasons teachers leave the profession (Alter & Haydon, 2017). The National Society for the Study of Education Yearbook (Duke, 1979) stated that classroom management is: “the provisions and procedures necessary to establish and maintain an environment in which instruction and learning can occur” (p. xii).

Teachers’ classroom management actions influence the behavioral and emotional exchanges between teachers and students (Garwood, & Vernon-Feagans, 2017). Classroom management cannot be described as a set of rules established to handle discipline problems; instead, it is a set of guidelines established to avoid discipline problems in the classroom (Bolton Allanson, Notar, & Rawlings Lester, 2017). Most educators receive minimal training in classroom management and need additional support (Hirn, Lewis, & Mitchell, 2017; Garwood, & Vernon-Feagans, 2017; Hirn, Lewis, & Mitchell, 2017). A majority of teachers believe they need additional classroom management training (Landmark, Montague, Stough, & Williams-Diehm, 2015).

Students that cause disruptions in the classroom are more likely to suffer punishments that take them out of the classroom, interrupting their learning and pushing them further behind academically (Hirn, Lewis, & Mitchell, 2017; Franks & Lentfer, 2015; Bywater, Hickey, Hyland, Kelly, Leckey, McGilloway, & O’Neill, 2017).

Cummings, Martinex, Ormiston, and Skiba, (2016) note that these consequences for students that have negative interactions with teachers cause more than just time out of the classroom, it causes a decline in students' grades as well as an increase in potential for school dropouts. Preventing behavior problems now will decrease the likelihood for problems throughout their educational career. These behaviors can also have a detrimental effect on their classmates (Aspiranti, Cazzell, Coleman, Moore, Skinner, A., Skinner, C., & Watson, 2016). An effective classroom manager that ensures a safe and productive learning environment improves both teacher and student wellbeing (Cummings, Martinex, Ormiston, and Skiba, 2016). Effective classroom management positively affects both the teachers' and the students' success (Franks & Lentfer, 2015).

Literacy Instruction. Effective classroom management has a direct influence on higher student achievement (Garwood, & Vernon-Feagans, 2017; Hirn, Lewis, & Mitchell, 2017; Fabes, Hanish, Kochel, Martin, Miller, Updegraff, & Wheeler, 2017). When classrooms are poorly managed, teachers spend less time on instructional planning and meeting the individual needs of students, and more time on managing the classrooms (Hochweber, Hosenfeld, & Klieme, 2014). Ineffective classroom managers have trouble establishing an effective environment for learning (Hochweber, Hosenfeld, & Klieme, 2014).

Routines and Procedures. Routines are essential to the success of a classroom (Bolton Allanson, Notar, & Rawlings Lester, 2017; DiCarlo & Watson, 2016). These routines and procedures should be clear and specify the behavioral expectations (Aspiranti, Cazzell, Coleman, Moore, Skinner, A., Skinner, C., & Watson, 2016;

Sieberer-Nagler, 2016). If established at the beginning of the year, the likelihood of success increases. Routines and procedures must be taught, modeled, and practiced so that students clearly understand the expectations for the classroom (Bolton Allanson, Notar, & Rawlings Lester, 2017; Mwaba, Roman, & Topkin, 2015). They also must be written and provided to the students (Bolton Allanson, Notar, & Rawlings Lester, 2017; Lewis, Putman, Siwatu, & Starker-Glass, 2017). Established routines are called procedures (Bolton Allanson, Notar, & Rawlings Lester, 2017).

Classroom behaviors can distract from routines and procedures for both new and experienced teachers (Collet & McBride, 2017; Ratcliff, Carroll, Hunt, & Professor, 2014). Routines are a foundational strategy that can improve classroom management, but are often missing from classrooms (Hirn, Lewis, & Mitchell, 2017; Aspiranti, Cazzell, Coleman, Moore, Skinner, Skinner, & Watson, 2016). Routines and procedures must be practiced each day to ensure consistency and understanding among all students (Bolton Allanson, Notar, & Rawlings Lester, 2017; Englehart, 2013). Routines help organize both teachers and students, and also minimize stress and anxiety among students because they know what to expect (DiCarlo & Watson, 2016).

Student Engagement. Increasing student engagement minimizes classroom management issues in the classroom (Coddling, Feinberg, James, Kleinert, & Silva, 2017; Cummings, Martinex, Ormiston, and Skiba, 2016). Effective classrooms that engage students offer them multiple opportunities to respond to the curriculum (Cummings, Martinex, Ormiston, and Skiba, 2016). Teachers should use diverse learning strategies and techniques to engage all students. When students are engaged, they are less likely to

cause disturbances in the classroom (Egeberg, McConney, & Price, 2016; Englehart, 2013). Student engagement can be used to reduce classroom management issues in the classroom. Less time should be spent on a lecture, or the teacher talking, and more time engaging students in their learning (Englehart, 2013).

Relationships and Motivation. In classrooms where there is effective closeness between the teachers and students, there is an increase in achievement (Hajovsky, Mason, McCune, & Turek, 2017; Cook, Evanovich, & Sweigart, 2016). There is also a decrease in student achievement when there is little to no relationships between the teacher and the students (Hajovsky, Mason, McCune, & Turek, 2017). Classrooms that foster strong teacher-student relationships typically have fewer behavior problems (Cummings, Martinex, Ormiston, & Skiba, 2016). Positive relationships between teachers and students are vital to learning and have a positive influence on student behavior in the classroom (Egeberg, McConney, & Price, 2016). An effective classroom both engages and motivates students (Cayci & Ersozlu, 2016; Englehart, 2013). Engaging students in meaningful learning requires both skill and care (Egeberg, McConney, & Price, 2016). Training programs that focus on the teacher and student relationship are highly supported by teachers (Lewis, Romi, & Salkovsky, 2016).

Teachers should provide constant feedback and praise to ensure students are motivated. Motivation provides an inner drive for students to desire to improve their behavior (Sieberer-Nagler, 2016; Cook, Evanovich, & Sweigart, 2016). Building a positive and motivating learning environment will increase positive behavior in the classroom (Egeberg, McConney, & Price, 2016; Lewis, Putman, Siwatu, & Starker-

Glass, 2017). Teachers should recognize and encourage positive behavior through encouragement in the classroom. When teachers do this, they increase appropriate behavior in their classrooms (Egeberg, McConney, & Price, 2016; Cook, Evanovich, & Sweigart, 2016).

Self-Efficacy. Teachers' awareness of efficacy in the classroom is affected by their classroom management skills (McKim, & Velez, 2015). Teachers with poor classroom management noted high stress and lack of self-perceived effectiveness (Künsting, Lipowsky, & Neuber, 2016; Franks & Lentfer, 2015). Self-efficacy also influences teacher commitment to the profession (McKim, & Velez, 2015; Yüksel, 2014). Teachers' beliefs about their abilities affect their learning outcomes, planning, and their classroom management skills (Yüksel, 2014).

There is a positive relationship between principal perceptions and teachers' self-efficacy (Bellibas & Liu, 2017). The teacher has the biggest influence on student achievement, with the principal coming in second on their influence (Bellibas & Liu, 2017). Teachers that have low self-efficacy beliefs about their ability to succeed in the classroom believe there is not much they can do to decrease the behavior in their classroom (Heikonen, Pietarinen, Pyhältö, Toom, & Soini, 2017).

Teachers' thoughts about how much they know on classroom management affects how they react to issues in the classroom (Lewis, Romi, & Salkovsky, 2016). Teachers' belief about their knowledgeable of classroom management matters and determines if a teacher chooses to persist in finding ways to implement strategies in their classroom (Franks & Lentfer, 2015). Teacher action integrated into classroom management will

encourage and maintain a positive classroom environment (Egeberg, McConney, & Price, 2016). Teachers' self-efficacy has shown to increase after professional development in classroom management (Yüksel, 2014).

Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated instruction is appropriate to the research project because teachers noted this in their interviews, and it was also noted as a deficit in the classroom observations. Every student that attends school is not the same, nor do they have the same needs. These differences include backgrounds, learning styles, interests and abilities (Godwin, Suprayogi, & Valcke, 2017; Salar & Turgut, 2015; Herron & Suanrong, 2014; Tomlinson, 2014). A one-size fits all method to teaching does not work because it does not meet the needs of every student (Gaitas & Alves Martins, 2017; Salar & Turgut, 2015; Siefert, Sparrow, & Stover, 2017). Differentiated instruction is an method of teaching and planning that addresses the needs of all learners (Tippett & Tobin, 2014; Herron & Suanrong, 2014; Altıntaş & Özdemir, 2015).

Differentiation allows teachers to reach all students through individualized assessments and instruction (Gaitas & Alves Martins, 2017; Tippett & Tobin, 2014; Tomlinson, 2014). Differentiated instruction has benefits to both the student and the teacher (Kincade, Solis, & Turner, 2017). Teachers have noted that when differentiation was used, students were happy and engaged while learning (Tippett & Tobin, 2014; Morgan, 2014). Even student literacy achievement was increased when using differentiated instruction in a mixed ability classroom (Morgan, 2014; Siefert, Sparrow, & Stover, 2017; Firmender, Reis, & Sweeny, 2013).

Differentiation helps provide a constant learning environment (Altıntaş & Özdemir, 2015; Morgan, 2014). All students, no matter their race, socioeconomic level, or academic ability, are taught at their level in order to meet their educational needs (Morgan, 2014). Using differentiated instruction increases the academic achievement of students (Altıntaş & Özdemir, 2015).

Differentiation has three dimensions content, process, product, and environment (Tomlinson, 2014; Godwin, Suprayogi, & Valcke, 2017; Dixon, Hardin, McConnell, & Yssel, 2014; Yacapsin, 2013; Taylor, 2015). Effective differentiated instruction is based on the constructivism learning theory (Morgan, 2014). In the constructivist learning theory, students actively participate in engaging activities (Durmuş, 2016; Cotterill, 2015). Teachers believe that permanent learning occurs when using constructivist learning approach (Durmuş, 2016). Cotterill (2015) points out that constructivist is an effective form of teaching and learning.

Content. The content of differentiated instruction is what the teacher will be teaching (Taylor, 2015; Firmender, Reis, & Sweeny, 2013; Tomlinson, 2014). Teachers noted preparing materials for each lesson was difficult and time consuming (Gaitas & Alves Martins, 2017). Teachers should use the topics that interest the students and link those to the curriculum to increase understanding (Tippett & Tobin, 2014). Teachers should use a range of strategies and resources to determine the best way to teach every student through differentiation (Tippett & Tobin, 2014; Firmender, Reis, & Sweeny, 2013; Tomlinson, 2014). When teachers make educated decisions based on their students' progress, they will foster instructional success (Siefert, Sparrow, & Stover,

2017). Through content, teachers can vary the levels of what they are teaching (Tomlinson, 2014; Taylor, 2015; Firmender, Reis, & Sweeny, 2013).

Process. The process in differentiated instruction is the” how” of instruction (Taylor, 2015; Tomlinson, 2014). Tiered instruction and scaffolding can be used when differentiating the instruction (Taylor, 2015). Activities and content should not just be easier or harder depending on a student’s level; they must be engaging and stimulating to the students (Wu, 2017). Student activities can be varied through the process of differentiated instruction (Taylor, 2015). Both peer tutoring and small groups allow the teacher to incorporate differentiation (Herron & Suanrong, 2014).

Product. The product is the evidence of what was taught and learned (Taylor, 2015; Tomlinson, 2014). This product can be varied so that each student can demonstrate what he or she has learned (Tomlinson, 2014; Taylor, 2015). Creating assessments that assess students on their academic level, both during and after instruction, is considered a difficult task for teachers (Gaitas & Alves Martins, 2017; Wu, 2017). Formative assessments are highly effective in differentiated instruction and provide a picture of each student’s learning level (Wan, 2017; Tomlinson, 2014). Assessments should be designed so that they provide data quickly and the teacher can use that data to drive future instruction (Wu, 2017). These assessments are pivotal to the success of the classroom. The teacher must know where the students are so that they can adjust their lessons to better meet their needs (Wu, 2013).

Environment. The learning environment is the key to a successful differentiated classroom (Tomlinson, 2014). It should be student centered (Berg, Rahimi, & Veen,

2015; Tomlinson, 2014). Personal learning environments enhance the learning process (Berg, Rahimi, & Veen, 2015). The learning environment should focus on all aspects of the students' lives (de Benito Crosetti, Marín Juarros, & Salinas Ibáñez, 2014). Creating effective learning environments allows teachers to meet the needs of his or her students (Johnson & Sherlock, 2014). When students take control of their learning, they create an effective learning environment (Cotterill, 2015).

The learning environment should contain: cooperative learning tasks that are targeted at meeting the students' needs, work that challenges students, and should be focused on formative feedback for students (Conner & Sliwka, 2014). It should also be welcoming for all students, a safe place for success and failure, supportive, collaborate with peers, and provide them with the resources they need to be successful (Tomlinson, 2014).

Self-Efficacy. Teachers offered professional development in differentiated instruction had an increase in their self-efficacy (Dixon, Hardin, McConnell, & Yssel, 2014; Salar & Turgut, 2015). The teachers may lack self-efficacy in their beliefs to be able to implement activities that reach each student (Tippett & Tobin, 2014; Dixon, Hardin, McConnell, & Yssel, 2014). They may not have belief in their ability to create individualized assessments or their ability to adjust lessons to meet the learners (Dixon, Hardin, McConnell, & Yssel, 2014).

Implementation

After completing the project, I will follow up with evaluation forms. The evaluation forms will allow teachers to rate the professional development they were given

and identify areas they need additional support in. I will implement the project during the established professional development days set by the district as well as monthly support and professional development. The initial professional development will consist of four days of training. In addition to this initial training, participants will also be provided with monthly support and professional development. The monthly professional development will occur after school, one day per month. The district support team and I would meet to best determine when and where to conduct the professional development.

Potential Resources and Existing Supports

Material and human resources will be needed to ensure the implementation of the Reaching All Students Effectively project. The district supervisors will be part of the team and assist in some of the professional development. The district will provide literacy coaches and master teachers to assist with the professional development activities. The schools will provide a location for the professional development to occur. Some presenters will come from the state department to assist with the professional development. The district or the school will provide the lap top computer for use that day, Smart Board or projector and screen, nametags, pens, pencils, highlighters, sticky notes, and copies of the materials needed.

The school principal at each professional development site school will be needed for additional support. These administrators are important because we need all teachers to participate, and they will provide the directive. The school principal will be responsible for organizing all the space needed for the professional developments at their school.

I will also enlist the support of both the local school district and the State Department of Education. Each of these will provide support and presenters at no cost to facilitate the professional development. Both the state and district have reading specialist or literacy coaches. They offer support and professional development focused on the identified needs of literacy teachers.

In order to create buy in, teachers will be paid a stipend through the district. This funding will come from a grant or another district-funded source. Teachers would also receive a detailed schedule of events and the presenters will conform to those time parameters. Mentors will also meet with teachers and emphasize that these meetings are support training and assistance for them. During the course of the professional development, presenters and mentors will point out how the training and mentors will continue to support the teachers throughout the year. Teachers will also have the opportunity to complete a survey at the end of each workshop to ensure they feel supported and make changes to the training if necessary in order to meet their needs.

Potential Barriers

Although there are supports in place for the Reaching All Students Effectively (RASE) project implementation, there are potential barriers. One potential barrier to this could be lack of participation from teachers. Although the initial four days of training will be held before the school year begins, faculty meetings, after school duties, and responsibilities assigned by the principal could hinder the monthly training. One way to overcome this barrier would be to establish the monthly meeting dates prior to school starting and distribute those dates to principals and teachers. These meetings would have

to be mandatory to ensure participation. All participants would be excused from duties and meetings on the scheduled RASE professional development trainings.

A second possibly barrier would be lack of support from the district, and/or lack of time to devote four days of professional development towards these two topics. There are many topics the districts notes as important for teachers to attend professional development on. One way to overcome this barrier would be to talk with the district superintendent and supervisors. The results of this project study could be reviewed to inform the district of the needs and the importance of these two topics.

A third potential barrier could be funding for materials that are needed. The district could write grants or use Title 1 funding to purchase the resources needed, such as books and videotapes. Almost all of the schools in the district receive Title 1 funding and this could be an area of consideration to meet the needs of the teachers and the students in these schools. If neither of these options are available, the district could also investigate other funding resources.

A fourth possible barrier could be the district support team providing the monthly professional development. In order to train them, the district support team would attend and receive free training from the state department. If additional training was needed, the district could look for funding sources that would allow the trainers to attend professional development and coaching sessions. I would garner support for the project and buy in from the district team by showing them the results of the study, as well as the data from previous research. The previous research suggests an increase in student achievement

when professional development is targeted at a specific need. This would ensure that support was in place for an entire school year.

Proposal for Implementation and Timetable

The Reaching All Students Effectively (RASE) professional development project, a project I created, will be implemented during the 2018-19 school year. The timeline for activities is as follows:

1. Meet with superintendent and district support team to discuss the project and resources needed and also request approval for implementation
2. Establish funding source(s) for the stipend for teachers for attendance at the initial four-day trainings and the monthly support trainings.
3. Work with profession development and curriculum experts from the district and state department to establish the four day training modules and the monthly professional development meetings (Month 2-4)
4. Secure trainers/presenters for the initial four day training and the monthly professional development sessions (Month 5)
5. Obtain the names and email addresses of all potential participants (ELA teachers in Grades 3-5) as well as literacy coaches in those grades.
Contact those teachers and notify them of the initial four-day training.
Request a reply/response within five days of the email. (Month 6)
6. Purchase supplies needed for the trainings (Month 7) Supplies will include the books listed in Appendix A under materials.

7. Implement the Reaching All Students Effectively (RASE) project.

(August, 2018)

Roles and Responsibilities of Student and Others

As the project coordinator, I will have the primary responsibility for organizing, planning, implementing, and evaluating the project. Guided by the research study's findings, I will create a professional development plan, Reaching All Students Effectively (RASE), which is targeted at meeting the needs identified in the study results. I will plan all the initial professional development activities, contact all participants, organize all presenters and facilitators, order the supplies, and procure the professional development venues. The district and state literacy coaches and specialists will develop the monthly professional development, as well as support, throughout the school year.

Although the project is designed to increase literacy achievement by providing targeted professional development in the areas of classroom management and differentiation in an English Language Arts classroom, the participants will be expected to actively participate in each session. After discussing topics and details with English Language Arts curriculum specialists, I will ensure that the workshop presenters deliver the curriculum for the professional development. Mraz, Salas, Mercado, and Dikotla, (2016) point out that coaches and teachers must work together to improve literacy instruction and classroom management.

The team of presenters will include literacy coaches, model teachers, district support personnel, district supervisors, and state department of education English Language Arts curriculum specialists. This team will also provide monthly support to

these teachers. The district support personnel will present the requirements of the state mandated teacher evaluation rubric. They will also focus on the classroom management and differentiation of instruction components in that rubric and what that should look like in an English language arts classroom. Teachers will collaborate on a classroom management plan and the district personnel will provide specific feedback on that plan.

The literacy coaches will provide classroom modeling, assist in writing lesson plans that include reading and writing differentiation strategies, and assist in developing and ensuring implementation of classroom management plans. In addition to the RASE professional development project, literacy coaches will provide weekly support to all teachers in Grades 3-5. They will ensure that these teachers receive: all materials and resources, classroom management resources, training and support, English Language Arts curriculum and strategies that assist in implementing differentiation in the ELA classroom. The literacy coaches and mentor teachers will also ensure teachers receive training on the state mandated rubric. The model teachers will provide classroom modeling and support as needed, but will meet with each teacher at least once a week.

The district support personnel and supervisors will help the project coordinator in developing professional development training modules. They, along with the other members of the professional development support team, will provide targeted, specific professional development training and support each month. The topics will center on classroom management and differentiated instruction.

Project Evaluation

The focus of this project is to provide professional development and support for English language arts teachers in the areas of classroom management and differentiation. It is designed to inform and demonstrate effective classroom management techniques and differentiation in the ELA classroom. I will use a four day workshop prior to school starting, as well as once a month professional development and support meetings to accomplish the goal of increasing teachers' knowledge of both classroom management and differentiated instruction strategies and activities.

I will use formative assessment instead of summative assessment to consistently evaluate the effectiveness of the professional development. Teachers will be given an evaluation form that seeks their opinions of the presenters, materials, and support after each professional development session (Appendix F). The evaluation form will also ask their suggestions for changes. Giving teachers a vessel to express their opinions and thoughts, and then making changes according to their suggestions, shows that their opinions are valued.

Implications Including Social Change

Local Community

Social change in instructional literacy is imperative in the development of proficiency in literacy of children. Literacy proficiency in the district is 30%, but at the research site, those proficient in literacy is only 13% (Louisiana Believes, 2017). Teacher participants in this case study identified a need for professional development in classroom management and differentiated instruction as the critical response needed to

change the literacy rates of students in their classrooms. The social change in literacy instruction is vital at the district and state level in order to increase literacy rates statewide. In order to meet the needs of local employers, increasing proficiency rates among students provided them with literate future employees. This will increase the quality of employees in the community.

Far Reaching

Although this study addressed the concerns at Rosewood Elementary School, the results and implication are consistent with the needs across the nation. Therefore, the study results can be shared state and worldwide. The greatest implications for social change in literacy instruction and achievement include the ability to improve instructional practices (Hasbrouck, 2017). Educational leaders seeking the perceptions of literacy teachers should carefully review the study results so they can be implemented in their district. In addition, I intend to submit the project study for publication in a journal in order to reach a broader educational audience.

Conclusion

In Section 3, I presented details about the Project Study, a comprehensive four day professional development plan, and monthly meetings throughout the school year to serve as support and additional professional development. Section 3 included recommendations to address the concerns of classroom management and differentiated instruction and potential barriers. An extensive literature review was included which supported focused professional development and support for literacy teachers. Section 3 also includes the rationale for the project, implementation guidelines, and the plan for

evaluation. In the next section, I will present the strengths and limitations of the project as well as my personal reflections on myself as a scholar, practitioner, and project developer.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

The purpose of Section 4 is to discuss the strengths and limitations to the professional development project. The goals of the project focus on improving the classroom management skills and differentiated instruction strategies of elementary teachers in a Louisiana school district. Included in this section are my reflections and conclusions on the scholarship of teaching, project development and evaluation, and leadership and change. I will also explore the potential social change impact of the project. Finally, I will discuss the implications, applications, and directions for future research.

Project Strengths

The 4 days of professional development I created, as well as once a month follow-up and support meetings, have several strengths for addressing teachers concerns about literacy instruction in their classrooms. One strength of the project's professional development plan is its organized and thoughtful design, which I created. The program provides the local school system's administrators and teachers with instructional expertise and support. The project also includes opportunities for participants to collaborate and create classroom management plans, as well as lesson plans that incorporate differentiated instruction. I addressed the weaknesses from the data in the project study, which were lack of professional development, support with classroom management, and differentiated instruction. Included in the project are material to

strengthen differentiated instruction in the classroom and classroom management plans, strategies, and support.

Information that I gained from the surveys, interviews, and classroom observations are the basis for the professional development project. De Boer, Doolaard, Harms, Korpershoek, and van Kuijk (2016) reported that student achievement increased when teachers had targeted professional development. Literacy coaches, district support staff, and teachers are the most important participants in making literacy a success at the school. One strength of the project is that these support staff are included in the project. The professional development days, as well as the monthly support meetings, will not only build teacher confidence and self-efficacy, but also relationships with coaches and the support team.

Recommendations for Remediation of Limitations

One limitation of the project is that I have not created a monitoring system for the literacy coaches, and there is no one to hold them accountable. This might allow them to choose when and how the literacy coaches support the teachers. Although I collected data from literacy coaches and teachers, I did not collect data from district supervisors. The input from supervisors could have provided valuable insight into what the district is doing and what they know they need to improve. All stakeholders could also benefit from knowing what teachers need in order to teach literacy effectively. This weakness could be addressed by asking supervisors and stakeholders for their input. Implementation could occur during the monthly professional development sessions.

A final limitation could be additional support. Although I have created a 4-day professional development training with monthly support and additional professional development, some teachers may need more than this. Also, if a new teacher joins the staff in the middle of a semester, they would not have the background or base knowledge that was provided to the other teachers. This could create lack of knowledge and frustration for teachers. Each of these limitations can be addressed through constant feedback and discussions with the teachers, coaches, and district personnel. To remedy this limitation, additional professional development sessions could be offered during the summer after the first year of implementation.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

Because there is not a single method or strategy for effective classroom management or differentiated instruction that reaches every student, a comparative study may be necessary. The study results focused on teachers and literacy coaches in Grades 3-5, so lower grades and middle school grades would need additional research. A comparative evaluation would point of similarities and differences in other grade levels (Baştuğ, 2014).

There are numerous strategies and programs used throughout Louisiana and the United States. Additional classroom management strategies could be presented in order to show teachers a variety of ideas that they can try and see what works best for them. Also, additional differentiated instruction strategies could be modeled and explained in the classroom to assist teachers in understanding and implementing differentiated instruction in the classroom.

Scholarship, Project Development, and Leadership and Change

This project helped me grow as a scholar and obtain knowledge on the importance of classroom management and differentiated instruction in the literacy classroom.

Scholarship allows the researcher to look at not only what has been done, but what can be added and how it can be used (Herman, 2017). This encouragement to dig deeper into the challenges these teachers and coaches faced each day afforded me the opportunity to create a project that focused on those needs. I learned the importance of creating professional development that teachers want and need.

This project changed my opinion of teachers struggling with classroom management and differentiated instruction. One of the goals of the RASE project is to provide the tools and support the teachers need via professional development. The professional development project allows teachers to engage with colleagues, coaches, supervisors, and specialists that have the same goal, helping them feel confident with both classroom management and differentiated instruction in the classroom. The monthly professional development and support meetings will provide additional assistance and coaching for teachers.

Before planning this professional development, I had conducted several professional development opportunities for teachers. This one, however, was different because I had to think about what the teachers stated they needed and the logistics for the professional development. My desire was to ensure that the professional development was meaningful, effective, and necessary by all that attend. I noticed that I approached

this professional development very differently. One large difference was that the research data drove the topics that would be covered in the professional development.

Deciding on how the project would be evaluated was difficult at first. I wanted to make sure that when teachers evaluated the program, it was a fair evaluation. More importantly, I wanted to make sure the evaluation was designed to take that feedback from teachers and incorporate that into RASE professional development. I had to decide between a formative or summative evaluation. In the end, I wanted both. After the 4-day professional development, teachers evaluate the professional development for that day, but they also evaluate the monthly professional development. Changes will be made for the next month according to their feedback on the evaluation. At the end of the year-long support professional development, teachers will complete a summative evaluation. Using this information, updates and revisions to the RASE program will be made.

A leader must continually learn and adjust to be effective. In the past, I have been part of a team, but for this professional development project, I was on my own. While creating this project independently, I had to immerse myself in the results of the original study as well as the tenets of effective professional development. Creating this professional development required me to look at and analyze the district's current professional development strategies to determine what needed to be adjusted. This process taught me to think about all stakeholders when addressing their needs of teachers. Instead of planning what I think is best, it is important to get the opinions of all stakeholders then determine what steps should be taken next. As a leader in the field, I

will encourage others to listen to the needs of everyone and make decisions based on what is best for all stakeholders.

The development of RASE professional development project forced me to check over every aspect of the professional development, presenters, content, strategies, and logistics. There are many responsibilities in coordinating this project, but through the detailed progress Walden requires, I feel knowledgeable and adequately trained to assist in the project implementation. I now see myself as a leader with the ability to guide the professional growth of teachers. Using everything I have learned from Walden about being an educational leader, it is important to make change in the educational field by sharing my results, professional development project, and strategies I have learned to make teaching more effective. Adjusting professional development based on the needs of stakeholders allows everyone to have a stake in the project and change. If they have a stake, they are more likely to assist and follow through with all aspects because they had a part in creating it.

Throughout the process of this research, I have noticed an extreme change in the way I evaluate both sources and content. It has been enlightening. As I have completed the project, I have become aware that this process has led me on a learning journey that I want to continue. Being a life-long learner is now instilled in me. Planning the proposal, conducting the research, collecting data, analyzing that data, and completing literature reviews have allowed me to see its strengths

As I have developed as a scholar, I have also learned that a scholar adds to the discipline significantly. My field of study is literacy. I first located a school and school

district that agreed to participate in my doctoral research. After I examined one school's literacy data, I discovered that the majority of the students were not performing or reading on level. I then proposed a solution to the problem by suggesting that English language arts teachers learn how to differentiate their instruction, as well as manage their classrooms by participating in professional development.

As a novice researcher, understanding ethical methods throughout the project assisted me in creating a reliable report. The goal of a researcher is to ensure reliability (Creswell, 2012). The feedback from the participants was included throughout the process of collecting analyzing data. The opportunity to member check provided the teachers will opportunities to check errors and challenged any perceived interpretations. This also afforded the participants an opportunity to offer any additional information.

After serving as a literacy coach and performing the various roles and duties that requires, the knowledge and those experiences sparked my enthusiasm for researching and investigating effective literacy instruction. The numerous experiences I have had that allowed me to work with both teachers and the students learning in their classrooms has been rewarding. Being a part of this learning and working with the teachers and students inspires me to continue my own learning.

I have experienced growth as an educator and researcher. As a researcher, I had to become proficient in areas I was only slightly familiar with. I learned how to ethically gather research and sift through results objectively, making sure my own personal thoughts and biases were not included in the analysis of the data.

Teaching and education require teachers to continually learn and stay current on the most recent and effective strategies (Pratt & Martin, 2017). Teachers also need to be life-long learners, modeling new and effective strategies for their students. This allows for reflection as well. As a teacher and researcher, I must always reflect on what the stakeholders believe as well as what research states. Each of these are essential to the success of any program or project.

As I developed the project, I had a sense of confidence because of my experience creating professional development opportunities for teachers. However, in the past, the district primarily directed the professional development sessions. Unpacking the project study allowed me to use the data gathered to create a personalized, targeted professional development opportunity that the English language arts teachers and literacy coaches said they needed. Through the reflective process Walden requires, I feel confident in the RASE professional development program.

Reflections on the Importance of the Work

Literacy is essential for the success of all students. The important job of teaching students to become literate is critical in increasing their academic achievement. Building knowledge of differentiated instructional strategies will allow the teachers to tailor their instruction to meet the needs of every student in their classroom. Every student enters the classroom with specific academic and social needs. Generating plans and activities that permit students to learn in the way that suits them best will increase engagement and academic success.

Classroom management is also an area of concern for effective literacy instruction. If the classroom is chaotic, it prevents learning. Without training in classroom management, both new and experienced teachers may struggle with the use of effective strategies that allow teachers the environment needed to educate their students. The use of effective classroom management techniques will propel both students and teachers to a more successful classroom.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

The findings of this project study and my review of the literature confirmed that there is a relationship between differentiated instruction and effective literacy instruction. It also showed that classroom management plays an important role in the success of a teacher in the literacy classroom. The project has implications for social change because it includes components perceived to be important to both teachers and literacy coaches.

Effective professional development in differentiated instruction and classroom management can positively impact teacher confidence, effective teaching, student achievement, school culture, and the community's support of that school. Increased self-efficacy of teachers could also improve the school's culture and the communities support because teachers would feel proud and share that with others. If teachers feel proud, they will share that with the community when they are shopping, attending sporting events, at community events, etc.

Increasing literacy rates could have the biggest influence on social change. If the parents and the community hear the positive reports from teachers and coaches, as well as see an increase in literacy, they will also be more supportive of the school and district.

This could decrease drop out rates and provide more literate employees for local businesses. With the support of all stakeholders, everyone wins.

As indicated by the English language arts teachers and literacy coaches, professional development is needed to increase literacy success in the classroom. By focusing on differentiated instruction and classroom management, this project aims to enhance or increase teachers' knowledge and confidence in teaching literacy. The hope is that teachers will use the knowledge gained from the professional development will increase student achievement in literacy.

The project study is applicable in many situations. The professional development could be incorporated into literacy programs across the district, the state, and the nation. The program might also be used with teacher preparation programs. If pre-service teachers have access to the Reaching All Students Effectively (RASE) project, it could positively affect their self-efficacy and success in the classroom.

Future researchers may want to research how the targeted professional development influence students academic achievement after implementing the RASE program. This type of study would determine additional needs teachers have in order to teach literacy effectively. Specifically, differentiated professional development should be provided to all teachers so that their needs are met instead of a one size fits all professional development.

Conclusion

Elementary English language arts teachers and coaches are asked to increase literacy for every student in their classroom. Through this study, my purpose was to

analyze English language arts teachers' and literacy coaches' experiences and perceptions of their needs for effective literacy instruction. Through this study, I confirmed that a group of teachers at a low performing school, the research site, sought effective professional development in the areas of differentiated instruction and classroom management. Additionally, the school district provided limited professional development targeted at the teachers' perceived needs. As district and state leaders review the findings of the study and apply the RASE professional development program, literacy scores should improve. The professional development training outlined provides teachers with the knowledge and the tools needed to teach literacy effectively.

I have evolved as a writer, scholar, educator, and practitioner. I became a project developer through the RASE project. Each process I completed through Walden assisted me in achieving my goal of learning how to improve and influence the education of students and teachers across the state as well as my own.

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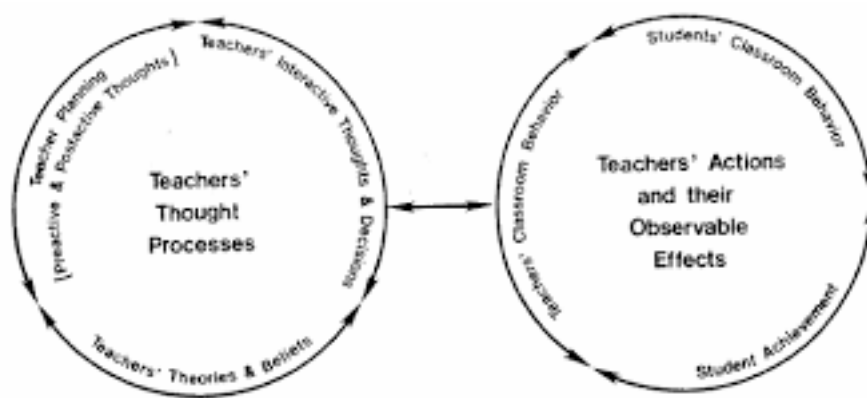
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Table 1. This table includes The Teacher Conceptual Model shows the two domains that are critical in the teaching process.



Appendix A: Project

RASE
Reaching All Students Effectively**Goals, Outcomes, and Objectives****Goals:**

1. Facilitate teachers growth and development
2. Assist teachers develop effective instructional classroom management skills.
3. Provide support for teachers.
4. Assist teachers improve instructional practices to increase student achievement.
5. Assist teachers develop effective skills in differentiating instruction

Outcomes

1. Teachers will become familiar with classroom procedures as well as the COMPASS rubric for Louisiana teachers, specifically component 3C, Managing classroom behaviors.
2. Teachers will collaborate with their peers to develop a classroom management plan to be implemented in their classrooms.
3. Teachers will become familiar with differentiated instruction and develop lesson plans that include specific differentiated instruction strategies.

Objectives:

1. As a result of the professional development, teachers will create a classroom management plan.

2. As a result of professional development, teachers will demonstrate effective teaching strategies.
3. As a result of the professional development, teachers will develop lesson plans that include differentiated instruction.

Sources for Participants

The First Days of School: How to Be an Effective Teacher – Resource Book and DVD:

Wong Publications

The Differentiated Classroom by Carol Tomlinson

Kagan Cooperative Learning

Classroom Management that Works –Professional Development Video Series

What Works in Schools Video Series (3 videos) Educational consultant: Robert J. Marzano; Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (this will be used at the monthly professional development opportunities).

Websites: Retrieved from <http://www.mc3edsupport.org>

Target Audience

Teachers in Grades 3-5

Timeline for Teachers' Professional Development

Suggested Topics	Suggested Activities	Resources	Timeline
Day 1 Classroom Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model strategies • Video Vignettes • Ice breaker activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom Management that Works –Professional Development Video Series • The First Days of School: How to Be an Effective Teacher – Resource Book and DVD by Harry Wong 	Training in August before school begins Ongoing support August- July 6 hours

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handouts from presenter • Classroom or campus library • Smart Board • Internet Connectivity • Laptop or Desktop Computer • Printer • Digital Projector 	
Day 2 Classroom Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role playing exercises • Create a classroom management plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The First Days of School: How to Be an Effective Teacher – Resource Book and DVD by Harry Wong • Handouts from presenter • Classroom or campus library • Smart Board • Internet Connectivity • Laptop or Desktop Computer • Printer • Digital Projector 	<p>Training in August before school begins</p> <p>Ongoing support</p> <p>August- July</p> <p>6 hours</p>
Day 3 Differentiated Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model strategies • Video Vignettes • Ice breaker activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Differentiated Classroom (book) by Carol Tomlinson • Handouts from presenter • Classroom or campus library • Smart Board • Internet Connectivity • Laptop or Desktop Computer • Printer • Digital Projector 	<p>Training in August before school begins</p> <p>Ongoing support</p> <p>August- July</p> <p>6 hours</p>

<p>Day 4</p> <p>Differentiated Instruction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with content area teachers to create plans that incorporate differentiated instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Differentiated Classroom (book) by Carol Tomlinson • District curriculum guidelines/Scope and Sequence • Handouts from presenter • Classroom or campus library • Smart Board • Internet Connectivity • Laptop or Desktop Computer • Printer • Digital Projector 	<p>Training in August before school begins</p> <p>Ongoing support</p> <p>August- July</p> <p>6 hours</p>
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Professional Development Outline

The Reaching All Students Effectively (RASE) will be a four-day professional initial development project with a year-long support meetings and mentoring for all teachers in Grades 3-5. This project includes activities designed to help the teachers practice, refine, and develop a greater understanding of effective teaching. The school principal, literacy coaches, and district personnel will assist in the implantation of this professional development project. It will begin with a four-day initial training prior to school beginning and will continue throughout the 2017-18 school year, with monthly activities embedded in coaching and professional development.

The four-day orientation will be conducted four days prior to the beginning of school. These days are already designated on the school calendar for professional development for teachers. The professional development will begin at 8am and end at 3pm. There will be a 15-minute break at 10am and 1:30pm. Lunch will be from 11:30am-12:30pm.

The monthly professional development sessions will be designed to focus on activities and strategies that assist teachers in both classroom management and differentiated instruction. Each session will take place after school and will last 1-1/2 hours in length at the same location, the school. The format for these sessions will include beginning with an icebreaker, a targeted strategy focusing on differentiation in the classroom, and interactive collaboration activity that demonstrates effective classroom management, and a reflection sheet for teachers to identify their needs and or successes in the classroom.

The workshop presenters will deliver the curriculum for the professional development. The team of presenters will include literacy coaches, model teachers, district support personnel, and district supervisors. This team will also provide monthly support to these teachers. The district support personnel will present the requirements of the state mandated teacher evaluation rubric. They will also focus on the classroom management and differentiation of instruction components in that rubric. Teachers will collaborate on a classroom management plan and the district personnel will provide specific feedback on that plan.

The literacy coaches will provide classroom modeling, assist in writing lesson plans that include differentiation, and assist in developing and ensuring implementation of classroom management plans. In addition to the RASE professional development project, literacy coaches will provide weekly support to all teachers in Grades 3-5. They will ensure that these teachers receive: all materials and resources, classroom management, curriculum and how to implement differentiation in the classroom. The literacy coaches and mentor teachers will also ensure teachers receive training on the state mandated rubric. The model teachers will provide classroom modeling and support as needed, but will meet with each teacher at least once a week.

The district support personnel and supervisors will help with the project coordinator in developing professional development training modules. They, along with the other members of the professional development support team, will provide targeted, specific professional development training and support each month. The topics will center on classroom management and differentiated instruction.

Format

A variety of strategies will be used during the workshop sessions. Cooperative learning will be used at each workshop. A list of sample activities include:

- Modeling strategies and demonstrations
- Video Vignettes
- Ice breaker games
- Role playing exercises
- Quiz Quiz Trade with questions and answers
- Jot Thoughts with new or difficult topics
- Think Pair Share with questions and answers

RASE Orientation Agenda

Day 1

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 8:00-8:15 | Registration and snacks |
| 8:15-8:45 | Welcome and RASE Project Overview |
| 8:45-9:00 | Introduction of Support Team |
| | Professional Development Calendar Overview |
| 9:00-10:00 | “Ice Breaker” Get to know you Activity (Teachers get to know and begin developing relationships with district and school support staff) |
| 10:00-10:15 | Break |
| 10:15-11:30 | A. Introduction to Classroom Management
B. Mentor training for Mentor Teachers and Literacy Coaches |
| 11:30-12:30 | Lunch |
| 12:30-1:30 | A. Classroom Management in the Classroom
B. Mentor training for Mentor Teachers and Literacy Coaches |
| 1:30-1:45 | Break |
| 1:45-2:30 | Cooperative Learning Classroom Management (Video Vignette) |
| 2:30-3:00 | Reaching All Students Effectively (RASE)

Purpose of the training

Roles of Mentors and District Staff

Roles of Teachers |

RASE Agenda**Day 2**

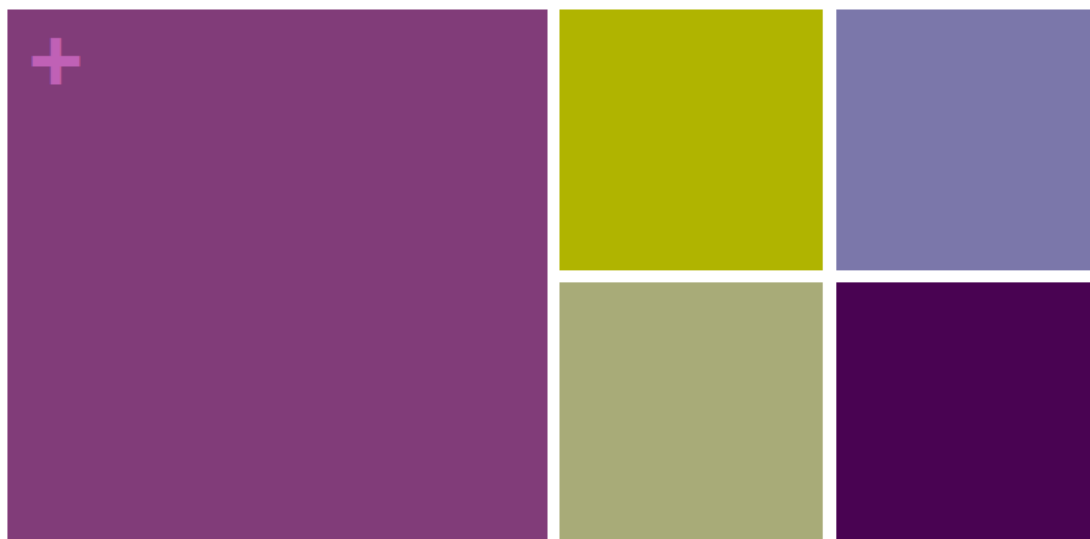
- 8:00-8:15 Registration and snacks
- 8:15-8:20 Review RASE Project Overview/Answer Questions about RASE
- 8:20-9:00 Video/Discussion The First Days of School
- 9:00-10:00 Role Playing Exercise
- 10:00-10:15 Break
- 10:15-11:30 What does a classroom management plan consist of?
- 11:30-12:30 Lunch
- 12:30-1:30 Create a Classroom Management Plan (collaboratively)
- 1:30-1:45 Break
- 1:45-2:30 Coaches and Supervisors Assist in the Creation of Classroom
Management Plans
- 2:30-3:50 Present Classroom Management Plans
- 2:50-3:00 Discuss expectations for Monthly Professional Development

RASE Agenda**Day 3**

8:00-8:15	Registration and snacks
8:15-8:25	Ice Breaker
8:25-9:00	What is Differentiated Instruction? Why is it important? (The Differentiated Classroom)-Distribute books
9:00-9:30	Video Vignette/Discussion
9:30-10:00	Model DI Strategy
10:00-10:15	Break
10:15-11:30	Differentiated Instruction Strategies/Activities
11:30-12:30	Lunch
12:30-1:30	Collaborative DI Activity
1:30-1:45	Break
1:45-2:30	Video/Discussion
2:30-3:00	Presentations

RASE Agenda**Day 4**

- 8:00-8:15 Registration and snacks
- 8:15-8:25 Ice Breaker
- 8:25-9:00 What does differentiation look like in your classroom? (The Differentiated Classroom)
- 9:00-10:00 Collaboration with grade levels/content areas
- 10:00-10:15 Break
- 10:15-11:30 Writing Lesson Plans that include Differentiated Instruction
- 11:30-12:30 Lunch
- 12:30-1:30 Literacy Coaches/District Staff Collaborate with Groups/Generate DI Plans
- 1:30-1:45 Break
- 1:45-2:30 (Cont.) Literacy Coaches/District Staff Collaborate with Groups/Generate DI Plans
- 2:30-3:00 Discuss Plans for Month Professional Development Collaboration



RASE Project

Created by April Giddens

+

RASE Project

- Reaching
- All
- Students
- Effectively

+

Introductions

- Meet the RASE Support Team
- Review the Professional Development schedule and calendar
- Get to know your support team (Activity)

+ Classroom Management

- Goal: to develop a classroom management plan
- Outcome: review COMPASS component 3C, Managing Classroom Procedures and collaborate with peers to develop a classroom management plan
- Objectives: as a results of this professional development, the participants will develop a classroom management plan that can be implemented in their classrooms immediately

+ Characteristics of an Effective Classroom

- An appropriate number of rules
- Rules were created collaboratively with students
- Rules were positive and specific
- Posted publically
- Taught to students
- Positeve and negative consequences

+ **The Learning Environment**



- Students feel safe
- Students are valued
- The teacher uses a variety of learning strategies to meet the needs of all the students
- Effective collaboration is used
- Rules and procedures are established and modeled often

+ **Routines and Procedures**



- Must be established at the beginning of school
- Provide to your students and parents in writing
- Must be consistent throughout the school year

Video Vignette: The Effective Teacher – Series (Harry Wong) –Part 4 Procedures and Routines

Chapter 2- Positive Expectations
Chapter 3- Classroom Management

+ Interventions

- What can you do when a student is disrupting class?
 - (Discuss with partners)

Video series-What interventions are appropriate in your classroom?

+ Relationships

- Relationships are critical to the success of a classroom
- Disruptions can be minimized if the teacher and student have a positive relationship.

How can you establish relationships with your students?

Review-Effective Classrooms Chart-Materials will be supplied

+ **Organization**

- Classrooms should be organized and accessible for all students.
- Safe for all students
- Physical environment

Look at the pictures on your table. What do you notice about the classroom organization? Which of these are effective organizational strategies? Which should you avoid?

Work in groups to determine which of the pictures best represents effective organization. Be prepared to defend your answer with specific strategies (use your book for reference if needed).

+ **Differentiated Instruction**

- Content
- Process
- Product
- Environment

Please refer to *The Differentiated Classroom* by Carol Tomlinson (materials provided by the district)

+ Content

- This is **WHAT** you are teaching
- How can you differentiate what you are teaching in order to meet the needs of all of your students?

Working with your group, review Tomlinson's strategies for content.

Discuss

Group activity to share knowledge (Pair share)

+ Process

- This is **HOW** you are teaching
- How can you create activities and lessons that engage and reach all students?

Working with your group, review Tomlinson's teaching strategies for the process of teaching.

Discuss (whole group)

Group activity to share knowledge (Quiz Quiz Trade)

+ Product

- Assessments should be engaging and stimulating
- Assessments should provide the teacher with a clear picture of the students level of knowledge

Working with your group, review Tomlinson's strategies for creating an assessment.

Looking at the ELA State Standards, choose one to create an assessment on. Now how can we differentiate that assessment?

With your group, create at least three assessments that you could use with your chosen standard.

+ Environment

- The environment is the most critical to a successful differentiated classroom.

Video clip-Environment

Activity-One Stray (Cooperative learning) to share knowledge

Classroom Management

Sign-In Sheet for Professional Development Day 1

Project: Managing Classroom Behavior Day 2 6 hours	Meeting Date:
Facilitator: TBA	Place/Room:

Last name (Print)	First Name (Print)	Employ ID#	Position	Signature

April Giddens

Differentiated Instruction

Sign-In Sheet for Professional Development

Project: Differentiated Instruction Day 4 6 hours	Meeting Date:
Facilitator: TBA	Place/Room:

Last name (Print)	First Name (Print)	Employ ID#	Position	Signature

April Giddens

Appendix B: Literacy Walkthrough Form

Literacy Walkthrough

1. Explicit vocabulary instruction is purposeful and ongoing.

Yes

No

Not observed

2. Classroom behavior management system creates a positive learning environment.

Yes

No

Not observed

3. Pacing is appropriate during both whole group and small group instruction.

Yes

No

Not observed

4. The teacher fosters student engagement during the lesson.

Yes

No

Not observed

5. Teacher used scaffolding during the lesson.

Yes

No

Not observed

6. Differentiation used in the lesson.

Yes

No

Not observed

7. What literacy strategies were used in the lesson?

8. What resources were used during the lesson?

Additional Notes:

Appendix C: Permission to use the Learning Forward Survey



March 20, 2017

April Jessup Giddens

[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]

Dear April,

Learning Forward grants you permission to use the Standards Assessment Inventory (SAI) in your research for your doctoral dissertation as an instrument to gather data from teachers about their perceptions of the professional development they receive and its alignment with the Standards for Professional Learning.

Please ensure that this credit line appears in your work in reference to the SAI:

“Used with permission of Learning Forward, www.learningforward.org. All rights reserved.”

Good luck in your research in pursuit of your Doctorate.

Sincerely,

Tom Manning

[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]

Appendix D: Interview Protocol

Project: Teachers' and Literacy Coaches' Perceptions and Experiences with Literacy Instruction

Date/Time of Interview:

Place:

Interviewer: April Giddens

Interviewee:

Position of Interviewee:

Questions for teachers:

1. Describe your role and experience teaching.
2. What do you believe are best practices in literacy instruction? Which of these do you use on a regular bases?
3. What barriers do you face each day in the classroom? Does this affect literacy instruction? If so, how?
4. What is one struggle, if any, that you have face in literacy instruction? Please explain.
5. Explain the professional development you have been offered. Do you find it meets your individual needs? Why? Why not?
6. How does professional development affect your performance in the classroom?
7. Is there anything else you would like to add about your experience teaching?

Questions for Literacy Coaches:

1. Describe your experience coaching teachers.
2. What do you believe are best practices in literacy instruction? Which of these do you use see in classrooms on a regular bases?
3. What are some of the barriers you see each day in the classroom? Does this affect literacy instruction? If so, how?
4. What do you believe are best practices in literacy instruction? Which of these do you use on a regular bases?

5. Explain the professional development your teachers have been offered. Do you find it meets their individual needs? Why? Why not?
6. How does professional development affect your teachers' performance in the classroom or the way in which you coach teachers?

Appendix E: Survey Results

Survey Results

Question	Survey 1	Survey 2	Survey 3	Survey 4	Survey 5	Survey 6	Total Average
1 (LC)	2	3	2	1	3	1	2
2 (LC)	5	3	1	1	4	1	2.5
3 (LC)	4	3	2	1	4	1	2.5
4 (LC)	1	3	1	1	4	1	1.8
5 (LC)	3	3	1	1	4	1	2.2
6 (LC)	3	3	1	1	4	1	2.2
7 (LC)	1	3	2	1	3	1	1.8
8 (L)	4	4	2	2	4	2	3
9 (L)	1	3	2	2	4	2	1.75
10 (L)	3	4	2	2	3	2	2.7
11 (L)	2	4	2	2	4	2	2.7
12 (L)	1	4	1	2	4	2	2.3
13 (L)	2	4	2	2	4	2	2.7
14 (L)	2	4	1	2	3	2	2.3
15 (R)	4	3	3	2	4	3	3.2
16 (R)	3	0	1	3	1	2	1.7
17 (R)	1	1	1	1	2	1	1.2
18 (R)	4	3	1	1	3	1	2.2
19 (R)	2	1	1	1	3	1	1.5
20 (R)	2	4	2	2	3	1	2.3
21 (R)	2	4	2	2	4	2	2.7
22 (D)	3	4	2	1	3	1	2.3
23 (D)	3	4	2	2	3	1	2.7
24 (D)	0	4	2	1	3	1	1.8
25 (D)	0	4	2	1	3	2	2
26 (D)	3	4	3	1	3	1	2.5
27 (D)	3	4	2	1	3	1	2.3
28 (D)	3	4	2	1	3	1	2.3
29 (D)	0	4	2	1	3	1	1.8
30 (LD)	0	0	1	1	3	2	1.2
31 (LD)	2	1	1	2	5	4	2.5
32 (LD)	3	0	1	2	3	1	1.7
33 (LD)	2	0	1	1	3	1	1.3

34 (LD)	0	0	1	1	3	1	1
35 (LD)	2	0	2	1	3	1	1.5
36 (LD)	0	0	1	1	3	1	1
37 (I)	3	5	3	3	5	3	3.7
38 (I)	3	4	1	2	3	2	2.5
39 (I)	0	0	0	2	1	3	1
40 (I)	0	0	3	2	4	2	1.8
41 (I)	0	0	2	2	3	3	1.7
42 (I)	0	0	3	1	3	1	1.3
43 (I)	3	0	2	1	3	3	2
44 (O)	3	4	3	3	4	2	3.2
45 (O)	3	4	2	2	4	2	2.8
46 (O)	0	4	2	2	5	2	2.5
47 (O)	2	4	2	2	4	5	3.2
48 (O)	3	4	2	2	4	2	2.8
49 (O)	0	4	2	2	4	2	2.3
50 (O)	3	4	1	2	4	5	3.2

Note: Learning Communities (LC); Leadership (L); Resources (R); Data (D); Learning Designs (LD); Implementation (I); and Outcomes (O).

Appendix F: RASE Evaluation Form

Reaching All Students Effectively (RASE) Evaluation Form

Rating key: 4 Highly Effective, 3-Effective, 2-Partially Effective, and 1-Not Effective

How would you rate the presenter after today's professional development?

4 3 2 1

How would you rate the materials provided to you during today's professional development?

4 3 2 1

How would you rate the support you have received since the last professional development?

4 3 2 1

What should stay the same for the upcoming professional development sessions?

Do you have any suggestions or recommendations for changes that could improve the professional development you receive?