

2019

Impact of a Geography-Literature Collaborative on Secondary School Pedagogy

John Matthew McCormick
Walden University

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John Matthew McCormick

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Review Committee

Dr. Heather Caldwell, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty

Dr. Jesse Richter, Committee Member, Education Faculty

Dr. Barbara Schirmer, University Reviewer, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer

Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University

2019

Abstract

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by

John Matthew McCormick

MLS, West Virginia University, 2012

M.Ed., Concord University, 2010

BA, Concord University, 2005

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Walden University

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Abstract

Geography education has been relegated to a subset of social studies standards in most of the United States and has been overshadowed by a history-centered curriculum. Student achievement in geography has not improved for several decades due to the focus on history content in the social studies curriculum. Rooted in a conceptual framework encompassing elements of self-efficacy and the whole teacher approach, the purpose of this case study was to examine the impact of the West Virginia Geographic Alliance (WVGA) professional development workshop on teachers' practices in delivering cross-disciplinary geography education. The research questions addressed teachers' perceived self-efficacy in delivering cross-disciplinary geography and literature instruction and the long-term changes they made to their classroom pedagogy. Data collection involved open-ended, semistructured interviews with 6 teachers (3 geography and 3 literature) who attended the WVGA training. Analysis of interview transcripts with open and axial coding revealed that teachers perceived geography as an important discipline and an effective means of enhancing literature instruction. Perceived obstacles to cross-disciplinary geography instruction included rigid content standards, scheduling conflicts, and time constraints. Findings indicated that future geography professional development should be relevant to teachers' needs and based on state standards for geography instruction. Findings may be used to promote cross-disciplinary geography instruction through professional development.

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Dedication

This doctoral study is dedicated to my children, Cricket, Daisy Bea, Reed, and Rose. I hope that you all strive to live up to your full potential. Most of all, I hope that you do what makes you happy.

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Section 1: The Problem

The Local Problem

Students in the United States struggle with geography content mastery (Edelson, Wertheim, & Schell, 2013; Jo & Milson, 2013). The social studies curriculum throughout most states has emphasized history as the core offering for students in secondary schools, and has reduced the presence of geography to a subset of standards within a larger social studies and history curriculum (Brysch, 2014; Edelson et al., 2013; Jo & Milson, 2013). West Virginia has followed the trend set by other states and has crafted a series of standards for the social studies curriculum that emphasizes history as the core component to a larger social studies curriculum (West Virginia Department of Education [WVDE], 2016). History courses are offered in West Virginia high schools during three of the four years of secondary study, with the fourth year emphasizing a mandatory civics course. Although the mandatory nature of civics has fluctuated over the years, the strong emphasis on history and classification of geography as a set of history substandards within the social studies curriculum has persisted for many years, modeling a curricular status quo that is pervasive across the United States (Brysch, 2014; Mitchell, Brysch, & Collins, 2015). One veteran counselor at a large southern West Virginia school indicated that this curricular setup has been in place for decades (High School Guidance Counselor, 2016).

West Virginia Policy 2510, as revised every few years, sets social studies standards in the state of West Virginia (WVDE, 2016). Political tension in the state regarding federally supported common core curriculum standards led the West Virginia

legislature to pass House Bill 4014 in March of 2016 that eliminated common core standards in the state and forced the WVDE to revise the standards set in Policy 2510 for the 2016-2017 school year (West Virginia Legislature, 2016). The revisions were made over the summer and were open to public comment. The resulting policy represented a shift in the state of West Virginia's view on geography education as a part of the curriculum.

Geography courses at the secondary level had previously been relegated to elective status, meaning that students could take geography to earn a general elective credit, but this credit could not count as a substitute for a social studies credit. In other words, students were forced to take four years of mandatory social studies courses that did not include a stand-alone geography credit, and could only use a geography elective, if offered, to supplement a generic credit that could be fulfilled as easily by choosing any other elective course (High School Guidance Counselor, personal communication, 2016; WVDE, 2016). As a result, many secondary schools in West Virginia did not offer stand-alone geography courses as part of their high school curriculum despite state curriculum standards existing for such an elective course.

In the state of West Virginia, courses are taught in accordance with standards developed by the WVDE (2016). At one time social studies standards were tested in yearly standardized tests, but social studies testing was phased out over the course of the early 2010s, meaning that social studies courses are taught with relatively little oversight (County Social Studies Director personal communication, 2016). Despite social studies standards and subsequently geography standards not being evaluated in state standardized

tests, the policy shift represented by Policy 2510 has brought geography back to the forefront of social studies discussion. The current social studies curriculum in West Virginia allows geography to be used as a core social studies credit under certain circumstances and also requires schools to offer a stand-alone geography credit (WVDE, 2016). According to the state of West Virginia, the state social studies coordinator, and the West Virginia Geographic Alliance cocoordinator, the current Policy 2510 as revised was crafted with the intent of bringing geography back into the high school curriculum (personal communication, 2016). Policy 2510 states that in addition to core social studies classes, West Virginia high schools are required to offer geography electives to their students (WVDE, 2016). Though the intent was to increase the presence of geography in West Virginia high schools, there are loopholes that schools may use to avoid teaching geography courses, despite the language stating that the elective course is required. The state social studies director stated in a recent communication that these loopholes addressed the logistic impossibility of many schools offering a stand-alone geography course (personal communication, 2016). Concerned principals contacted the WVDE at the beginning of the 2016-2017 school year to denounce the policy, which did not take into consideration the small social studies staffs at many schools. This created a situation that placed additional burdens on schools that were already facing overfull classrooms while offering only core social studies courses as outlined by 2510 (State Social Studies Director, personal communication, 2016). The response from the WVDE has been to allow flexibility in the policy's interpretation of what required means within the context of the policy, creating an escape hatch for principals who find the implementation of the

policy to be inconvenient or unworkable (State Social Studies Director, personal communication, 2016).

The result of this inconsistency in interpretation of the policy has led to a situation in which the WVDE's move to increase the presence of geography within the high school social studies curriculum is somewhat more symbolic than practical, especially given that the mandate was made without providing funding of infrastructure support necessary to expand geography into every secondary school. The result has been that some counties have implemented geography in full, some in part, and some have ignored the mandate. One county social studies coordinator stated, "That word, 'required,' is in there! We took that to mean that we had to offer the class at all our [four secondary] schools" (personal communication, 2016). When confronted with the possibility of flexibility within the policy, one social studies coordinator indicated that the county felt that it had an obligation to offer the course, as well as an educational imperative given the poor state of geography that persists throughout U.S. K-12 education, and went so far as to suggest that the county had plans to further integrate geography into the secondary curriculum through the advancement of dual credit courses and other measures, where and when possible (personal communication, 2016..

Current emphasis on multidisciplinary education in West Virginia has promoted the use of literacy design collaborative modules, a curricular design that has been adopted by many schools throughout West Virginia at the behest of the WVDE (State Social Studies Coordinator, personal communication, 2016). West Virginia has pushed for full implementation of literacy design collaborative modules as a part of their literacy

standards (WVDE, 2016). The literacy design collaborative is an effort to integrate literature content into other subject classes and other subjects into literature subject matter, placing a heavy emphasis on primary and secondary source reading and analysis. One director of secondary social studies stated that the integration of geography into literature classrooms (and vice versa) is a natural extension of the adoption of literacy design collaborate models (personal communication, 2016). She further indicated that the integration of geography should not stop there. According to a social studies director, new teaching materials for a variety of classes, including art and music, include built-in geography components; she concluded her correspondence with me with this telling thought:

I believe geography has been integrated into several curriculums for many years. We may not make note of it, but it is still within the content. What happens many times is that the geography content gets overlooked within these said curriculums. For example, maps within the English or art text[books] may not be focused on as much as the story or art within. The question is how do we get instructors to focus on that content as well? (personal communication, 2016)

The question raised in this quote is not rhetorical. One group, the West Virginia Geographic Alliance (WVGA), has not only asked that question but has made an effort to bridge the gap between geography and other subjects, particularly literature.

A 2013 workshop provided by the WVGA and funded by a grant from the Benedum Foundation hosted 26 West Virginia teachers (including myself) for a week-long training session aimed at helping geography content teachers connect and

collaborate with literature teachers. The emphasis of this workshop was on bringing elements of geography, particularly physical geography, into the literature classroom and literature materials into the geography classroom, and on improving connections between literature teachers and geography content teachers, which WVGA recognized as a group including both social studies and science teachers in the public school system (Hagen, 2015). During the week-long workshop, teachers were given instruction by teachers, professors, and professionals in various fields. Operating under the belief that geography serves as a bridge discipline between the humanities, social studies, and hard sciences, each individual presenter discussed the connections that their field has with geography and geography education. Some presentations dealt specifically with content. For example, a presenter specializing in marine biology discussed the importance of location in creating the backdrop to Ernest Hemingway's seminal novella *The Old Man and the Sea*. Several such informational sessions were delivered relating to other works of literature. Other presenters taught strategies meant to help secondary teachers better understand how to deliver instruction regarding the physical environment (an important component of geography education) in their classrooms. These strategies included games and activities designed for middle and high school age students.

Further, the workshop provided literature materials to geography content teachers to encourage the use of literature to teach help teach geography. Individual copies of books were given to teachers by the conclusion of the session. These included novels deemed by the presenters and the WVGA as worthy vehicles for the delivery of geographic content in literature, social studies, and science classrooms. The books were

diverse and included both classic literary works and more recent offerings meant to appeal to younger readers. Books delivered to teachers included but were not limited to *The Old Man and the Sea*, *The Earth Abides*, *The Hunger Games*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Heart of Darkness*, and *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. In addition to these works, which were distributed to both social studies and literature teachers, all teachers who attended were given copies of a physical geography textbook as well as various maps (sourced from the National Geographic Society) for use in their respective classrooms.

The workshops took place during the spring and summer of 2013 and included teachers predominantly employed in the instruction of 10th and 11th grade high school students. The summer after the workshops was designated as curriculum development time for teachers, and teachers who attended the workshops were expected to deliver lessons to students using materials and/or strategies learned from the sessions during the 2013-2014 school year. Teachers were not only expected to deliver content to students but also to provide samples of lesson plans to the WVGA. Lessons were to be developed collaboratively by teacher teams consisting of a geography content teacher and literature teacher. The choice of which classroom in which to deliver the lesson was left up to the teacher teams.

In 2015 surveys were administered to teacher participants from the WVGA workshops. A total of 16 teachers responded to these surveys. The surveys included open-ended questions and questions that asked respondents to rate their experience on a Likert scale. The questions asked teacher participants to reflect on the difficulty of

teaching geography and literature (as comparable to teaching regular courses), support from school administrators, level of student interest, and the effectiveness of the workshop and materials in preparing the teachers to teach geography and literature in a collaborative setting.

A total of 244 students were also surveyed with questions focusing on student experiences during the teaching of the collaborative lessons. Student questions focused on student perceptions of course difficulty and students' interest in taking geography and literature courses in the future based on their experience with the collaborative lessons. Regarding both teacher and student perceptions, the WVGA deemed the program as successful in the short term, and noted favorable responses from teachers regarding their confidence in using cross-curricular techniques for teaching geography in a variety of classroom settings, as well as favorable student perceptions regarding their experiences learning geography and literature in a collaborative setting (Hagen, 2015).

Professional development is key in improving cross-curricular learning and bolstering teachers' confidence in teaching geography content in their classrooms (Harte & Reitano, 2015; Hinde, Popp, Jimenez-Silva, & Dorn, 2011; Hutson, Rutherford, Foster, & Richardson, 2014). Multiple parties, including the WVDE's social studies coordinator and the social studies coordinator for a county in West Virginia, have indicated an interest in finding out how the WVGA's first effort at a literature-geography collaborative has impacted pedagogy for both social studies and literature teachers (personal communication, 2016; WVDE, 2016). For this reason, coupled with the refreshed focus of West Virginia policymakers on geography, further investigation

following the WVGA's literature-geography collaborative was warranted to determine whether teachers who attended the WVGA persisted in their use of geography and literature collaborative teaching strategies and materials.

Rationale

Geography education faces challenges throughout the United States. In addition to the aforementioned problem of stand-alone geography courses not being available to all students, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) testing in 2014 revealed that geography scores for 8th grade students (the only subset of students nationally evaluated) had not improved significantly since 1994, and that only 27% of 8th grade students scored at or above proficiency levels on the NAEP geography assessment (NAEP, 2014). West Virginia no longer tests students' mastery of geography standards during the yearly battery of state mandated standardized tests (WVDE, 2016).

Geography is in a unique place in West Virginia. The discipline has been given more attention by the WVDE through revisions to Policy 2510, but the mandate to offer a geography elective has not been embraced by every high school in West Virginia. Also, not every student will take a high school level geography course. Additionally, the mandatory middle school geography courses previously offered in West Virginia have been converted to more history-themed world studies courses that maintain only some elements of the previous geography courses. This seemingly downplays the role of geography as the prevailing theme of the courses (Regional Geographic Alliance Director, personal communication, 2016; WVDE, 2016). Without mandating geography for all students and closing any loopholes that allow schools to opt out of offering a

geography elective to high school students, geography remains a subset of standards in other mandated social studies courses (WVDE, 2016).

Advocates for geography education in West Virginia are forced to acknowledge that most students will receive their geography instruction through other social studies courses. This is not an unusual situation, as most states have reduced geography education to embedded standards within other social studies offerings (Brysch, 2014). Stoltman (2013) stated that the consensus reached by academic organizations with an interest in geography is that where geography cannot be taught as a stand-alone subject, these organizations should work to cement the role of geography as a set of standards within social studies.

The professional development program created by the WVGA is intended to advance the goals expressed by Stoltman (2013). Professional development is viewed as a means by which geography education can be shored up as an embedded set of standards, particularly because teachers expected to teach geography within other courses often are unprepared to teach the subject (Hutson et al., 2014; Jo & Milson, 2013). The lack of an effective means of evaluating West Virginia students' geography content knowledge and the fact that teachers are left on their own to determine how to address geography standards in the classroom is problematic (Hutson et al., 2014; Jo & Milson, 2014; Office of Assessment Coordinator personal communication, 2016).

The WVGA's use of professional development was meant to help teachers in social studies and literature better incorporate meaningful geography content in their lessons (Hagen, 2015). The evaluation system put in place by the WVGA only addressed

the effect of the professional development sessions on teachers' pedagogy at the conclusion of the sessions. In other words, the evaluations took place while the concepts were still novel and teachers were still working to meet the lesson plan requirements set forth by the WVGA as a contingent of participation in the program. By evaluating the program at a point in time farther removed from the influence of the sessions, I hoped to determine the lasting influence of the WVGA's sessions on teacher pedagogy in the literature and social studies settings. The intent of this study was to explore the WVGA's program and its influence on the use of geography-specific content and materials in the secondary classrooms of participants. Findings may aid state level education decision-makers as well as local board of education and school principals in determining what type of geography-centered professional development is most appropriate in spurring cross-disciplinary geography education. Such cross-disciplinary concerns resonate in an education landscape that has seen recent changes in state level policy regarding geography education.

Definitions of Terms

Geography is a field that is not well understood by many outside of the cadre of academic geographers who dedicate their life to the subject. Therefore, it is necessary to define terms that may not be readily understood or identifiable to those unacquainted with the nuances of geography as a subject of study (Bednarz, 2016).

Benedum Foundation: The Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation provides grants to help fund projects in education, as well as other fields, in the states of West

Virginia and Pennsylvania (Benedum Foundation, 2016). The Benedum Foundation provided funding for the WVGA's literature-geography collaborative.

Cross-curricular instruction: An education strategy that emphasizes teaching students to utilize skills and content from various academic disciplines regardless of the core focus of the courses in which they are enrolled.

Elective course: Any course offered in a West Virginia secondary school that can be taken for credit but is not required for a student to meet graduation requirements (WVDE, 2016).

Embedded standards: Education standards for specific content disciplines such as geography or economics that are included in state-mandated education standards as a subset of another course's primary standards.

Geographic literacy (geoliteracy): Awareness of basic geographic information (facts) and the ability to apply geographic skills in diverse settings and situations (Bednarz, 2016).

Human geography: One of the two main branches of geography as a discipline, which emphasizes the study of geographic concepts and application of geographic skills as they pertain to human activity and culture (Gillette, 2014).

Literacy-design collaborative module (LDC): LDCs are an approach to cross-disciplinary learning that emphasizes the completion of mini-tasks leading to the conclusion of a larger paper or project, with the inclusion of a literacy element in nonliterature classrooms as a core part of the process. The LDC modules also prompt literature teachers to engage in cross-disciplinary work in their classrooms, integrating

other subjects into their lessons (County Social Studies Director, personal communication, 2016; LDC, 2016).

Physical geography: One of the two main branches of geography as an academic discipline, which emphasizes the application of geographic skills and concepts in the study of the natural world (Gillette, 2014).

Professional development: Any education program targeted at teachers with the intent on enhancing their classroom performance or making them more proficient in carrying out their job-related responsibilities.

Secondary education: In the state of West Virginia, secondary education is considered high school Grades 9 to 12 (WVDE, 2016).

Self-efficacy: An individual's level of confidence that they can successfully perform a task or achieve a goal.

Stand-alone geography course: Geography courses offered as either a required or elective credit that puts their primary emphasis on educating students in geographic content and skills.

West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE): The WVDE is a government body in the state of West Virginia that serves as part of the state's executive branch and sets policy, including curricular content, for all schools in the state of West Virginia. The WVDE is headed by a state level board of education that is appointed by the state governor and holds quasilegislative authority in matters relating to education.

West Virginia Geographic Alliance (WVGA): The WVGA is a special interest organization founded as the West Virginia chapter of the National Geographic Network

of Alliances for Geographic Education. Its express purpose is to promote geography education in both K-12 and higher education institutions (WVGA, 2016).

Significance of the Study

Geography education has struggled to find its footing in recent years, with many states reducing or eliminating stand-alone geography classes in favor of a more comprehensive social studies curriculum. This has resulted in a diminished capacity for the delivery of geography education at the K-12 level, as well as issues regarding student mastery of geography content (Edelson et al., 2013; Jo & Milson, 2013). This diminished capacity has been addressed by independent organizations with an interest in geography education, many of which have made recommendations regarding geography standards in K-12 education or have engaged in teacher trainings in an attempt to rejuvenate the discipline within the broader social studies curriculum (Stoltman, 2013; Waite & Mohan, 2014).

Social studies teachers in West Virginia are legally tasked with delivering geography content and may benefit from this study, as do literature teachers. The idea of merging literature and geography provides another vehicle for the delivery of geography content in the social studies classroom. The expanded inclusion of geography in the literature classroom may help literature teachers better explain the context of the literary works they teach. West Virginia state content standards state that teachers are to address the complexities associated with a literary work's setting and how that setting impacts the work (WVDE, 2016). The study of geography may become an integral component to understanding the nuances of a story's setting. The combined content may benefit

students and teachers by strengthening their curriculum. This study may effect positive social change by confirming the effectiveness of cross-curricular professional development, as well as the flaws inherent in such programs, ensuring that students continue to benefit from such collaborations.

According to Manzo (2005), geography education is a key factor in producing a student body that is ready to take up the responsibilities of both the electorate and workforce. This study was timely and fed into renewed energy in the state of West Virginia regarding the inclusion of geography content in the secondary school system. Recent changes to the WVDE's content standards have been favorable for geography, mandating that geography be offered in some state secondary schools (WVDE, 2016). However, these mandates do not cover all secondary schools in the state, as budgetary, staffing, and scheduling concerns have limited the availability of geography in some parts of the state, particularly in counties with small populations and more limited resources (State Social Studies Coordinator, personal communication, 2016).

Despite these limitations, this change in status demonstrates that the WVDE is taking geography as a discipline more seriously and is making an effort to elevate the discipline's status in a way that has not been coded in policy for decades (State Social Studies Director, personal communication, 2016; WVDE, 2016). At the same time that the WVDE has taken steps to include geography in more classrooms, they have also been pushing for the statewide adoption of literacy design collaborative (LDC) modules. LDC modules ask teachers to engage in cross-disciplinary learning that includes a literary element (County Social Studies Director, personal communication, 2016). The

combination of geography's new place in the curriculum, the emphasis on literature as a cross-disciplinary means of learning, and acknowledgment of geography as an embedded standard in multiple disciplines (including literature) creates an inviting atmosphere for those interested in bolstering geography education in the secondary classroom. These factors contribute to a sense of timeliness for this study, which addressed how professional development can help teachers merge the aforementioned elements in their everyday instruction. Both the WVDE and county level school boards have expressed an interest in bolstering their geography offerings. I used this study as an opportunity to examine participants selected from 26 counties in the state of West Virginia, giving the study statewide significance. Participants were interviewed to determine how participating in the WVGA's professional development program influenced their instruction as it pertains to geography. Although the mandate to teach geography has come from the state level, it is individual counties that must determine how to implement geography course work in their respective schools. A deeper understanding of teachers' pedagogical strategies and use of materials implemented after attending the workshop may serve to assist county school boards in their effort to meet the mandate set by the WVDE.

Research Questions

The following research questions (RQs) were designed to address whether the WVGA/Benedum program successfully facilitated the long-term crossover of geography content into social studies and literature classrooms. I also examined whether teachers developed self-efficacy in delivering geography-related content, and the impact of the

WVGA/Benedum program on teachers' current practices relating to cross-disciplinary geography education. These research questions were answered using semistructured interview questions that afforded teacher-participants the opportunity to provide open-ended responses:

RQ1: How do secondary social studies teachers who participated in the WVGA's literature-geography collaborative describe their pedagogical practices for the long-term integration of literature and social studies materials, concepts, and themes in their classrooms?

RQ2: How do secondary social studies and literature teachers who participated in the WVGA's literature-geography collaborative describe their pedagogical practices for the long-term integration of cross-curricular lesson planning in their classrooms?

RQ3: How do secondary social studies and literature teachers describe their feelings of self-efficacy regarding the integration of geography-related strategies and materials into their classroom pedagogy?

Review of the Literature

Geography education in the United States has lost its sense of identity within the K-12 curriculum. Many states do not offer stand-alone geography courses and have integrated geography into other disciplines to salvage some aspect of the discipline. This divide between geography as an independent discipline and an integrated discipline set the stage for this study addressing the WVGA's push for more collaborative education.

The program created by the WVGA and the Benedum collaborative is predicated on two key ideas. The first is an affirmation that the integration of geography into other

disciplines does not eliminate geography as a discipline. Instead, the WVGA affirms that geography can be successfully taught in an interdisciplinary setting (in this case, the literature classroom). They are not alone in this belief.

Second, the WVGA embraces the idea that professional development opportunities can enhance teachers' abilities in delivering geographic content. Each of these matters is accounted for in academic literature. Related to the introduction of geography into other disciplines is the assertion that, also rooted in the literature on the subject of geography, geography as a discipline has found itself playing a diminished role in K-12 education in the United States. This has resulted from policy decisions that have affected geography's place in the curriculum, often relegating geography content to a subset of the social studies, thereby deemphasizing the importance of geography as a discipline.

Conceptual Framework

Social Cognitive Theory and Teacher Self-Efficacy

The concept of self-efficacy is firmly rooted in the decades of pioneering research into social cognitive theory by Bandura (1982) who described human behavior as a product of agency. Agency, according to Bandura (2001), is the role that humans play as architects of their own action. Previous modes of thought described human behavior as a product of environmental influence, which painted relationships between people and their environment as one-way streets. Bandura (1982) recognized the importance of modeling in regard to setting standards for behavior as well as acknowledging possible consequences of those actions. Bandura's (2001) research demonstrated that the

relationship between agent and environment is complex, and better represents a series of interactions between individuals and the world in which they exist.

Bandura (2001) described four elements of agency: intentionality (purposeful behavior), forethought (planning), self-reactiveness (personal motivation and the ability to carry out plans), and self-reflectiveness (self-examination). Self-reflectiveness most relates to the concept of self-efficacy, or the confidence that an individual has in her or his ability to perform a task or meet a goal. Self-efficacy influences how people decide “what challenges to undertake, how much effort to expend in the endeavor, how long to persevere in the face of obstacles and failures, and whether failures are motivating or demoralizing” (Bandura, 2001, p. 10). Human agency is influenced by the perceptions that humans have regarding how successful they believe that they will be in executing a task, and also what perceived outcomes of failure are apparent in the event that the person is not successful.

Following the groundwork laid by Bandura, Klassen and Tze (2014) demonstrated that there is a statistically significant association between teachers’ self-efficacy and their teaching performance outcomes, as well as the success of their students. This means that in addition to increasing the likelihood that teachers will persist with difficult tasks (such as blending geography and literature in the classroom setting), teacher self-efficacy is an indicator of how successful a teacher may be at actually performing the tasks which they undertake. Indirectly related to these findings are those of Schiefele and Schaffner (2015) who explained that teacher interest and feelings of self-

efficacy in their educational subject matter increases the likelihood that the teachers will deliver mastery-oriented and pedagogically appropriate instruction to their students.

Current research also indicated an association between self-efficacy and professional development. Dixon, Yssel, McConnell, and Hardin (2014) conducted a study of teachers from two school districts using self-efficacy surveys as well as surveys regarding approaches to differentiation of instruction in the classroom. Their findings indicated that teachers with more professional development in differentiation of instruction had higher self-efficacy in regard to their ability to offer differentiated instruction (Dixon et al., 2014).

Yoo (2016) conducted a mixed-methods study and found a relationship between teachers taking part in an online professional development program and teachers' perceptions of their self-efficacy. Dixon et al. (2014) also found a positive relationship between teachers' willingness to undertake differentiated instruction and the number of professional development hours that teachers have taken in differentiated instruction.

The WVGA's use of professional development as a vehicle to change teacher behaviors is supported by the current body of research. Studies indicated that professional development is a tool for increasing teacher self-efficacy and that self-efficacy is an important contributing factor in motivating teachers to engage in appropriate types of instruction, as well as contributing to their overall success in delivering instruction. The WVGA's professional development program was designed to promote geography as a discipline and to prepare teachers with the skills, knowledge, and materials needed to teach geography content to their students. This multifaceted approach resembles the

whole teacher approach to professional development, which comprised a secondary aspect of the conceptual framework for this study.

Whole Teacher Approach

The hope that geography can be successfully integrated into other disciplines is in keeping with the whole teacher approach, which represents a facet of the self-efficacy framework for this study. The WVGA did not state that their professional development program was modeled on the whole teacher approach. However, the professional development program demonstrates criteria that fit within the confines created by the pioneering researchers of the whole teacher approach. The whole teacher approach represents an important subcategory of the larger self-efficacy conceptual framework, and merits further discussion.

Very little literature was available regarding the whole teacher approach. Multiple searches using *whole teacher approach*, *whole teacher*, *whole teacher professional development*, and similar search terms in multiple databases (and a Google search) revealed only a few relevant articles. Most pointed to a work from 2006 by Chen and Chang, which appeared to be a seminal work in the whole teacher theory, as well as a 2012 article by Chen and McCray that furthered the work outlined in the first article. Although little literature was available, the whole teacher approach fit with the intent and purpose of this study, as well as the spirit in which the original professional development sessions provided by the WVGA were conducted.

The whole teacher approach is a comprehensive approach to education preparedness that seeks to impact “teacher attitudes, skills and knowledge, and practices”

(Chen & Chang, 2006, para. 1), each of which is important to bolstering teacher self-efficacy. The whole teacher approach is developmental in nature. Teachers who undergo training under the whole teacher model are expected to take what they learn in the professional development setting and apply it in the classroom, but the expectation is that the teachers' learning and adaptation continues after the conclusion of the professional development session(s). In other words, the whole teacher approach promotes a form of professional development that prepares teacher participants to be more adaptable and versatile educators not only in the interim period after training, but also as they mature as educators (Chen & Chang, 2006). The whole teacher approach promotes professional development experiences that emphasize teacher development in a way that not only appeals to teacher practices but teacher attitudes (Chen & McCray, 2012). This approach can improve teachers' skill at delivering lessons, which is linked to improved student achievement (Chen & McCray, 2012).

The program created by the WVGA and Benedum collaborative was not labeled as a whole teacher approach to professional development, but nevertheless met the requirements set forth in Chen and McCray's (2012) seminal work on the subject, which lists a number of important components for implementing successful professional development. Among these are avoiding single sessions, encouraging collaboration, and making sessions relevant to teachers' specific needs (Chen & McCray, 2012). Chen and McCray also highlighted the whole teacher approach's emphasis on improving teacher attitudes, knowledge, and practice.

The WVGA program shares these goals. Chen and McCray (2012) discussed the importance, for example, of providing support through the implementation stage (i.e., practice) for teachers. The WVGA program followed this model by providing resources, including professional assistance, and followed up with teachers as they implemented lesson plans in the classroom. The lead-up to putting lessons into practice consisted of professional development sessions that were more generalized in nature, as well as the provision of a number of diverse literary resources for teachers with an emphasis on making literature and geography fit within the confines of the distinct subject, classroom culture, and pedagogical needs of individual teachers.

This approach is of particular importance given the current position of geography within the curriculum, as geography advocates are currently seeking to increase geography's presence in academia through the successful integration of the subject into cross-curricular settings. This is built on necessity as geography education currently finds itself facing a lack of identity, having been long placed in the care of teachers who do not specialize in geography education and have little training in the subject. Without adequate training, teacher self-efficacy and classroom pedagogy and effectiveness may suffer. Ensuring that geography content is delivered well depend on the effectiveness of organizations like the WVGA in promoting geography as a subject to teachers, as well as the level of preparedness that teacher participants have after the trainings.

Changes in Perceptions Regarding Geography as a Discipline

Geography was a mainstay in U.S. education until recently. Though geography first emerged as an academic discipline in the early years of Harvard during the 1600s, it

wasn't until the mid-1800s that geography took root as a dedicated part of secondary school curricula. It was in the mid-19th century that geography began to move away from the strict confines of the physical sciences and include what is generally referred to as human or cultural geography (Stoltman, 1990). This paved the way for geography to be integrated into the social studies in the wave of educational reforms that began at the end of the 19th century and persisted throughout the 20th century.

Stoltman (1990) claimed that cooperation between secondary schools and college educators was prevalent through the 1980s, but the field of geography had already been relegated to the junior high schools and middle schools by that period. In the few decades between Stoltman's analysis and the writing of this paper, the role of geography had been further diminished at the secondary level. These changes reflect a loss of identity for geography as an independent academic discipline, largely as a result of the muddling of the discipline through its integration into a broader social studies curriculum dominated by history.

Geography's Integration and Subsequent Loss of Identity

Geography education in the United States currently faces a diminished role in the K-12 setting, thereby creating a sense of uncertainty about what role geography will play in the public education system. Bednarz (2016) argued that geography's status as a subset of standards within the broader context of social studies education "has always been one of the key challenges" (p. 47) facing geography education, and also noted that geography education at the K-12 level currently faces a high degree of uncertainty. This uncertainty has led many geographers to assert that geography can persist within the realms of other

disciplines, particularly the social studies. Bednarz shared this belief and indicated that there is a mandate to teach geography as a practical interdisciplinary subject. Geography, according to Bednarz, is well suited to multidisciplinary study because geographers understand the connections between the so-called hard sciences and the social sciences. Geography, in other words, can serve as a bridge discipline.

It is the placement of geography as an integrated discipline that has saved the discipline from academic extinction, but has also limited the importance of the discipline in the view of teachers, administrators, students, and legislators. K-12 education is dominated by the big four disciplines: mathematics, science, English/literature, and social studies. These are the broad subject categories that have been encapsulated in state standards, including the West Virginia state content standards in every iteration during my career.

The social studies have become a discipline that incorporates in the state of West Virginia, specifically, a number of related but different disciplines into one over-arching category. In addition to geography the social studies categorization hosts economics, history, and civics. In the state of West Virginia, as in many other states, history claims the largest share of the social studies content standards. To say that history dominates the social studies in West Virginia is not an understatement, nor is it merely my opinion. The content standards set by the state of West Virginia heavily emphasize history, particularly at the secondary level. Of the four mandatory social studies credits required by the West Virginia Department of Education, three are history classes (WVDE, 2016). Only the senior credit, civics, is not a traditional history survey course.

Within the standards for these mandatory history courses are substandards that call for students to incorporate geography (as well as economics) into their history lessons (WVDE, 2016). These standards are often poorly incorporated, with teachers emphasizing the chronological cause and effect relationships typical of survey level history instead of the more spatial oriented emphasis of geography. Because teaching history inevitably requires some attention to geography to help make sense of the actions of contemporary man's predecessors, geography often finds itself relegated to a side note in the more pervasive goal to teach students history.

It is this very fact that geographers have seized upon to help bring geography back to the forefront of education. The groundwork for a more well-rounded geography curriculum already exists, it is merely being neglected. This has not escaped the attention of other parties interested in geography as a discipline, such as the WVGA.

Stoltman (2013) stated that in the event that geography could not cement its place as a stand-alone discipline in the K-12 system it should strive to truly integrate itself into the social studies. Full and meaningful integration, according to Stoltman, should be the agency by which geographers ensure that geographic content is taught in the K-12 school system (Stoltman, 2013). MacLeod (2014) declared similar sentiments regarding geography's place in school curriculums, indicating that geography education requires teachers to acknowledge that the discipline of geography is rooted in how material is viewed, not in what material is viewed. In essence, MacLeod is describing geography as a practical application of a geographic world view, not as a set of specific facts or standards that must be taught (MacLeod, 2014). When geography is viewed in this way it

becomes a discipline that has tremendous flexibility. Geography can therefore be viewed as a way to interpret information, which does not have to be confined to the geography classroom.

Though many, this author and the leadership at the WVGA included, would like to see geography reinstated as a core component of K-12 education, the likelihood of that happening is negligible. This is evidenced in the previously discussed antics of the West Virginia Department of Education, who found making geography mandatory to be wrought with difficulty, and failed to enforce their own policy on the matter. The status of geography as a sub-standard within the social studies seems to have been cemented by both practicality and long standing tradition.

Although the aforementioned geographers pontificated on the role of geography in the school in an editorial fashion, their views are backed up by contemporary literature on the subject of the state of geography education in the United States. A report by Brysch (2014) established that the role of geography in United States K-12 education has indeed diminished over the years, with many states eliminating geography requirements for high school students.

Brysch (2014) found that only ten states require a stand-alone geography course at the secondary level, but that all states do incorporate geography standards into the curriculum requirements of other disciplines such as science or social studies. The report concluded that elective geography courses, particularly AP courses, are on the rise, but that poor teacher preparation has hobbled their impact, as well as that of the cross-curricular geography standards. These strides are marked as evidence of progress, but the

report concludes that geography education would benefit from more aggressive pursuit of teacher professional development in geography content, especially in light of teacher in-service being the key stratagem for most states' geography curriculum.

Within the context of Brysch's report the commentaries provided by the aforementioned authors become even more pertinent. Geography education has faced systemic challenges in many states, with policy makers having reduced the role of geography in the classroom to that of a support discipline. Parties concerned with geography education face the extremely difficult task of changing the minds of policy makers regarding the importance of geography education, and as such have shifted their focus toward the places where geography can still be found in state curricular standards, namely within other disciplines.

Redefining Geography's Purpose in an Integrated Setting

A project overview conducted by Edelson et al. (2013) of the Road Map for 21st Century Geography Education identified the purpose of the roadmap as putting an emphasis on "doing geography" (Edelson et al., 2013, pg. 1) as opposed to simply knowing geography. The Road Map project represents an effort by the National Geographic Society to improve geography education by tasking geography teachers across the country with teaching key geographic themes and concepts. The Road Map emphasizes the necessity of fostering geography education that is well integrated into the K-12 curriculum, and advocates for research into effective geography instruction as well as promoting professional development to foster better teacher understanding of

geography, citing the necessity of these measures because American students consistently underperform in geography (Edelson et al., 2013).

The Road Map project represents the idea espoused by Bednarz (2016) that those interested in geography education have to be pragmatic in their approach to geography education. To change policy in the forty states that do not already include a stand-alone geography course would be a monumental undertaking, and success is not guaranteed. Meeting the standards where they are, as embedded within other curriculums, allows organizations like the National Geographic Society (and the West Virginia Geographic Alliance) to maximize their efforts to improve geography education without the need to usurp policy, much of which is deeply entrenched after what Kozak, Dobson, and Wood (2015) described as the “academic purge” of geography from the K-12 curriculum that occurred in the latter half of the twentieth century.

As mentioned previously, in the state of West Virginia at least some resistance to the spread of geography education is rooted in the lack of resources (State Social Studies Coordinator, personal communication, 2016). Practicality dictates that parties interested in geography try to score victories where they are best able, and influencing state policy, even in targeted locales like West Virginia, would stretch resources of geography advocates to their limits without the guarantee of meaningful change in how the K-12 system. As such, the emphasis of geography advocates must be molding a more well-rounded geography student within the existing framework from which geography is taught.

Noting that geographic performance among American students is traditionally low, Kozak et al. add to the conversation and reiterate the importance of geography education as a practical discipline, mirroring the sentiments expressed by MacLeod (2014). In their analysis of the American Geographical Society's nationwide poll of American citizens regarding geography education (the geographic knowledge and values survey), Kozak et al. identified a constituency of American adults that they classify as predominantly female, educated, and less diverse than the population at large. This subgroup rates high in support for the expansion of geography education through funding increases and more stringent geography standards (Kozak et al., 2015). These findings signal that although geography has been in decline for decades as a discipline, both in higher education and K-12 education, there is support for geography education outside the cadre of teachers, professors, and experts such as those featured in the opinion pieces mentioned earlier in this literature review (Kozak et al., 2015).

It is in the identification of further bastions of public support for geography that geography advocates can draw motivation to continue their work. One of the main concerns regarding the status of geography education are the obstacles faced by geography advocates as a result of decisions made by policy makers whose expertise is generally not geography, and in some cases, whose expertise is not rooted in the world of practical or academic education. These support systems can and should be leveraged to help encourage school districts and the policy makers that govern them to place additional emphasis on existing embedded geography standards.

In keeping with the notion that geography should be integrated more effectively within existing content standards, the National Council for Geographic Education put forth a number of recommendations within their new lesson plan format in 2014 that echo the sentiments expressed in the previously discussed articles, and specifically cited the influence of the Road Map for the 21st Century Project. Among the recommendations within the lesson format (which can be adapted to teaching geography in any subject or discipline) was a call for instructional materials that emphasize practicing geography “across subjects and grade levels” (Waite & Mohan, 2014, pg. 86), as well as providing materials and support for teachers that are not adept at teaching geography.

The acknowledgement that both teachers and students are less adept at geography than they should be by organizations such as the National Council for Geographic Education speaks to the looming and persistent problem that geography has faced. Its displacement from core subject status in K-12 education is a reflection of long standing processes, but the impact has been that students, teachers, schools, and lawmakers have put less emphasis on the importance of the discipline than was necessary. Although geography experts and some laypersons may believe that elevating the status of geography in a multidisciplinary setting is a net positive, that is not to say that such an endeavor would not be met with substantial obstacles.

Obstacles to Teaching Geography as an Integrated Discipline

Geography education is clearly viewed within the context of integration into other disciplines, particularly the closely related social studies. As such geography has cemented its place as an interdisciplinary subject. This embedding of geography within

other disciplines may be the reality of current K-12 landscape, but that is not to say that this method is without its problems. Illustrating the challenges of geography's role as an integrated discipline, Mitchell, Brysch, and Collins (2015) conducted a rather fun study of key words in literature related to geography education. What they found is that among the key words least likely to be used in geography education literature were those associated with the hard science aspect of geography as a discipline. The authors attribute this to the placement of geography within the social studies, going so far as to refer to this relationship as neglectful, and emphasize that more focus is needed on this aspect of the discipline as opposed to the current emphasis on geographic learning.

One interesting element relating to the Mitchell et al. (2015) article is that the WVGA's geography-literature collaborative was meant to emphasize physical geography within the literature. Personal communications with the head of the program and head of the WVGA, revealed that this emphasis was partially abandoned during the program and that he considers that lack of emphasis as one of the program's weaknesses. The former WVGA director stated a desire to reemphasize the physical geography component as the program moves forward in the future (personal communication, 2015).

Although geography may not be on stable footing as a core discipline in the K-12 setting, the implications of this shift in status has resonated in the realm of higher education. A significant problem stemming from the lack of geography education as a core subject within the K-12 curriculum is a breakdown in what high school teachers and college professors expect from students regarding geography content knowledge. Jo and Milson (2013) cited the fact that "social studies and science have not received significant

attention in most college and career readiness initiatives” (Jo & Milson, 2013, pg. 193) as on reason that students leave high schools unprepared for college level geography coursework, and why high school level teachers are out of touch with what will be expected by geography professors at the college level. Jo and Milson describe this breakdown as the result of “different curricular priorities” (Jo & Milson, 2013, pg. 193).

The differences in curricular priorities between college and secondary school are a result of the loss of curricular identity faced by geography education. Geography education faced a similar purge in the 1940s at institutions of higher learning, a state from which higher education efforts to teach geography still have not fully recovered from at present. There are, however, universities that prioritize geography education and do a good job teaching the subject (Kozak et al., 2015). Geography is facing a resurgence of sorts in higher education, with additional emphasis placed on the role of geographical thinking and geographic literacy in solving pressing modern questions about the relationship between humans and their environment. There are also upward trends in the number of geography related jobs in the modern economy (Bednarz, 2016). As such, preparation for use of geographic skills at the college level are again becoming a priority in some school systems, with states such as West Virginia going as far as to begin to reassess the role of geography within their state standards (County Social Studies Director, personal communication, 2016; WVDE, 2016).

Geography Curriculum and Pedagogy

Geography and Literature

Despite the current tendency to ingrain geography within the social studies, the WVGA-Benedum collaboration aimed to meet the needs of West Virginia students by expanding the relationship between geography and other subjects into the realm of literature. This is not a completely novel idea, and several recent studies demonstrate the possibilities of such programs.

Holloway (2015) conducted a study analyzing what she called “quality children’s literature” (Holloway, 2015, pg. 1). The study linked a number of popular, high quality children’s books with the Geography for Life national standards, and found that teaching geography through the use of literature is not only possible for grades K-6, but that “[t]eachers can also use specific selections of literature to highlight individual elements” (Holloway, 2015, pg. 3) of the standards. A similar study by Hinde, Popp, Jimenez-Silva, and Dorn (2011) stated that K-8 students that are offered geography education through the GeoLiteracy for English Language Learners program made gains in geoliteracy as well as reading comprehension.

Another study by Walshe (2017) examined a class’ use of poetry in their study of sustainable development in an advanced geography course at an English school. Students ranged in age between 16-17 years old, and students were surveyed and interviewed regarding their experiences in the class. The researcher found that interdisciplinary study was successful in improving student understanding of the social, economic, and political aspects of sustainable development, though their emphasis remained focused

predominantly on the environmental aspects of sustainable development. The study also points to some students having difficulty merging multiple disciplines into a cohesive whole, an issue that is covered in other literature elsewhere in this literature review.

In summation, these studies align with the overall idea presented by the WVGA/Benedum project, and resonate with the sentiments expressed earlier in this work by Bednarz (2016) and MacLeod (2014) regarding the place of geography in schools being one of interdisciplinary opportunity. Blending geography with literature offers challenges, but also opportunities for enhancing both disciplines when taught together.

Improving Geographic Pedagogy Using Professional Development

Multidisciplinary geography may very well represent the future of geography as a discipline, and it is not without its failings, most overtly the poorly prepared teachers that will be adapting geography to better fit within the confines of other disciplines. Integration of geography, whether in literature or the social studies, is hampered by these well-intentioned but poorly prepared teachers, many of which may not understand the nuances of teaching geographic material and concepts (Bednarz, 2016). Teachers can, however, benefit from professional development opportunities afforded to better acquaint them with geographic material. Some of the studies and articles cited previously discussed the deficiencies associated with integrating geography into other fields, and also called for more professional development opportunities for teachers. Professional development has been viewed as a vehicle for improving geography education, particularly in the modern, integrated setting.

Harte and Reitano (2015) demonstrated in a study of 16 pre-service geography teachers, both undergraduate and postgraduate, that participating in “microteaching activities” (Harte & Reitano, 2015, pg. 223) improved pre-service teachers’ confidence levels regarding teaching geography. Harte and Reitano found that teachers that have an opportunity to practice teaching geography become more confident in their craft. This represents an important step in helping to manage the new status of geography as an interdisciplinary subject. Poorly trained teachers do not have to remain poorly trained, and the means by which these teachers can be better equipped to handle geographic information (in the form of professional development) is already known.

In a study published a year before Harte and Reitano, Hutson, Rutherford, Foster, and Richardson (2014) deride the poor state of training for pre-service geography teachers, which they state was identified as a problem more than two decades ago, and thus propose expanding a decade long program adopted by Mississippi’s Geographic Alliance which offers a two day, no cost training course for pre-service teachers that was demonstrated to improve pre-service teachers’ perceptions and confidence regarding teaching geography content, as well as their ability to identify specific geographic themes and elements as promoted within national geography standards.

Professional development may help pre-service teachers, but the desire for content among teachers is also evident based on the body of literature, which reflects that parties interested in geography are delivering geography related professional development to teachers already in the field. These efforts are meant to help curb some problems associated with geography integration, which is marked by a decline in the

number of teachers with adequate content knowledge and levels of preparedness to successfully teach geography in an integrated setting.

The sentiment that meaningful professional development opportunities are a boon to struggling geography teachers is shared by some teachers within the profession. Blankman, Shee, Volman, and Boogaard's (2015) study of Dutch primary teachers' perceptions regarding teaching geography found that teachers themselves believe that they and their students would benefit from more time teaching geography as well as "more attention to subject knowledge" (Blankman et al., 2015, pg. 80). Harris, Wirz, Hinde, and Libbee (2015) found that teachers engaged in geography training could successfully integrate geography within history courses, and that these same teachers utilized materials that were given to them during the trainings. The trainings were provided over 90 hours during a fourteen month period, which the researchers concluded was still not an adequate amount of training to successfully foster the integration of geography and history for all participants.

Perhaps the main takeaway from the previous study is that geography professional development should be a sustained effort that occurs over time. One of the main failings of the WVGA program was the short term nature of the program. Time can wear on even the most noble of intentions, and many teachers that attend such trainings may very well leave with the intention of incorporating more geography into their classrooms, but as time passes they begin to waiver in their devotion. This may be influenced further by professional development sessions that are not adequate in length and offer only limited

time for teachers to get a grasp important and often complex strategies meant to better incorporate the unfamiliar discipline of geography into their classrooms.

In keeping with the previous sentiment, Allen and Penuel (2015) conducted a study that collected artifacts (lesson materials, lesson plans) and interviews with teachers that attended a science based professional development session regarding the implementation of new science standards. Allen and Penuel's (2015) findings indicated that teachers that are afforded the opportunity to work with colleagues that have also attended the training affords a level of sense-making that teachers do not always achieve when acting on their own. This collaborative sense-making allows teachers to reconcile ambiguities from the training with real world classroom practices.

Additionally, Thomas-Brown, Shaffer, and Werner (2016) used surveys, focus groups, and open-ended narrative questions to evaluate teacher attitudes toward a social studies specific professional development program that heavily emphasized geography for 6th and 7th grade teachers. The authors described the professional development program as "intensive, sustained, and content specific" (Thomas-Brown et al., 2016, pg. 69). They found that teachers that participated in the approximately 109 hours of professional development offerings over a twelve month period felt better prepared to teach the content presented and also built a sense of community among educators that participated in the workshops.

Leaning on collaboration to help smooth out uncertainties from training is pertinent to this study in that the geography/literature collaborative offered by the WVGA specifically targeted teacher teams at high schools. Each participating school offered a

geography content specialist from the social studies or sciences, and paired them with a team teacher from the school that specialized in literature. The teachers involved in the WVGA had a small, but built-in, support system to help encourage or better understand the nuances of the WVGA training and given materials.

Importance of and Challenges in Interdisciplinary Studies

Thus far, attention has been paid to specific efforts to create geography collaboration, but general research on interdisciplinary studies also supports the notion that blending disciplines is, in general, sound practice for teachers and students, and that professional development is a valid vehicle for facilitating these practices. The following studies reinforce the idea that the de-compartmentalization of academic disciplines can be a net positive for teachers and students.

Visser, Coenders, Pieters, and Terlouw (2013) found that teachers participating in a four part professional development session geared toward helping them implement multidisciplinary lessons left the sessions better prepared and having undergone “professional growth” (Visser et al., 2013, pg. 807), and that the teachers also saw growth in their students as a result. The authors call attention to the fact that teachers from multiple disciplines benefit from working and collaborating with one another. Rives-East and Lima (2013) assert that although there are many obstacles that may impede multidisciplinary collaboration, these barriers may be overcome to the benefit of instructors and students alike. Interdisciplinary work fosters a sense of respect between disciplines for students, and also serves in and of itself as an important mode of professional development between educators. Herein the idea of professional

development surfaces as an avenue to better instruction, in this case in the promotion of multidisciplinary lessons. Perhaps more telling is the idea that fostering a sense of respect between disciplines is an important part of this process, particularly in a time when geography education finds itself playing a secondary role within the social studies and science curriculums, and some educators are attempting to expand geography education into the rather unorthodox territory of the literature classroom.

Once again touting the role of professional development, Fine, Zygouris-Coe, Senokosof, and Fang (2013) concluded that integrating reading and writing instruction into secondary teachers' content areas could be better achieved through professional development for teachers, citing success with a Florida program that improved content knowledge as well as self-efficacy regarding using content area classrooms as a platform for teaching reading skills. Hardre et al. (2013) also praise the benefits of collaboration of faculty for interdisciplinary learning, finding that a professional development opportunity putting secondary math and science teachers together resulted in interfaculty collaboration and increased individual interest in engineering subject matter, as well as an increase in the use of innovative teaching strategies within the classrooms. The participants favorably viewed this experience.

DiCamillo and Bailey (2016) also report strongly positive feedback for an interdisciplinary course taught at an urban charter high school to eleventh grade students. The course was taught by DiCamillo and Bailey, both of which are college instructors that frequently collaborate at the college level. The course taught blended English with United States history, particularly the progressive era, and student feedback was

overwhelmingly positive. The researchers shared that they struggled to adapt lessons after learning that the participants in their course were largely behind grade level in reading and word recognition. Although the researchers were able to adapt assignments and adopt learning strategies that bolstered their students' abilities, they also noted that collaborative teaching of this kind would pose an immense challenge to new teachers, and that teacher training programs need to adapt to prepare young teachers to take on these responsibilities. This is particularly true in the age of common core, as the common core curriculum adopted by many states pushes the blending of literature, both fiction and non-fiction, with other disciplines.

In closing, the sum of the many studies listed above cements the idea that geography exists primarily as a discipline with a certain level of transience within the K-12 system. Although geography may not exist as a stand-alone offering in many areas, geography content has wormed its way into various other disciplines, and notably for the purposes of this study in both the social studies and literature. This cross-disciplinary approach is not without problems. Those problems can be addressed by treating cross-disciplinary geography education similarly to other cross-disciplinary approaches, through the incorporation of professional development for teachers. These opportunities may bring about a heightened sense of teacher self-efficacy and confidence in teaching geography material. The core focus of this project is to examine one such program hosted by the West Virginia Geographic Alliance with funding by the Benedum foundation, a program operating with the implicit goal of fostering better interdisciplinary geography education through offering professional development to teachers.

Implications

This study has implications for the WVGA, who have expressed interest in the results of the study (Regional Geographic Alliance Director, personal communication, 2016). Although there is a stated interest in the results of this study for the organization under scrutiny, the importance of this study expands well beyond the reaches of the WVGA. Professional development opportunities are an integral part of the teacher experience throughout the United States. Studies of professional development in one capacity or another are abundant.

Interviews with teacher participants yielded information about teacher pedagogy after the conclusion of WVGA's program and the use of geography specific content and materials in the secondary classrooms of participants. Given the state of geography as an embedded discipline it has become imperative to determine whether or not professional development sessions can achieve the goal of bolstering geography education through cross disciplinary collaboration (Stoltman, 2013). Based on the outcomes of the interviews conducted for this study there is reason to be optimistic about these prospects.

The Whole Teacher Approach describes professional development opportunities that cater to teachers' needs by attempting to give them the tools to foster better pedagogy and attitudes toward the discipline under study (Chen & Chang, 2006). Earlier in this work the whole teacher approach was described as the beginning of a process, as well as a means by which multidisciplinary learning could take place. This is especially important in light of geography's current standing as a secondary set of embedded standards in West Virginia rather than a core discipline (WVDE, 2016). West Virginia,

though, is just one of fifty states, most of which currently embed geography standards in other disciplines and do not count geography as one of their core subjects. Interested parties have sought to work within the confines of geography in its current state, and promote geography education in a multidisciplinary way through the use of professional development training for non-geography teachers (Edelson et al., 2013). This study attempted to capitalize on an opportunity to obtain firsthand information from classroom teachers for whom geography is not their primary emphasis.

The WVGA approach to professional development was meant to refine how teachers utilize geography in their classrooms, particularly those teachers that currently teach social studies (in which the standards are embedded) and literature (where there is an obvious content connection through the setting of various literary works). Findings from this study may be useful to schools throughout the state of West Virginia, many of which were not represented in the WVGA's participant base. Given that West Virginia's geography woes are mirrored in many other states across the country, and professional development is a standard service offered in every state, the findings from this study may be helpful or illustrative to any number of states with an interest in better promoting geography content through professional development. It may also interest the myriad state and national organizations that have tasked themselves with that endeavor.

Summary

This study was intended to facilitate a better understand of the relationship between a whole teacher oriented professional development program and its influence on pedagogy relating to geographic content at the secondary level amongst both social

studies and literature teachers. The nature of the problem and the study purpose were explained in Section 1. Additionally, in section 1 important terms necessary to understanding the nature of the study were identified. An outline was provided for the relevant body of literature in regard to the whole teacher approach to professional development, the purge of geography from the core curriculum, and geography's subsequent placement as an embedded standard in other disciplines. Also considered was the relationship between geography and literature, the importance of professional development to advancing geography as a discipline, and the general importance of interdisciplinary education. Section 1 was closed with a brief discussion of the implication that this study may have in the academic community, particularly in the state of West Virginia and in states with a similar approach to teaching geography.

In the next section I discuss the methodology of this study and include a discussion of the merits of using a simple qualitative study, the data collection process, interview procedures, participants, access to participants, and the use of ethical research practices.

Section 2: The Methodology

Research Design and Approach

The study was qualitative in nature. Qualitative studies are used to understand data that represent “personal happenings in time in a place” (Stake, 2010, p. 88). A qualitative approach affords the researcher the ability to seek a depth of knowledge from each participant and emphasizes the kind of growth and adaptability in questioning needed to fully explore the topic of a study (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013). Although this study was qualitative in nature, the design did not fit with several popular qualitative designs, and was best conducted as a case study. Following is a brief discussion as to why this project was poorly suited for other common qualitative designs.

This study did not meet the criteria of an ethnographic study because it did not emphasize long-term observation and data collection and did not focus on a particular classroom culture (see Leavy & Beretvas, 2014). It is possible that the inclusion of geography education and literature in secondary classrooms may be a product of particular classroom cultures or may contribute to classroom culture, but no specific culture was under study for this project, and I did not hypothesize that any such culture may exist. This study was designed with the intent to better understand pedagogical behaviors of participants in the WVGA workshop, and was limited to those specific activities. Further exploration of the process of classroom culture or behavior patterns was outside the scope of this study (see Leavy & Beretvas, 2014). This study also failed to meet the requirements of a narrative methodology, which is often associated with ethnography, as I did not intend to present the results in a narrative format.

The purpose of a grounded theory study is to build a theory around the data that have been collected and analyzed (Leavy & Beretvas, 2014; Roulston, 2010). This study did not align with the grounded theory approach because I had no intention of trying to establish a new theory “from the ground up” (see Leavy & Beretvas, 2014, p. 6). This study was rooted in the whole teacher approach, which emphasizes the importance of professional development in nurturing teachers and informing their in-class behavior.

Phenomenology is used to explore participants’ lived experiences, as well as their deeper meanings (Leavy & Beretvas, 2014). This study was not intended to determine what it means to be a secondary teacher using geography in the literature or social studies classroom. Instead, I focused on the implementation of geography materials (or the lack thereof) for teachers who attended a professional development session. There was no deep investigation into what it means to be a geography-minded educator. Instead, I explored pedagogical decisions made by participant educators.

This study was a case study designed to emphasize description and understanding through an examination of self-reports of subjects’ thinking (see Woodside, 2010). The use of semistructured interviews permitted me to obtain data about participants’ pedagogical practices over a span of time in which I was not able to personally observe their behavior in the classroom (see Stake, 2010). The open-ended nature of the interview process meant that participants were able to express themselves in a meaningful way, while the interview questions prompted participants to discuss issues directly related to the research questions (see Stake, 2010).

I intended this study to focus on secondary level social studies and literature teachers, which omits a few participants in the WVGA's professional development program. The WVGA program was open to middle school and elementary school teachers as well, and a few participants hailed from those grade levels. Teachers outside the social studies and literature fields also participated in the WVGA program, but they did not fall under the parameters that I set for this study. It is also noteworthy that I examined self-reports of teachers' classroom behaviors at a set point in time, not in an ongoing way. For these reasons, I concluded this study was a poor contender for a program evaluation.

Additionally, I did not use quantitative data for this study. As previously stated, the schools under study are all demographically similar. According to the West Virginia Feed to Achieve Report (2015) issued by the WVDE, 60% of all students in the state qualify for free or reduced lunch. This number ranges from 42% in the lowest county to 100% in the poorest county, and falls below 50% in only two of the 55 counties in the state. The U.S. Census Bureau (n.d.) also reported that the state population is in excess of 93% White, and in no county does the number of people who identify as White fall below 85% of the population. With relatively little variation across counties, the issues of economic or racial diversity were unlikely to have had an impact on teachers' self-reporting of pedagogical strategies relating to geography instruction in their classrooms. Nevertheless, I collected and reported basic demographic data regarding teacher participants, including school size, school poverty data, and teachers' years of experience.

Regarding other forms of quantitative data, there was also no metric for measurement established by the WVGA in the beginning of this study, so there was no starting-point from which to measure growth in the use of geographic data. Instead, I used interview questions to collect qualitative data to determine if and how geography content was being incorporated into teachers' lessons.

Sample sizes in qualitative studies vary based on the needs of the researcher as well as the number of participants needed to reach a level of data saturation (Boddy, 2016; Woodside, 2010). Data saturation occurs when the addition of new participants no longer yields unique or meaningful discovery. According to Boddy (2016), sample sizes in qualitative studies may be as small as a single participant. Additionally, saturation among members of a homogenous population is attainable with a small number of participants (Boddy, 2016; Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2016). Only 26 teachers participated in the WVGA professional development program. These teachers hailed from schools in a state with relatively little economic or racial diversity. With a small population only a few participants are needed to reach a point of information saturation (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006). A total of eight participants representing approximately 25% of the total teacher participant population was included in my study. However, I was able to interview only six participants for this study.

A purposeful sample is not a weakness but rather the most logical course of action in a qualitative study (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006). The interview process in qualitative research is meant to be a deeper exploration of a lived experience than demographic data could provide. Focusing on a small sample size allows the researcher to fully explore the

experiences of the interviewees in a meaningful way. Although it may be difficult to transfer these experiences to the larger population, their importance lies in the analysis of a shared experience and the possibility of building on these experiences for future research and “communal knowledge building” (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006, p. 14; see Trotter, 2012). Because the scope of the current study was limited to understanding how teachers who participated in the WVDE’s professional development program use or do not use what they learned from the program, the interview process provided the bulk of data for the study.

Participants

Participants in this study were interviewed on a strictly voluntary basis. Participants were informed that they could leave the study at any time without any repercussions. Information for contacts was given to me by the WVGA. Participants were given a consent form that included the terms of their participation, namely that all information would be kept confidential and all findings would be scrubbed of information that could lead to their identities being revealed. Consent forms were e-mailed to participants at the suggestion of Walden University’s institutional review board (IRB), and participant agreement to take part in the study came in the form of an affirmative reply to the e-mail.

All reporting was done confidentially with pseudonyms used in place of participants’ names. Because some counties have very few high schools, it was also in the best interest of the participants to use pseudonyms for both participants and the schools where they work. This ensured that confidentiality was maintained for all participants.

Teacher participants were chosen as part of a purposive sample. Twenty-six teachers from nine West Virginia counties participated in the 2013 WVGA workshop. The 26 teachers were part of 13 teacher teams, each of which consisted of a literature teacher and a teacher from a field more closely related to the study of geography in a more traditional sense, namely social studies, though one or two participants hailed from the sciences (Hagen, 2015). The initial target number of 8 participants fit within the mold of the simple qualitative study as outlined by Ulin, Robinson, and Tolley (2005). Participants were recruited from the population of high school teachers of social studies or literature courses at their respective schools. It was my intent to recruit equal numbers of social studies and literature teachers for this study.

Of the 26 teachers who participated in the WVDE workshop, including myself, I hoped to interview eight participants (approximately 30% of the original group). I was able to conduct interviews with only six participants. Among those participants were three social studies teachers, including two AP human geography teachers, one of whom also teaches literature courses. The other three teachers were literature teachers, one of whom had a background in social studies education. Although I was not able to obtain interviews with the target of eight participants, the sample of six teachers who responded affirmatively to my request for interviews included three social studies teachers and three literature teachers, each of which brought a unique perspective to my study.

According to Crouch and McKenzie (2006), qualitative researchers who use interviews for data collection are more concerned with collecting data that are not dependent on a proportionally based sample size. Boddy (2016) affirmed this, stating that

because qualitative research is more concerned with depth rather than breadth, smaller sample sizes (including a single participant) can be justified based on the depth of the contribution that each participant can provide. Crouch and McKenzie as well as Boddy recognized that smaller sample sizes may be used at the discretion of the researcher in a qualitative study, especially in cases in which the researcher is not interested in pursuing any kind of quantitative path. The interviews from the six available participants yielded solid information about how the WVGA/Benedum workshop influenced their pedagogy and their perceptions of cross-curricular geography education, as well as their feelings of self-efficacy.

I have maintained a close relationship with the WVGA over the years, and I have also participated in a number of workshops and committees hosted by the WVGA, including the geography/literature collaborative. However, I was interested in maintaining a level of objectivity in this study and did not allow myself to inject my views into the study. Interview questions for this study were written to allow the respondents maximum freedom in describing their experience with the WVGA workshop.

I reached out to teacher participants through e-mail and telephone. I sent an e-mail and follow-up e-mail to participants to attempt to gauge interest in participation. The e-mail contained a brief description of the study. I used the same description of the study from the consent form, as well as my contact information. I also attached a copy of the consent form to the e-mail. A sample of the e-mail is included in Appendix D.

Additionally, because the teachers in the potential sample hailed from nine counties in West Virginia, it was necessary to seek permission from the county school boards to ensure that there was no conflict regarding the teachers' participation and their respective places of employment. The assistant director of the office of assessment and research for the WVDE stated that there were no state level requirements to gain access to participants for research (personal communication, 2017). The director suggested contacting each county school district individually to request written permission to interview teachers, and then submitting those letters of permission to Walden University's IRB. The director noted that other researchers had followed suit in the past due to the lack of a state policy. I contacted each individual county school district to obtain written permission. These permission letters were obtained prior to applying for IRB approval. Interview questions were thematically similar, but adaptations were made to differentiate between questions for social studies and literature teachers to represent their classroom pedagogy as it applies to their specific content areas. My goal for this qualitative case study was to examine the current state of the participant teachers' pedagogical practices 3 years after the conclusion of the original professional development sessions.

The WVGA agreed to cooperate in this research endeavor, as they believe that they have a vested interest in learning the outcome of this body of research. Whether it casts the program under scrutiny in a negative or positive light was irrelevant to the WVGA. The organization viewed this study as an opportunity to gain insight that would help them improve future efforts (Regional Geographic Alliance Director, personal

communication, 2016). The WVGA agreed to provide contact information for the teachers who attended the workshop. This would be the extent of WVGA involvement in this study.

All interviews for this study were scheduled during off school hours, which eliminated any potential impacts on educators that may influence their school day. Interviews took place in designated and verified quiet spaces in public libraries in the town or a county near to where participants live, or were conducted over the phone. Five of the six interview participants opted to be interviewed by phone. One participant was interviewed in person. All procedures and courses required by Walden University were adhered to prior to engaging any participants. No data were collected prior to receiving IRB approval.

Those who chose to participate were given a one- or two-page written summary of the finished research project via e-mail. A note was included in the summary of the project that indicated that a full copy of the research project would be made available to interested participants. Participants could obtain a copy of the full finished research project at their request in PDF format.

Data Collection

The source of data collection for this study consisted of semi-structured interviews with the 6 teacher participants. Two interview protocols (see Appendices B and C) that I designed were based on whether the participant's primary job was teaching social studies or literature classes in a secondary setting. One teacher that primarily taught social studies, but also occasionally taught literature, was interviewed using the

full social studies interview protocol and then several questions from the literature interview protocol. The use of open ended, semi-structured interviews allowed for a great deal of flexibility in what each teacher decided to self-report about their experience and pedagogy. Interview questions from the protocols were focused on answering the research questions associated with this study, and follow-up questions were asked for the purposes of clarification and to elicit more information based on interviewee responses. Questions emphasized classroom pedagogy, co-teaching and co-planning activities, perceptions of confidence in delivering cross-curricular instruction, and the strategies and materials that teachers used after completing the WVGA workshop.

Interview times ranged from between 50 minutes and 95 minutes. One interview was conducted in person at a public library near where the teacher worked during off duty hours. The remaining five interviews were conducted by phone.

I made digital audio recordings of participant responses and manually transcribed them using word processing software. Interview transcripts were stripped of all personally identifying information, which included names of teachers, schools, and counties of employment. Teachers were identified in the transcripts as Teachers 1-6. Copies of all audio files and interview transcripts have been stored on a password protected personal computer device. Additionally, transcripts used for coding were printed and have been stored in a locked filing cabinet along with notes that were made during the research process.

No major adverse effects regarding data collection or participant involvement occurred, though I did contact the IRB to adapt my study to use phone interviews when in

person interviews became difficult to schedule. Participants were reminded that they could withdraw from the study at any time, and also that they may request that their responses not be used in the study. Protocols were in place to ensure that in the event that confidentiality would be breached I would have immediately contacted the IRB as well as individual participants in order to allow them the option to either continue their participation in the study or revoke their permission to include their responses in the study, but no confidentiality breaches took place during this study.

I have worked closely with the WVGA over the years (2009 – 2017). My role has varied from being a student in no cost graduate classes offered by the WVGA to a participant in professional development sessions and serving on planning and steering committees for the WVGA. As of the time of this writing I am not actively participating in any WVGA activities, but I am still a member of the organization. Membership in the organization is granted indefinitely to any education professional that participates in Alliance activities. I am not involved in any evaluation or decision making processes for the WVGA at this time, nor have I been a participant in any form of committee meeting or other WVGA program in the past year. When the original Benedum/WVGA literature collaborative workshop was offered I took part in the workshop as one of the 26 participants, along with a co-worker from the high school that currently serves as my primary place of employment. As such I have a relationship with the various participants that ranges from being a well -known work acquaintance to having limited interactions during a weeklong workshop (i.e. participating in group activities, eating lunch in a communal setting). With the exception of two participants (the participant that works in

the same school and one that served on some of the same committees for the WVGA) I have had no contact with any of the participants in the years separating the end of the workshop and the writing of this document.

Although it would be disingenuous to say that no relationship exists between the researcher and most of the participants that were in the potential pool, it would be equally disingenuous to suggest that the nature of these relationships carry enough weight, socially speaking or otherwise, to influence the answers that the participants offered to the interview questions. For all but two potential participants my relationship is limited to marginal interaction during the workshop. The other two individuals from the participant pool have a nominal working relationship with me by virtue of being employed by the same county school system, but our work contact is minimal, sporadic, and we have no social contact outside of being present at the same work related meetings on occasion. Participants were encouraged at the beginning of the interview process to speak candidly about their experiences, and reminded that my interest in this topic is purely academic and outside the scope of any previous relationships that I have had with the WVGA.

Data Analysis

The content of the interviews for this study was the focus of analysis, and, therefore, I eliminated verbal utterances that did not address directly to the content of the interviews (Flick, 2014). The use of a words spoken approach, which excludes interviewee stuttering, the insertion of “um,” as well as other extraneous utterances, allowed the primary content of the interviews, the clear language responding to the interview questions, to be more readily understood and coded into their base thematic

elements. However, when needed, I included descriptive language that highlighted the contents of the interviews, and took note when participants used inflection of voice or body language that conveyed additional weight or meaning to aspects of their words spoken (Flick, 2014; Roulston, 2010).

I analyzed responses and used axial coding to explore patterns in the responses that highlighted any themes that emerged in the interview process. The coding process began as I recorded preliminary thematic codes while transcribing the interviews, and then reread the interviews prior the beginning of coding. I printed hard copies of the interviews and began highlighting and underlining segments of the interviews that demonstrated commonalities and differences among the interviews. These highlighted and underlined sections were color coded based on content, and the codes were developed during and after the comparing of statements across the six interviews.

Axial coding allowed me to identify themes that emerge from the responses themselves, and then compare responses across all interviews (Roulston, 2010). This type of thematic analysis allowed me to reduce the data to themes that served to tie responses together. These themes serve as umbrella statements under which responses were organized (Roulston, 2010).

I engaged in member checking to ensure that participants felt that my interpretations of their comments reflected the reality of their experiences. I sent copies of my transcripts and interview notes to each participant via email and asked them to review the materials. I then contacted each person by phone or email to engage in a brief

discussion about the accuracy of the transcriptions and my interpretations of the data collected.

Sgier (2012) identifies thematic analysis as the most common form of qualitative analysis. Thematic analysis seeks to determine what patterns emerge in data sets. In this case, that meant coding interviews and attempting to identify themes or categories of information that emerged from participant responses. Thematic analysis was appropriate for this study in that the study was designed to explore teachers' perspectives at a point in time well beyond the conclusion of the professional development session. My intent was not to attribute blame or responsibility for these outcomes, which made interpretive analysis a less suitable choice (Sgier, 2012).

Coding the data from respondent interviews allowed me to evaluate the outcomes of the study in a way that clearly identified what respondents (as opposed to the researcher, WVGA, etc.) chose to self-report regarding their pedagogical practices and use of geography related materials in their classrooms. The coding process enabled me to identify both commonalities between respondents as well as contrasts between their experiences. The coding process was also used to highlight statements pertaining to teacher participants' self-efficacy regarding the use of geography centered strategies and materials. Aronson (1995) described the thematic analysis process as one that allows the researcher to establish themes, as well as subthemes, through the coding process. The development of themes is intended to be an evolving process. As such, data analysis for this study continued from the conclusion of the first interview until all interviews were completed and thematic elements were identified across all interviews.

In order to better ensure both the confirmability and credibility of this study, I used interviews with multiple members of the participant group, which included teachers from varying counties and both the social studies and literature disciplines. Each participant represented a unique perspective and point of view regarding the integration of geography related material into their classroom pedagogy. These unique perspectives were compared during the data analysis phase of the study after all data had been collected. According to Thurmond (2001), “Variance in events, situations, times, places, and persons add to the study because of the possibility of revealing atypical data or the potential of identifying similar patterns, thus increasing confidence in the findings,” (pg. 254). In essence, similarities and differences in data accumulated during a study are likely to result from the inclusion of multiple viewpoints or perspectives. This study was designed to incorporate perspectives from multiple teachers that attended the WVGA’s workshop and attendees from the two different disciplines of social studies and literature.

It was my original intent to interview 8 participants for this study. Only 6 volunteered to be participants. In keeping with the principles advocated by Thurmond (2001), the mix of interviewees was split across disciplines, and the mixture of teachers was evenly divided between teachers who primarily teach literature and teachers who primarily teach social studies.

Data analysis revealed two distinctive pictures. First, each teacher was a unique individual who organized and ran their class in a distinctively different way. Because every teacher interviewed gave unique answers regarding how they approached cross-disciplinary geography and literature instruction, it is possible that more interviews would

have revealed more diversity in the strategies that teachers employed after the conclusion of the WVGA workshop.

However, every respondent, including the discrepant case, identified similar obstacles to cross-disciplinary education. As they each mentioned these obstacles, this finding represents data saturation; that is, no further insights would have been gained with interviews from additional participants. Thematically, these obstacles included time constraints, availability of willing co-teachers, scheduling, and the rigidity of standards. Furthermore, all teachers in the study, including the discrepant case, indicated that they held positive attitudes toward the overall goals of the WVGA workshop and the worthiness of cross-disciplinary geography/literature collaboration. Because these themes emerged from all interviews, further interviews would have likely yielded the same results.

To ensure that findings represented an objective and knowledgeable interpretation of the data, I also used peer debriefing as a method to assure the validity of data analysis. I enlisted the assistance of two peers to review not only the text of the interviews (which did not contain any identifying information about the participants), but also my analysis of the interviews and my notes about the content of the interviews. One peer was a geographer from a college or university unaffiliated with the WVGA study. The second peer was an expert in the field of education, also from a college or university not affiliated with the WVGA study. It was my intent that these professionals, who are knowledgeable about the phenomenon of interest but outsiders to the study, would provide feedback on whether analyses, findings, and interpretations were logical and

grounded in the data. Although it was my intention to avoid conferring personal bias in any part of the process, my past relationship with the WVGA and participation in the program could have led to the unintentional skewing of my interpretation.

Another step toward assuring an accurate analysis of the data involved researcher reflexivity. As I reviewed the information from interviews, I took into consideration how my conduct during the interviews may have influenced the outcome of the interviews, as well as how my expectations and beliefs may have influenced how I interpreted the transcripts. By reflecting on my possible biases, I strived to avoid integrating them into my data analysis and interpretation. Along with member checking and peer debriefing, reflexivity was used to ensure the validity of data analysis.

In spite of incorporating these credibility measures to data analysis, some misinterpretations may be present because of limited information that each provided. Participants had little to say about the content of the interviews or my findings. They offered brief, summative affirmations that the information was correct and only one participant made a slight editorial change.

The peer debriefers enlisted for this study both affirmed that the findings of my study were in alignment with the content of the interviews, which I considered a clear endorsement that the information that I extrapolated from the interviews was representative of what was contained in the raw data. I had asked the peer debriefers to review my findings as they aligned to the study, and provide a critique of the findings as they related to the interviews. Although both indicated that my findings were in alignment with the content of my interviews, neither offered more robust explanation as

to why they felt this way. I reached back out to the peer debriefers to offer them the opportunity to expand on their initial reactions to my paper, but both declined to offer further comment. Because they indicated that my data and findings were in alignment, I did not alter my findings based specifically on the outcomes of the peer debriefing process.

Researcher reflexivity disclosed no issues during the interviews but did lead me to make changes during the coding process. I realized that some preliminary codes could be construed as biased or a misrepresentation of the data. For example, I had initially labeled one code as “positive views of geography.” Upon contemplation, I realized that while the initial code accurately stemmed from my interpretation of the data, I had not included a secondary code for “negative views of geography.” I changed the code to “feelings toward program/attitudes toward geography” because it was more inclusive of the data and less potentially biased.

Another example involves a category for the use of literature books in geography classrooms or to teach geography materials. This strategy was featured explicitly as a core goal of the WVGA workshop. However, through researcher reflexivity, I recognized that this categorization was too narrowly defined based on the data that I had collected and reflected the goals of the workshop but not the participants’ practices. I revised the initial code to be “use of literary book/non-standard materials,” which more accurately reflected the teachers’ views.

Limitations

This study is limited in scope and was narrowly focused on the experiences of a handful of teachers that participated in a geography-literature collaborative workshop. The workshop's goals were aligned with those espoused by many geography advocates (as discussed at length in the literature review section of this paper). The focus of this study was meant to determine the perceptions and pedagogical shifts that occurred for a small number of teachers in southern West Virginia. Although I hope that this study will provide insights as to the effectiveness of professional development programs in influencing teacher attitudes and practices regarding cross-curricular geography education, findings for this study are limited to the scope allotted for simple qualitative studies.

Qualitative research is transferable when conducted with an adequate level of care. Dependability is accounted for through the quality and thoroughness of the study, and transferability is linked to the appropriateness of the sampling technique (Weis & Willems, 2016). The transferability of this study, though justified as a product of research quality, will still be limited in scope to particular parties interested in cross-curricular geography education. Like much qualitative research, this study will be of interest to a niche group of geography educators, curriculum developers, and geography professional organizations that may draw inferences as to the value of this study.

It is also worth noting that substantial time had lapsed between the WVGA workshop and this study. Presumably, the last contact that the teacher participants had with the WVGA in regard to this particular training would have taken place no later than

2015 when the WVGA provided outcomes to the surveys that teacher participants had taken. Teachers that participated in the workshop fulfilled the mandatory lesson plan requirement no later than 2014, so there clearly has been no guarantee in regard to the attrition of using the strategies and materials that were given out in the workshop.

As the interview process is considered a hallmark of qualitative research (Flick, 2014), a primary weakness in the interview process is participants' capacity to misremember or even misrepresent information. Given the length of time that has lapsed and that each participant was only interviewed once, participant perceptions may have been skewed (Vogl, Zartler, Schmidt, & Rieder, 2017).

Another limitation is that five of the six interviews for this study were conducted by phone. During these interviews, it was not possible for me to read facial expressions or body language that serve to modulate meaning. Thus, the inability to see most of the participants during interviews limited the scope of information and, therefore, is a limitation in comprehensiveness of the data collected (Flick, 2014).

Although it was my intent to primarily collect data from teachers who do not know me well, there is always a chance that those being interviewed may have skewed their responses due to my status as a colleague teacher. I, along with the participants, are education insiders, and as a result there could be some residual feeling of comradery that would influence the details that the participants choose to share, as well as those that they choose not to share. These feelings may have also led to changes in how information regarding classroom pedagogy was delivered. It is possible that among the teacher sample, the use of geography related materials and strategies did not persist substantively

in some classrooms but they may have been hesitant to express this to someone who shares in their duties as a classroom teacher. The frankness in which the participants spoke about their experiences with the WVGA/Benedum program, along with the general content of the interviews as a whole, does not lead me to believe this was a substantive issue.

Data Analysis Results

Data for this study was collected through the use of open ended, semi-structured interviews. One interview took place in person, and the remaining five were conducted over the phone. Software was used to record the interviews on a password protected electronic device, and was then transcribed by the researcher. Participants in this study represent a purposeful sample, as each interviewee was chosen for this study based specifically on their previous participation in the West Virginia Geographic Alliance's geography/literature collaborative workshop. Emails were sent to all workshop participants; nine volunteered and three declined to participate.

Participants were read questions from a pre-scripted set of interview protocols. One protocol was specifically meant to be read to social studies teachers, and the other was meant to be used in interviews with literature teachers. Three teachers were read the social studies specific interview prompts. Two teacher participants were read the literature specific social studies prompts. One teacher indicated that she had taught both subjects, and therefore was administered the social studies interview prompts as well as the literature specific prompts from the literature interview protocol.

Differences in interview protocols were tailored to elicit responses pertinent to the following research questions:

RQ1: How do secondary social studies teachers that participated in the WVGA's literature-geography collaborative describe their pedagogical practices for the long-term integration of both literature and social studies materials, concepts, and themes in their classrooms?

RQ2: How do secondary social studies and literature teachers that participated in the WVGA's literature-geography collaborative describe their pedagogical practices for the long term integration of cross curricular lesson planning in their classrooms?

RQ3: How do secondary social studies and literature teachers describe their feelings of self-efficacy regarding the integration of geography related strategies and materials into their classroom pedagogy?

After interview data were transcribed, individual copies of each of the six participant interviews were printed. After conducting, transcribing, and reading the interviews it became apparent that there were several broad categories that had emerged from the data. I began evaluating the content of the interviews based on their relationship to broad thematic concepts such as geography related, literature related, standards related, obstacles, and general pedagogy. These categories allowed me to begin mapping the content of the interviews for further analysis, and served as preliminary data analysis for this study. In short, this first step led me to develop an emerging understanding of the interview content.

I then expanded these preliminary categories into a form of open codes. These codes were labeled as a form of preliminary coding, and each was associated each with a color. As I reread the statements, I used color codes based on their match to the preliminary codes. Some statements did not fit within the existing codes so this process led to the development of more broad, basic codes, which I marked and color coded. Additionally, as I discussed in the data analysis section, credibility measures led me to re-categorize some of these preliminary open codes. Some of these codes were eventually abandoned because they represented information that better fit in other categories. For example, Teacher 3 indicated that he spent time working as an actor in community theater productions, which I first coded as “distinctly unique to this individual,” and almost dismissed as irrelevant to the study. Upon rereading, I recognized that participation in community theater productions represented familiarity with literature material and so re-categorized this finding under the preliminary open code “self-efficacy/preparation.”

The earliest versions of preliminary open codes utilized for this study included, after being edited slightly for clarity and more relevance to the study’s ideation, a series of labels that I used to first categorize information from the interviews. These more crude preliminary labels were listed as:

- not part of standards/doesn’t fit with standards/doesn’t fit objectives
- split tasks/co-teaching/cooperation/cross disciplinary
- use of literary book/non-standard materials
- understanding lit through geography/geography through lit

- outside of comfort zone
- challenges to co-teaching/challenges
- specific strategies
- feelings toward program/attitudes toward geography
- evidence of sustained use/possible use
- distinctly unique to this interview
- not actively using, two disciplines
- self-efficacy/preparation
- compartmentalization in social studies or across disciplines
- books/stories used in class, and
- mention of cultural geography/physical geography.

The above list represents a group of concepts that emerged during the coding process, but was a group that I recognized as imperfect and impractical in conveying the overall patterns which emerged from the interviews. These preliminary codes felt both useful and informal. As a result I categorized information under these classifiers, but then critically examined each to determine the classifier's relevance or redundancy. After review of this list, I fine-tuned the set of preliminary codes as the following:

- content's relation to the standards
- co-teaching/co-planning
- challenges to application
- use of non-standard materials
- specific/individualized pedagogical strategies

- attitudes toward geography/literature integration
- abandonment of workshop strategies/materials, and
- sustained use of geography literature integration.

Once open coding was complete, I compiled a list of descriptors for each open code and identified quotes and concepts that reflected the open codes. I organized this information according to relevance to the three research questions. I then reevaluated the open codes to determine the relationships or patterns between them, which led to identifying four distinct axial codes. Some of the open codes were relevant to more than one axial code and were included in the lists for more than one axial code. These axial codes included:

- relevance to learning goals/objectives,
- obstacles to the co-teaching of geography/literature instruction,
- self-efficacy for implementation of geography/literature collaboration, and
- usefulness of geography/literature cross disciplinary instruction.

Information regarding open code descriptors and organization into axial codes is available in Appendix F.

Discrepant Findings

The nature of the questions asked, and the highly personal nature of individual classroom pedagogy frequently resulted in starkly unique responses from participants. Most of these differences were predominantly about how information from the workshop was applied in individual classrooms. Only one case stood out as being different. In this case, the teacher did not adopt long lasting changes as a result of the workshop. However,

this teachers' other responses were quite similar to the other participants and were consonant with the themes that emerged from data analysis.

In determining the importance of this case to overall findings, I examined the reasons that this teacher did not incorporate workshop information into his pedagogy. Whereas he did use literature when teaching United States history because he viewed the practice as beneficial, he did not use literature in his Advanced Placement (AP) human geography classes because he could not justify the time required to teach literature as an ancillary method given the rigid standards of AP courses. Teacher 2 explicitly stated that “in the AP curriculum we’re pretty set on what we have to teach,” and later in the interview said “with AP you have such a strict course that you have to hit these components to get kids ready for the AP exam that I really just couldn’t find the time to assign a novel to kids.”

Given that this teacher described valuing the integration of geography and literature across disciplinary boundaries but was not able to incorporate this pedagogy when teaching AP courses, I found that his responses did not actually reflect a discrepant case.

Evidence of Quality

Several steps were taken to ensure that a high standard of research quality was maintained. These included member checking and peer debriefing.

Member Checking

First, I engaged in member checking with each interviewee to ensure that my account of their words was adequately and accurately represented at the conclusion of the

interview process. I emailed transcripts of the interviews to the interviewees as the individual transcriptions were finished. Aside from one participant's request to change a typographical error in the transcription that arose from mishearing a word when transcribing, all participants confirmed that the interviews were accurate representation of what they said during the interview process. I then sent each participant a copy of my coding and asked them to evaluate my organization and interpretation of their interview data. Only one participant provided further feedback by noting that he had engaged in 25-minute co-teaching sessions with a cooperating literature teacher early in the program and intermittently on an ongoing basis.

Peer Debriefing

A geography professor and education professor from colleges not affiliated with this study and who were previously unknown to the researcher were asked to review the analysis and results and provide feedback on the logic and accuracy of findings and conclusions. I provided them with copies of the full study, interview transcripts, and coding charts. I asked them to focus on the data analysis and results after reading the transcriptions. Both peer debriefers responded that findings and data analysis accurately represented the content of the interviews. The professor of education stated, "The study is in alignment with the content of the interviews. I have no further comment." The geography professor's statement was equally as brief and he drew the same conclusions regarding data analysis and findings.

Summary of the Findings

The goals of this study were to determine what impacts the WVGA's literature/geography collaborative workshop had on teacher pedagogy in both social studies and literature classrooms, as well as teachers' feelings of self-efficacy in their delivery of geography and literature content. Four dominant themes emerged from data analysis.

Relevance to Learning Goals/Objectives

Every teacher interviewed for this study continued using materials and strategies from the WVGA workshop beyond the mandated period during which the WVGA monitored their lesson plans. The length of time that teachers continued using these materials and strategies was influenced by a number of factors that will be discussed throughout this section of the paper, but one of the most significant indicators of whether teachers continued using the materials and strategies was their determination of how relevant those strategies and objectives were to their classes' goals and objectives.

Throughout the interviews conducted for this study teachers repeatedly brought up the state mandated standards, which are inexorably tied to the learning goals and objectives set forth for each course taught in the West Virginia school system. These standards quite literally spell out the learning goals for classes as well as what content teachers must cover. These standards provide a foundational, consistent set of learning objectives with which all students taking that class across the state are expected to engage. These standards provide a baseline for what teachers must cover, but in practice,

teachers generally have a great deal of freedom in how they approach the learning standards, which translates to a great deal of variety in how instruction is carried out.

All interviewees referenced the standards and their learning objectives throughout the interview process, and although the standards and learning objectives served in some ways as limitations on how much cross curricular instruction could take place, they also provided a justification to integrate geography and literature collaboration in classrooms. For instance, Teacher 1 made several statements about the time needed for geography and literature collaboration, stating that she did not “want to defeat the whole purpose of the program” by introducing so much geography collaboration that it diminished her ability to meet her learning goals. Teacher 1 repeatedly stated, however, that geography “enhanced” students’ understanding of the material she was teaching, and their performance in class. After discussing co-teaching for multiple 90 minute blocks, Teacher 1 indicated a level of hesitancy at spending so much time on geography related content, but followed this with the statement: “But, then that totally enhanced their writing. That totally enhanced their complete comprehension about the characters in their analysis of the characters. So, when we do study the geography and take the time it really enhances depth, it gives deeper perspective and a deeper analysis when they write.”

The above quote is illustrative of some of the goals that Teacher 1 has in her classroom, notably writing about literature and engaging in character analysis. Teacher 1’s continued use of geography strategies in her classroom occurs precisely because those strategies serve as an enhancement to her established goals and objectives.

Teacher 1 was not unique in her analysis of the benefits of integrating geography and literature. Virtually all interviewees were laudatory of how integration of geography and literature strategies and materials could enhance their pedagogy. Teacher 3, a social studies teacher, recounted part of the reason that he used literature in his classes: “There’s just so many lessons from water, to birthplace of rivers, that all stem back to the basics these books were written about.” Teacher 3 uses literature materials regularly, and states that the use of these materials is an enhancement to his courses, adding that “there is a great deal to be learned by tying literacy to the subject at hand.” Note that Teacher 3 is not changing the base level content of his courses, but instead has introduced literature as a means to enhance instruction.

What stands out here is that both literature and social studies teachers describe the integration of geography and literature as means by which to improve their pedagogy as it is concerned with their already established classroom goals. Teacher 1 did not begin character analysis exercises as a result of the WVGA workshop, but instead decided that the strategies she adopted at the conclusion of the WVGA workshop were beneficial to her already established learning goals. Teacher 3 used literature to better teach the goals that were already expressed as part of his state mandated standards. This behavior, which is mirrored throughout the interviews in a variety of ways, is what establishes a sense of relevance for the WVGA’s professional development, and illustrates the importance of relevance in adapting what is learned from professional development sessions to classroom instruction.

It is noteworthy that of the teachers interviewed for this study only two had indicated that they were not actively using some form of literature-geography cross-disciplinary instruction. One of these teachers was a social studies teacher employed regularly as an AP Human Geography teacher (identified as Teacher 2 in the interviews). He indicated that he cooperated with his literature teacher until she left the school, and then ceased using cross-disciplinary instruction. The main reason that he cited for not moving forward with this form of blended instruction was that he felt confined by the mandated content standards imposed on him by the AP College Board (which sets standards for all AP classes). He specifically stated that he felt that incorporating literature into his classroom would have been an impediment to his ability to execute his standards, and that time spent reading for his class was better spent on more traditional geography materials. His capacity in co-teaching/co-planning with a colleague seemed mostly reserved to offering a support role as she integrated geography into her literature instruction. He later indicated that he had incorporated literature in history courses that he taught only sporadically, and expressed that he felt that the incorporation of geography into literature courses (and vice versa) had merit, but that merit could only be achieved when teachers had the freedom in how they met their learning objectives.

Teacher 2 was an outlier in that he opted not to include geography and literature integration in the primary courses that he taught (one teacher changed to a library job and no longer had the ability to integrate geography/literature in her current role). All other teachers interviewed continued to integrate literature and geography, albeit in ways

sometimes far removed from the practices they had adopted in the period just after the completion of the workshop.

The integral difference between Teacher 2 and the other teachers interviewed for this study is directly related to the mandated standards of the AP course that Teacher 2 identified as the role he primarily fills at his school, which are far more stringent than the state standards mandated for other coursework. Whereas the other teachers provided examples that indicated that they were able to use geography/literature instruction to improve their instruction, Teacher 2 felt that this behavior would supplant needed time in meeting the more rigid AP standards.

Usefulness of Geography/Literature Cross-Disciplinary Instruction

This was one of the most striking aspects of the interview process, as it became apparent very early in the data collection phase that the cooperating teachers all had concerns about the standards that they were obligated to teach, and had demonstrated diversity and individuality in how they continued the use of geography and literature materials. By the time that the interviews were conducted in mid-2018 no teacher was using *The Old Man and the Sea*, a book that was pushed as a mandatory common thread across teacher participants in the program. Instead the teachers that were still actively blending geography and literature elements, from both literature and social studies backgrounds, had adopted a number of highly personalized teaching strategies and materials that were not specifically ordained by the WVGA program. The teachers in question demonstrated adaptability of the WVGA program's strategies to fit other materials that they deemed more relevant to their day to day teaching, and teachers cited

numerous strategies, from silent sustained reading to individual research, as means by which to teach geography concepts in conjunction with literature.

For the social studies teachers interviewed the incorporation of literature was more sporadic, with only one teacher indicating that he (Teacher 3) integrated geography and literature into his classes on a weekly basis. The other social studies teachers varied in their use, but professed to still be using the materials on an ongoing basis, save for the one teacher that switched to a library job and no longer had the opportunity to deliver such instruction. Perhaps most interesting regarding Teacher 3's continued use of WVGA strategies and materials is that he also switched jobs, and currently teaches tourism related courses at a vocational school. According to Teacher 3 his tourism related classes are rooted firmly in the social studies, and the use of geography and literature materials and strategies helps him to meet his established learning objectives. Of the other social studies teachers interviewed, other responses varied, but geography and literature integration was seen as a means by which to teach the standards assigned to them effectively. As such, the material and strategies supplied by the WVGA became a tool in each teacher's repertoire, and served as a means to an end.

The persistence in using vastly differing methods to teach geography and literature by the social studies teachers indicates that they saw value in doing so, a sentiment that is echoed in their universal and laudatory praise of the importance of geography as a discipline. The value teachers found in the WVGA workshop is tied to the concept of relevance, which is detailed in the preceding section. Simply being able to relate geography and literature materials to existing standards and learning objectives is

an inadequate justification for engaging in such behavior. Whereas the relevance of the WVGA promoted standards and materials was dictated by the teachers' abilities to link geography and literature information to what they were already teaching, the continued application and adaptation of new strategies and materials in the absence of WVGA oversight speaks to the teachers' perceived usefulness of these practices. It is here, in the applied practice of geography/literature cross-disciplinary strategies and use of these materials that it becomes readily apparent that teachers' found in these strategies and materials a degree of usefulness worthy of continued use or adaptation.

Only Teacher 2 viewed the integration of literature and geography as more of a hindrance than a help, though he did indicate that there was value in the practice and there could be times in the future, however unlikely, that he would employ similar tactics in meeting his educational goals, especially outside the realm of AP instruction.

Two of the social studies teachers interviewed for this study were teaching AP Human Geography, and both indicated that they felt shackled by the regimented AP curriculum and their necessity to teach students a vast body of highly specialized material. For them the use of literature materials was an impediment to other proven pedagogical strategies that they employed to help their students meet the rigorous AP requirements. In these instances the teachers did not dispute the relevance of the geography/literature strategies and materials to what they were teaching, but underscored that they did not find these strategies and materials as consistently or wholly useful in meeting their needs. Interestingly, literature teachers found themselves also citing standards related issues, but with very different outcomes. Where the social studies

teachers were inconsistent in their application of geography and literature materials in their day to day pedagogy (ranging from not at all to weekly), literature teachers were more consistent. For the literature teachers interviewed the introduction of geographic concepts was universally viewed as a means to enhance their literature instruction. Citing setting and culture, the literature teachers noted that there was a consistent value in using geography related content while teaching literature, and that geography content had a significant level of importance to their students' understanding of the literary works they read.

There was some deviation among literature teachers as to what strategies and materials were to be employed, with the literature teachers all opting to integrate geography instruction into their classrooms by applying strategies they learned from the WVGA to the existing works that they were teaching, or to new works they chose that were not part of the WVGA's first round of suggested novels. Whereas social studies teachers varied in their views on the usefulness of introducing literary works into their social studies classes, the literature teachers were united in praising geography as a means to better meet their individual classrooms' goals and objectives, specifically citing the relevance of human geography to their content. Inklings of this relevance emerged several times in the interviews, with literature teachers discussing geography as a way to enhance students' understanding of setting. One teacher even cited AP Literature questions from past exams that ask students to analyze readings in the context of geography, indicating that this connection between geography and literature as

disciplines is not completely novel, despite a paucity of academic literature relating to the thematic and working relationships between the disciplines of literature and geography.

Obstacles to the Coteaching of Geography/Literature

Most of the teachers interviewed cited significant impediments to the integration of geography and literature in a cross-disciplinary setting. Teacher 3 cited no problems in integrating geography and literature into his lessons, which he explained as relating to his overall confidence in his ability to deliver cross-disciplinary instruction, and the nature of the subject he taught. Teacher 3 did not cite specific difficulties, but he did state that co-teaching was not continuous, and that co-teaching occurred “several times for just 25 minute segments.” Other teachers also indicated difficulties in maintaining co-teaching, with one literature teacher stating that she was unable to get a coworker to cooperate with her at all, even at the outset of the program (she attended the professional development alone, whereas all other participants had a partner from their school). Teacher 5 stated that she “didn’t have any co-teaching simply because [she] could not find a teacher at [her] school to participate.” A social studies teacher interviewed also indicated that after her cooperating teacher left the school the replacement literature teacher refused to cooperate, despite her efforts to recruit her. Teacher 4 noted that the new literature teacher is “a very heavy [literature] person, not so much interested in the geography component, though I’ve tried!”

Co-teaching and co-planning was cited as problematic virtually across the board, with teachers indicating time and scheduling conflicts as some of the main obstacles that they faced in integrating this specific practice.

This was not unanticipated by the WVGA. The former state director of the WVGA, indicated that their initial hope was to create a cross-disciplinary class, but that was stifled by logistical difficulties. Instead the WVGA promoted co-teaching and co-planning as a means by which to meet objectives. As such, the WVGA program started out with the understanding that cross-disciplinary education, regardless of value, would face impediments based on scheduling. As Teacher 5 said, echoing sentiments expressed by several of the interviewees, “at my high school[...] it’s particularly difficult to do a co-teaching lesson where they’re studying something in a social studies class and an English class, because the same groups of kids aren’t in those classes.”

Teachers on both sides of the disciplinary divide stated that they had apprehensions regarding whether or not they could incorporate cross-disciplinary instruction, including co-teaching, and still meet their mandated standards thanks to time and scheduling restrictions. As previously discussed, literature teachers were more open to the integration of geography into their literature classes than were social studies teachers, who varied in their feelings on the matter. One literature teacher, Teacher 5, did not overtly say that time was a burden, but noted that the lessons she used to incorporate geography and literature were time intensive. Another literature teacher, Teacher 6, indicated that her ability to co-teach even in a limited capacity was only possible because her administration liked what she was doing and continued to schedule the classes so that she could teach literature to students also taking AP Human Geography. Teacher 6 said, “but the administration kindly went through schedules and plucked the kids for me,”

indicating that one of the more “difficult” co-teaching hurdles was circumvented by a supportive administration.

A very interesting point brought up by both literature and social studies teachers pertained to the students’ capabilities to engage with the material. Some of the novels suggested by the WVGA, such as *Heart of Darkness*, were cited as being overly difficult for high school students. Although many of the books suggested by the WVGA are already on reading lists in high schools around the country, two teachers interviewed for this study indicated that those books may not be developmentally appropriate for the students that they were tasked with teaching. Some literature teachers indicated that geography was better suited for longer works, where the depth of analysis could be ongoing and related to students’ ability to engage in material over longer periods, where Teacher 3 indicated that he used shorter stories to appeal to students’ with shorter attention spans. Teacher 3 indicated that he chose works based on his students’ capabilities, adding that his chosen materials are “well suited to the students here in [Southern Coalfields] County,” and that “these stories are of interest.”

Important to note here is that literature teachers and social studies teachers will inevitably approach materials differently. This could serve as an impediment to co-teaching in general, but also represents the need for diversity in how material is approached, and provides a partial explanation for why teachers reacted very differently in terms of how they implemented geography and literature collaboration in the long term. In short, different teachers have different needs, a sentiment that also factors into

concerns over scheduling and course pacing given that standards for classes across discipline rarely line up for very long.

Teacher 2 also mentioned the difficulty in obtaining materials, something that other teachers did not directly say was a problem, but implied could be a problem if circumstances were different. Literature and social studies teachers made a point to state that they did not have difficulty obtaining materials due to administrative support (Teacher 3) or by virtue of having the materials already on hand (literature teachers). Teacher 2 said that “I have 148 kids, so that’s just unrealistic for me to ask kids to buy a copy. We’re not allowed to ask our kids to spend their money on stuff.” In short, although Teacher 2 indicated that he would have had difficulty obtaining materials, his peers mentioned that they were able to circumnavigate what would seem to be an obvious obstacle to geography-literature integration, especially because the WVGA gave teachers only a single copy of each novel (though they did offer to help purchase books for teachers if funds were available at the time of need).

Of course, it would be an error to continue on without reiterating that the perceived usefulness and relevance to the standards for each respective discipline can also be viewed as impediments to implementation. This is perhaps why so many variations in application of the material and strategies emerged across the teachers interviewed. Teachers that found the WVGA’s suggested materials or strategies useful were able to exercise a great deal of freedom in how they applied what they had learned from the workshop. A more regimented professional development program that was more precise in its focus, such as promoting a singular method for implementation, or a

specific piece of literature without ample alternatives, would likely have been less well suited to fostering geography-literature collaboration. As it was, the teachers that participated in this collaboration after the mandatory component had ended, for however long, were tailoring the strategies and materials from the WVGA workshop to their own individual needs, and in the process surmounting various minute obstacles.

Although content related obstacles can be dealt with (as evidenced in the section relating to usefulness), others mentioned here are far more difficult to overcome. Scheduling issues and recalcitrant coworkers are beyond the control of most classroom teachers. This means that teachers can be limited by their level of expertise and their willingness to persist in the absence of cooperating teachers, or in the face of significant obstacles that are beyond their control.

Self-Efficacy for Implementation of Geography/Literature Instruction

A recurrent theme in this study thus far has been the need for self-efficacy among teachers if they are to be effective in the delivery of instruction to students. Self-efficacy can be described, in part, as teachers' level of confidence in their ability to effectively deliver instructional material to their students. One of the more significant findings from this research is the corroboration of current literature that both professional development and college/university coursework are means by which teacher self-efficacy can be improved.

Bandura (2001) discussed self-efficacy in terms of self-reactiveness, which he linked to the concepts of participants' willingness to face challenges and put forth effort when faced with difficult tasks. Bandura's discussion of self-efficacy in this regard

centered on personal motivation, which can be either buttressed or thwarted when someone faces failure in a difficult undertaking. For people displaying low self-efficacy, challenges could lead to diminished motivation. For people with higher levels of self-efficacy, challenges may be invigorating instead of discouraging. One interview question in particular was asked with the intent that participants could discuss challenges that they faced in implementing geography instruction in their coursework, and others were asked so that teachers could discuss their confidence in crossing disciplinary boundaries to implement the strategies and materials presented by the WVGA.

Participants hailing from both the literature and social studies camps differed in their feelings of self-efficacy regarding the delivery of cross-disciplinary instruction. One literature teacher, Teacher 5, stated that she felt like an expert in the delivery of geography content, and cited the fact that she is certified to teach social studies. Her experience with coursework in the social studies field provided a level of confidence not seen in her fellow literature teachers, each of which indicated a cautious optimism in their ability to deliver geography instruction in their literature courses, with the caveat that they are not experts in the field and felt reliant on the assistance of benevolent social studies colleagues when they reached a limit to their understanding of the material. Literature teachers described attending the WVGA workshop as “eye opening,” among other things, and suggested that their attendance there gave them a better understanding of the importance of geography to their content.

Social studies teachers were singularly prepared to teach geography content. Two of the three were already experienced teaching AP Human Geography, and both of these

teachers cited attendance at WVGA workshops as beneficial. Teacher 2 stated that he was more narrowly focused on the historical perspective before taking Alliance workshops, but indicated that the whole of his Alliance experience had led him to a career centered on geography instruction. Teacher 4, who taught AP Human Geography, specifically cited the WVGA workshop as being beneficial, and related that it also created a networking opportunity that extended beyond the walls of her own school, and allowed her to continue to seek help in teaching geography and literature after her cooperating teacher had left her school. Teacher 4, like Teacher 5, has specialized experience in teaching across disciplines. Teacher 4 is employed at a private school, and has occasionally been asked to teach literature courses in addition to her role as a social studies educator. Teacher 4 cited this as a boon to her confidence, much as Teacher 5 did when discussing her background in the social studies.

Teacher 3 teaches social studies by way of tourism coursework at a vocational school, and stated that he also felt very prepared to engage in cross disciplinary instruction. He cited his involvement with the Alliance over the years, as well as strong coursework from his alma mater as being foundational to his ability to teach geography and literature in a combined setting. Pertinent here is the fact that two of the three social studies teachers interviewed cited past WVGA involvement as contributing to their overall confidence in delivering geography material. Although there was variation in their comfort levels teaching literature, both stated that involvement with the Alliance had strengthened their geography credentials. Teacher 4 had not been a recurring participant in Alliance workshops up to this point, but indicated that she, too, benefitted from her

participation in the WVGA's literature-geography collaborative workshop, which she attended early in her career.

It would seem that participation in the WVGA's professional development program helped bolster social studies participants' self-efficacy in their ability to deliver geography material, but the fact that only one WVGA workshop dealt exclusively with literature points to the varied responses that the social studies teachers gave in their assessment of their ability to successfully deliver literature material. Teacher 2 was not as confident as Teacher 3 or Teacher 4, each of which had cited previous experience with literature material (coursework and professional theater for Teacher 3, and teaching literature for Teacher 4).

To that end, it must be acknowledged that the literature teachers without a background in social studies (both Teacher 6 and Teacher 1) felt less confident in their ability, and had not been through previous Alliance trainings. Trainings held by the WVGA are usually aimed at science or social studies teachers, which have a decidedly more concrete connection in their content standards to geography. Because the WVGA serves as a sort of interest group with an agenda, it makes sense that they would target social studies teachers rather than literature teachers, because social studies content standards incorporate a geography component. The lack of confidence shown by Teacher 6 and Teacher 1 mirror their lack of exposure to geography material in their university/college coursework, and the fact that they had been overlooked by the Alliance during previous trainings.

Chen and Chang (2006) described the nurturing of self-efficacy among teachers as developmental, and a robust professional development program as being one means to shift both teacher attitudes and feelings of self-efficacy when adapting to new material. The commonality among social studies teachers in this study was that they all, by virtue of attending geography specific professional development, felt well prepared to teach geography material. It is likely that the fact that two of these teachers were enlisted as near full time geography teachers skewed their responses. They indicated a high level of comfort with geography because they were teaching geography, but also cited Alliance programs as being integral to building their knowledge of geography. Their counterparts in the literature field did not demonstrate the same level of confidence, but nevertheless had persisted in their use of combined geography and literature instruction.

Teacher 1 specifically stated that what she “learned from the workshop” and working with her co-teacher had given her confidence to continue using geography instruction without direct support from a social studies teacher. She cited, however, that she felt confident that she could rely on her co-teacher if she ran into difficulties, which indicates that her feelings of self-efficacy, when combined with a support system, were substantial enough to overcome the challenges that arose during cross-disciplinary instruction.

By comparison, Teacher 4 primarily taught geography courses, but as previously mentioned also taught literature on an irregular basis. Teacher 4 stated plainly that teaching geography was “not hard!” Citing experience and Alliance support, Teacher 4 described what she perceived as challenges to geography education: “I think I took two

geography classes. I think maybe one[...] I had to do a lot of self-learning.” That self-learning was subsidized by interaction with more knowledgeable social studies teachers that Teacher 4 used as a support group.

This set of responses bear interest because they mirror the responses that all parties interviewed gave when asked about challenges or difficulties that arose during the integration of geography material into their pedagogy. Teachers with a social studies background were confident in their abilities, and approached their responses with audible confidence. Literature teachers without a background in geography were more apprehensive, but still spent the bulk of their time on that question describing logistical impediments to geography integration such as scheduling or time constraints rather than evidence that would indicate that a lack of self-efficacy in their ability to effectively integrate geography into their pedagogy. Both literature teachers that did not have strong backgrounds in geography (Teacher 1 and Teacher 6) stated that they were not “expert[s]” but added a number of qualifiers to their discussion that indicated a level willingness to persist because they felt they had a support system in place to overcome obstacles regarding their understanding of the content, which appeared to be tied to participation in the Alliance workshop.

Summary in Relation to the Literature

The literature teachers in this study were more united in their praise of incorporating geography into their pedagogy while the social studies teachers expressed varied views of incorporating literature into their pedagogy. Across disciplines, the teachers with more extensive experiences with professional development or coursework

expressed higher levels of self-efficacy. The teachers engaged with the material differently, some continued to use or adapt the materials and strategies presented by the WVGA, and others discontinued using the materials and strategies. Most, however, maintained cross-disciplinary instruction well after the completion of the mandatory component instituted by the WVGA, indicating that the teachers found the program to be both useful and relevant. Co-teaching and co-planning were viewed by most participants as being positive or helpful but also largely unsustainable. These findings indicate that future models for professional development should emphasize strategies and materials that are relevant, useful, and sustainable to teachers.

These findings are consistent with existing literature dealing with self-efficacy, professional development, and co-teaching. Self-efficacy is viewed as one of the primary factors that influences teachers' job satisfaction and their ability to effectively deliver content to their students (Mahler, Grobschedl, & Harms, 2017; Yoo, 2016). Self-efficacy is also linked to teachers' mastery of content knowledge, which plays a role in their feelings of competence and their students' perceptions of their competence (Mahler et al., 2017).

Within this context, it is not surprising that teachers in both geography and literature disciplines were more confident in their abilities when they had considerable content background. This is shown in the confidence demonstrated by social studies teachers in teaching geography and by the teachers with cross-disciplinary backgrounds including Teacher 4 who taught AP Human Geography and literature courses, Teacher 5, who taught literature exclusively but was also certified to teach social studies, and

Teacher 3 who taught social studies but had experience in professional theater and college coursework in literature. It appears that in order to cross disciplinary boundaries, teachers need knowledge and experience with disciplinary content with which they may be less knowledgeable.

The teachers noted that the professional development program provided them with understanding of how geography content could be used in both literature and social studies courses. The literature teachers who were previously unfamiliar with geography content explained that they felt the WVGA workshop was “eye opening” and exposed them to new perspectives that were relevant and useful to their content standards and objectives. The social studies teachers cited WVGA experiences as being instrumental in shaping their views of geography as a discipline. This insight is consistent with literature on professional development as a means to expand content knowledge and build confidence in delivering content (Deng, 2018; Mahler et al., 2017; Yang, Liu, & Gardella, 2018; Yoo, 2016).

Findings from this study also indicate that professional development can foster cross-disciplinary teaching through bolstering teachers’ self-efficacy. Similarly, studies have shown that professional development contributes to teachers’ self-efficacy (Deng, 2018; Mahler et al., 2017; Yang et al., 2018; Yoo, 2016).

The finding that co-teaching and co-planning activities were helpful but difficult to sustain is also consistent with research findings (Binkhorst, Handelzaltz, Poortman, & van Joolingen, 2015; Chandler-Olcott & Hinchman, 2015). Teacher 3 engaged in limited co-teaching, Teacher 2 and 4 used co-planning but not co-teaching, and all of the teachers

discussed the challenges involved in co-teaching. These perspectives indicate that even limited co-teaching and co-planning can be promoted when frequent collaboration is not possible.

Deliverable as an Outcome

Findings from this study have indicated that professional development is a sufficient vehicle to promote teachers' self-efficacy and confidence in delivering geography content, as well as shaping attitudes regarding the usefulness and relevance of geography content. The importance of co-teaching and co-planning has also been established, even when they can only be sustained intermittently through creating teacher relationships that can be utilized to ease the burden of planning cross-disciplinary lessons.

The deliverable portion of this project paper is a three day professional development workshop that builds on the foundation set by the WVGA's program by incorporating the findings of this study and current literature on self-efficacy, professional development, and co-teaching. The WVGA program succeeded in shaping attitudes toward geography education and spurring some participants to engage in sustained cross-disciplinary instruction. However, the abandonment of many suggested materials and the break down in co-teaching and co-planning activities indicates that improvements were needed. These improvements tie directly into the feedback given by the teachers who customized geography and literature content, as well as their pedagogical strategies.

The professional development regime created for this project thus tackles the more problematic aspects of the WVGA's program, including creating a feeling of relevance among teachers regarding geography and its direct link to teachers' content objectives and standards. Findings from the current study and recent studies in the literature indicate that professional development must be tailored to the individual needs of teachers to ensure confidence in shaping what they learn from the professional development session to their own classrooms. This level of individuality can be accomplished through establishing teachers' sense of agency in relating what they learn in a professional development program to their immediate needs. In the case of cross-disciplinary geography/literature instruction, teachers must have time to relate geography material directly to their teaching standards.

This focus of professional development can address a major hurdle identified in this study, which was teachers' acknowledgement that cross-disciplinary education diminished their ability to meet content standards. By promoting planning in direct conjunction with the standards, teachers can be given tools to help them meet their objectives rather than assume acceptance of professional development workshop suggestions. Although the WVGA program did promote co-teaching and co-planning, the time allotted for those activities was relegated to periods after the conclusion of the professional development program. The professional development deliverable for this project seeks to address this issue by incorporating planning activities during the session.

Professional development that links geography and literature must allow both social studies and literature teachers the opportunity to engage with geography material

along with literature, and ample time to build relationships among teachers. Although continuous co-teaching and co-planning cannot be ensured at the secondary level, relationship building can create informal systems for planning lessons with a higher degree of confidence because the teachers are comfortable having discussions with an expert colleague teacher.

In conclusion, the professional development deliverable that I have designed for this study builds on the strengths of the WVGA program, and adds components that address its weaknesses. The professional development program that I have developed emphasizes relationship building within and outside disciplinary boundaries, and provides tools that are relevant and useful additions to pedagogical repertoires.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

The outcome of my research was the development of a 3-day professional development program that was designed within the confines of current literature on the subject of self-efficacy, professional development, and coteaching/coplanning, as well as the thematic findings that emerged during the course of this study. The target audience of this professional development program was a county level assembly of both social studies and literature content teachers in West Virginia.

The purpose of this professional development workshop was to provide 3 days of instruction to educators regarding blending geography and literature instruction. The findings of my study indicated that coteaching was unsustainable or unfeasible for all participants for a variety of reasons, but this workshop was intended to communicate that the benefits of coteaching could be maintained through occasional cooperation rather than true coteaching. Additionally, this program would help develop a standards-based approach to blending geography and literature, which would ensure that cross-curricular lessons would be in keeping with state mandated academic standards and would be relevant to all participants involved. This workshop would describe the benefits of coteaching and coplanning, would explore standards for literature and social studies teachers, and would guide educators to choose locally relevant standards-based materials for use in their classrooms.

Rationale

A professional development program was the most logical choice for this study due to my research emphasis on the outcomes of a professional development program administered by the WVGA. The research questions for this study were designed to determine whether social studies and literature teachers had altered their pedagogy in the wake of attending the professional development program, and how their self-efficacy had been impacted by participation in the program. It became evident during data analysis that most of the teachers had engaged in long-term changes to their pedagogy based on their experience in the program, but that certain deficiencies remained in terms of self-efficacy among teachers strictly engaged in literature instruction prior to attending the WVGA workshop. At least one social studies teacher expressed feelings of unease about his ability to integrate literature into his social studies courses.

A thorough examination of relevant literature demonstrated that these findings were within the realm of what is known and served as a platform for designing a professional development program to meet the needs of future participants. Evaluation of what teachers need from their program was shaped by the literature and the findings from the study, which highlighted the need to overcome certain obstacles such as time and scheduling conflicts, and also emphasized the need to provide useful and relevant content, as well as a support system that could help teachers meet their academic needs.

The professional development program designed for this study emphasized relationship building among teachers for support, introduction to geography concepts and materials, relation of geography concepts to individual teachers' standards, and providing

teachers with a sense of agency in how they choose to approach geography material in their classrooms. Considerations were made to avoid significant obstacles to coteaching and coplanning by allotting for time to engage in those activities during the session and to network with other teachers so that like-minded allies could be found within the local community.

Review of the Literature

At the outset of my study, I identified a number of factors that had an impact on teacher performance in their delivery of geography content to their students. Among these factors was the need to foster teachers' feelings of self-efficacy. Fostering self-efficacy appears as a factor in the whole teacher approach to professional development. The whole teacher approach formed an important framework for my study. The whole teacher approach promoted professional development that emphasized a focus on teacher attitudes, skills, knowledge, and practice, as well as the subsequent developmental relationship between these four interrelated concepts (see Chen & Chang, 2006).

The whole teacher approach made important contributions to my study and helps to drive the focus of this literature review. First, it established a link between professional development programs to improve teacher performance, a theme that was supported by literature on the subject. Second, it established the importance of teacher confidence in determining positive outcomes in educational practice. Teacher confidence is addressed in the body of literature derived from Bandura's (1982) groundbreaking work on self-efficacy, and recent literature linked teacher self-efficacy and content knowledge with better outcomes in terms of teacher satisfaction and student performance.

Teacher participants in my study indicated varying levels of confidence in their ability to deliver geographic content in their classrooms, but most participants, particularly those on the literature side, indicated that there was a benefit to coplanning or coinstruction. These teachers noted the importance of coplanning or coteaching in the early days of their integrated geography-literature lessons to make up for their personal deficits in geographic knowledge. The WVGA opted to promote coteaching as a means to bolster geographic knowledge for teacher participants in their WVGA/Benedum collaborative workshop. Although coteaching and coplanning were not sustainable in most of participant teachers' schools, research on the subject continues to promote the practices as a means of enhancing instructional quality and providing on-the-job professional development.

For these reasons I divided this literature review into three subject-based categories, each of which is linked to the others. First, I discuss the general nature of self-efficacy and its link to content knowledge. Next, I discuss current literature regarding what makes professional development programs effective. Finally, I discuss the importance of coteaching and coplanning to academic outcomes.

Research for this literature review was collected using the ERIC search engine and through searches facilitated by the various databases housed by the Walden University library. Numerous search terms were used, including but not limited to *self-efficacy*, *teacher self-efficacy*, *co-teaching*, *co-planning*, *co-instruction*, *cross-disciplinary*, *multi-discipline*, *professional development*, *teacher professional development*, and various combinations of these terms. I limited search results based on

peer-reviewed status and time frame, though I did select a few older works to include in this review because they served as foundational literature despite being outside the 5-year time frame that I set for search parameters.

Self-Efficacy and Content Knowledge

Earlier in this work I discussed the current state of geography education in the United States, which can be characterized as generally poor for several reasons including misconceptions about what geography entails and a lack of adequate training for teachers in the field of social studies who are predominantly tasked with the delivery of geography instruction. Links have been established between domain-specific content knowledge, teacher self-efficacy, and teachers' enthusiasm in performing their assigned duties; further, there is a benefit to teacher enthusiasm and self-efficacy rooted in granting teachers the opportunity to engage with content and learn, both in formal and informal settings (Mahler et al., 2017).

Geography education in most states is relegated to the social studies curriculum and appears tangentially in other disciplines, such as being cited as an AP Literature question from one of the teacher participants interviewed for this study. For this reason, education programs at many colleges and universities may require geography course work for teacher candidates in the social studies field, but generally not elsewhere, and even then the geography coursework is overshadowed by history work and courses focused on pedagogy. For those interested in advancing geography education, this has long been seen as a misstep by colleges and universities, so interested parties such as the WVGA have dedicated resources to promoting geography education to teachers in

professional development settings. Professional development has been established as a productive strategy in improving teacher self-efficacy and enthusiasm for subject matter (Mahler et al., 2017; Yoo, 2016).

Professional development can be used to improve teacher self-efficacy and enthusiasm for the subject of geography, and may impact student achievement. Evidence indicated that self-efficacy leads to better student outcomes as a result of better teaching performance and habits (Cayirdag, 2017; Shahzad & Naureen, 2017; Taylor et al., 2015). This evidence supports working toward better self-efficacy among teachers and reinforces the need to foster a more robust body of content knowledge and content-specific pedagogical strategies among those who would teach geography. Teachers who are well versed in pedagogical content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, and specific content knowledge are better suited to serve their students than teachers competent in one or two of the three domains (Evens, Elen, Larmuseau, & Depaepe, 2018). Any professional development program geared toward improving teacher self-efficacy must have a focus on mastery of content knowledge, pedagogy, and specific pedagogy well suited to delivering specific types of content. In other words, exposing teachers to pedagogical knowledge and content knowledge is not enough. Teachers have to be given the opportunity to learn pedagogical knowledge that is domain specific and can allow them to better deliver their material.

Methods to teach mathematics and the history of the War of 1812 would have to be fundamentally different in some ways, but it may be less evident that teaching geography, a spatially oriented discipline, has to be done differently than teaching

history, a discipline based on an often thematically organized record of human events. In the United States and in the state of West Virginia, much of the educational capital is allocated to having undertrained social studies teachers deliver geography content in a largely history-based curriculum.

Although researchers have not addressed the issue of geography education directly, scholars have established a statistically significant link between student motivation and perceptions of teachers' content knowledge and competency. Teachers perceived as more knowledgeable of content in their field and competent in delivering it were better able to motivate their students, and teacher self-efficacy also impacts students' feelings of self-efficacy in their mastery of the work, as well as their level of respect for their teachers (Farmer, 2018; Miller, Ramirez, & Murdock, 2017). This represents how teacher mastery of content knowledge relates to the ability to deliver instruction leading to enhanced student outcomes, which is also well established in current literature on the subject. Also implied here is that if students are to be taught the value of geography as a discipline, they will need teachers who are confident in their ability to discuss and teach the material in the classrooms.

Mastery of pedagogical content knowledge can come from exposure to content-specific material. Although it is expected that curriculum designers would have a level of pedagogical content knowledge, Deng (2018) postulated that a practical version of this can arise from teachers who teach the content in their classrooms and from their professional development experiences. Deng referred to this as a theory of content, and further explained that effective instruction is predicated on teachers having a good

understanding of the content that they are teaching, as well as the standards that they are teaching.

The concept of teacher self-efficacy being linked to pedagogical content knowledge seems self-evident in retrospect, as does the idea that confident teachers produce more motivated students. Deng's (2018) assertion that teachers can develop a better understanding of pedagogical content knowledge through practice and exposure to professional development would indicate that there is value in allowing teachers with novice proficiency in teaching-specific content to gain hands-on experience in teaching unfamiliar concepts, and that backing those experiences up with professional development would be a positive step in creating better teachers.

Because there is a disconnect between geography curricula and modern educational requirements, it would seem that encouraging teachers with little proficiency in geography instruction to teach the content would be a first step in creating more well-rounded teachers capable of delivering quality geography instruction. This practice would need to be buttressed by the use of professional development to hone teachers' content and pedagogical content knowledge.

This is in keeping with Gallo-Fox and Scantlebury's (2016) findings that coteaching can serve as on-the-job professional development. Gallo-Fox and Scantlebury stated that "the experience provided them with renewed energy toward practice, [and] opportunities to develop and implement curriculum" (p. 191). Coteaching is discussed later in this section, but the important takeaway from this study was that experience

creates opportunity to learn better practices, a theme that was incorporated into the professional development program that accompanied my study.

Teachers entering the social studies field are poorly prepared to teach geography content, and many people have misconceptions about what geography is as a discipline. Because self-efficacy is built around the concept of teachers feeling competent and confident in their abilities, it would seem counterintuitive to encourage teachers without much self-confidence to take on geography education. Many may be made uneasy by the prospect, but aside from college preparation and professional development opportunities, it would seem that on-the-job experience may be the solution for teachers tasked with teaching geography-related materials.

Whether self-efficacy is created through on-the-job training, university coursework, or attending professional development, it is a necessity to breed more successful teachers as well as teachers that are willing to weather the job related hardships associated with teaching in the 21st century. Kleinsasser (2014) notes in a review of literature on the subject of self-efficacy that higher levels of teacher self-efficacy correspond with better measures of teacher wellness. Teacher wellness includes a variety of factors that lend themselves to teacher well-being including feelings of depression and teacher burnout, both of which are related to the overall concepts of teacher self-efficacy and teachers' on the job experience (Kleinsasser, 2014). Literature on the subject appears to consistently demonstrate a positive relationship between self-efficacy levels and teacher job satisfaction, and self-efficacy itself appears to serve as a predictor of teachers' job satisfaction (Turkoglu, Cansoy, & Parlar, 2017). One such

piece of literature encompassed 73,100 teachers across 23 countries, and stands as an excellent summation of our collective understanding of the role teacher self-efficacy plays in fostering satisfied teachers that are more likely to stay on the job and deliver content effectively (Vieluf, Kunter, & van de Vijver, 2013).

Self-efficacy can be improved with on-the-job experience, and self-efficacy is a key component in helping build teacher resilience as a counter to burnout or depression, though Kleinsasser states that resilience is multifaceted and not wholly controlled by just one's self-efficacy. Still, self-efficacy has been demonstrated to impact teachers' job satisfaction, and higher rates of self-efficacy correspond with "lower motivation to leave" (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017, pg. 152) the profession.

In recent months there have been a wave of teacher strikes throughout the United States, which started in West Virginia in the early spring of 2018. As a participant in those strikes I was acutely aware of the talking points presented by the various conflicted parties in the West Virginia strike. A consistent point of contention, which was viewed as a serious concern in need of remediation on all sides, were the more than 700 teaching jobs that were either unfilled or filled with long-term substitutes in the state of West Virginia. Given that the attrition rate for teachers in West Virginia has already reached a point in which there are hundreds of open jobs without teachers to fill them, it would seem that grasping onto anything that could lend itself to reducing instances of teacher attrition would be a net positive. Although self-efficacy may not be the defining factor in determining levels of teacher resilience, depression, or burnout, it still plays a part in shaping those attributes.

Bridging the notion of teacher attrition and self-efficacy is the fact that literature not only points to self-efficacy as a predictor of job satisfaction, but “increased workload and emotional exhaustion” (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017, pg. 152) contribute to teachers’ motivations to leave the profession. The professional development program created by the WVGA, and subsequently the one attached to this project, asks a great deal of teachers. Teachers are expected to cross disciplinary boundaries, and although the outlooks of the teachers interviewed for this paper were overwhelmingly positive regarding the merits of cross-disciplinary instruction, the act of crossing those disciplinary lines was still intimidating to some participants. Given the nature of teaching as an occupation and the varied and plentiful number of stressors that can lead to teacher depression or burnout (and subsequently a departure from the profession), it makes sense to minimize additional stressors associated with cross-disciplinary pedagogy. This can be accomplished through exposure to professional development as well as allowing teachers to simply gain experience through practice.

Echoing these sentiments is the work of McLennan, McIlveen, and Perera (2017), which demonstrated links between self-efficacy and pre-service teachers’ levels of career adaptability and career optimism, each of which is viewed as a means by which to foster sustainability in the currently embattled teaching profession. Of particular interest to my study are the factors of career adaptability and optimism, which are described respectively as the ability of teachers to comfortably cope with changes and obstacles that they are exposed to, and one’s optimism about the outcomes of one’s job performance (McLennan et al., 2017).

Not only are these factors relevant in their ability to mitigate teacher attrition, but they also reflect the ability of teachers to demonstrate adaptability, which in this case come in the form of asking teachers to engage in cross-disciplinary education utilizing geographic content of which they may be only tangentially aware. The ability to remain positive in the face of change and adapt as necessary can be improved by improving teacher self-efficacy, a goal that must be at the core of professional development efforts moving forward.

Professional Development

As previously noted, professional development is one way to bolster teachers' self-efficacy (Deng, 2018; Mahler et al., 2017; Yoo, 2016). Improving self-efficacy appears to be a fundamental step in improving teachers' preparedness to teach geography related content, as it is generally considered a means by which to improve teacher performance and enthusiasm for subject matter overall. This research study includes a project component that lists professional development activities sufficient to cover three days of teacher training. Decisions regarding what to include in the program were made based on contemporary literature in the field of professional development.

Anecdotally speaking, much criticism of professional development rests in feelings that the workshops provided do not offer sufficient relevance to the reality of teachers' day to day practice. The establishment of relevance in professional development was therefore one goal adopted when drafting the content of the professional development workshop. Contemporary research in the field supports this practice, with one study going as far as to say that professional development is governed by the need for

personalization, and that opportunities for the continuation of learning in formal and informal situations is necessary to reach full effectiveness (Parks, Oliver, & Carson, 2016). The call for relevancy in professional development is exemplified by the following quote: “Professional development becomes relevant when teachers are actively involved, collaborate, and when it is linked to teachers’ daily school practice” (Visser et al., 2013).

The very nature of what the WVGA and my professional development program strive to do, albeit with differing methods, is to ask teachers’ to take on responsibility for teaching geography content in both literature and social studies courses. As previously established, geography is a discipline that has lost its bearings even within the social studies curriculum in which it is currently couched. To ask teachers, especially those in the literature field, to rise to this particular challenge may seem daunting to the teachers, and as such it is necessary to tailor their professional development experience to their content and practice in order to maintain a level of relevance and create a sense of teacher buy-in.

If teachers are expected to conform to the non-mandatory changes presented in geography centered professional development then they need to feel as though there is merit in what they are doing, and that merit can be achieved through a dedicated “focus on subject matter content” (Lindvall, Helenius, & Wiberg, 2018, pg. 121). To better tailor professional development to teacher needs, a professional development program should be not only content specific, but also culturally relevant. Promoting culturally relevant professional development can improve the effectiveness of classroom pedagogy,

particularly when there is a divide between the culture of teachers and their pupils (Bradshaw, Feinberg, & Bohan, 2016).

Schools throughout West Virginia are not particularly diverse by virtue of basic demographics, and the Census Bureau reporting that nearly 94% of people in West Virginia identify as white (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). Anecdotally speaking, as an employee of the largest school in my county we rarely approach a student population that exceeds 7 or 8% non-White students. A lack of diversity does not indicate a lack of uniqueness, however, and Appalachian culture has long been one that has stood apart from the world outside. We in this region have regionally specific problems and circumstances to deal with, and our students can benefit from instruction that is decidedly relevant to their lives. This sentiment is mirrored in Boehm, Solem, and Zadrozny's (2018) emerging geography framework, *Powerful Geography*.

Powerful Geography is built on the presupposition that non-specialists can teach geography content in cross-disciplinary settings, and that content ought to be regionally appropriate. To this end the authors of *Powerful Geography* have proposed a state level reformation of geography standards, something that is, frankly, outside the purview of what can be immediately changed by a single researcher or professional development provider. It is within the ability of geography conscious professional development providers, however, to provide content that can set teachers up to engage their students in relevant, timely material, and demonstrate a distinct connection between geography education and meeting the local population's needs (Boehm et al., 2018).

By catering to teachers' and students' unique cultural needs, leaning on teachers' existing knowledge base, providing teachers with strategies tailored to meet their content needs, and granting teachers the chance to share their insights a professional development program can be used to promote a sense of teacher agency, which is a necessary trait in effective professional development (Lindvall, Helenius & Wiberg, 2018). Catering to teachers' content needs alone, though, is not likely to pass the difficult to identify threshold for what constitutes effective professional development, especially given the difficulties that can arise when trying to implement new learning regimes in an already crowded academic schedule (Lindvall et al., 2018). In addition to giving teachers content relevant professional development opportunities, there is a necessity to foster teachers' sense of personal autonomy in how they apply what they learn from a professional development session (Groot-Reuvekamp, Ros, & van Boxtel, 2018).

By allowing teachers to engage geography material and pedagogical strategies through professional development while also affording them a level of freedom to ensure that the material is delivered in a way that meets their content specific needs could prove as a challenge. The lack of familiarity with geography related material is especially daunting for literature teachers, as evidenced by responses from some participants in this study. Feelings of uncertainty can be partially alleviated through professional development itself, but there is ample evidence to suggest that ensuring a support system for teachers can help them build stronger, more-sound educational practices. The WVGA's program did not foster long term co-teaching according to the majority of

teachers interviewed for my study, but most did indicate the importance of co-teaching, or at the very least co-planning, in their interviews.

Delivering geography content in social studies and literature classrooms will likely continue to pose a challenge to teachers, even if they are permitted time for collaboration (a luxury not all teachers will have). As a result my professional development program will allocate time for informal team building and co-planning during training times at which the teachers are not otherwise engaged in their expected classroom duties. Co-teaching will be encouraged as well, even if it occurs only informally and intermittently. This strategy can be effective, particularly if the co-teaching caters to the needs of both groups of teachers, who are apt to learn from one another during the co-teaching experience (Shaffer & Thomas-Brown, 2015).

In keeping with the Whole Teacher Approach, the combination of professional development and allowing teachers the time for interdisciplinary cooperation are means to change teacher practices, beliefs, and body of content knowledge, each of which ties in to overall feelings of teacher self-efficacy. Cooperative teacher groups can be beneficial in helping teachers change their pedagogy and increase their knowledge base (Yang et al., 2018). This effect is most pronounced when professional teachers are receptive to cooperation and the material being presented, and as a result professional development must engage teachers in a way that promotes a belief that the professional development and cooperative learning scenarios are beneficial (Holm & Kajander, 2015).

In a discipline crowded with interruptions, behavioral issues, staffing concerns, and a litany of other complaints and obstacles that can hamper classroom instruction, it

may be a bit ostentatious to expect teachers to show up to a professional development program and simply accept the value of what is being presented to them. At very least it may be unrealistic to think that teachers attending a professional development session will actively work to adopt new strategies into their (often) long established routines. Whether or not teachers are willing to adopt new practices is related to how they view the changes, and whether they see the changes in practice as useful or as an unnecessary imposition from school administrators at higher levels (Agyemang & Ashraf, 2016). Professional development works best when it is focused “concrete tasks of teaching, assessment, observation, and reflection” (Pella, 2015, pg. 81). It must be made clear to teachers at the outset of any professional development program that the end goal of the program is to improve their teaching through giving them resources necessary to work within their established standards and practices, and that they will be afforded a support system that allows them to tread uncharted academic waters without fear of being overwhelmed. Teachers should be encouraged to view collaboration with colleagues as a form of ongoing professional development in which they can learn and grow together with other education professionals (Holm & Kajander, 2015).

Co-Teaching and Co-Planning

Co-teaching can serve as a form of on-the-job professional development (Holm & Kajander, 2015; Shaffer & Thomas-Brown, 2015; Yang et al., 2018). In the current education schema co-teaching and co-planning are largely seen as the purview of special education teachers and general education teachers with whom they have been paired (Keeley, Brown, & Knapp, 2017). Increasingly, however, co-teaching has been identified

within contemporary literature as a means to bridge disciplinary divides, predominantly in middle schools, but also in secondary schools in the United States (Agyemang & Ashraf, 2016; Chandler-Olcott & Hitchman, 2015; Hurd & Weilbacher, 2017). These successes are predicated on the notion that teachers benefit from interaction with one another, and that those interactions can yield beneficial or innovative strategies regarding how teachers approach varied content.

The efficacy of co-teaching and co-planning experiences can vary, but benefit from certain traits that could potentially be fostered within a professional development environment. One critical element is ensuring that both parties in a co-teaching team have shared goals and objectives, and that teachers see those goals as achievable through engaging in cooperative instruction (Binkhorst et al., 2015; Chandler-Olcott & Hinchman, 2015). Co-teaching activities work best when there is a level of administrative support, including access to professional development and time to build relationships between participating teachers (Agyemang & Ashraf, 2016).

It is noteworthy that more than one participant in my study mentioned that administrators were supportive of their cross-disciplinary endeavors, but all participants discussed in some way the challenges that arose with teaching in conjunction with their colleagues. It is also worth mentioning that nurturing administrator support, as well as building relationships between co-teachers, is something that can only happen at an intimate level, and suggests that efforts to engage teachers in the type of professional development discussed here is best reserved for the school level.

School cultures can vary, and the educational objectives vary with them. Because building successful co-teaching teams involves “relationship development, trust, and shared motivations and mutual decision making” (Kooy, 2015, pg. 187) it is imperative that teachers engaged in professional development be exposed to ideas from their colleagues at other schools, but not at the expense of having time dedicated to building relationships with teachers in their own building. Any professional development program geared toward building cooperation across disciplines must be designed with this fact in mind. Creating a shared vision between educators requires the ability of teachers to work together for long periods without significant conflict (Fluijt, Bakker, & Struyf, 2016). Groupings of educators should therefore be both voluntary and responsive to individual teachers’ needs in order to avoid the trappings of top-down mandates.

Without doubt the creation of interdisciplinary teams of geography minded educators can be wrought with difficulties. Teachers interviewed for this study named various obstacles to interdisciplinary instruction that stemmed from everything from time constraints to apathy on the part of their fellow educators. Time was the most often cited problem facing teachers interested in collaboration, with teachers reporting that their collaborative efforts were often cut short by the realities of their day to day obligations. Fortunately, there is reason to believe that collaboration does not necessarily have to be an ongoing practice in order to be effective. Simply planning a curriculum together with other educators serves to establish some of the bonds mentioned in my previous discussion of the issue, and can reflect the best attributes of effective professional development programs. Curriculum design can be achieved early in the semester through

collaboration between teachers, and generally does not reflect a long term time investment. It can, however, yield desirable outcomes such as self-reflection, shared experience, and even shifts in content knowledge (Drits-Esser & Stark, 2015).

Conclusion

Establishing a professional development program that bridges disciplinary gaps, affords teachers an opportunity to collaborate, and bolsters pedagogical and content knowledge is a daunting task. It is, however, necessary in order to ensure teachers have the access to the best resources available to them, namely the content and pedagogical expertise of their fellow teachers, and a requisite sense of confidence regarding their ability to successfully cross disciplinary boundaries and deliver geography content effectively within the body of their required standards. There are distinctive benefits to collaboration, even in the short term, and collaboration can best be facilitated at the school level where teachers are able to engage in meaningful working relationships with one another. Professional development must center on the specific needs of all involved teachers, and must maintain a sense of relevance and purpose that is sometimes missing from professional development regimes mandated in a top down fashion. The seemingly insurmountable task of bringing geography to students through interdisciplinary instruction can be achieved, but only if the program is well designed and meets the specific criteria laid out in this literature review.

Project Description

Resources

Implementing this professional development program requires few resources. Teachers will need to be given copies of their state mandated content standard objectives as well as schedules and activity instruction, which means that the presenter will need to have access to ink and paper well in advance of the start of the session. Large poster paper, markers, and tape will be needed for the completion of some activities, as well as highlighters. A laptop computer and projector will also be necessary to help compile informational lists, give instructions, and present PowerPoint presentations to the attendees. For two activities handouts in the form of a brief survey and standards based bingo cards will be needed. These will be printed before the appropriate session. Plastic tokens (such as poker chips) will also be needed for the bingo activity. These resources are all within the reach of school systems within West Virginia, and particularly in the county where I reside, where they are regularly employed for professional development purposes.

Few barriers exist to the implementation of this professional development program. The local county allocates professional development days at the beginning of each school year and each new semester. The established practice in the target county has long been to allow teachers to instruct teachers in academically sound, literature based, and practical professional development. Professional development is most often conducted at a countywide level and based on discipline, with teachers from individual disciplines either attending presentations with teachers from their same subject and grade

level (elementary, middle, and high school teachers are given professional development separately), or in a mixed setting with teachers of different disciplines but the same grade levels.

The biggest obstacle to implementation would be time given that most years start with three days of professional development, but calendar considerations make this difficult to ensure. Most years include professional development opportunities that are conducted in three consecutive days, but because calendars are designed by committee and then voted on democratically by school staff, it is impossible to ensure that three consecutive training days will be allotted in any given year, despite that being the standard practice. This could potentially lead to the training having to be divided up over days scattered through the semester. Conducting the training this way is not optimal because there is a chance that teachers could misplace materials or forget where they left off during previous sessions.

Alleviating these specific problems could be handled with review of previous sessions if the content is not delivered consecutively, as well as efforts to engage interested teachers in optional training days that are built into the calendar on early dismissal days. Although this would inevitably reach fewer teachers, it would likely draw teachers in that have a vested interest in the presented content.

Implementation

Implementation of the professional development program will take place over three consecutive training days offered at the beginning of the semester or school year. If three consecutive days are not available, the training may be split across training dates

that occur later in the semester. Training will take place in accordance with established county practice, which means that training will begin at 8am and end at 3pm, with a one hour lunch break given in the middle of the day (the time of which is at presenter discretion). Decisions regarding where trainings take place are made by the county school board, and are based on logistical considerations including the size of the group. Those decisions are made a few weeks in advance of the training, and take into consideration the needs of the presenter.

Role of the Researcher

This professional development program was designed with the intent that I would deliver the training. However, it is entirely possible for any other geography savvy teacher to deliver this training (albeit in a modified form with a diminished emphasis on the outcomes of this study). That was also by design, as it increases the likelihood that this training can be delivered as well as its repeatability for new teachers in subsequent years. Because social studies teachers and literature teachers may not be up to date on their understanding of geography as a discipline and its state within the American education system, both of which are important to the context of this professional development session, it is important to have a geography content specialist at the helm. This ensures that teachers in both the social studies and literature fields are best able to take advantage of the presenter's base of knowledge during activities and subsequent discussion.

Role of Participants

Participants from both literature and social studies disciplines will be expected to come to the professional development session ready to learn about how their instruction can be enhanced through the use of geography and cross-disciplinary education. The activities from this session will call on teachers to discuss their current pedagogy, including strengths and weaknesses, as well as the content standards that they are expected to teach. This will require teachers to reference state mandated content standards, copies of which will be provided. Most teachers will undoubtedly know the standards in a more casual way, but they are not likely to remember specific numbering from state policy. This professional development session was designed with relevance in mind, so individual teachers will be asked to bring a great deal of personal knowledge and experience to the forefront of the discussion and activities.

Project Evaluation Plan

Professional development programs delivered in the local county are all evaluated using a standard instrument. The form asks a series of questions and offers respondents the opportunity to respond to some questions using a Likert-scale type rating system, and others are open ended. Questions deal with the quality of content delivered as well as the proficiency of the presenter, and whether or not the session should be offered again in the future. Open ended questions ask respondents to describe the strengths and weaknesses of the session. Each day of the presentation is evaluated separately. The evaluation schema adopted by the local county is helpful, but will not go the full lengths necessary to meet my needs. In addition to this evaluation, I will administer open ended questionnaires to

participants that allow them to describe their perceptions of the session's relevance to this project's learning goals in their own voice and without overly specific prompts that participants may find leading. The extemporaneous nature of these responses will allow for a more robust evaluation that may uncover strengths and weaknesses of the program that I did not anticipate. Combined with the local county's mandatory evaluation, these responses will provide a variety of perspectives that should provide information needed to make improvements to future sessions.

Overall Goals of the Project

The professional development program developed for this course includes three stated goals:

1. To encourage co-teaching, co-planning, and cooperation between secondary level literature and social studies teachers for the purpose of promoting both literature and geography standards more effectively
2. To demonstrate the secondary level standards based linkages between geography content and literature content
3. To demonstrate that geography can be used to enhance secondary level literature education, and that literature enhances secondary level geography education

These goals are not specifically addressed by the mandatory evaluation procedure, and as such I will offer an addendum to the mandatory evaluations that address the three goals specifically. Each goal will be addressed by an open ended question that allows respondents to use their own voice to describe their experience and perceptions. Although

quantitative measures can help research designers quantify how much participants enjoyed a session, or learned from it, open ended responses add the depth and breadth necessary for a more formative assessment of the professional development outcomes. Assessment questions will ask teachers to relate how attending the professional development session impacted their attitudes toward co-teaching/co-planning, willingness to merge geography and literature, and usefulness of incorporating geography into their lesson plans. The openness of the questions allows for the same set to be administered to social studies and literature teachers, and also allows sufficient freedom to answer in their own voice. Teachers must be permitted to voice their thoughts on the professional development program freely and without fear of any kind of negative recourse, and so all questionnaires will ask teachers to list their discipline, but no further identifying information will be collected.

Stakeholders

The WVGA has had no input in the development of this professional development program, but they must be identified as a potential stakeholder due to their persistent efforts to promote geography education in the local county, as well as the rest of the state. The former WVGA director has indicated that he and the WVGA are interested in the outcome of this study as they move forward with another round of workshops aimed at bolstering geography education in the K-12 system in West Virginia (personal communication, 2018). Naturally, they would also have a stake in the outcome of professional development programs similar in goals to their own.

The other key stakeholder for this professional development program is the local county's school system, who will have hosted the workshop for their teachers. This county has made some advances in promoting geography in recent years, including pushing for more geography electives in their high schools, and have promoted a number of cross-disciplinary agendas that are similar in spirit, if not scope or content, to the professional development program that I have designed. Their interest in the outcome of my study has also been established through communications with the county social studies director (personal communication, 2017). As parties interested in not only geography but the continued professional development of their faculty, the local county has a vested interest in the outcomes of this professional development workshop.

Finally, and most importantly, the local county's literature and social studies teachers also represent stakeholders on behalf of both themselves and their students. As previously established, quality instruction provides better student outcomes, and teachers are more likely to truly engage with professional development if those programs are suited to their specific needs (Groot-Reuvekamp et al., 2018).

Project Implications

Geography education in the United States is in a precarious place. There are difficulties in administering geographic content in the K-12 curriculum, particularly at the high school level, due to its relegation to a set of sub-standards in a more broad social studies curriculum. Adding to this challenge is the fact that many teachers are poorly prepared to incorporate geography content into their classrooms because they are inadequately trained or their college certification programs heavily emphasize history

over geography. It is believed that teaching geography, even as a set of substandards, can be done, but only if teachers are adequately prepared (Bednarz, 2016).

In the state of West Virginia standalone geography courses are not mandatory per Policy 2510, which establishes standards for all coursework in the state. The former West Virginia social studies director noted that efforts to mandate the expansion of geography electives in the state was met with resistance, largely as a result of staffing and budgetary concerns that made offering the elective course impossible (State Social Studies Coordinator, personal communication, 2017).

As a result, West Virginians are at an impasse. Expansion of geography coursework has occurred in some areas, but has met with seemingly insurmountable obstacles in other areas. The local county for this professional development project has established a full time geography elective at one high school in the county, and offers the course intermittently at others (County Social Studies Director, personal communication, 2017). Despite these inroads, there is little hope that geography will face a resurgence without a more substantive push from policy makers accompanied by better preparation for classroom teachers.

As the former head of the WVGA pointed out, geography is a bridge discipline that helps people analyze information and solve real world problems (personal communication, 2018). This perspective is shared by others, not the least of which are the minds behind the Powerful Geography framework advanced by the Grosvenor Center for Geographic Education and National Center for Research in Geography Education. It is worth noting that Powerful Geography advocates grooming non-specialist teachers so

that they are better suited to deliver geography content, and one part of their mission statement is worth quoting at length here:

We are not suggesting that youth in our nation's cities should never learn about agriculture, or rural students should not know how to reduce heat vulnerability, but simply that the notion of learning a 'bushel basket' of geography is not addressing the needs of these young people, nor is it focusing on the realities that presently limit the amount of geography education in schools. We can better serve teachers and their students by tailoring geography education to the content standards at the state level, focusing teacher preparation in those states on that content, and orienting teachers on the characteristics of geographic knowledge that make it powerful for understanding that content. (Boehm et al., 2018, p. 134)

In speaking with the former WVGA director to gain necessary information to undertake this study, he indicated that geography, as a discipline, can offer analytical skills necessary to produce a better citizenry that is more capable of tackling the many difficulties of a changing world, particularly as future generations take on questions pertaining to anthropogenic climate change, energy production, and waste disposal, issues that are always reverberating just below the din of politics in West Virginia (personal communication, 2017). This is an opinion that I, like Boehm et al (in a broader context), share. Geography is a means to an end. It is a method by which the relationships that exist over space can be explained, and perhaps regulated for the betterment of all who live in the interceding areas.

For West Virginia students, and more personally, students in the county where I reside, to leave high school without a foundationally sound understanding of geography represents a disservice to those students, their community, and their progeny. It is perhaps a cliché at this point, but those students truly are the next generation of citizens, voters, and leaders. Without a background in geography they are doomed to face the most pressing issues of their time poorly informed. This may sound like mere hyperbole, but as Boehm et al point out, “NAEP [National Assessment of Educational Progress] has repeatedly reminded us since 1994 that students [...] have made very little gains in proficiency in geography” (Boehm et al, 2018, pg. 127).

The educational progress, as it pertains to geography, of an entire generation in the United States has atrophied. This professional development program may not be able to change the United States, or even the state of West Virginia, but it can serve as a means to hopefully create better informed and more resourceful teachers in the local county’s school system, who can confer the importance of geography to their students and the next generation of problem solvers and community leaders in this quasi-rural county of just over 60,000 people. This, after-all, is the *raison d’être* for public education in general, and is summed up nicely in the local county’s established Board Goals, which state that the goal of public education in the county is to “ensure that students develop then master the competencies and skills necessary for success in our changing world,” (Board Goals, 2018).

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Project Strengths and Limitations

The goal of this product was shared by the WVGA and the scholars cited in this study, which was to enhance the effectiveness of geography education in a K-12 setting, particularly at the secondary level. There are many obstacles that hinder K-12 educators' ability to teach geography-related content, and those problems range from administrative issues (lack of a stand-alone class, dominance of core curriculum subjects) to the troublesome reality that many teachers are ill prepared to teach geography-related content. The project component of this study was a 3-day professional development program to assist social studies and literature teachers in enhancing their instruction through the use of geography, and consequently improving the status of geography education for students in their classrooms.

Strengths of this project include its foundation in pertinent literature as well as feedback given by participants in the research component of this study, namely that this project is relevant and useful for literature and social studies teachers who may participate in the training. Geography instruction in West Virginia is relegated to a subset of standards at the high school level, with no real mandate for a stand-alone geography class. Because many West Virginia students are not being exposed to geography in a focused and dedicated way (such as through an elective or AP course), this project affords teachers in the social studies and literature fields the opportunity to work geography content into their individual instruction.

Interviewees indicated that relevance to their field of study was an important consideration regarding their willingness to continue using geography and literature materials or strategies in their day-to-day instruction. Literature teachers indicated a great deal of interest in geography as a means to enhance their pedagogy but cited concerns about state-mandated learning objectives, as did the social studies teachers interviewed. One of the key strengths of this project is that it allows both literature and social studies teachers to select from geography-related themes and concepts and apply those in a way that meets their individual needs. By emphasizing relation of geography and literature materials to the state-mandated standards, this professional development program is well suited for creating a sense of relevance and usefulness that can be adapted by teacher participants.

Another strength of this program is that it asks teachers, regardless of discipline, to identify state-mandated standards that they feel that they teach adequately and others that they have difficulty teaching for various reasons. By tying geography content and built-in planning time to standards that teachers, by the own admission, are not adequately covering, teacher participants are given the opportunity to build geography and literature materials into their courses without creating an imposition that could disrupt successful instruction. Teachers are able to implement geography and literature-related reforms in a way that bolsters their instruction in areas of individual weakness, as identified by the teachers themselves.

The professional development program in this study also includes time for coplanning, which is often lacking in secondary schools, particularly across disciplines.

My findings indicated that literature teachers relied on their colleagues in the social studies to guide them while they implemented geography-related materials in their courses. Although coteaching and coplanning are not always viable in a long-term model, as revealed by the research component of this study, limited opportunities to interact across disciplines can yield significant results for teachers (see Dritis-Esser & Stark, 2015). Activities in this professional development program allow time for literature teachers to collaborate with other literature teachers, for social studies teachers to collaborate with other social studies teachers, and for literature and social studies teachers to come together to better understand the links between their disciplines and geography concepts.

The intent to bring teachers together for coplanning in light of their likely inability to sustain coteaching and coplanning activities during the semester represented one of the fundamental weaknesses of this professional development program. Limited to 3 days, this professional development program represents a beginning for interested teachers, but does not create the certainty of sustainability in coteaching or coplanning, nor does it follow up in such a way to ensure that teachers maintain the use of geography-related materials and strategies that they organized during the session. Without built-in checkpoints where teachers can be brought back together to discuss their pedagogy, there is no means by which to address obstacles or hardships that the teachers face, or to encourage them to continue innovating their instruction based on the outcomes of the workshop.

Professional development days are built into the calendar for all employees and are necessitated by state code, but those days are limited in number and are often preplanned by administrators at the county level. This means that even if the professional development program were implemented, there would be no guarantee that subsequent professional development days would be dedicated to following up with the initial 3-day workshop. Teachers interviewed for this project indicated a great deal of flexibility in how they used the strategies and materials presented by the WVGA, and there is reason to believe that teachers exposed to this professional development program would follow suit. Although it is important to emphasize relevance to individual teachers' instruction, the goal of this professional development regime is linked to enhancing geography education in a more general sense. It would be more comforting (and efficient) to establish a means by which to continue monitoring teacher activities after the conclusion of the professional development program, though that would be difficult without the backing of the county board, individual schools, and local institutions that could supply necessary personnel and resources to maintain long-term contact, monitoring, and evaluation.

Another significant limitation in this professional development program was its general design, which emphasizes freedom and relevance (both of which are significant strengths) but does not offer the guided and straightforward recommendations that some professional development programs offer. Some teachers like to be given ready-made strategies they can adapt in a plug-and-play format. This project does not offer that style of instruction, and instead relies on the groups to identify relevant standards and mold

geography and literature-related content to those standards with the assistance of their peers and facilitators. Although there are opportunities for group sharing, the individualized nature of this process means that great ideas shared by other teacher participants are not guaranteed to fit the needs of other individuals, at least not without significant modification. With freedom comes a level of responsibility, and there is no guarantee that teachers will use that freedom to bring significant or worthy changes to fruition in their classrooms.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

Alternative approaches to address the local problem may focus on social studies instruction rather than combining geography and literature. Geography is already embedded in West Virginia social studies standards, and the expectation is that these standards will be taught in schools. Despite the fact that geography is not being adequately taught through these standards, some geography experts believe that teaching geography within the social studies is an adequate vehicle for effective delivery of geography content (Bednarz, 2016). This belief underlies the WVGA's program, as well as the program detailed as part of this project. The key difference is that the WVGA and this project both emphasize teaching geography in a cross-disciplinary fashion despite the fact that there is no compelling legal reason to cross those disciplinary lines. It would be acceptable to emphasize geography instruction through social studies, which would likely be easier from a logistical standpoint as social studies teachers are already given shared professional development and planning time at intervals throughout the year and are already somewhat familiar with geography as a discipline. Social studies teachers in West

Virginia take mandatory geography courses although the number of courses is limited and eclipsed by a curricular focus on history course work.

The local problem that I have aimed to resolve through this project is rooted in historically low geography awareness and the poor geoliteracy rates that plague students across the United States. Although it was beyond my control to fix problems across the country, a localized professional development program may help effect changes at the local level. If the local problem is boiled down to one of access to geography content by students, the focus on social studies integration could alleviate the problem. Geoliteracy could also be promoted through the expansion of current curriculum to include more geography-based elective courses. Not all high schools in the local county include geography as an elective, and only one consistently includes the course (County Social Studies Director, personal communication, 2018). Aside from professional development in literature or social studies, the creation of dedicated geography electives may go a long way toward building a more geoliterate student population. These electives could include the standard elective outlined in the state content standards, AP Human Geography (which is offered at some schools in the state), and/or Geography 101 offered as a dual enrollment course. Unfortunately, scheduling restraints may keep these courses from being offered everywhere in the county due to staffing concerns outlined in earlier sections of this study.

Additionally, the local county is currently home to one university, one regional college, and three community colleges. The university and regional college feed a considerable number of teacher recruits into the K-12 system in the local county and

subsequently into other portions of the state and neighboring Virginia. Targeting reforms to increase the geoliteracy and geographic competency of teacher recruits at the secondary level would likely have a positive effect on geography education in this area. A key sentiment expressed by Bednarz (2016) and shared by other researchers is that underprepared teachers are a contributing factor to the current geoliteracy crisis in the United States. It is within the realm of possibility that teacher preparation programs at the college level could improve the quality of geography teachers through working more closely with the geography departments at their respective schools. This would be a serious undertaking that would have to address not only the needs of K-12 educators but also those of individual schools in the area, which may not agree on student needs, particularly in the ever-changing realm of modern geography (Jo & Milson, 2013).

Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change

I began this research project unsure as to how teacher participants would respond regarding their continued use of geography and literature-related materials in their classrooms. Feedback from teachers coupled with an in-depth look into contemporary literature on professional development has opened my eyes to the varied needs that educators have when engaging in professional development activities. At the outset of this project, I felt that I had a strong background in geography that was forged over years of attending professional development, teaching geography at the high school and college level, and completing a master's degree program with an emphasis in master's geography. Working through the earliest portion of this study, I was able to build on my existing knowledge to identify key difficulties plaguing geography as a discipline in the

modern education system. This felt familiar to me despite the fact that I was learning and growing as a geographer during this time because the issues facing geography have been repeated in a broad sense for at least the last decade in seminars and professional journals. Because I have been active as a geographer during much of this period, I went into this study with a basic understanding of what I would encounter in the research, and knew that I could build on that foundation.

I now recognize that I embarked on this journey with only a marginal understanding of professional development, and juxtaposed to my strong geography background, this deficiency presented as a key challenge to my work. Professional development became a key topic in my research, and much of my work focused on the outcomes of a particular professional development program as well as analysis of what factors contribute to the success of professional development. As the results of my research unfolded and I examined them within the context of relevant literature, I grew as a scholar practitioner and was able to hone my knowledge base so that I had a much deeper understanding of professional development and the requisite components that lend to better teacher outcomes.

The drafting of my professional development program required my existing knowledge as well as the breadth of knowledge that I had assimilated as part of this project. When my committee and I met and decided that drafting a professional development program was the best project option for this study, I was apprehensive because my previous graduate work dealt with pedagogy-related action research and policy analysis. Despite my apprehensions, I felt confident that I could draft a quality

product based on what I had learned over the years spent studying this particular professional development program and its outcomes.

Data analysis and the final literature review for this project intersected in such a way that it became evident that there were key components to successful professional development, and that including these components had to be a priority during the drafting of my plan. I began drafting my 3-day program and emphasized relevance as a guiding principle, as this was cited in the literature and by my research participants as a necessary component to any successful professional development program. Additionally, I addressed the benefits associated with coteaching and coplanning in conjunction with limitations to time and resources faced by many teachers.

During this period of project development I believe that I demonstrated a great deal of growth as a scholar and within the bounds of my potential as a leader in the movement to improve students' and teachers' geoliteracy in my local area. Not only was I able to expand my already established knowledge base of geography education, but I was able to build a knowledge base about professional development that has helped me to become more qualified to create geography related professional development. Many people are experts in geography, and many are experts in professional development, but there are fewer that have extensively studied both at this level, and as a result I feel uniquely positioned to continue my work even after the conclusion of this doctoral project.

Reflection on Importance of the Work

As previously discussed, one of the most important aspects of what I learned during this project relates to the elements necessary to craft effective professional development. A focus on relevance and an organizational structure that allows for a great deal of adaptability are hallmarks of the professional development session that I have crafted for this project. As a person with an extensive background in geography education, I have come to a crossroads between my field of immediate interest and professional development in a more broad sense.

As noted throughout this study, there is ample evidence indicating that geography education is lacking in the United States, and that geography has lost its place within the core of modern K-12 curriculum. This is especially pronounced at the high school level, where many areas do not offer geography as a stand-alone course and fail to adequately teach geography as an embedded part of social studies standards. The shift in current academic literature on the subject points to an overall acceptance that geographers must work within the confines created for us by the current educational climate.

It is within these confines where the importance of this work and my professional development regime are best highlighted. Geographers are interested in improving geoliteracy, and as previously mentioned there are those among us that believe that geography is a key to better understanding the world in which we live. Geographers are currently hobbled by the emphasis on history in the K-12 social studies curriculum, and the general lack of geography preparation expected of teachers in most K-12 programs. The remedy for these problems is acknowledged to be, in part, targeting existing and new

teachers with professional development opportunities that will make them geography converts, regardless of field, who are aware of geography's importance and how it can improve their classroom pedagogy.

Crafting this professional development program has not only contributed to my personal growth as a scholar and agent of local change, but has also created a situation in which I have been able to use existing channels of change to bring a novel approach to geography education to social studies and literature teachers in a way that speaks to their immediate needs. I will not have presented this work by the conclusion of this doctoral study, but the parties interested in the outcomes of this work will be given copies of this study as well as copies of my professional development workshop for review, and will be given my blessing to proceed to use this research as they see fit, with or without my direct participation.

As such, the conclusion of this project has culminated in a product that addresses a key set of problems for those of us interested in geography, but does so in a way that eschews the niche politics associated with the arbitrary disciplinary boundaries that we so often erect between teachers and academics. Instead, this project's outcome serves to bring geography directly to teachers in a way that is specifically geared to helping them meet their legally mandated standards and stated job goals, thus, hopefully, improving the likelihood that these teachers will find value in what geography has to offer them in their respective fields.

From the outset of this project the underlying theme has been concerns about geoliteracy and access to quality geography instruction in the K-12 setting, particularly in

high schools. This project deliverable represents a vehicle to address that underlying issue, at least in a limited sense, and represents a step forward for other researchers interested in helping geography re-infiltrate the K-12 curriculum.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

It is not my goal to overstate this project's ability to bring about social change in terms of spreading the geography curriculum. The target audience for this professional development session is one county in southern West Virginia, where some inroads have already been made by the WVGA's persistent efforts to indoctrinate teachers as to the importance of geography. The outcomes of the professional development project cannot be readily known, and as with all things the best of intentions does not guarantee that this will be a successful deliverable. That which can be guaranteed, however, is that delivering this professional development program in the local county will be a learning experience for both the workshop's administrator and the teachers that attend this 3-day professional development program.

The teachers that participated in this study all indicated that they used what they had learned in the WVGA's program to some extent, with some teachers, particularly those not engaged in AP instruction, being much more enthusiastic about their integration of geography and literature. The obstacles that teachers faced, whether they continued to cross disciplinary boundaries or not, were largely the same, and focused on relevance to their standards and objectives, as well as a lack of time or willingness from faculty members that had not attended geography specific training. That teachers in both the literature and social studies disciplines would specifically site the relevance of geography

to their standards, or the lack thereof, and issues with gaining cooperation from other teachers as chief concerns indicates that these issues are worth further study. These themes have certainly have appeared in the literature, as cited in the literature review for the project portion of this paper, but by no means does this mean that the intersection between the literature and the work conducted here represent a comprehensive understanding of how these issues impact professional development, and specifically professional development related to geography instruction.

Future research should continue to explore the relationships between contemporary understandings of what constitutes successful professional development, but should focus on the interactions between those variables and geography instruction. Very little research into geography specific professional development exists at this point, and our collective understanding of the role professional development can play in fostering more positive teacher attitudes toward geography, as well as teachers' capacity to deliver geography instruction is largely unknown. Teachers interviewed for this study included AP Human Geography teachers, which provided for interesting findings regarding the relevance of the professional development and a need to align to individual teachers' standards, but also left a gap in that fewer social studies teachers focused on the more traditional curriculum were interviewed. In fact, one social studies teacher interviewed had transitioned into teaching social studies via tourism, which is certainly outside the realm of what is considered normal for most curriculums.

Expanding the knowledge base about geography professional development through continued and targeted assessments of the outcomes of existing geography

professional development programs is a necessary component to building a more comprehensive understanding as to how to combat the many issues that plague modern geography instruction, and future research must explore the role of cross-disciplinary education in teaching geography, particularly within the social studies and literature, where elements of geography are likely to be pertinent to standards and teachers' learning objectives. This study examined a multidisciplinary geography professional development program, but the aforementioned peculiarities in the sample indicates that teachers more concerned with a traditional social studies curriculum may have given different responses to interview questions listed here, and therefore future research should target not only literature and social studies teachers, but differentiate between teachers engaged in more traditional social studies and geography specific social studies. This is especially true when gauging individual teachers' willingness to actively engage with potentially unfamiliar geography material, which can be an indicator of teacher self-efficacy (Bandura, 2001). Furthermore, it would likely be beneficial to differentiate between AP course teachers and teachers in so-called regular courses, as the significant confines placed on teachers by the more stringent AP curriculum clearly played a role in how teachers' pedagogy adapted in the wake of the WVGA workshop.

Conclusion

This study was designed to explore how secondary social teachers who had participated in a literature-geography collaborative workshop describe their long-term integration of literature and social studies content, cross-curricular lesson planning, and self-efficacy in integrating geography into classroom pedagogy. I found that although

geography instruction has long been embattled in the United States, there is reason to believe that professional development is an adequate vehicle to bolster geography instruction in K-12 schools. This study revolved around the WVGA's geography/literature collaborative professional development program, and found that the majority of teachers that participated found the program to be beneficial, and continued to use the methods and strategies that they learned from the workshop in some capacity.

What was perhaps most telling was the liberties that each teacher took with the materials and strategies offered by the WVGA. Interviewees cited the relevance of materials and strategies to their established standards and learning goals as both an obstacle and a benefit to their instruction. Although co-teaching and co-planning was largely untenable, teachers, particularly literature teachers, cited that they built relationships with other teachers as a means to gain support when they were utilizing cross-disciplinary geography and literature related instruction, which helped compensate for their overall lack of perceived self-efficacy regarding the delivery of geography content to their classes. The combination of relationship building, limited co-planning, and concern for individual goals and standards led to a great deal of adaptability in how the teachers interviewed chose to use the strategies and materials presented to them by the WVGA. Although there were some similarities among teachers, each individual that continued to use the geography and literature materials did so in a unique way which was well suited for their individual teaching styles. Teachers utilized scavenger hunts in newspapers, research projects, and silent sustained reading, among other projects and assignments, to merge geography and literature in their classrooms.

The fact that these teachers took what the WVGA presented them and made it their own signals that there is significant merit to current pertinent literature on the subject, which indicates that teachers are more likely to benefit from activities like co-teaching and professional development when they have a vested interest in those activities. That the teachers involved suffered from an inability to make cross-disciplinary instruction work due to unwilling participants or time constraints is also not surprising, given that this form of cross-disciplinary instruction is not generally what comes up in the literature on the subject, which is heavily focused on the relationships between special education and general education teachers.

Although teachers perceived insurmountable roadblocks that prevented some interviewees from using what they had learned in the workshop in their classes on a long-term basis (rigid standards, job changes, loss of corroborating faculty, scheduling issues), there is plenty of hope to be found in just how adaptable and resourceful the teachers were in what they did continue to use from the WVGA workshop, as well as their willingness to utilize one another as resources to help overcome their lack of confidence in teaching across disciplinary boundaries. Teachers saw an opportunity to deliver content to their students, and most jumped at the chance, with only one teacher being truly dismissive of their efforts at cross-collaboration (and notably he spoke highly of the WVGA's program and efforts, but cited the heavy handedness of the AP standards as being what limited the WVGA program's usefulness to him).

Moving forward, there is ample evidence here to indicate that similar programs, such as the project that I designed based on the findings of this study, can afford teachers

an opportunity to better serve their students through introducing them to geography related themes, materials, and practices alongside time to co-plan and be creative in how they choose to use those resources in their classrooms. By engaging in the design of further professional development while emphasizing freedom and relevance for individual teachers, as well as opportunities to co-plan and build relationships with content specialists, those of us interested in geography instruction can also further our long stated goal of helping expose students to geography content, even if that exposure happens outside of a dedicated geography classroom. Given the current state of geography in the curriculum, and the continued emphasis on a history heavy social studies, adopting a more flexible, cross-disciplinary approach to geography instruction may be the discipline's best chance of finding more significant footing in the standards, particularly if teachers that participate in future geography related workshops can be made into geography converts like those interviewed for this study.

As one interviewee stated, participation in the WVGA program's many professional development offerings made him a believer in the subject. The social studies teachers interviewed all seemed to hold this in common, and the literature teachers were laudatory of the role that geography now played in the way they viewed the literature that they teach. Although the WVGA's intention to spur co-teaching and long term geography/literature integration fizzled in some ways (namely in establishing significant co-teaching), the program marked substantial progress by demonstrating to the teachers interviewed that geography and literature can be effectively taught together under the

right circumstances, and that bringing teachers together across disciplinary boundaries for geography focused professional development is a boon for everyone involved.

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Appendix A: The Project

Geography and Literature: Working Across Disciplines, but Within the Standards

Purpose:

The purpose of this professional development workshop is to provide three days of instruction to educators regarding blending geography and literature instruction. The outcomes of my study indicate that co-teaching was unsustainable or unfeasible for all participants for a variety of reasons, but this workshop aims to confer that the benefits of co-teaching can be maintained through sporadic cooperation rather than true co-teaching. Additionally, this program will help develop a standards based approach to blending geography and literature, which ensures that cross curricular lessons are in keeping with state mandated academic standards, and are relevant to all participants involved. This workshop will describe the benefits of co-teaching and co-planning, explore standards for literature and social studies teachers, and also guide educators to choose locally relevant, standards based materials for use in their classrooms.

Stated Goals:

1. To encourage co-teaching, co-planning, and cooperation between secondary level literature and social studies teachers for the purpose of promoting both literature and geography standards more effectively
2. To demonstrate the secondary level standards based linkages between geography content and literature content
3. To demonstrate that geography can be used to enhance secondary level literature education, and that literature enhances secondary level geography education

Implementation Schedule:

Professional Development Workdays: 8am – 3pm for all employees

Session 1: Using Geography to Cross Curricular Boundaries

Proposed Time: Beginning of School Year Teacher In-Service

Duration: 7 hours

Session 2: Understanding Standards Across Curriculums

Proposed Time: Beginning of School Year Teacher In-Service

Duration: 7 hours

Session 3: Local Connections for Standards Based Problems

Proposed Time: Beginning of School Year Teacher In-Service

Duration: 7 hours

Session 1: Using Geography to Cross Curricular Boundaries

Schedule

8am – 8:30am: Introduction, discuss background of research (30 min)

8:30am – 9:30am: Geography in the Curriculum

Presentation

Resources needed: Laptop computer, projector

- a. Poor geography performance
- b. Questionable place in standards
- c. Lack of preparation
- d. Emphasis on spatial perspective
 1. Geography as destiny
 2. Relationships and differences over space

9:30am – 10:30am: Establishing the importance of co-teaching

Presentation

Resources needed: Laptop computer, projector

- a. Co-teaching popularity
- b. Co-teaching as teamwork (special ed to cross curricular)
- c. Co-teaching as a form of PD
- d. Links to enhanced student outcomes

Activity: What's in it for me?

Resources needed: Laptop, projector, large poster paper, markers, tape

10:30am – 11:30am: Temporary co-teaching, lasting impacts for students and teachers

Presentation

Resources needed: Laptop, projector

- a. Obstacles to co-teaching
 1. Attitudes from research project
 2. Time
 3. Lack of team planning

Activity: Tearing Down Walls

Resources needed: Laptop, projector, large poster paper, markers, tape

11:30am-12:30pm: Lunch

12:30pm – 12:45pm: Establishing the importance of cross-disciplinary education

Presentation

Resources needed: Laptop computer, projector, tape

- a. Attitudes toward cross-disciplinary education
- b. Aligning goals

12:45pm – 2pm: Planning With a Partner

Activity: Planning With a Partner

Resources needed: Laptop, projector, large poster paper, markers, tape

2pm – 3pm: Review of Day’s Topics and Conclusion

Presentation: Summary of Main Points

Resources needed: Laptop computer, projector

Question and Answer Session

Day 1 Session Evaluation

Session 2: Standards Based Education

8am – 8:30am: Handcuffed by the Standards

Presentation

Resources needed: Laptop computer, projector

- Participant attitudes relating to standards
- Participant attitudes toward enhancing instruction through cooperation

8:30am – 10:30am: Powerful Geography

Presentation

Resources needed: Laptop computer, projector

- a. Improve geographic awareness of basic concepts for social studies and literature teachers:
 - Human geography (deviates from Alliance workshop)
 - Physical geography
 - Environment and society
 - Places and regions
- b. Creating relevance for students through linking to local
- c. Emphasis on bottom up decision making

Activity: Explain, Analyze, and Generalize

Resources needed: Laptop, projector, large poster paper, markers, tape

10:30am – 11:30 am: Standards

Activity: Sorting Standards

11:30am – 12:30pm: Lunch

12:30pm – 1:30pm: Breakout session: Sharing Standards

Activity: Sharing Standards

Resources needed: Laptop, projector, large poster paper, markers, highlighters, copies of WV Content Standards, tape

1:30pm – 2:30pm: Planning With a Partner II

Activity: Planning With a Partner II

Resources needed: Laptop, projector, large poster paper, markers, highlighters, copies of WV Content Standards, tape

2:30pm – 3:00pm: Closing

- a. Allow teacher comments on the session
- b. Session evaluation

Session 3: Local Connections for Standards Based Problems

8:00am – 8:30am: Review of Research

Presentation

Resources needed: Laptop computer, projector

- a. Review of obstacles to geography education
- b. Review basic concept behind Powerful Geography

8:30am – 9:30am: Creating Relevance

Activity: Identifying state level/local level issues that pertain to geography

Resources needed: Laptop, projector, large poster paper, markers, highlighters, copies of WV Content Standards, tape

9:30am – 10:30am: Choosing Literature

Activity: Choosing Standards Based Literature

Resources needed: Laptop, projector, large poster paper, markers, highlighters, copies of WV Content Standards, Activity Checklists, tape

10:30am – 11:30am: Recommendation of locally significant novels/readings

Activity: Linking Readings to Local Problems

Resources needed: Laptop, projector, large poster paper, markers, highlighters, copies of WV Content Standards, tape

11:30am – 12:30pm: Lunch

12:30pm – 1:30pm: Adapting existing materials to a geographic perspective

Activity: Standards Bingo

Resources needed: Laptop, projector, large poster paper, markers, highlighters, copies of WV Content Standards, Bingo Cards (generated from standards listed in previous sessions), plastic tokens, tape

Activity: Matching Geographic Concepts to Existing Materials

1:30pm – 2:30pm: Suggested Reading

Resources needed: Laptop, projector, large poster paper, markers, highlighters, copies of WV Content Standards, tape

Activity: Teacher Generated Reading Lists

Resources needed: Laptop, projector, large poster paper, markers, highlighters, copies of WV Content Standards, tape

2:30pm – 3:00pm: Closing

- a. Session Conclusion
- b. Session Evaluation

Activity: What's in it for me?

Resources needed: Laptop, projector, large poster paper, markers, tape

Step 1: Ask teachers in each discipline to create a list of the five most important topics that they teach in their classes each year.

Step 2: Ask teachers to compare lists with other teachers in their discipline, and revise their lists if they feel that necessary

Step 3: Ask teachers to interact with teachers outside their discipline and find a key topic from their list that could be taught cooperatively with a key concept from another discipline. Do not worry about differences in grade level for this activity; its purpose is illustrative.

Example: A World History teacher may state that the Renaissance is a key topic in their class

That teacher may discover that the works of Shakespeare pairs well with Renaissance education because Shakespeare wrote during the Renaissance.

Step 4: After teachers have paired off with a teacher from another discipline, ask them to brainstorm a list of ways that co-teaching these topics could benefit their students.

Step 5: Ask for examples from individuals that would like to share with the group; full discussion

Activity: Tearing Down Walls

Resources needed: Laptop, projector, large poster paper, markers, tape

Step 1: Group teachers by discipline

Step 2*: Ask teachers what barriers exist that prevent them from working with their colleagues in their own discipline (answers should be recorded for discussion)

Step 3*: Ask teachers what barriers exist that prevent them from working with their colleagues in other disciplines (answers should be recorded for discussion)

*Allow teachers to write on “walls” made from large poster style paper, and plaster their barriers/walls around the room

Step 4: Presenter will choose several members of each group (social studies and literature) to switch places with their colleagues

Step 5: Discuss answers to find commonalities and differences

Step 6**: Full group discussion topic: “What walls exist that provide barriers to cooperation with our colleagues, and how can we tear those walls down?”

Step 7**: Create a running list of methods for better ensuring cross-curricular communication.

**For each solution to a problem allow teachers to tear down the “wall” that has that problem recorded on it

Activity: Planning with a Partner

Resources needed: Laptop, projector, large poster paper, markers, highlighters, tape

Step 1: Ask teachers to think about the key topic they matched with a concept from a different discipline in the last activity, and then create a list of learning goals/lesson objectives that they feel best represent the content/teaching strategies that they normally emphasize while teaching that lesson/unit.

Step 2: Ask teachers to meet back with their cross-disciplinary partners from the previous activity. Ask teachers to swap lists with their partner, and create a running (written) commentary regarding what information, strategies, or activities they could employ from their discipline to enhance the instruction of their co-worker.

Step 3: Exchange lists again and review the strategies that each individual has contributed. Cooperatively use the County Schools Lesson Plan template to create a joint lesson plan that reflects cooperative strategies and meets the learning objectives set out in Step 1 of this activity.

Step 4: Revisiting the list of obstacles from the previous activity, explain which of those obstacles would pose the greatest challenge to co-teaching the lesson you have jointly planned, and explain how that challenge could be overcome.

Step 5. Group sharing of lesson plan ideas via ELMO; allow teachers to take comments/suggestions from their fellow teachers.

Activity: Explain, Analyze, and Generalize

Resources needed: Laptop, projector, large poster paper, markers, highlighters, copies of WV Content Standards, tape

Intro Script: Powerful Geography is a method of learning that promotes geography education as relevant and useful to all citizens. Teachers are encouraged to use geography content to help students explain and analyze information, as well as to generalize based on their findings. Powerful Geography thus differs in how it approaches geography from current standards. This activity will help teachers better understand how previous conceptions of geography education can merge with new, practice/process oriented geography methods. For this activity geography teachers and literature teachers will meet in small groups.

Step 1: Geography teachers will need to reinforce literature teachers' knowledge of the current five themes of geography (Location, Place, Region, Movement, and People and their Environment).

Step 2: Choose a theme of geography for your group (or the PD leader may assign one to each group).

Step 3: Brainstorming across curriculum, create a lesson plan highlighting your chosen/assigned theme that would be appropriate both in a social studies and literature classroom. Assignments should ask students to:

- a. Explain information (preferably a short piece of fiction or non-fiction writing)
- b. Analyze information
- c. Make generalizations/draw conclusions based on available information

Step 4: Allow groups to disperse throughout the room to discuss their assignments with members of other groups. Ask for specific criticisms and feedback regarding the assignments. After a 20 minute discussion session return to your original group to revise your lesson plans.

Step 5: Full group discussion: How can using the “analyze, explain, and generalize” framework enhance your lessons? What obstacles might you face?

Activity: Sorting Standards

Resources needed: Laptop, projector, large poster paper, markers, highlighters, copies of WV Content Standards, tape

Intro script: Standards based education is the law in West Virginia. This means that by law we are expected to deliver lessons that hit all content standards that we have been assigned by state policy. As all educators know, there are many limitations that can prevent even the most veteran teachers from meeting their obligations. This activity is

designed to help teachers identify standards that they teach well, and those that they sometimes fail to properly teach. The goal of this activity is to create a list of appropriate standards that we can build on in subsequent activities.

Step 1: Teachers will be given individual copies of the standards for their classes, and asked to highlight in blue the standards that they feel that they teach adequately every single semester.

Step 2: Teachers will highlight in yellow any standards that they either teach inadequately/insufficiently, or that they sometimes do not have time to teach.

Step 3: Teachers will highlight in orange any standards that they are not regularly able to cover in the instructional year.

Step 4: Once teachers have accomplished this task, they may get in small groups with teachers that share their discipline and grade level. The target should be to create three to four groups of literature teachers and three to four groups of social studies teachers. Compare work, and create a list with the top ten (as agreed upon by teachers) standards from each category (always cover, sometimes cover, and never cover).

Step 5: Brainstorm reasons why these standards fall under each of these categories. For example: A social studies teacher might find that they always cover the American Revolution, sometimes cover the Northwest Ordinance, and never cover Reconstruction. The fact that they never cover Reconstruction may be linked to time spent on earlier material, or that it falls late in the semester when interruptions are more prevalent.

Step 6: Create a web chart that lists the top ten “sometimes covers” and “never covers.” The two aforementioned categories should be in the center of the web charts, and branches off should include the standards chosen by educators.

*Step 5 and 6 will be used in a follow up activity.

Activity: Sharing Standards

Resources needed: Laptop, projector, large poster paper, markers, highlighters, copies of WV Content Standards, tape

Step 1: Divide the room into groups according to grade level. This may be a challenge because teachers likely teach more than one grade level. If that’s the case, allow the teachers to choose the grade level they most often teach, or most enjoy teaching. Each group should include teachers from both literature and social studies.

Step 2: Post the web charts made by each group next to one another. Allow time for teachers from each discipline to ask questions about standards, and explain the meaning

of the standards. Encourage teachers to discuss the obstacles that they face in implementing the standards.

Step 3: Ask teachers to draw connections between standards on the literature and geography web charts. These connections should bring standards together from each discipline that are minimally or normally not covered. On the line connecting the standards write a brief explanation of why the standards are related, or why it makes sense to connect them.

Example:

SS W 5: Research and categorize multiple current and historical world aid organizations and assess the importance of global volunteerism as a 21st century citizen (e.g., Amnesty International, Doctors Without Borders, Human Rights Campaign, International Red Cross, Invisible Children, Peace Corps, etc.).

ELA.9.15: Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums of informational texts (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.

It would make sense to connect these two 9th grade standards because the World History standard provides a number of suggested research topics relating to world aid organizations, and the ELA standards asks students to analyze different types of media or informational texts. Teachers might use different texts or accounts related to an organization such as Amnesty International to meet the needs of both social studies and literature teachers. In other words, these standards are complimentary because they could be used simultaneously to meet the needs of both social studies and literature teachers in a cooperative lesson.

Step 4: Ask teachers in each group to narrow down their connections to two or three cross curricular sets of standards that would be most beneficial to teach in a cross-curricular setting. Teachers should explain why they believe that these sets of standards are particularly well-suited for cross-curricular instruction, and what goals that such instruction/planning may help them achieve in their courses.

Activity: Planning With a Partner II

Resources needed: Laptop, projector, large poster paper, markers, highlighters, copies of WV Content Standards, tape

Step 1: Allow teachers to group up with other teachers in social studies/literature teacher pairs.

Step 2: Ask each pair to choose one set of cross curricular standards from the previous activity.

Step 3: Once the teacher pairs have settled on a pair of standards, allocate time for them to work together in crafting a lesson plan that addresses the standards in a cross-curricular way. This may not mean that the teachers are present in one another's classrooms, but rather that they planned the lesson together and collaborated on the strategies and materials used to teach the standards. Each teacher should be willing to help their colleague meet their own discipline's standard, and as such should include it as part of the lesson objectives. Each lesson should include what standards are being targeted, what materials or strategies are to be used to meet the standard, and an assessment that tests/challenges student knowledge about the standard in question.

Step 4: Teacher groups may present their lesson plans via the ELMO projector or PC projector, and receive feedback from their colleagues.

Activity: Identifying State Level/local Level Issues That Pertain to Geography

Resources needed: Laptop, projector, large poster paper, markers, highlighters, copies of WV Content Standards, tape

Intro Script: Geography has lost its place in the standards, but that doesn't mean that there's no opportunity to effectively integrate geography into our instruction. Fortunately, geography is well-suited to cross disciplinary education. One great way to link geography to instruction is through getting students actively involved in geography at a local level.

Step 1: Allow the whole group to volunteer ideas regarding the most significant local problems/issues in their communities. For these purposes we will limit the term "local" to mean that the problem/issue involves the town/immediate community, county, state, or general region (e.g. Appalachia). What constitutes a local problem can be decided by the workshop facilitator as necessary. Write down as many ideas as possible on large poster-board sized paper, a chalk board, or a dry-erase marker board.

Step 2: Once a list has been compiled, ask the whole group to whittle the list down to ten significant problems. This should be done as democratically as possible.

Step 3: Divide the room into two groups. One group should be literature teacher, and the other should be social studies teachers. Ask each group to brainstorm ways that the problems listed on the board could be taught within their discipline, and how the problems could tie in with the lists of under-taught concepts from our previous activities.

Step 4: Match geographic themes (discussed under Powerful Geography/Five Themes of Geography) to each of the problems/concepts to be taught. This can be done with the assistance of any geography teachers that are in the room, or with the help of the workshop facilitator.

Step 5: Once matched, the facilitator should discuss in open forum with the teachers the benefits and obstacles that may accompany integrating geography into lessons, and

dealing with local problems with students. For example, it may be difficult to address opioid abuse with students in rural West Virginia because many students have loved ones addicted to opioids, or have lost loved ones to the epidemic.

Activity: Choosing Standards Based Literature

Resources needed: Laptop, projector, large poster paper, markers, highlighters, copies of WV Content Standards, tape, printed surveys

Step 1: Ask teachers to, on an individual basis, come up with a list of five books, stories, poems, or pieces of non-fiction literature that they have read that they feel had a significant impact on their lives.

Step 2: Next, ask teachers to consider how these works can be related back to the standards that they teach. Not all works of literature may be related to standards being taught, particularly in social studies, but encourage teachers to list as many relations to the standards as possible.

Step 3: Small group discussions should be held among teachers. Allow each teacher to search the room for others that have read some of the same works on their lists. In the event that a person has no works from their list in common with others, allow them to enter a group that includes a work that they are familiar with or have read, even if it is not on the list. Discuss why the work was meaningful/memorable, and how it connects to standards.

Step 4: Provide each teacher with a list of geography standards. These will come from the geography elective class offered in West Virginia, as well as geography standards embedded in social studies courses. As a group, allow each teacher to describe one work of literature that had meaning to them and briefly how it fits within the standards. Ask all teachers present to brainstorm ways that the work being discussed may fit with the geography standards they were given. Allow a brief discussion of how each geographic theme could be tied to the other themes listed in previous steps of this activity.

Step 5: Next, ask teachers to take each piece of literature they discussed and fill out the following checklist for it:

1. This work of literature is relevant to my students ___ yes ___ no
2. This work of literature can be used to teach my state mandated standards ___ yes ___ no
3. This work of literature can be used to teach geography standards or concepts ___ yes ___ no

4. This work of literature is appropriate for my students' grade level and maturity level ___ yes ___ no
5. I feel that this work of literature would be a good addition to my classroom instruction ___ yes ___ no

Activity: Linking Readings to Local Problems

Resources needed: Laptop, projector, large poster paper, markers, highlighters, copies of WV Content Standards, tape

Intro Script: The previous activity helped us identify some potential materials that we could use in class to help us meet our standards. This activity asks you to make connections between the works we have discussed thus far, works we currently use in our classes, and the local problems we identified in a previous activity.

Step 1: In a mixed group of both literature and social studies teachers compile a list of literature that teachers chose from the previous activity and literature/readings that teachers currently use in class. List them down one side of the paper given to each group. Fill the paper if you can.

Step 2: On the other side of the paper list the local problems from the previous activity. The first ten should be the more relevant problems that we discussed earlier in the session. The remainder of the space can be filled with other problems suggested during the activity, or new ones that the group comes up with during this activity.

Step 3: Draw lines to match pieces of literature to local problems. The connections should make sense (i.e. there should be a logical connection between the two), and not every topic will connect with a piece of literature.

Step 4: Discuss among the groups the ways that each piece of literature connects with the local problem, and the challenges and benefits of teaching this piece of literature in context to the problem/issue to which it was connected.

Step 5: Each group should choose one literary work and one local problem to diagram on the board/large paper. Create a Venn diagram that shows how the local problem, piece of literature, and standards for your classes overlap, and where they differ substantially.

Step 6: Share teacher diagrams with the whole group, and allow for group discussion.

Activity: Standards Bingo

Resources needed: Laptop, projector, large poster paper, markers, highlighters, copies of WV Content Standards, tape, bingo cards, plastic tokens

The purpose of this game is reinforce the link between literature materials/local problems to standards, and to have a good time. Run through the steps repeatedly until several winners have been chosen. Prizes are not necessary, but because the district sometimes allows rewards to be given out during professional days they could be utilized at discretion of the workshop facilitator.

Step 1: Pass out bingo cards that have geography and literature standards (literature teachers) and geography and social studies standards (social studies teachers) printed in the squares. The card should be populated with as many standards as possible from previous activities. Give each teacher plastic tokens or chips to cover the spots on their cards.

Step 2: Call out the names of literature materials from previous activities, as well as the local problems we discussed. Allow teachers to cover a single square for every piece of literature/problem called. If a teacher is unfamiliar with the work they can ask colleagues in the area around them for help.

Step 3: When a person connects five squares across, vertically, or diagonally they win! Repeat as necessary.

Activity: Matching Geographic Concepts to Existing Materials

Resources needed: Laptop, projector, large poster paper, markers, highlighters, copies of WV Content Standards, tape

Step 1: Give small groups of teachers (3-4; mix literature and social studies content teachers) a large section of bulletin board paper/poster sized paper. Ask them to draw four boxes, and for each box list one of the following categories:

- Human geography
- Physical geography
- Environment and society
- Places and regions

Step 2: Give teachers a 20 minute time limit, and tell them to choose literature materials that the literature teachers are currently using to put into each box based on their relevance to the theme/concept. Social studies content teachers can help the literature teachers fit their existing materials into the boxes, but may offer up their own suggestions

if they use reading materials in their classrooms as well. A single work may fit into one or more of the four available categories.

Step 3: At the end of the 20 minute period ask teachers which group was able to fit the most items into each of the four categories. Let the group with the most items listed present their lists for each of the four categories. Allow other teachers to discuss whether or not the items belong under the category, and allow the group presenting to defend their choices. Strike items from the list at the discretion of the workshop administrator, and recount.

Step 4: Declare the groups with the most in each category as the winner, and award available prizes, if applicable.

Activity: Teacher Generated Reading Lists

Resources needed: Laptop, projector, large poster paper, markers, highlighters, copies of WV Content Standards, tape

For this activity teachers will need to draw on all that they have learned over the last three days of trainings.

Step 1: Separate teachers by school, and if appropriate, by grade level.

Step 2: Ask literature and social studies teachers to draft a plan for their individual schools that would allow them to:

- a. Cooperate in an interdisciplinary fashion
- b. Cover literature, social studies, and geography standards/concepts
- c. Relate to a local problem

Part of this plan should be a reading list for students in both literature and social studies classrooms. The list should cover teacher needs for an entire academic year. The reading list should include:

- a. Literature materials that can be taught in literature classrooms (including previously used materials that will remain in-use)
- b. Literature materials to be used in social studies classrooms
- c. Literature materials that can be used concurrently in both literature and social studies classrooms as part of cross curricular studies
- d. Recommended literature for use in independent reading assignments (silent sustained reading, book reports, etc.)

Step 3: Finally, create brief synopsis for each reading that explains why it was chosen, as well as its relevance to geography, literature, and social studies classes.

PowerPoint Slides for Presentations

Slide 1

Background of the Research Session 1, Part 1

Presentation by John M. McCormick

Slide 2

Basics of the Research

- My interest was in a cross-disciplinary geography and literature workshop hosted by the West Virginia Geographic Alliance
- Relevant details:
 - a) Teacher teams
 - b) Emphasis on limited co-teaching/co-planning
 - c) Limited to WV
 - d) Offered literature materials for all teachers involved
 - e) Geography and literature specialists presented information to all teachers
 - f) “Mandatory” lesson plans surrounding *The Old Man and the Sea*

Slide 3

Research Questions

- RQ1: How do secondary social studies teachers that participated in the WVGA's literature-geography collaborative describe their pedagogical practices for the long term integration of both literature and social studies materials, concepts, and themes in their classrooms?
- RQ2: How do secondary social studies and literature teachers that participated in the WVGA's literature-geography collaborative describe their pedagogical practices for the long term integration of cross curricular lesson planning in their classrooms?
- RQ3: How do secondary social studies and literature teachers describe their feelings of self-efficacy regarding the integration of geography related strategies and materials into their classroom pedagogy?

Slide 4

Sample

- Six teachers were interviewed
- Three teachers identified as social studies teachers
- Three teachers identified as literature teachers
- One literature teacher was also certified in social studies
- One social studies teacher had also taught literature
- Two social studies teachers taught AP Human Geography

Slide 5

Basic Findings

- Most teachers in both disciplines continued to blend geography and literature in some capacity
- Teachers with more experience in geography felt more confident in teaching geography related content
- Literature teachers saw value in geography as a means to teach their standards
- Job changes and scheduling conflict limited opportunities for co-teaching and co-planning
- AP Teachers were particularly concerned with rigid course standards
- Most teachers in both disciplines indicated that meeting requirements set by state standards was a concern while implementing geography/literature collaboration

Slide 6

Conclusions

- Relevance to standards and learning goals is a key component of successful professional development
- Co-teaching and co-planning are beneficial even intermittently
- Teachers across disciplines can serve as resources for one another
- Teachers used a great deal of autonomy in applying the WVGA's recommended strategies and materials in their individual classrooms
- Autonomy and relevance are foundational to merging geography and literature professional development in the future
- Exposure to geography material improved self-efficacy

Slide 7

Geography in the Curriculum Session 1, Part 2

Presentation by John M. McCormick

Slide 8

Poor Geography Performance

- U.S. students do not perform well in geography
- Most 8th grade students are not proficient in geography according to Government Accountability Office (GAO)
- Half of social studies teachers spend less than 10% of their time teaching geography (U.S. News and World Report, 10/16/2015)
- Only 17 states require mandatory geography coursework
- Low geography achievement means students may not be adequately prepared for the modern workforce (Bednarz, 2016)
- Geography jobs represent a growing portion of the future workforce (Bednarz, 2016)

Slide 9

Questionable Place in the Standards

- Across the country geography has been largely incorporate into the social studies curriculum
- This has resulted in a loss of identity for geography
- Many Americans, including teachers, have misconceptions about what geography entails as a discipline
- In West Virginia geography standards fall under the social studies
- West Virginia offers an optional elective in geography, which is not consistently taught
- Geography standards are otherwise relegated to a set of sub-standards in the social studies/history courses

Slide 10

Lack of Preparation

- Many college teacher training programs do not adequately prepare candidates to teach geography (Jo & Milson, 2013; Bednarz, 2016)
- Social studies education in the U.S. is heavily history oriented
- Teacher training in the U.S. overemphasizes history at the expense of geography
- Dedicated history courses are offered as part of the core curriculum in every state, but geography is not
- Teacher candidates focus heavily on history coursework

Slide 11

Emphasis on Spatial Perspective

- Geography differs from history at a fundamental level
 - Geography emphasizes a spatial perspective
- a) The spatial perspective helps us understand how place influences the way that we live (geography as destiny)
 - b) Geography emphasizes relationships with place and over space

Slide 12

Citations

Sarah Witham Bednarz. (2016) [The Practices of Geography](#). *The Geography Teacher* 13:2, pages 46-51.

<https://www.gao.gov/assets/680/673128.pdf>

<https://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2015/10/16/us-students-are-terrible-at-geography>

Slide 13

Co-Teaching and Co-Planning Session 1, Part 3

Presentation by John M. McCormick

Slide 14

Popularity of Co-teaching

- Co-teaching is popular in the United States
- Most co-teaching involves collaboration with special education and general education teachers
- Co-teaching can help teachers better serve their students
- Participants in my study faced logistic challenges that limited their ability to co-teach and co-plan
- Participants found co-teaching and co-planning to be generally beneficial

Slide 15

Co-teaching as Teamwork

- Co-teaching works best when cooperating teachers want to work together One obstacle faced by my research participants was the inability to get other teachers to work with them across disciplinary boundaries
- Teacher participants indicated that they continued to use materials created by their co-workers, and relied on their co-workers in other disciplines to share their expertise

Slide 16

Co-teaching as a Form of Professional Development

- Teacher participants cited that they learned from the materials produced by their co-workers, as well as by working with them during the planning of lessons
- Co-teaching can serve as a form of professional development by allowing teachers across disciplinary boundaries to actively learn from one another
- The goal of professional development is to help us grow as teachers, and that goal can be achieved while learning from one another in an on-the-job setting

Slide 17

Links to Enhanced Student Outcomes

- Professional development can lead to better student outcomes, including enhanced achievement
- When we grow as educators, our students can grow with us
- Students hold more confidence in their teachers when they perceive that teachers have a mastery level understanding of the material being taught
- Perceptions of teacher confidence are linked to student levels of respect for their teachers

Slide 18

Obstacles to Co-teaching Session 1, Part 4

Presentation by John M. McCormick

Slide 19

Attitudes Toward Co-Teaching

- Most research participants acknowledged benefits from co-teaching
- Several obstacles to co-teaching came up
 - Time
 - Lack of willing partners
 - Leaving jobs
 - Changes to schedules
 - Incongruence in scheduling

Slide 20

Time

- One objective of this professional development program is to work around the time constraints associated with co-teaching
- Co-planning can be beneficial, even if co-teaching does not happen regularly
- Co-planning can take place sporadically, such as on non-student work days
- Co-planning between teachers in different disciplines can help teachers develop big ideas, which each teacher can refine later to suit their individual needs

Slide 21

Lack of Team Planning

- High school teachers in Mercer County do not get team planning
- Different planning periods make co-planning very difficult
- Co-planning may take place on work days
- Your co-workers are your resources
- Email and other forms of communication can help facilitate co-planning

Slide 22

Cross-disciplinary Education Session 1, Part 5

Presentation by John M. McCormick

Slide 23

Attitudes Toward Cross Disciplinary Education

- Cross-disciplinary education was viewed positively by all teacher participants
- Participants indicated that cross-disciplinary education was encouraged by some administrators
- Social studies is a cross-disciplinary field based on WV standards
- Mercer County has actively encouraged cross-disciplinary education through their adoption of LDC programs

Slide 24

Aligning Goals

- As with other forms of co-teaching and co-planning, cross-disciplinary education requires a level of buy-in from all participants
- Teachers that want to work together are more likely to see positive outcomes from their collaborations
- Teachers in different disciplines have different stated goals and objectives for their classes
- It is possible to find common ground for some standards across disciplinary boundaries

Slide 25

Conclusion

Session 1, Part 6

Presentation by John M. McCormick

Slide 26

Day 1 Closing

Main take-aways:

- Research outcomes
- State of geography
- Obstacles to co-teaching/interdisciplinary teaching
- Co-planning and Co-teaching is possible in a limiting environment
- Finding geography content relevant to your standards may be a path to more geoliterate students, as well as a means to enhance your instruction

Slide 27

Discussion

I will now allow a brief period for questions and answers from participants while you are being given your evaluation forms.

Slide 28

Handcuffed by the Standards Session 2, Part 1

Presentation by John M. McCormick

Slide 29

Participant Attitudes Relating to Standards

- Teacher participants in my research study voiced standards-based concerns about merging geography and literature
- AP teachers struggled with rigid course standards
- Literature teachers indicated that geography was beneficial, but they had to balance geography instruction against their existing standards
- Time was considered an obstacle to covering standards

Slide 30

Participant Attitudes Toward Cooperation

- Teachers in both literature and social studies disciplines acknowledged that there were benefits to cooperation
- Participants related strong feelings in favor of cross-disciplinary instruction
- The goal of today's activities is to help demonstrate that cross-disciplinary education with a focus on geography can be an enhancement to your instruction

Slide 31

Powerful Geography Session 2, Part 2

Presentation by John M. McCormick

Slide 32

Geography's Five Themes

- Geography education reformers established a widely used system for teaching geography in a K-12 and college setting that revolves around 5 basic themes:
 1. Location
 2. Place
 3. Region
 4. Movement
 5. People and the Environment
- The five themes are currently ubiquitous in American geography education

Slide 33

Five Themes As Curriculum

- Geography textbooks at the middle school, high school, and college level organize themselves around the five themes
- Many history textbooks include short excerpts explaining the five themes
- The five themes have promoted geography as a discipline, and alleviated some misunderstandings about what geography is as a discipline
- The five themes present geography in a fairly standardized way

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Five Themes As Curriculum

- There is nothing inherently wrong with the five themes, but there are some concerns surrounding how they are used
- The reliance of standardized curriculum has benefits, but may also limit relevance
- Teachers that are underprepared may not understand the nuance and depth of the geographic field that underlies the five themes
- Geography is more than the five themes, and in order to be compelling to students should be taught with an eye on depth and relevance

Slide 35

Powerful Geography

- A new approach to teaching that does not eschew the five themes, but reworks how geography is approached at the classroom level
- Emphasizes a bottom up approach to geography education
- Promotes teachers as curricular decision makers regarding what to teach in their classrooms
- Promotes the idea that geography instruction should be relevant to students and teach problem solving skills

Slide 36

A Core Division in Geography

- Geography is also divided into two widely acknowledge main branches:
 - Human/Cultural Geography
 - Physical Geography
- Geography in the social studies often emphasizes human or cultural geography
- Geography taught through the sciences emphasizes physical geography

Slide 37

Environment and Society

- The relationship between people and their environment is a pertinent geographic theme
- Bridges the gaps between human and physical geography
- Allows for a great deal of adaptability on a state by state and community by community basis
- Encourages research component
- Ample fiction and non-fiction readings that can cross disciplinary boundaries

Slide 38

Places and Regions

- Interrelated themes that can provide significant relevance to students and teachers alike
- May be limited by standards
- May also play into some standards, existing literature works
- Gives students a sense of ownership of content
- Allows teachers to draw on existing knowledge base

Slide 39

Local Connections

- Local connections to the content standards
- Teachers can work at a regional, state, county, town/city level
- Examples:
 1. One teacher participant used the novel *Storming Heaven*, which takes place in Appalachia (regional)
 2. Civil War generals camped in the Princeton area with their armies/small battle in the town of Princeton (city/town/county)
 3. West Virginia's division from Virginia (state level)

What geographic concepts could tie to each of these examples?

Slide 40

Bottom Up Decision Making

The overall goals:

- Put teachers, schools, and students in charge of geography education
- Create relevance for teachers and students
- Make geography education a discipline taught from the bottom up
- Crossing disciplinary boundaries is encouraged

Slide 41

Citations

<http://powerfulgeography.org/>

Slide 42

Local Connections For Standards
Based Problems
Session 3, Part 1

Presentation by John M. McCormick

Slide 43

Obstacles to Cross-disciplinary Geography Education (Review)

- Loss of place in the standards
- Overemphasis on history
- Time
- Content standards
- Lack of willingness to cooperate
- Scheduling conflicts

Slide 44

Powerful Geography (Review)

- The five themes reworked for a bottom up approach
- Emphasis on local connections
- Teachers as curriculum leaders and decision makers
- Student problem solvers
- Environment and society
- Place and region

Slide 45

Session Conclusion

Session 3, Part 2

Presentation by John M. McCormick

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Wrapping Things Up

- You have the power to improve geoliteracy
- The activities you've participated in are geared toward making geography and co-teaching/co-planning into an asset for you
- Maintain relationships with the other teachers you met here, they are a resource
- Target standards that you have difficulty teaching
- Emphasize local/state/regional content to create relevance for your students
- Consider geography when re-teaching already successful lessons

Slide 47

Session Evaluations

Thank you for attending!

Please take an evaluation form and return it to the designated administrator.

I will be available after the conclusion of the session to take any further questions.

Appendix B: Interview Protocol For Literature Teachers

Time of interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Say: This research is being conducted as part of my doctoral work at Walden University. This interview will gather information regarding your participation in the West Virginia Geographic Alliance's Literature-Geography collaborative workshop, and the influence of that program on your classroom pedagogy. No one from Walden University, the West Virginia Geographic Alliance, or any other institution will treat you differently based on the responses that you give for this interview. There are no rewards or compensation associated with this study. All information collected during this process will be reported confidentially, with pseudonyms used for both you and your school. You may choose to end this interview or back out of this research project at any time. Participation is completely voluntary. Additionally, you will be given the opportunity to review my findings to ensure that your views are adequately and truthfully represented prior to the completion of this study.

Interview Questions

Interview Questions for Participants

For literature teachers:

1. Please describe in detail any pedagogical changes that you made in the way you taught your class as they pertain to the initial, mandatory assignments associated with the WVGA/Benedum program.
2. What changes, if any, persisted after you completed the mandatory component of this program?
 - (a) How often do you incorporate geography related material into your pedagogy?
 - (b) To what extent do you plan to continue to use these methods/materials?

3. A) [If participant answered in the affirmative to question 2] Why did you continue to use these pedagogical methods/geographic materials in your classroom?
 - 1) Were there pedagogical methods/geographic materials that you did not continue to use? If so, what were they and why did you cease using them?
- B) [If participant answered in the negative to question 2] Why did you cease using these pedagogical methods/geographic materials in your classroom?
4. Aside from specific methods/materials from the workshop, how do you feel that participation in the session has had an influence on the way that you think about the literature that you teach?
5. How confident are you in your ability to effectively integrate geography related materials, content, and strategies into your classes?
6. How did you handle any difficulties that have arisen while integrating geography into your classroom instruction?

Follow up questions as necessary (adapted from Roulston, 2010)

You discussed _____, please go into further detail about that.

When you used the word _____, what specifically did you mean by that?

Earlier you mentioned _____, can you please give an example of that and then provide further explanation?

Appendix C: Interview Protocol for Social Studies Teachers

Time of interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Say: This research is being conducted as part of my doctoral work at Walden University. This interview will gather information regarding your participation in the West Virginia Geographic Alliance's Literature-Geography collaborative workshop, and the influence of that program on your classroom pedagogy. No one from Walden University, the West Virginia Geographic Alliance, or any other institution will treat you differently based on the responses that you give for this interview. There are no rewards or compensation associated with this study. All information collected during this process will be reported confidentially, with pseudonyms used for both you and your school. You may choose to end this interview or back out of this research project at any time. Participation is completely voluntary. Additionally, you will be given the opportunity to review my findings to ensure that your views are adequately and truthfully represented prior to the completion of this study.

Questions for Social Studies teachers

1. Please describe in detail any pedagogical changes that you made in the way you taught your class as they pertain to the initial, mandatory assignments associated with the WVGA/Benedum program.
2. What changes, if any, persisted after you completed the mandatory component of this program?
 - (a) To what extent do you incorporate literature related material into your pedagogy?
 - (b) To what extent do you plan to continue to use these methods/materials?
3. A) If you answered in the affirmative to question 2, why did you continue to use these pedagogical methods/literature materials in your classroom?

- 1) Were there pedagogical methods/literature materials that you did not continue to use? If so, what were they and why did you cease using them?
- B) If you answered in the negative to question 2, why did you cease using these pedagogical methods/literature materials in your classroom?
4. Aside from specific methods/materials from the workshop, how do you feel that participation in the session has had an impact on the way that you think about the social studies subjects that you teach?
5. How confident are you in your ability to effectively integrate literature related materials, content, and strategies into your classes?
6. How did you handle any difficulties that have arisen while integrating geography into your classroom instruction?

Follow up questions as necessary (adapted from Roulston, 2010)

You discussed _____, please go into further detail about that.

When you used the word _____, what specifically did you mean by that?

Earlier you mentioned _____, can you please give an example of that and then provide further explanation?

Appendix D: E-mail to Potential Participants

Greetings,

You are invited to take part in a research study about participants' pedagogy after taking part in a geography-literature collaborative workshop hosted by the West Virginia Geographic Alliance (WVGA). The researcher is inviting secondary social studies and literature teachers that participated in the geography-literature workshop hosted by the WVGA to be in the study. I obtained your name/contact info via the West Virginia Geographic Alliance. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named John McCormick, who is a doctoral student at Walden University. You might already know the researcher as a teacher in Mercer County and member of the WVGA, but this study is separate from those roles.

If you are interested in participating in this study please review the consent form attached to this email and contact John McCormick at the email address or phone number listed below for further details and instructions.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
John McCormick

Appendix E: The Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

You are invited to take part in a research study about participants' pedagogy after taking part in a geography-literature collaborative workshop hosted by the West Virginia Geographic Alliance (WVGA). The researcher is inviting secondary social studies and literature teachers that participated in the geography-literature workshop hosted by the WVGA to be in the study. I obtained your name/contact info via the West Virginia Geographic Alliance. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named John McCormick, who is a doctoral student at Walden University. If recruiting participants within the researcher's own professional environment, an additional statement is required: You might already know the researcher as a teacher in Mercer County and member of the WVGA, but this study is separate from those roles.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to determine what geography related pedagogical changes, if any, persisted in secondary social studies and literature teachers' classrooms after the fulfillment of mandatory lesson plans assigned during the workshop.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Participate in a one on one interview with the researcher regarding your participation in the WVGA workshop and your classroom pedagogy (interviews will take place during non-working hours; approximate length of interview 45-60 minutes).
- Interview questions are open ended; you will ultimately have freedom to share the information pertaining to this study that you deem most important to you as a classroom teacher
- Consent to audio recording of the interview
- Participate in a 15-20 minute member checking process where you will review the transcriptions of your responses as well as my interpretations of your responses

Here are some sample questions:

- Please describe in detail any pedagogical changes that you made in the way you taught your class as they pertain to the initial, mandatory assignments associated with the WVGA/Benedum program.
- Did any of these changes persist after you completed the mandatory component of this program?
- Were there pedagogical methods/geographic materials that you did not continue to use? If so, what were they and why did you cease using them?
- Aside from specific methods/materials from the workshop, do you feel that participation in the program has had an impact on the way that you think about the subject that you teach?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary. You are free to accept or turn down the invitation. No one at Walden University or the West Virginia Geographic Alliance will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to be in the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time. The researcher will follow up with all volunteers to let them know whether or not they were selected for the study.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Being in this type of study involves minimal risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as minor stress associated with being interviewed and recorded. Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing

This study is not likely to yield any kind of personal benefit to the participant outside the general benefits afforded to the education community. This study seeks to better understand the dynamic between attending professional development and the incorporation of cross-curricular geography content into classroom teachers' pedagogy. This study's main benefit will be to those with a specific interest in integrating geography content into social studies and literature classrooms.

Payment:

There will be no payments or gifts associated with participation in this study.

Privacy:

Reports coming out of this study will not share the identities of individual participants. Details that might identify participants, such as the location of the study, also will not be shared. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purpose outside of

this research project. Data will be kept secure by recording interview responses and providing all participants pseudonyms for themselves as well as their schools. Only the researcher will know the identities of those that chose to participate. Any information shared via this study will be shared in a way that protects the identity of participants. All data, including contact information and interview responses, will be stored in password protected computers and/or password protected cloud storage. Data will be kept in a locked cabinet in my home for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university. At the end of that five year period the data will be permanently destroyed.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via phone at 304-910-9794 or email at john.mccormick@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call the Research Participant Advocate at my university at 612-312-1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is **IRB will enter approval number here** and it expires on **IRB will enter expiration date.**

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

Obtaining Your Consent

If you feel you understand the study well enough to make a decision about it, please indicate your consent by signing below.

Printed Name of Participant

Date of consent

Participant's Signature

Researcher's Signature

Appendix F: Coding Charts

| RQ1: Open Code | Descriptors | Examples from the Interviews |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| Content's relation to the standards | <p>Two of the three social studies teachers were teaching AP courses</p> <p>Teachers felt confined by standards</p> <p>Standards were viewed as limiting pedagogical freedom</p> | <p>"In the AP Curriculum we're pretty set on what we have to teach"</p> <p>Feeling "handcuffed" by the material</p> <p>Teaching to the test</p> <p>"It doesn't leave me a lot of flexibility"</p> <p>"I have so much mandatory material I have to cover"</p> |
| Co-teaching/Co-planning | <p>Identified instances of co-teaching and co-planning with literature teachers</p> <p>Teachers that co-taught or co-planned with literature teachers did so only in the short term</p> | <p>The cooperating teacher is "no longer at our school"</p> <p>Scheduling conflicts</p> <p>Roster inconsistency between social studies and literature classes</p> <p>Visiting literature classrooms for short lessons</p> |
| Challenges to application | <p>Obstacles to application of strategies and materials from WVGA workshop varied</p> <p>Time constraints</p> <p>Rigor of literature materials</p> | <p>"We finish school so early now"</p> <p>"snow days"</p> <p>"I just couldn't find time to assign the novels to the kids"</p> <p>"not a worthwhile venture"</p> |

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| | Unwillingness/inability to maintain co-teaching | Some students did not read |
| | Funding for materials | Complexity of material |
| Use of non-standard materials | Integration of various literature materials introduced in the WVGA course Selection of literature materials outside the recommendations made by the WVGA course | “National Geographic video” “The Old Man and the Sea” [mandatory/suggested] Choosing materials from other WVGA workshops Using an “actual literary book” |
| Specific/individualized pedagogical strategies | Social studies teachers described individualized strategies that they employed in merging literature and geography materials | Discussing novels in regionally relevant context Choosing regionally relevant materials Map integration in history courses Research Linking literature materials to daily content Networking with other teachers via Alliance events and activities |
| Attitudes toward geography/literature integration | Social studies teachers saw value in teaching with literature, even if they did not actively practice it Participation in Alliance workshops prior to the geography/literature workshop shaped attitudes toward geography’s importance | “I think that literature did help me out with that” “I probably didn’t even realize I was doing it” “could turn a lot of things around with novels” “get kids to think” |

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| | | <p>Means to address literacy deficiency in struggling schools</p> <p>Teach that reading is fun Better understanding of literature through geographical analysis</p> <p>“great deal to learn” by incorporating literature</p> <p>“We didn’t try anything else, but those two things did work for us”</p> |
| Abandonment of workshop strategies/materials | <p>Some materials introduced by the WVGA were not used</p> <p>Some materials introduced by the WVGA were used for a short time and discontinued</p> | <p>“I don’t do too much” blending of literature and social studies</p> <p>“I’ve not used any of those novels they gave us”</p> <p>“just like The Old Man and the Sea, it just kinda died”</p> <p>New teacher “not on board”</p> |
| Sustained use of geography literature integration | <p>Two social studies teachers indicated that they continued to use literature in their instruction on a regular basis</p> <p>One social studies teacher stated that he abandoned the practice in his regular classes, but adapted it to a class he teaches infrequently</p> <p>Some teachers continued to use materials given by the WVGA</p> | <p>“Any time I could[...] I would”</p> <p>Administrative support</p> <p>Alliance support</p> <p>Students gave positive feedback</p> |

| RQ2: Open Code | Descriptors | Examples from the Interviews |
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| Content's relation to the standards | <p>Literature teachers described the content as a means to enhance what they were already expected to teach</p> <p>One teacher was inhibited by her co-teacher's AP standards, which set more rigid parameters for what liberties could be taken with course instruction</p> <p>Discussion of standards was more limited with literature teachers</p> | <p>"I think about more than just my standards"</p> <p>AP Literature questions already call on students to synthesize literature and geographic knowledge</p> <p>Expressed more freedom to address standards in innovative ways</p> |
| Co-teaching/Co-planning | <p>Co-teaching was not sustainable for literature teachers</p> <p>One literature teacher did not engage in co-teaching at all</p> <p>Co-teaching occurred incrementally for some literature teachers interviewed</p> | <p>"I could not find a co-teacher at my school to participate with me"</p> <p>Scheduling conflicts</p> <p>Roster inconsistency between social studies and literature classes</p> <p>Co-teaching/co-planning created materials and relationships that literature teachers later called on</p> |
| Challenges to application | <p>Obstacles to application of strategies and materials from WVGA workshop varied</p> <p>Time constraints</p> | <p>"I've changed [jobs]" to be an elementary librarian</p> <p>Conflicting teacher schedules</p> <p>"the same group of kids aren't in those classes"</p> |

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| | <p>Unwillingness/inability to maintain co-teaching</p> <p>Job change diminished the capacity for use</p> | <p>“how are we going to have time” to implement geography elements</p> <p>Inconsistent timeframes between disciplines</p> |
| Use of non-standard materials | <p>Use of physical and digital maps</p> <p>Literature chosen for its geographic connection</p> <p>Books obtained from the WVGA program</p> | <p>Use of physical geography textbook</p> <p>“I have a range of books and some of those books” came from the WVGA</p> <p>“I didn’t use the [physical] maps because I had resources online”</p> |
| Specific/individualized pedagogical strategies | <p>Literature teachers spent more time discussing individualized strategies that they adopted after the WVGA workshop</p> <p>Teachers engaged in a variety of different strategies, indicating they adapted what they learned in the WVGA workshop to their specific needs</p> | <p>Use of geographic elements to analyze longer literature</p> <p>Research elements</p> <p>Choosing literature “relevant” to students</p> <p>Map analysis</p> <p>Use of geographic vocabulary</p> <p>Sustained silent reading of various books (including those donated by the WVGA)</p> |
| Attitudes toward geography/literature integration | Literature teachers talked extensively about the way that geography influenced | Geography is “very important to understand the different ethnic groups” |

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| | <p>their ability to teach literature</p> <p>Geography content was viewed as means of enhancing literature</p> | <p>“helps me think about who they are and how the place that they’re from shapes them”</p> <p>“enhanced their writing” and comprehension</p> <p>“creates broader experience”</p> <p>“it’s just a different way of looking at literature, and it really helps”</p> <p>“making them think a little more of the context”</p> <p>“excited to do it”</p> |
| Abandonment of workshop strategies/materials | <p>Some materials introduced by the WVGA were not used</p> <p>Some materials introduced by the WVGA were used for a short time and discontinued</p> | <p>“I didn’t use the [physical] maps because I had resources online”</p> <p>One teacher did not use <i>The Old Man and the Sea</i> at all, another abandoned the practice (albeit one because she changed jobs)</p> |
| Sustained use of geography literature integration | Some teachers continued to use materials and strategies introduced by the WVGA | <p>“trying to strengthen it and make it better”</p> <p>“it’s a way for me to express my love of the social studies”</p> <p>“really make sure that we knew about the place or knew about the people before studying a novel”</p> |

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| | | “but then I spoke about using the resources and continue to use those in different ways in my teaching” |
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| RQ3: Open Code | Descriptors | Examples from Interviews |
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| Attitudes toward geography: Social studies teachers | <p>Teachers expressed overall positive views on the need for geography education and geography integration</p> <p>Geography was described as being of important to social studies education</p> <p>Participation in Alliance workshops prior to the geography/literature workshop shaped attitudes toward geography’s importance</p> | <p>Geography “didn’t really come alive to me until I went to the Alliance”</p> <p>“I would’ve never been in AP Human Geography had it not been for the Alliance”</p> <p>Learning geography presented a “rebirth”</p> <p>Without Alliance support the interviewee “would not even [have] thought about geography</p> <p>“I learned a lot from Dr. -- --”</p> |
| Attitudes toward geography | <p>Literature teachers had positive views of geography content</p> <p>The majority of literature teacher’s discussion of geography was centered on its role in teaching literature rather than the merit of the discipline itself</p> | <p>Attendance at the WVGA workshop was “pretty eye opening”</p> <p>“I simply value that broader experience for students”</p> <p>Students “loved” geography integration</p> <p>“setting is more than just when and where”</p> |

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| | | <p>“so important and beneficial”</p> <p>“obviously extremely important”</p> |
| Confidence: social studies teachers | <p>Teachers with social studies backgrounds were more confident in their ability to integrate geography and literature materials into their pedagogy</p> <p>Teachers teaching AP geography felt very confident in their integration of geography</p> <p>Teachers that had attended WVGA workshops and geography related college/university courses cited what they learned there as a confidence booster</p> <p>Only one teacher indicated reservations about integrating literature</p> | <p>“I felt pretty confident having taught both English and social studies courses”</p> <p>Use of geography was “not hard! My class is a geography class!”</p> <p>“I feel like I’m an expert. I feel like I got a good solid background”</p> <p>“If I had to. I think I could do it like last year” (regarding incorporating literature)</p> |
| Confidence: literature teachers | <p>Literature teachers felt less confident in applying geographic material in their classroom pedagogy</p> <p>Literature teachers cited their social studies colleagues as resources they could turn to for help</p> <p>Only one literature teacher felt very confident, and she has a social studies certification</p> | <p>“I could always of course go [my colleague]. He is right down the hall. And if I had any questions he’d be more than willing to answer anything.”</p> <p>“I feel confident that I did my best”</p> <p>“I’m not an expert”</p> <p>“I think we collaborated more and formed a working relationship</p> |

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| | | <p>where we felt like if we needed more expertise in a certain area we could collaborate”</p> <p>“I’m confident in sharing what I’ve learned through the program and through working and collaborating with geography teachers, and I’m confident in my research skills”</p> |
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| Open codes | Axial Codes |
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| <p>Content’s relation to the standards Attitudes toward geography Attitudes toward geography/literature integration Sustained use of geography literature integration Abandonment of workshop strategies/materials Specific/individualized pedagogical strategies</p> | <p>Relevance to learning goals/objectives</p> |
| <p>Content’s relation to the standards Sustained use of geography literature integration Abandonment of workshop strategies/materials Co-teaching/Co-planning Challenges to application</p> | <p>Obstacles to the co-teaching of geography/literature instruction</p> |
| <p>Sustained use of geography literature integration Co-teaching/Co-planning Confidence: literature teachers Confidence: social studies teachers Attitudes toward geography integration Attitudes toward geography/literature integration Specific/individualized pedagogical strategies</p> | <p>Self-efficacy for implementation of geography/literature collaboration</p> |

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| Attitudes toward geography/literature integration Attitudes toward geography Abandonment of workshop strategies/materials Specific/individualized pedagogical strategies Content's relation to the standards Sustained use of geography literature integration | Usefulness of geography/literature cross disciplinary instruction |
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