Walden University

College of Education and Human Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Orchid Hill

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

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Walden University
2023

Abstract

Teacher Perceptions on the Implementation of a New Reading Curriculum in Third Grade

by

Orchid Hill

MA, Bowie State University, 2004

BS, University of Maryland University College, 1994

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

November 2023

Abstract

Since the inception of a new curriculum in a northeastern school district, reading proficiency scores remained low, and the district had not explored teacher experiences and challenges with the implementation of the new curriculum. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the experiences and challenges of third grade teachers when implementing the new required reading curriculum. The concerns based adoption model (CBAM) formed the conceptual framework for this study because it was designed to elicit concerns regarding implementing new programs. A purposeful sample of 12 third grade teachers utilizing the new curriculum for at least one year within the local school district was used to collect data. Participants were interviewed to identify the concerns, challenges, and experiences with implementing the new reading curriculum. Data were analyzed thematically, resulting in five themes: lack of collaborative learning and classroom support, time management of nonacademic requirements, concerns regarding professional development, navigating curriculum complexity, and concerns about curriculum alignment. Results indicated teachers were concerned about managing tasks associated with implementing the curriculum and how their actions impact students' learning. The resulting project was a 3-day professional development to support the implementation of the curriculum and develop a network of community learners. Implications for potential positive social change included providing school leaders with data to assist them in making systemic changes before and during implementation of a reading curriculum to improve student progress in reading proficiency.

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to my mom, Beverly Butler, daughter, Bevara Anderson, and grandson, Tripp. Thank you to my mom for managing our home, cooking delicious meals, and handling many of my responsibilities, freeing me to dedicate more time to research. Thank you to my daughter for being a fantastic example of a woman excelling while living in her truth. Seeing you persevere through adversity with courage and grace provided me with immeasurable inspiration to continue the race toward completing my program. I could not have been successful without you. And to Tripp, my tenacious grandson who fights daily to overcome battles to live his best life, you motivate me every day to be thankful for God's precious gift of life.

Acknowledgments

Thank you to my first chair, Dr. Michelle McCraney, and second committee member, Dr. Ashraf Esmail for guidance, support, and encouragement. My endeavor was filled with peaks and valleys but made easier by the resourcefulness and constructive feedback offered during opportune times. I thank my colleagues and dedicated friends who provided advice and inspiration throughout my research journey. And above all else, thank you, God, for directing my path through this process from the beginning to the end.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

Reading is an essential skill that forms the foundation for learning. Fundamentally, a primary goal of elementary school is to help students learn the complex and interactive reading process proficiently (Nouwens et al., 2021). Developing reading comprehension skills may influence students' academic success and future real world experiences, considering most knowledge acquisition occurs through reading (Ardhian et al., 2020). Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) mandated schools adopt evidence-based curricula to enhance student outcomes (Slavin, 2020). Pinkelman et al. (2022) suggested that efficacy remains an issue regarding implementing evidence-based programs as ESSA prescribes.

The degree to which curricula are implemented with fidelity may significantly influence the program's effectiveness. Implementing new curricula requires that teachers command the knowledge and motivation to implement curricula with fidelity (Ambusaidi et at., 2021). Teachers' attitudes and personal experiences are significant to the level of implementation. Kaimara et al. (2021) suggested that teachers' perceived value of an innovation is a significant factor in implementing curricula with fidelity. Several concerns regarding curriculum implementation would involve understanding if implementation occurred as designed and general barriers or facilitators to implementing the curriculum (Lakin & Rambo-Hernandez, 2019).

The Local Problem

In 2014, the Local School District's (LSD) 2015-2020 Strategic Plan described the declining academic performance in reading as a critical area of concern (LSD, n.d.). In response, the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH): Into Reading curriculum was adopted for third grade classes across the district (LSD, n.d.). The problem was that in the years since the inception of this new curriculum, reading proficiency scores remained low, and the district had not explored teacher experiences and challenges with the implementation of the new curriculum. The HMH: Into Reading curriculum is a K-6 literacy curriculum designed to support all learners using evidence-based materials (HMH, n.d.). The curriculum includes 12 modules differentiated by design to foster a growth mindset in students to become independent readers and lifelong learners (HMH, n.d.). In a 2019 Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) reading assessment, grade 3 students' reading scores increased significantly from the beginning of the year to the middle (HMH, 2020). STAR assessments are used to monitor students' reading progress (Scammacca et al., 2020). The STAR assessment measures progress in phonics, word reading, vocabulary, and literary and expository text comprehension (Scammacca et al., 2020). There is a gap in practice since HMH affirmed that students would make reading achievement gains (Eddy et al., 2020). However, in the local setting, students' scores had yet to show the expected improvement.

School programs and interventions are rarely implemented as planned due to changes made during the implementation process. Consequently, fidelity is paramount to understanding how changes influence student outcomes (Anderson, 2017; Moon & Park,

2016). In addition, carefully examining a new implementation assists school leaders in understanding why programs fail or succeed (Lakin & Rambo-Hernandez, 2019). Students realize increased gains when programs are implemented with higher fidelity (King-Sears et al., 2018). However, if programs are not implemented well, understanding what contributes to student growth or the lack thereof becomes difficult (Karakus, 2021; Konrad et al., 2019).

Between 2015-2018, reading proficiency scores for the LSD averaged 24% (State Department of Education, 2019). However, the three school districts bordering the LSD achieved higher reading proficiency scores during the same period (State Department of Education, 2019). The three geographically closest districts averaged 47%, 51%, and 53% (State Department of Education, 2019). In 2019, after approval from the principals, teachers within the LSD implemented the HMH: Into Reading curriculum. Due to COVID, the state received a waiver. Therefore, annual reading assessment scores for 2019-2020 are not available. However, the LSD's 2020-2021 State Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) results reflected reading scores well below neighboring counties. In 2021, the LSD reported reading proficiency levels for third graders of 12.5%. Conversely, closely neighboring counties reported proficiency levels at 36%, 34%, and 26% (State Department of Education, 2021).

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is a congressionally mandated assessment administered by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), designed to measure students' academic performance in grades 4, 8, and 12 in reading, math, and other core subjects. In the United States, the percentage of fourth-

grade public school students at or above NAEP reading proficiency for 2019-2021 was 33% (NCES, 2022). In the LSD's state, this percentage was just below the national average at 31% (NCES, 2022). The NAEP generates data on reading scores only for grades 4, 8, and 12, reflecting a need for further research on reading skills at the third-grade level.

In the LSD, in this study, the reading proficiency in reading at the third grade level, based on the MCAP test scores, was 12.5% - less than the NAEP averages and state averages (State Department of Education, 2021). From available MCAP data, the state English language arts proficiency for third grade was higher, at 24% (State Department of Education, 2021). The data reflects that progress remains in meeting and exceeding the gain of neighboring districts, states, and the national average.

Rationale

The LSD adopted the HMH: Into Reading curriculum but altered the curriculum by selecting reading and writing modules aligned with the [State] College and Career Reading Standards (CCRS) developed within the Eastern state in which this study took place and the Framework for Teaching program (Local School District, 2019). Researchers have advised that inappropriate implementation of school reforms could influence fidelity. Thus, exploring the fidelity of implementing new programs by assessing teacher perceptions should transpire (Gonzalez et al., 2020; Lakin & Shannon, 2015; Stains & Vickrey, 2017). Understanding the challenges that may influence the implementation of the reading curriculum becomes significant in developing approaches to improve the implementation and yield improved student outcomes. Understanding

teachers' perceptions of implementing the new reading curriculum was used to determine how the fidelity of implementing the new curriculum will be improved and thereby improve students' reading skills.

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

In 2019, the LSD implemented the HMH: Into Reading curriculum (State Department of Education, n.d.). However, teachers' experiences implementing the new reading curriculum had yet to be explored. As a result, there was limited information on the perceptions of implementing the reading curriculum within the LSD, which means there may not have been sufficient knowledge on the barriers and facilitators to implement the reading curriculum correctly. A primary concern regarding implementing programs involved understanding if implementation occurred as designed and the general barriers or facilitators to implementing the curriculum with fidelity. To understand why and if a program worked, it is imperative to know if the program was implemented with fidelity (Lakin & Rambo-Hernandez, 2019). Consequently, understanding the factors that lead to implementing programs as designed remains a significant subject to explore for school leaders (McNeill et al., 2018).

The LSD's school board approved adopting the new curriculum, which aligned to the state standards to ensure students' college and workplace success by improving student achievement in reading and math within the Eastern state (Local School District, 2019). Additionally, the approved FY2020 annual operating budget included funds for professional development (PD) for teachers and school leaders regarding system curriculum and teaching best practices (Local School District, n.d.). However, the LSD

implemented the new curriculum in 2019 without a plan to explore teachers' perceptions in terms of implementing the program with fidelity (District Academic Leader, personal communication obtained by the researcher in their position as a K-12 professional, January 7, 2020). The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the experiences and challenges of 3rd grade teachers when implementing the new, required reading curriculum.

Definition of Terms

The following educational terms were implemented throughout the study. Therefore, defining the terms as bound within this study was appropriate. The study used the following terms to form the bases for this project study.

Concerns-based adoption model (CBAM): A model providing tools and techniques that enable leaders to identify and measure staff concerns experienced during the implementation of a program (SEDL, n.d.).

Implementation: "A dynamic process, involving the interaction among multiple actors, starting with the adoption of a new practice and ending with its routinization" (Trullen et al., 2020, p. 150).

Significance of the Study

The stakeholders who cared about the barriers and challenges teachers experience when implementing a curriculum were principals, district leaders, teachers, parents, and students. The significance of exploring teacher experiences may assist principals in better understanding how they can support teachers involved in implementing a new curriculum. When principals understand teachers' concerns, an

environment of collaborative problem solving may lead to improved implementation fidelity (Olson et al., 2020). Also, being privy to teachers' challenges may allow principals to create mitigation strategies to address the issues (Nollmeyer et al., 2019). Harris and Graham (2019) concluded that teachers do not welcome curriculum change. Understanding teachers' concerns may give principals the knowledge surrounding the level of support needed to promote teacher buy in. Acquiring teachers' acceptance of new programs may increase fidelity resulting in higher student outcomes (Gonzalez et al., 2020).

Some benefits to LSD's leaders included systematically identifying concerns that may prompt the use of job-embedded training, PD, or mentor coaching. The data from the study provided insight into curricular components that teachers found challenging to implement with fidelity. Due to the complexity of innovations, teachers should participate in sustained PD (Smets & Struyven, 2020). District leaders will care about this study because it may help target these areas of concern and provide data to support the need for teacher training (Davis et al., 2018). Identifying teacher concerns may help district leaders proactively provide PD budgets to improve curriculum implementation.

Teachers may benefit if school leaders understand their concerns and provide support to implement the reading program better. In Pak et al. (2020) research, three principals reported that teachers were uncomfortable with implementing a new curriculum but changed their mindset when administrative leadership began to support their needs. In another study by Rogers (2021), the researcher used CBAM as the

conceptual framework to explore teachers' attitudes and beliefs regarding implementing a standards-based curriculum. The results indicated that teachers' concerns informed their instructional practices. Furthermore, the researcher suggested that district leaders identify teachers' beliefs regarding implementation to offer PD to improve implementation processes and procedures.

Students may benefit from this study because exploring teachers' barriers and experiences may improve curriculum implementation. Moon and Young (2021) suggested that student outcomes may improve if teachers implement curricula as designed. Another barrier to implementing curricula involved teachers' need for more content knowledge. Ambusaidi et al. (2021) suggested that students' learning may decrease due to teachers' inadequate level of content knowledge. Research conducted by Troyer (2019) concluded that adaptations to the curriculum lead to students having different experiences and outcomes not intended by curriculum designers. Understanding teachers' perceptions regarding new curricula may improve students' chances of receiving instruction more closely aligned with curriculum designers.

CBAM represents the conceptual framework used for the study. The components of CBAM include the tools and techniques to assist leaders in identifying the concerns of staff involved in implementing new school programs (SEDL, n.d.) The selection of CBAM resulted from the perceived challenges related to implementing new initiatives. Implications for social change included implementing systemic changes by providing school leaders with informed data relevant to teachers' concerns before adopting a new school curriculum to improve fidelity.

Research Questions

In the LSD in the Eastern United States, there were challenges in using the new, required curriculum to improve the reading proficiency of third grade students. Since implementing a new evidence-based reading curriculum in 2019, there had yet to be a systematic effort to explore how teachers used the implementation and what challenges they had with the implementation. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the experiences and challenges of third grade teachers when implementing the new required reading curriculum. The following research questions (RQs) were designed to explore teacher experiences and challenges with implementing the new 3rd grade reading curriculum:

RQ1: What are the experiences of 3rd grade teachers in the LSD with implementing the HMH: Into Reading curriculum?

RQ2: What challenges and concerns do 3rd grade teachers in the LSD report with implementing the HMH: Into Reading curriculum?

Review of the Literature

King-Sears et al. (2018) suggested that implementing new academic programs with fidelity may improve student outcomes. Implementing a new curriculum without determining the fidelity of implementation (FOI) makes it difficult to assess its effectiveness (Gale et al., 2020). Teachers' beliefs are essential factors in the change process and relate to the level of implementation (Jiang et al., 2020). Moon and Young (2021) expressed that a new reading program may lose effectiveness if not implemented with fidelity. Therefore, exploring teachers' perceptions regarding barriers and

experiences during implementation occurred to understand the new academic program's effectiveness successfully.

The concerns based adoption model (CBAM), the conceptual framework used for the study, was created by Hall and Hord (1987; 2015). The CBAM components identify attitudes and beliefs toward adopting a new program. The model provides ways to explore teachers' perceptions during the implementation of an innovation (Wachidi, 2019). CBAM components will provide strategies and tools that allow educational leaders to gather data on teachers' concerns and program applications to create support to improve curriculum implementation (Rogers, 2021; Trapani & Annunziato, 2019). The concept or phenomenon that grounds this study was teachers' experiences implementing a required curriculum.

Conceptual Framework

To explore the experiences and challenges third grade teachers had with the new reading curriculum, I used elements of the CBAM (Hall & Hord, 2015). I primarily used the Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoCQ) to develop interview questions. Also, during interviews, I used the innovation configuration matrix to help me understand where teachers view themselves along the continuum of implementing the new curriculum. As implementors become more comfortable using innovations, a shift occurs from unconcerned to how the innovation will influence students and colleagues (SEDL, n.d.).

CBAM originated following Fuller's work regarding teachers' concerns (Fuller, 1969). Since then, CBAM has been used in the educational setting to understand further

teachers' beliefs, concerns, and levels of adherence throughout the implementation process of innovations (Hall & Hord, 2020). The researchers posited that each person responds to a new program with uniqueness which causes implementation variability based on personal attitudes and beliefs (SEDL, n.d.). Utilizing CBAM may provide school leaders with evidence-based data to inform decisions and actions, leading to improved implementation (Rogers, 2021).

The components of CBAM include three diagnostic parts: innovation configurations (IC), stages of concern (SoC), and levels of use (LoU) (SEDL, n.d.). IC helps teachers to understand the design of the innovation and what constitutes exceptional implementation (SEDL, n.d.). Also, IC provides teachers with clear ideas of what the new practice looks like when it operates within the classroom (Hall & Hord, 2020). During the IC phase of CBAM, IC maps are developed based on documented implementation components and ideal versus problematic implementation ranges within each component (George et al., 2013).

The SoC element focuses on the people implementing the innovation to the end user. Kaimara et al. (2021) suggested that teachers' perceived value of an innovation is a significant factor in implementing curricula with fidelity. The SoC aims to highlight users' concerns during the implementation process (SEDL, n.d.). According to the developers, the SoC provides a critical step in understanding how implementors respond to change (Kayaduman & Demirel, 2019). The component includes seven categories of possible concerns related to innovation. According to Hall and Hord (2020), the change process involves the following stages of concern: (a) Stage 0: unconcerned, (b) Stage 1:

informational, (c) Stage 2: personal, (d) Stage 3: management, (e) Stage 4: consequences, (f) Stage 5: collaboration, and (g) Stage 6: refocusing. As part of the SoC, the SoCQ is a questionnaire to ask implementors about their concerns when faced with a new program. The SoCQ is used to rate the extent to which participants agree with statements related to an innovation (Kayaduman & Demirel, 2019). Individual and group profiles emerge to assist stakeholders in addressing teachers' concerns regarding the new curriculum (George et al., 2013). Staff profiles emerge from the SoCQ data placing implementors within the seven SoC categories related to the innovation (George et al., 2013).

Finally, the LoU provides a tool to allow leaders to gather information on the degree of fidelity with which the innovations are being used (SEDL, n.d.). The LoU process includes providing staff members with questions to identify the implementation stage ranging from the beginning to a more advanced stage (SEDL, n.d.). Considering the SoC measures implementors' concerns regarding implementation, the SoC was selected as the focus for exploring experiences and challenges of 3rd grade teachers when implementing the new required reading curriculum. Interview questions were developed by adapting questions from SoCQ. Logical connections among key elements of CBAM included identifying teachers' barriers and practices when implementing a new reading curriculum, which served this study's purpose.

Review of the Broader Problem

In this literature review, I described the concept of curriculum implementation, teacher roles and responsibilities, curriculum alignment, barriers to implementation, and administrative support with regards to experiences and challenges of third grade teachers

when implementing a new reading curriculum. To ensure literature saturation for this research, several steps were conducted to find relevant and current research. In finding resources for this study, the following keywords were used: *balanced literacy, barriers to implementation, CBAM, change process, curricular alignment, curriculum design, curriculum implementation, curriculum reform, FOI, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, implementing innovations, interviews, qualitative research design, teaching and learning, thematic analysis, reading curriculum, teacher perceptions, school innovations, self-efficacy.* Next, I discussed my proposed problem with my colleagues and classmates. Lastly, I used the Walden Library databases for searching which included the following: APA PsycInfo, SAGE Journals, Taylor and Francis Online, Education resources Information, Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), Google Scholar, ProQuest Central, Directory of Open Access Journals, and SocINDEX.

Schools face a myriad of challenges to improve student achievement. Education funding comprises the highest component of state and local expenditures (Baker, 2021). Nonetheless, policy discussions often focus on enhancing inputs rather than changing school resource levels (Lafortune et al., 2018). Therefore, barriers may occur in implementing new curriculums, potentially influencing student achievement. Fidelity of implementation, which involves effectively implementing an evidence-based program or curriculum, is critical for student learning and improving student outcomes (Offerdahl et al., 2018; Pas et al., 2019; Scherer & Ingle, 2020). Specific to this study, researchers also found that students' scores on reading assessments were higher when teachers implemented reading interventions and curriculums with fidelity (Gonzalez et al., 2020;

De La Paz et al., 2014). Effective implementation is integral to enacting new school reforms (Bosworth et al., 2018). Variances in implementing the key components of a curriculum may result in school leadership's inability to understand the basis for student outcomes (Topping, 2018). Willson and Falcon (2018) argued that a consistent lack of understanding regarding defining processes and procedures often resulted in various implementation practices.

When teachers use evidence-based methodologies, it increases the chance of student achievement (Cook et al., 2017; Lekwa et al., 2019). Since the 1990s, a shift towards evidence-based practices in education has occurred to ensure the proper implementation of programs (Connolly et al., 2018). In 2015, the federal government enacted ESSA (2015) to ensure that all students receive an equal educational opportunity. Significant to the current study, ESSA mandated that schools utilize evidence-based methodologies and provide for PD to enhance student outcomes (Graham et al., 2018; Slavin, 2020).

To implement a curriculum, teachers' knowledge of processes and procedures must align with the curriculum to ensure effective delivery (Lakin & Rambo-Hernandez, 2019). Often, teachers use broad discretion in interpreting and carrying out new school programs based on beliefs about literacy instruction (Anderson, 2017; Bingham & Hall-Kenyon, 2013). The fidelity of implementing curriculum as defined by curriculum designers influences student achievement (Kavanagh & Fisher-Ari, 2020; Siuty et al., 2018). Teachers may therefore face challenges in implementing curriculums, which may lead to challenges in effectively delivering the content of the curriculum and thereby

prevent improvements in student achievement. Understanding teachers' perceptions of implementing the new reading curriculum can determine how the fidelity of implementing the new curriculum may be improved and thereby improve students' reading.

New Curriculum Implementation

Students may not experience academic success from exposure to the program if the curricula implementers deviate from the program design (Moon & Young, 2021). Traditionally, curriculum design includes goals, objectives, lesson plans, and materials. Teachers are the managers to change in schools (Taimur & Sattar, 2020). Curriculum designers expect curricula to be implemented the same across each grade level, but teachers often work in isolation, adapting instructional practices according to beliefs (Falloon et al., 2020). Horner et al. (2019) suggested that critical elements are associated with implementing innovations according to design.

Research indicated a series of stages that effectively facilitate adopting a new program, intervention, or practice (Bergmark et al., 2019; Forman et al., 2021; Myers et al., 2012). First, the organization should explore the need and fit of the new program to ensure stakeholder buy-in (Moir, 2018; Myers et al., 2012). Next, creating processes and procedures that match the program's design should occur (Forman et al., 2021; Myers et al., 2012). Then, practitioners implement the program adhering to processes and procedures detailed in the second stage (Nordstrum et al., 2017). Additionally, the organization should utilize practices and systems necessary for sustainability and scaling the program (Horner et al., 2017; Lee & Louis, 2019; Nordstrum et al., 2017). The stages

of implementation are iterative and require revisiting as new implementors encounter the program (Forman et al., 2013; von Thiele Schwarz et al., 2021). Identifying teacher beliefs about teaching and reform and conditions that support the sustainability of changes may help to facilitate the implementation of new school programs (Balgopal, 2020).

School system changes often involve curriculum with the expectations of quick implementation time frames, which challenges schools, especially teachers, as implementation agents (Dimmock et al., 2021). In an evaluation of curriculum implementation, the NCES (2012) reported that 16% of teachers recorded low levels of fidelity, 51% recorded average levels of fidelity, and 30% recorded high levels of fidelity of implementation. The NCES data underscores that a series of systematic supports is necessary to promote an efficient curriculum implementation (Faggella-Luby & Bonfiglio, 2020). Systematic support involves monitoring and measuring implementation fidelity's process and structure components (Nordstrum et al., 2017). The structure refers to the quantity of the program or intervention, whereas the process pertains to the implementation quality (Odom, 2009). When teachers implement new curriculums, practitioners adapt processes and procedures to fit their classroom context (Odom, 2009). The adaptations to curriculum occur based on teachers' values, perceptions, administrative support, and organizational context (Forman et al., 2013; Kim & Chung, 2017; Troyer, 2019).

Understanding teachers' beliefs and experiences may provide insights into whether instructional practices will parallel curriculum design (Sexton, 2020). A

researcher analyzed the implementation of a reading intervention program for students more than two years below grade level (Troyer, 2019). The results indicated that only 14 percent of teaching time did not include adaptations to the curriculum (Troyer, 2019). Furthermore, the enactments on the curriculum varied among teachers, demonstrating that the changes reflect teachers' beliefs, mainly oriented towards the curriculum. To ensure alignment between curriculum design and implementation, teachers' beliefs about learning and teaching should match the philosophy of the curriculum. Cansiz and Cansiz (2022) researched the misalignment between curriculum philosophy and teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning. The findings indicated that teachers' classroom practices mirrored their previous experiences and approach to classroom instruction, which did not align with the curriculum developers' intentions. Before implementing innovations, the researchers recommended that PD align teachers' beliefs and understanding of the curriculum with developers (Cansiz & Cansiz, 2022).

Content Knowledge

Teachers may use identical curricula but based on their beliefs and content knowledge, use different techniques, strategies, and methods during the implementation phase (Ballard & Haroldson, 2022; Gallo-Fox & Cuccuini-Harmon, 2018; Nollmeyer, 2019). Different uses of the curriculum may have various effects on student outcomes. Gelmez-Burakgazi (2020) argued that teachers' characteristics play a significant role in program implementation. Some of the adaptations made to the curriculum involve teachers' characteristics regarding content knowledge, competence, attitudes, personal attributes, and teacher training (Latif et al., 2019; White et al., 2021). Ambusaidi et al.

(2021) posited that insufficient content knowledge of a science curriculum hindered students' understanding and progress. The researchers suggested the need for PD to strengthen and sustain content knowledge espoused by the curriculum.

Teacher Self-Efficacy

Fullan (2018) suggested that successful implementation in an organization depends upon the ability to manage the social process of people. The researcher acknowledged that change is relative to the preparedness and actions of people. According to Gene Hall (SEDL, n.d.), staff may respond to change in many ways. Understanding their beliefs about self-efficacy may influence implementation levels. DeJarnette (2018) described the successful implementation of a science, technology, engineering, art, and math program due to increased teachers' self-efficacy and disposition toward the new curriculum. The researcher believed that increases from pre to post survey indicated their ability to utilize the curriculum as designed increased as teachers' self-efficacy increased. Understanding teachers' beliefs about self-efficacy are required to support the curricular demands necessary to address the learning needs of students (Martinez, 2022; De Smul et al., 2020). Liu and Liao (2019) suggested that job-embedded, inquiry oriented PD positively correlated with teacher efficacy.

Lee et al. (2018) recognized a connection between teacher content knowledge and student achievement. The researchers found that teachers' subject matter knowledge regarding problem posing influences students' mathematical achievements. In another study, researchers found that adopting and integrating an information technology program (ICT) was governed by teachers' characteristics, such as ICT knowledge and

attitudes toward the program's tenets (Lawrence & Tar, 2018). Neuman and Danielson (2021) suggested that teachers' content knowledge may support their confidence and skill in teaching content-rich curricula, which may improve curriculum implementation. Considering teachers' self-efficacy and content knowledge's significant role in implementing programs, understanding the perceived barriers to implementation is necessary (Bondie et al., 2019; Capp, 2020; Philipsen et al., 2019).

Curriculum Component Effectiveness

Additional reasons teachers choose not to implement a curriculum with fidelity stem from their beliefs surrounding the ineffectiveness of the curriculum and the notion that the curriculum may violate best practices (Kelly, 2018). Barrett-Tatum and Smith (2018) analyzed the implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), which aimed to ensure students' quality education across the nation. Teachers in the study felt that the CCSS restricted creativity and did not call for using proven methodologies. Teachers must feel prepared and supported when making standard mastery a reality for all students. Barrett-Tatum and Smith (2018) argued that teachers' lack of belief that CCSS aligned with the needs of all students led to low implementation adherence. Furthermore, the authors concluded that teachers must be provided opportunities to become familiar with standards and feel prepared and supported when implementing instructional practices outlined in curricula through sustained PD. Zucker et al. (2021) research concluded that teachers' reluctance to implement the curriculum as designed stemmed from beliefs that some activities needed to fit better students with unique needs, such as English learners or students with special needs.

Researchers have found that demanding pacing expectations come with many new curricula (Gelmez-Burakgazi, 2020; Zucker et al., 2021). Researchers found that a primary barrier to implementing curricula with fidelity stemmed from competing priorities for teachers' time (Gillam et al., 2022; Zucker et al., 2021). Zucker et al. (2021) concluded that the curriculum needed to allow adequate time to deliver instruction or prep time for teachers to prepare for program delivery. Gilliam et al. (2021) suggested that when teachers fail to include essential lesson components, they run out of time. Gelmez-Burakgazi (2020) suggested that one reason teachers may adapt a program is based on time limitations built into the curricula. Teachers find methods to adapt the curriculum to compensate for time constraints (Nurlaily et al., 2019). White et al. (2021) conducted a study using an action research approach to uncover barriers to implementing a program. The researcher concluded that time was a significant factor preventing teachers from implementing the curriculum with fidelity. Teachers expressed concerns about insufficient time to conduct instructional activities and cover the necessary content (White et al., 2021).

Understanding how teachers think about and use curricula elements may influence the outcomes of the implemented program (Swindle et al., 2022). Key factors influencing implementation include general concerns regarding the new program, fidelity, and influence (Swindle et al., 2022). A relationship exists between teachers' attitudes about a curriculum, their level of use, and the type of changes made during implementation (Kim et al., 2020; Locke et al., 2019). Some implementors make adaptions to improve the fit of innovation within a context. In contrast, others may decide to change or remove core

components of a program, which may reduce effectiveness (Wiltsey Stirman et al., 2019). Also, research suggests that attitudes about evidence-based practices, as part of a curriculum, relate to implementers' adaptations. When implementors have negative attitudes toward curriculum components, they tend to make more adaptations relating to decreasing required activities and changing the order activities are implemented (Kim et al., 2020).

School Climate

The challenge of providing positive working environments affects the adoption of programs within school districts (Reaves & Cozzens, 2018). Existing research supports a connection between a positive school climate and teachers' ability to facilitate meaningful learning for students (Darling-Hammond & Oakes, 2021; Zysberg & Schwabsky, 2021). Understanding teachers' perceptions about school climate may assist school officials in aligning programs and ensuring that implemented programs are effective (De Smul et al., 2020; Reaves & Cozzens, 2018). Williams et al. (2021) posited that school culture and climate are linked to the quality of implementation of evidence-based practices in schools. Improvement in the organizational environment contributes to improved implementation outcomes (Williams & Glisson, 2020). The need to understand teachers' perceptions of school climate when implementing a new curriculum is apparent, considering the effect on instruction and fidelity of implementation (Oder & Eisenschmidt, 2018).

Teacher Roles and Responsibilities

Teachers are vital in delivering curriculum in their classrooms (Gelmez-Burakgazi, 2020). Teachers should understand the goals and objectives of the curriculum to ensure FOI (Cansiz & Cansiz, 2022; Lewis et al., 2019). Raymond et al. (2020) found that teachers' ability to implement an aligned curriculum using best practices and required materials is integral to supporting positive student outcomes. Teachers need the training to meet the goals and objectives of a curriculum. One way to support teachers' preparedness to implement a curriculum is to involve teachers in the design or development of the curriculum (Lewis et al., 2019; Quigley et al., 2020; Voogt et al., 2018). A higher quality product will emerge when teachers are involved in curriculum development. The authors found that teachers' involvement improves instructional practices, increases implementation fidelity, and contributes to student achievement (Vaughn et al., 2021; Voogt et al., 2018). Understanding teachers' perceptions regarding their role in curriculum design may lead to identifying teachers' concerns about implementing a new program (Voogt et al., 2018).

Identifying teacher beliefs about teaching and reform and conditions that support the sustainability of changes may facilitate the implementation of reforms (Balgopal, 2020). Teachers' perceptions of the school climate, such as openness to innovation, decision making powers, and collaborative opportunities, all influence the implementation of programs (Malloy et al., 2015). Monitoring the quality of delivery may help identify when teachers' perceptions affect the implementation process. According to Woulfin (2015), teachers' responsiveness to new reforms varies based on

the level of exposure to policy messages regarding the new program. When school leaders emphasize specific reform components, it increases the use of the feature.

Historically, teachers have faced challenges when implementing curriculum in classrooms. Understanding the challenges and concerns of teachers implementing school programs may allow leaders to identify ways to mitigate the barriers leading to improved student outcomes. Nollmeyer et al. (2019) conducted a study to explore teachers' barriers to implementing a new program. One significant barrier identified in the study was curriculum alignment. Teachers indicated a need for more alignment between the required activities and the constructivist approach to engage students in problem solving and critical thinking. In another study by García et al. (2021), teachers used a dialogic cognitive strategy to instruct students during reading class. The researchers indicated that teachers held limited views of the students' capabilities, which led teachers to compensate by making changes during the implementation process. Additionally, the researchers concluded that teachers' concerns that students would not benefit from small group lessons prevented teachers from fully implementing the strategy (García et al., 2021).

Proposing ways to mitigate barriers made it necessary to understand why teachers choose not to implement a curriculum as designed. In a study conducted by Folsom et al. (2019), teachers spent most of the time in whole-class instruction instead of small group instruction suggested for the Tier 3 reading intervention program aimed at struggling students. Research findings revealed that only two-thirds of instructional time was spent on reading-related activities to improve the target groups' reading deficiencies. Related to the variability in instruction, the researchers suggested that teachers involved in the study

may have lacked the knowledge, experience, or confidence to implement the program (Folsom et al., 2019). Teachers may benefit from PD and literacy coaching to improve teaching practices to improve struggling readers' comprehension. Davis et al. (2019) completed a study to evaluate the use of literacy coaches on teachers' implementation of instructional practices with struggling readers. The results indicated that coaching improved teachers' instructional practices and student achievement (Davis et al., 2019).

Barriers to Implementing New Programs

Factors that may affect the fidelity of implementing programs include teachers' belief that a discrepancy exists between students' abilities and curriculum goals, the complexity of the program, and the lack of resources (Margot & Kettler, 2019; McMaster et al., 2021; McKenna & Parenti, 2017). Teachers must be highly receptive to implementing the curriculum as designed (Phillips et al., 2017). When teachers perceive that certain aspects of a new curriculum will not meet students' needs, it may lead to inconsistent adaptations or nonacceptance (Daniel & Lemons, 2018). Research indicated that when teachers perceive the curriculum as inflexible or complex, it may cause hesitancy or reluctance to engage the curriculum during the instructional process (Le et al., 2021). Dijkstra et al. (2017) conducted a study to determine the FOI of a program implemented across 18 study sites. The results indicated a lack of fidelity, mainly due to a lack of administrator support and resources. Therefore, when teachers lack sufficient resources and support from leadership and display negativity toward the program, FOI may suffer (Dijkstra et al., 2017).

Another criterion that may affect implementation is teachers' perceptions regarding personal classroom management skills and instructional knowledge. Kanter and Konstantopoulos (2010) suggested that teachers' lack of content and pedogeological knowledge may influence their ability to enact the curriculum as designed. Also, research indicated that when teachers feel unprepared to manage the classrooms, it affects the learning environment (Nagro et al., 2019). Teachers understand that disengaged students experience challenges with meeting learning expectations (Nagro et al., 2019). Educators struggling with classroom management may become distracted by disruptive behaviors and change the curriculum to remain on pace. When teachers utilize effective classroom management strategies, students engage significantly more during class (Kennedy et al., 2017), leading to greater adherence and effectiveness in program implementation.

Additional factors relating to the barriers to implementing programs with fidelity involve teachers' personal beliefs regarding the capability and knowledge to implement the reform (Cottone et al., 2021). When teachers lack experience in implementing new programs, it may cause anxiousness and result in teachers' reluctance to implement the curriculum as designed (Xenofontos, 2019). Teachers' beliefs about their ability to provide effective instruction may influence instructional strategies associated with the curriculum (Cottone et al., 2021; Nichols et al., 2020). In a research study, Poulou et al. (2019) investigated the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and classroom practices. One outcome of the study was that teachers with high levels of self-efficacy used instructional strategies designed by the curriculum developers to facilitate students'

mastery of skills. Consequently, understanding teachers' beliefs regarding self-efficacy remains significant to ensuring that teachers use practices outlined in the curriculum.

Considering that teachers are the curriculum implementers, a significant influence on FOI relates to teachers' perceptions (Sulaiman et al., 2017). Teachers' perception of the work environment affects the implementation of the curriculum. Ford et al. (2018) studied how teachers' perceptions of the working environment affect instructional practice. The researcher concluded that unsupported teachers lean towards teaching to the test and narrowing the curriculum. Additionally, the quality of curricula and material resources, planning time, and opportunities for collegial interactions affect how teachers enact instructional practices as prescribed (Bettini et al., 2020). These trends suggested that teachers require a supportive environment to work and interact with new programs with fidelity (Ford et al., 2017; Hargreaves, 2010; Holloway & Brass, 2018).

Other teacher perceptions about implementing programs with fidelity included teacher beliefs regarding alignment between curriculum and students' lived experiences, background knowledge, and missed opportunities to connect with students' emerging abilities. Maniates (2017) conducted a recent study examining how teachers at an urban elementary school adapted to the curriculum to increase student access. One teacher made adaptations when she expected limited benefits to her students or perceived a disconnect between students and the curriculum. Another teacher's adaptation occurred because the program content excluded students by not offering opportunities to build background knowledge before introducing abstract concepts. Similarly, a different teacher reported adding or removing content that she felt needed or unnecessary to fill in

her students' learning gaps (Maniates, 2017). The literature infers that teachers must believe in the effectiveness of the curriculum to implement the curriculum as designed.

School Leadership

Researchers have identified administrative support as necessary for teacher success and the implementation of new school programs (Bosworth et al., 2018; Locke et al., 2019; Ganon-Shilon & Schechter, 2019). Principals should feel equipped to support the implementation of new school programs (Acton, 2021; Forman et al., 2021). Hall and Hord (2020) described what they considered an effective change process that includes six factors: (1) developing a shared vision, (2) planning and providing resources, (3) investing in professional learning, (4) checking on progress, (5) providing continuous assistance and (6) creating a culture supportive of change. Acton (2021) suggested that school leaders' gaps in the understanding of the change process may contribute to the failed implementation of educational programs. The researcher posited that principals' inability to understand teachers' different stages of understanding and skill might require differentiated interventions by principals as an example of a gap in understanding the change process. With personalized support, teachers can implement new strategies (Acton, 2021).

Principals may not implement a new school program because principals do not 'buy in' to the exigency of a proposed mandate, or they might feel overloaded and reluctant to take on another responsibility (Acton, 2021). Additional challenges to implementing new reforms include needing more support from district leaders and difficulties coordinating other duties while implementing mandated reforms (Abu-

Alghayth et al., 2020; Simon et al., 2021). In a study by Acton (2021), all participants described a barrier to implementation stemming from a lack of district support. The principals believed that districts should share the responsibility for change implementation, including providing opportunities for PD and visits to schools by the superintendent to identify which schools need help in the change process (Acton, 2021; Meyer-Looze et al., 2019). Simon et al. (2021) suggested the need for ongoing PD for principals and teachers as key to the successful implementation of reforms.

Principals must be able to manage administrative duties, including becoming instructional leaders to ensure that teachers are prepared to use best practices and reduce teachers' resistance to change when implementing curriculum (Chabalala & Naidoo, 2021; Lang, 2019; Tremont & Templeton, 2019). Research suggests that principals should execute all activities and processes to support teachers' enhancement of curriculum delivery and reduce resistance to implementation (Lang, 2019). Bellibas et al. (2021) conducted a study investigating the effects of principals' leadership on teachers' instructional quality. Researchers indicate that teachers' classroom instructional practices significantly influence students' learning outcomes (Bryce et al., 2019; Duke et al., 2018; Hassan & Akbar, 2020). Bellibas et al. (2021) study indicated that the more principals engaged in instructional leadership, the better the quality of instruction among teachers at their school. To ensure the development of teachers' ability to deliver the curriculum as prescribed, principals need to ensure that teachers receive relevant and continued PD (Chabalala & Naidoo, 2021).

Establishing and maintaining PLCs are beneficial to adopting reforms in schools, making it essential to understand the challenges teachers may experience as part of a PLC. Willis and Templeton (2018) suggested that schools consider PLCs to provide students with programs to overcome obstacles to student achievement. Wan (2020) argued that positive school reform occurs when teachers participate in PLCs. Integrating PLCs within the school culture helps to promote a culture of student achievement. Principals must facilitate connecting the use of PLCs to making practical changes in the school that subsequently affects learning for all students and teachers (Meyer-Looze et al., 2019). As part of the PLC process, principals must champion the mutual trust between themselves and teachers to ensure the sustainably of PLCs (Meyer-Looze et al., 2019). However, principals reported challenges regarding providing time to establish and maintain PLCs. Therefore, understanding teachers' concerns involving participation in PLCs was necessary because of the connection with implementation readiness.

Principal Perceptions of Implementing Programs

Leadership is a critical factor in the successful or unsuccessful implementation of school initiatives (Bosworth et al., 2018; Ganon-Shilon & Schechter, 2019). Turning reforms into school reality depends greatly on principals. Schechter and Shaked (2017) studied why principals refrain from fully implementing new school programs. The researchers used maximal differentiation sampling to select 59 principals to participate in the exploration. Schechter and Shaked (2017) concluded that principals' implementation decisions derive from several factors but depend on personal belief systems. First, principals often deviate from implementation guidelines to better align plans within the

school climate (Schechter & Shaked 2017). Subsequently, even though the principals felt optimistic about the reforms, changes occurred to align theory with practice better.

Another reason many principals adapt to reforms involves their desire to lessen the disruption of the day-to-day functionality of the school (Schechter & Shaked, 2017). Many principals believed it essential to lessen the burden that change brings regarding teachers' work habits and workloads. Also, many principals reported refraining from fully implementing reforms due to their desire to use personal judgment to make significant decisions (Schechter & Shaked, 2017). In their view, principals are responsible for adhering to protocol while still using their knowledge and experience to make decisions.

Furthermore, principals must be willing to create an environment whereby efficient instruction occurs through continuous PD to assist in implementing programs as designed. Principals control the training and support opportunities, teacher assignments, and allowable planning time (Stockard, 2020). The utilization of PD remains imperative regarding teachers' preparedness to enact the curriculum as designed. To implement programs as planned, teachers require ongoing support and training for several years (Stylianou et al., 2019). Teachers participating in practical, continuous, and systematic PD potentially increase the quality of literacy instruction (Miller et al., 2019; Mystakidis et al., 2021). As instructional leaders, principals should provide PD opportunities to improve teachers' skills at adhering to implementation designs.

Curriculum Fidelity

One of the significant responsibilities of the teacher includes delivering a curriculum with fidelity, which means implementing the curriculum as designed by

developers. Traditionally, curricula vary in scope and content but are intended to facilitate skills development and improve student achievement (Nesbitt & Farran, 2021). Teachers' attitudes and influences toward a curriculum may influence implementation (Nesbitt & Farran, 2021). To understand if a curriculum accounts for a positive or negative effect on student outcomes identifying FOI becomes significant. Researchers have identified four components associated with FOI: (a) adherence, (b) exposure, (c) quality of program delivery, and (d) participant responsiveness (Hill & Erickson, 2019; Lemire et al., 2023; McNeill et al., 2018). Based on teachers' perceptions concerning curriculum, fidelity is significant because teachers choose to implement curriculum based on their beliefs, attitudes, and concerns. van Kuijk et al. (2021) reviewed the literature to uncover positive and negative factors experienced when implementing a literacy program. The researchers indicated several reasons that may cause teachers to augment implementation, including their beliefs regarding incompatibility with their pedagogical preferences and reservations about the external group development of curriculum.

Implications

Implications for possible project directions emerged from data collection and analysis associated with this basic qualitative study. The study will help the LSD leaders understand the influence of teachers' perceptions concerning experiences and challenges implementing the new curriculum as designed. Anyon et al. (2019) indicated that adhering to program design is necessary to ensure fidelity. Therefore, understanding teachers' perceptions in implementing the curriculum will enable school leaders to consider the support teachers require to implement the curriculum with fidelity.

Accordingly, the development of a comprehensive PD was considered. Although the LSD provided PD on implementing the new curriculum, teachers perceived the new curriculum processes and procedures as confusing. A PD workshop addressed the possible gaps in practice that emerged. Researchers have suggested that PD will help teachers become aware of the components of evidence-based curriculums and address other concerns regarding best practices (De Simone, 2020; Farkas & Jang, 2019; Matherson & Windle, 2017). Also, Shaw and Hurst (2012) agreed that school leaders should offer PD opportunities to improve the implementation of programs. Therefore, a PD workshop will help teachers and principals better understand how to implement the curriculum as intended. Additional implications of this study included potential transferability to implementing a new curriculum in other subject areas, grade levels, and school districts.

Summary

Nationwide, schools have implemented academic programs based on various learning and teaching frameworks (Farkas & Jang, 2019). In the LSD, a new reading curriculum was introduced and implemented in 2019 amidst low reading proficiency scores. The problem was that in the years since the inception of this new curriculum, reading proficiency scores remained low, and the district had not explored teacher experiences and challenges with the implementation of the new curriculum. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the experiences and challenges of 3rd grade teachers when implementing the new required reading curriculum. Based on this problem

and purpose, and in alignment with the CBAM as the conceptual framework, the research questions were used to guide this study.

The literature review addressed the curriculum implementation, teacher roles and responsibilities, administrative support, CBAM, and barriers to implementation related to implementing the new curriculum. The literature showed the significant role of teachers and principals in support of implementing curriculum with fidelity. As a result, the findings of this study provided recommendations for improving the implementation of the new curriculum to improve the intended outcomes of reading proficiency among third graders.

In Section 2 of this project study, I described the methodology used to explore the experiences and challenges of 3rd grade teachers when implementing a new reading curriculum. The methodology section included a description of the research design and approach, the setting and sample, the criteria for selecting participants, the ethical protection of participants, and instruments and materials. Furthermore, Section 2 detailed data collection and analysis, assumptions, limitations, and the measures taken for the accuracy and credibility of the study's findings.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the experiences and challenges of third grade teachers when implementing the new required reading curriculum. Upon investigation, teachers' perceptions regarding implementing the new curriculum and student achievement may improve due to enriched teacher capabilities to implement the program with fidelity. The study results provided the impetus to promote collaborative discussions between principals and teachers to enhance the future implementation of the new curriculum. The RQs aligned with the problem and the research purpose: to explore the experiences and challenges of 3rd grade teachers when implementing the new required reading curriculum. This project study focused on the following RQs:

RQ1: What are the experiences of third grade teachers in the LSD with implementing the HMH: Into Reading curriculum?

RQ2: What challenges and concerns do third grade teachers in the LSD report with implementing the HMH: Into Reading curriculum?

In Section 2 of this doctoral project study, I discussed the methodology used to determine the research questions' findings in Section 1. I utilized a basic qualitative study approach focused on third grade teachers in an urban school district. The basic qualitative approach was appropriate for this project study considering the overarching goal was to collect data on teachers' perceptions regarding implementing the new curriculum. The basic qualitative design also aligned with the research questions about teachers'

perceptions when implementing the reading curriculum. Lodico et al. (2010) indicated that the qualitative approach focuses on the social phenomena and highlights the participants' perceptions involved in the study. Therefore, I used the qualitative approach to investigate the problem in this project study.

I used semistructured interviews to understand teachers' perceptions of implementing the new curriculum. In section 2, I outlined sample procedures, data collection, and the data analysis method. I analyzed the data to determine if perceptions regarding implementation related to desires for increased understanding of the new curriculum, a lack of resources, or PD, which may have caused a gap in practice. The data provided a deeper understanding of the gaps in practice that exists and the effects of implementing the new curriculum with fidelity. The data from this project helped determine best practices for implementing the new curriculum.

Research Design and Approach

Description of the Qualitative Tradition

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the experiences and challenges of 3rd grade teachers when implementing the new required reading curriculum. In qualitative studies, researchers collect data to understand human experiences and situations and individuals' cultures, perceptions, and values related to a phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Traditionally, researchers using the qualitative approach use semistructured interviews as a data collection method (Rutberg & Bouikidis, 2018; Mohajan, 2018). The unique nature of the qualitative approach allows the researchers to examine the participants' perceptions while exercising their subjective

judgment to shape the knowledge produced through personal reflexivity (Lodico et al., 2010; Tuffour, 2017). Ultimately, the data collected shed light on teachers' perceptions regarding implementing the new third grade reading curriculum.

Another feature of qualitative studies pertains to the selection of participants. Qualitative research should occur in the participants' natural setting, using nonrandom methods to collect data that may explain a phenomenon based on the study's results (Lodico et al., 2010; Yin, 2015). The researcher used purposeful sampling for this project study. Using purposeful sampling assists researchers in identifying and selecting individuals or groups exposed to or experienced with the problem (Palinkas et al., 2015). Therefore, selecting purposeful sampling further aligned the current study with the qualitative research method.

Justification for Implementing a Basic Qualitative Design

The basic qualitative research design supported the exploration of this project study. Dames (2019) suggested that the basic qualitative research design is the most common form of qualitative research. The basic qualitative research design involves developing a deep understanding of a phenomenon by exploring a problem (Creswell, 2012). Polit and Beck (2012) indicated that selecting a qualitative research design stems from multiple factors. The criteria included determining if various means of data collection were needed to understand the problem, which design fits the study, the data collection plan, and the resources required to devote to the investigation. According to Ravitch and Carl (2019), the basic qualitative design focuses on the social aspect of research and usually involves interviews to gather rich narratives to answer the problem.

Hockey and Forsey (2020) suggested that research interviews allow for collecting insightful data that rarely occurs using surveys or observations. Also, Denzin and Lincoln (2017) claimed that the most popular data collection tool within qualitative research involves interviews. For this project study, the data collection tool used by the researcher included semistructured interviews.

Several factors influenced the selection of the research design for this study. Researchers using the quantitative design collect and summarize data numerically, whereas qualitative methodology provides for the collection of rich descriptive words regarding the problem (Creswell, 2012). Quantitative data collection encompasses surveys, statistics, and questionnaires, while qualitative focuses on participant interviews (Henson et al., 2020; Mohajan, 2018). Also, the quantitative methodology traditionally utilizes random sampling to gather data (Rahman, 2022). The sampling used in this project study was purposeful to target individuals with exposure to and knowledge of the LSD's curriculum. Therefore, a basic qualitative research design was appropriate based on the project study's data collection plan, goal, and planned use of findings.

Additional Research Designs Not Selected

Although the data collection plan and goal of the current study aligned with the basic qualitative design, several other designs did not meet the criteria for various reasons. The qualitative methods not selected included ethnography research, grounded theory, phenomenological theory, case study, and narrative. Additionally, the mixed-methods approach was not chosen for a variety of reasons. The qualitative and mixed methods not chosen did not fully align with the current study.

The grounded theory design perpetuates the use of data to develop a theory (Johnsson, 2021). The core practices of grounded theory explore hypotheses based on data that produce a tested and confirmed theory (Conlon et al., 2020). The present study did not present a theory based on the results. Consequently, the grounded theory design was not selected as the research design.

Another design not selected for this project study was the ethnographic approach. The ethnographic design involves a long-term data collection process in a natural setting to document the meaning people give to objects or themselves within a particular culture (Hammersley, 2018). One key element of the ethnographic approach requires researchers to become part of the participants' group to gain perspectives (Lodico et al., 2010). The ethnographic design was not selected, considering that I, as the researcher, did not become a part of the participants' environment or culture.

A phenomenological research design focuses on the structure of participants' experiences. This design captures the lived experiences of multiple people by the researcher immersing themselves in the participants' lives (Creswell, 2012; Yin, 2015). This process includes exploring the essence of participants' lived experiences versus collecting opinions, views, or interpretations of experiences (Flynn & Korcuska, 2018). The qualitative approach aligned better with collecting data reflecting the perceptions of teachers. Therefore, the phenomenological design was not selected for this project study.

Merriam (2009) suggested that the case study design tends to become the selected option when the study design does not fit other types of descriptive qualitative frameworks. Specific to case studies, multiple data collection methods are needed to

understand the case and resulting data (Yin, 2017). The case study should occur within a bounded system as the researcher pays close attention to the context in which the study was embedded (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). The current project study used only one data source to explore teachers' perceptions regarding implementing the new curriculum. Based on the criteria, the case study design was not selected for this project study.

Another qualitative approach not selected for this study involved the narrative inquiry. Using the narrative approach, the researcher aims to collect data and chronologically develop stories through structural analysis (Ford, 2020; Nasheeda et al., 2019). Conversely, the purpose of the current study relates to exploring the experiences and challenges of 3rd grade teachers when implementing the new required reading curriculum. Also, through layering, the narrative approach enables the researcher to identify the similarities across narratives about the same issue or problem (McAleese & Kilty, 2019). The current study used eight interview questions and five follow up questions to identify similarities and differences regarding the experiences, challenges, and concerns associated with implementing a reading curriculum.

The mixed-method research model combines quantitative and qualitative components to understand trends in numerical data (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The mixed-methods approach was not ideal for this study, considering it involves collecting data for statistical interpretation. Miles et al. (2019) suggested that errors may occur when combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies during data analysis. The primary purpose of the data collection was to collect in-depth information regarding teachers' experiences while implementing a school program. Bearman (2019) posited that

when participants use numbers to provide information about opinions, it becomes challenging to offer accurate data.

Participants

Population and Sampling Procedures

The setting for this project study was an urban school district, LSD, located in the northeastern part of the United States. The total student population of the local school district was 131,000, including elementary (PreK–5), middle school (6-8), high school (9-12), and other specialty schools (State Department of Education, n.d.). During the 2019-2020 school year, the LSD employed sightly over 9,300 teachers to instruct and meet the needs of its students. The LSD (see Table 1) comprised various types of schools throughout the district. Specifically, the LSD encompassed 120 elementary schools, 24 traditional middle schools, K-8 schools, 24 high schools, five early childhood centers, and four special centers. For purposes of this study, 14 elementary schools within the local school district received invitations to participate in the study. The 14 schools selected represented about 10% of the total elementary schools within the LSD.

Table 1.

LSD Demographics

Type of School	Number of Schools
Elementary	120
Traditional Middle	24
K-8	12
High School	31
Special Center	4
Early Childhood	5
Total	196

Criteria for Selecting Participants

The sample for this study included 12 third grade teachers. The third grade teachers were responsible for implementing the new curriculum. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the experiences and challenges of third grade teachers when implementing the new required reading curriculum. Therefore, the criteria for participating in the study included third grade teachers with at least one year of experience teaching the new curriculum. Selected participants must have utilized the new curriculum and therefore provided data pertinent to the experiences and challenges of implementing the program. Adhering to the criteria is necessary to ensure participants' expertise in answering the research questions (Fusch & Ness, 2017).

Justification for Number of Participants

The sample for this study included 12 third grade teachers. Third graders comprised 7% of the total student population within the LSD. The LSD had 120 elementary schools. The selection of 12 participants allowed access to 10% of the elementary schools within the LSD. Gathering data from 12 teachers enabled me to select participants from across the county to collect information from a diverse range of teachers. In qualitative research, the goal is to use the tools to gather enough data to reach saturation (Guest et al., 2020). Although estimating sample size is significant to ensure research quality, determining the number of interviews needed remains controversial and cannot be estimated with certainty (Sebele-Mpofu & Serpa, 2020). Some researchers indicate saturation levels of 10-12 interviews (Guest et al., 2006; Guest et al., 2020; Saunders et al., 2018).

The sampling strategy was purposeful in recruiting participants exposed to the new curriculum. Participants have exposure to the phenomenon and share a similar trait to provide critical information supporting research questions (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Therefore, the criteria for participating in the study included third grade teachers with at least one year of teaching with the new curriculum. Selected participants must have utilized the new curriculum and, therefore, provided data pertinent to the fidelity of implementing the program.

Etikan et al. (2016) indicated that utilizing purposive sampling emphasizes data saturation. In qualitative studies, sample size is often justified by interviewing participants until reaching data saturation (Francis et al., 2010). Research indicates that data saturation may appear around 12 participants in a relatively homogeneous group (Boddy, 2016; Guest et al., 2006; Guest et al., 2020; Namey et al., 2016). Also, Percy et al. (2015) suggested that a small but highly experienced sample can provide rich information on a qualitative research study topic. Creswell (2012) maintains that it is better to have a few participants to ensure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. Therefore, the small purposeful sample of 12 participants allowed for rich data collection from the participants agreeing to participate in this research study.

Procedures for Gaining Access to Participants

Upon receiving permission from the IRB and the LSD's Office of Research and Evaluation, the participants were recruited using a purposeful sampling of 14 participants. First, I sent the principal permission to conduct research study authorization (Appendix B) to the 14 schools targeted for participation. Then, I gathered the teachers'

names and email addresses from the school's website that met the requirements. The criteria for participating in the study included third grade teachers with at least one year of teaching with the new curriculum. Selected participants must have utilized the new curriculum and therefore provided data pertinent to the fidelity of implementing the program. I sent the participant the informed consent form requesting participation in the study. When the potential participants responded to my email confirming their desire to participate in the study by typing "I consent," I called them within 48 hours to arrange a day and time for the interview. I requested that participants respond to the consent form within ten business days of receiving the form.

The informed consent letter clarified participants' potential role in the investigation, research procedures, benefits, risks, and a statement advising that participants are not obligated to participate. Each potential participant responded to the informed consent letter within ten working days with a convenient date and time within a four week window to participate in the interview. After receiving the informed consent letter from the participants, I contacted each participant to establish a researcher-participant working relationship. I selected the first 12 teachers who consented to volunteer. For the additional participants consenting to volunteer, I thanked them for agreeing to participate. I advised that the threshold had been reached according to the requirements outlined in the consent letter. I provided a $20 Amazon card to incentivize participants to complete the interview. Additionally, I adhered to the privacy and confidentially statements provided in the consent letter.

Establishing Researcher-Participant Relationship

An integral part of this basic qualitative study reflected data capturing using semistructured interviews. The depth of information disclosed by participants evolves based on the quality of the researcher and participant relationship (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Also, Heslop et al. (2018) indicated that the researcher must maintain a safe environment for participants. Additionally, researchers must fully disclose the research goal and purpose to participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). I established the researcher participant relationship by divulging the intent, data collection procedures, the voluntary nature of the study, and confidentially procedures to the participants. Before conducting interviews, I received a signed informed consent letter from each participant.

Further consideration was to ensure researcher participant relationship was related to data collection and participant confidentially. The researcher is responsible for collecting data and addressing potential ethical challenges (Merriam, 2009). My goal was to set boundaries as a researcher and take steps to ensure the participants' comfort. The participants were advised that all identifiable information was removed from the study before publishing the results. Each participant's interview was coded alphanumerically, hiding all references to schools and the names of individuals.

The interview protocols put in place further underscored the establishment of the researcher participant relationship (Merriam, 2014). I asked permission to record each interview to ensure my attention during the interview. Then, I began the interview by building rapport by focusing on an introductory conversation unrelated to the study. DeJonckheere and Vaughn (2019) suggested that interviewers should take steps to build

rapport with participants. Next, I explained why the study was being conducted and how the participants' participation was voluntary and significant. During the interview, I maintained a sense of authenticity and was open to participants' points of view. Upon completing each interview, I thanked the participants for their participation and reiterated the details from the informed consent document. Following these protocols and procedures ensured that participants understood the importance of knowledge and commitment to maintaining confidentially of each participant (Merriam, 2014).

Ethical Protection of Participants

Considering human subjects were a significant part of this study, many protocols were adopted to ensure the privacy and rights of all participants. I received approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the school district's Department of Research and Evaluation before contacting participants and collecting data. The Walden University's approval number for this study was 03-21-23-0675887. The participants received an informed consent letter explaining the investigation's purpose, risks, benefits, and the voluntary nature of the study.

Brothers et al. (2019) indicated that researchers should treat participants with dignity and respect during investigations. In November 2022, I received a certificate acknowledging completing the CITI web-based training, Doctoral Student Researchers, to protect participants' rights and conduct research ethically. I guaranteed that all data would be kept confidential by coding and securing information to prevent privacy violations, coercion, social or economic loss, psychological stress, or other health effects.

Participants' responses were coded alphanumerically such as to provide confidentiality. The electronic correspondence and data were collected from each participant in a password protected email. The procedures ensured that I was the only one able to identify and access participants' information. I will securely keep all forms, notes, and recordings for five years. To ensure that data is irretrievable after the retention period, the secure data sanitization method I will use for computer files is Cyberscrub (Garfinkel & Shelat, 2003), and cross-cut shredding for forms, emails, and notes (Barnhill & Barnhill, 2014).

As the researcher of this study, I had access to the data acquired during the data collection process. In addition, participants had the opportunity to review the study's preliminary results as a means of member checking. Also, a peer debriefer accessed 10% of the research study codes and themes during the data analysis to improve the study's validity. The peer debriefer signed a confidentiality agreement (Appendix D) before receiving the information. Each participant's data included an alphanumeric code created by labeling each participant according to the order of the interview. For example, I labeled teacher one T1 and teacher two T2, and so on to ensure that schools and participants remained confidential.

Data Collection

Justification of Data Collection Methods

Semistructured interviews constitute a vital data collection tool to capture qualitative perceptions, opinions, and experiences (Bano et al., 2018). Selecting a dependable, valid, and appropriate instrument is vital to ensure alignment within the

study (Creswell, 2014). This project study utilized semistructured interviews. Collecting data using semistructured interviews allowed the researcher to ask predetermined and probing questions to dig deeper into the participants' responses (McGrath et al., 2019). The semistructured interviews were conducted after participants signed an informed consent letter agreeing to participate in the investigation. The data was collected one-on-one utilizing Zoom conferencing. Using Zoom is a safe method for videoconferencing for conducting qualitative interviews (Archibald et al., 2019; Oliffe et al., 2021). The interviews were used to answer RQ1 and RQ2. Also, the interviews were audio recorded and labeled with the assigned alphanumeric code. Audio recording of the interviews will improve the consistency of the data (Lodico et al., 2010).

Interviews

Interviews were appropriate for this basic qualitative study to gain teachers' perceptions regarding the experiences and barriers to implementing the new curriculum. I used eight semistructured open-ended questions and five follow up questions to provide participants with opportunities to offer in-depth data aligned with the qualitative methodology. Bearman (2019) suggested semistructured interviews as the most common method to acquire more meaningful information about the human experience from participants. For this study, the interview questions created natural conversation and offered sub-questions to clarify responses reflecting the research questions (Lodico et al., 2010; McGrath et al., 2019). I allocated 30-40 minutes for each interview. Each participant had a chance to schedule the interview on a convenient day, time, and location. I suggested that the participants use a quiet, empty room not accessible by

others during the interview. Also, I conducted interviews after school hours during noninstructional time.

During the data collection process, I asked eight semistructured open-ended questions and five follow up questions (see Appendix E) relating to teachers' experiences and challenges when implementing the new required reading curriculum. The interview questions aligned with this study's RQs, CBAM's SoC (Appendix F), and purpose involving exploring the experiences and challenges of 3rd grade teachers when implementing the new required reading curriculum. The interviews were labeled with the assigned alphanumeric code to ensure participants' confidentiality.

The system used to keep track of participants' information included an alphanumeric code created by labeling each participant according to the order of the interview. For example, I labeled teacher one T1 and teacher two T2, and so on to ensure that schools and participants remain confidential. All interview recordings, transcripts, and emails associated with the interviews will be kept on a password-protected computer in my residence file cabinet in the home office.

Source of Data Collection Instrument

For the present study, relevant portions of the SoCQ were adapted into interview questions (Appendix F) with permission granted by American Institutes for Research (Appendix G) to explore the experiences and challenges of 3rd grade teachers when implementing the new required curriculum. The SoCQ is used to rate the extent to which participants agree with innovation-related statements (Kayaduman & Demirel, 2019).

Staff profiles emerge from the SoCQ data placing implementors within the seven SoC categories related to the innovation (George et al., 2013).

The SoCQ, in conjunction with the SoC, was created to measure teachers' concerns about implementing new school programs (Hall & George, 1979; George et al., 2013). The researchers collected data from 300 elementary school and college teachers, using factor analysis to select 35 items that appeared most frequently. Test reliability and test-retest were deemed satisfactory at .64 to .83 and .65 to .86, respectively. Following the pilot study, the researchers administered the retooled questionnaire to a group of elementary school faculty and higher education members to test validity (George et al., 2006). The researchers concluded that the SoCQ accurately measures participants' concerns about new program implementation (George et al., 2013). Since 1974, the SoC has been widely used in studies of educational institutions implementing innovations (George et al., 2006). SEDL (n.d.) suggested that leaders should determine how to use the CBAM elements depending on specific organizational goals, which include the SoC and SoCQ. Consequently, I created the interview protocol for teachers to include eight semistructured open-ended questions and five follow up questions based on the SoCQ.

Interview Plan and Protocol

All study participants provided informed consent to participate in an audio-recorded Zoom semistructured interview designed based on the research questions. After collecting data, the researcher utilized NVivo to perform thematic content data analysis. NVivo is the most used data analysis tool by academic researchers (Cypress, 2019). I used my password protected computer to record each interview using the Zoom platform.

Also, I uploaded the Zoom audio files to NVivo for conversion into transcripts. Then, I sent a draft transcript to each participant to allow for comments and corrections. Each participant had 48 business hours to make corrections to the draft to increase accuracy by correcting any misconceptions found in the draft. Asking for feedback on the draft can corroborate findings and produce new evidence not initially given by the participant (Yin, 2014).

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, many schools within the LSD have policies against non-staff members entering their buildings. Therefore, interviews were conducted through Zoom to ensure the health and safety of all participants. Archibald et al. (2019) suggested the viability of utilizing Zoom as a collection method due to security options, ease of use, and cost effectiveness. After receiving feedback from teachers who expressed interest in participating in the study, the researcher scheduled a Zoom meeting with each participant. The researcher provided each participant with a unique meeting ID and password to allow them access to the meeting. To maintain confidentiality, participants received information allowing them to change their names, turn off their cameras, and hide their phone numbers before joining the meeting. Once the participant entered the meeting, I locked the meeting to prevent uninvited guests from entering. I conducted interviews in my home office. During the interviews, the home office door was locked, disallowing entry by other parties. Also, I recorded each participant's interview to maintain the integrity of the data (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019).

At the start of each interview, I obtained permission from the interviewee to audio record the session using the Zoom platform. Participants who declined the audio

recording of their interview were allowed to provide written responses. Each participant was able to review their consent form and received a reminder that they could stop the interview at any time and withdraw from the study without repercussion. I recorded the alphanumeric code for each participant at the beginning of each interview. At the start of the interview, I reviewed the purpose of the study as an exploration of the experiences and challenges of 3rd grade teachers when implementing the new required reading curriculum. The interview consisted of eight semistructured open-ended questions and five follow up questions. I will keep the audio files, transcripts, and laptop in a file cabinet in my home office. I am the only one with access to the cabinet. All information was stored under alphanumeric codes to protect each participant's identity.

Systems for Keeping Track of Data

The data collected for this project study was semistructured interviews. Each interview was conducted using the Zoom platform. I used my password protected computer to record each interview. I uploaded the Zoom audio files to NVivo within twenty-four hours after concluding each interview. All paper copies of interviews and electronic copies of interviews were stored on my home computer and secured in my home office locked file cabinet. Electronic documents were secured using confidential password protections. Furthermore, the privacy and confidentiality of participant data were protected using an alphanumerical system.

Role of the Researcher

My formal role in this study was as an observer. I selected participants, completed semistructured interviews, analyzed data for possible themes, and provided findings that

could improve the new curriculum's implementation. Through engagement with participants, I conducted interviews and made observations during interviews. Reid et al. (2018) indicated that acknowledging position and potential researcher biases and assumptions is essential in judging the authenticity of research findings. Although I was not a faculty member at the selected study sites, I was a teacher within the LSD. I minimized the influences of my biases by acknowledging them within a reflective research journal. Phillippi and Lauderdale (2018) suggested the importance of field notes while collecting data to encourage reflection and acknowledgment of researcher bias. I also used a reflective journal and field notes to record my thoughts, biases, and participants' nonverbal behavior during interviews. Writing field notes assist researchers in describing what was observed or heard during interviews and personal questions or comments (Lodico et al., 2010).

In addition to keeping notes, I incorporated additional practices to minimize bias during the data collection process. Before each interview, I established a rapport with the participants by discussing subjects unrelated to the study. DeJonckheere and Vaughn (2019) suggested using rapport to set the tone for the interview. During the interview, I maintained vocal evenness when asking questions and made a purposeful effort not to agree or disagree with the participants' comments. Maintaining a calm disposition constitutes a less biased demeanor (Merriam, 2014). Also, I adhered to the interview protocol to guide the questioning relating to my research problem and purpose. Creswell and Creswell (2017) posited that adhering to an interview protocol may provide a professional environment for capturing pertinent data. Lastly, after collecting data, I used

NVivo to analyze and code data to uncover themes used to interpret data. O'Kane et al. (2021) described NVivo as a multipurpose tool that allows researchers to increase the depth and breadth of data analysis in qualitative studies. Therefore, my efforts to minimize bias throughout this investigation were critical in maintaining my role as the researcher, as I collected and analyzed data to find ways to improve the fidelity of implementing the new curriculum.

Data Analysis

Data analysis represents an essential component of qualitative research investigations. Research indicates that data analysis allows for in-depth interpretation of data leading to the effective communication of results (Creswell, 2012; Yin, 2014). After collecting the data, I used NVivo to analyze thematic content. NVivo is the most used data analysis tool by academic researchers (Cypress, 2019). NVivo is a computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQAS) used by researchers to help organize and analyze qualitative data (O'Kane et al., 2021). After each interview, I transcribed the audio recordings and field notes using NVivo. Next, I began the coding process using NVivo.

The coding process consists of using NVivo to organize, sort, identify, and compare patterns found in the content (Allsop et al., 2022). I sent 10% of the resulting codes and themes to a peer debriefer. After considering the peer debriefers' comments, I sent participants my preliminary findings to confirm that appropriate interpretations were drawn from the data for member checking. All information was kept secure during the data analysis by labeling participants with an alphanumeric code. Concerning the

research data, participants had access to the preliminary findings, and the peer debriefer had access to 10% of codes and themes developed during the data analysis process. No one else had access to the research data. I secured the research data on a password-protected computer in a file cabinet in my home office.

Accuracy and Credibility of Findings

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that when using the qualitative approach, the researcher should ensure the study's trustworthiness by using criteria such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. For this project study, triangulation in the form of member checking, peer debriefing, reflexivity, data collection, and analysis was used to validate the accuracy and credibility of the research. Researchers use triangulation to understand the phenomenon under investigation better (Jentoft & Olsen, 2019). I sent participants my preliminary finding to confirm that appropriate interpretations were drawn from the data as a means of member checking. The member checking process allows participants to make clarifying statements regarding research findings (Hamilton, 2020). Creswell (2014) advised that the data collected should accurately reflect participants' reflections and views. I provided a summary of the research finding to study participants and a 48 business hour timeframe for each participant to provide comments relating to the conclusions. Using member checking assists researchers in establishing data saturation (Aguboshim, 2021; Galehdar et al., 2020). I utilized participants' feedback to ensure data saturation to increase study validity.

Incorporating reflexivity offered an additional method for ensuring the accuracy and credibility of findings. Yin (2014) described reflexivity as the unintentional influence

of researchers' perspectives on the research process, which may alter a study. Accounting for reflexivity enables the researcher to analyze their thoughts and feelings regarding the project study (Stuart, 2017). Rose and Johnson (2020) indicated that understanding researchers' perceptions and biases regarding the research topic and data analysis to represent findings is critical to strengthening the validity of research studies. Violanti (2020) suggested that researchers acknowledge their partiality and treat participants as active subjects collecting data about their lived experiences instead of relying on passive objectification. As part of this study, I acknowledged biases that might have influenced my interpretation of findings. Also, I maintained an audit trail during data analysis by keeping research notes. Vaismoradi et al. (2016) expressed that research notes facilitate reflexivity and allow researchers to reflect on data analysis steps, improve data interpretation, and develop themes.

In addition to reflexivity, I utilized a peer debriefer to increase accuracy within the study. Creswell and Poth (2018) defined peer debriefers as colleagues who review parts of the research to provide objective views of the study. Utilizing peer debriefers may reduce bias during investigations (Aguboshim, 2021; Lodico et al., 2010). In connection with this investigation, one peer debriefer had an opportunity to make clarifying statements associated with the present study. The peer debriefer had 25 years of teaching experience on the primary level and an EdD in Reading, Literacy, and Assessment from a private university. The debriefer reviewed 10% of the data analysis portion of the study, particularly the codes and themes developed from participants'

interviews. Additionally, the debriefer signed a confidentiality form forwarded to the IRB (Appendix D).

The data source used for the study included interviews, the SoCQ adapted into interview questions, and field notes. To test the credibility of the research, Stahl and King (2020) suggested using multiplicity in support of triangulation. Each data source addressed the purpose of the study, which was to explore the experiences and challenges of 3rd grade teachers implementing a new required reading curriculum. Although the participants did not complete the SoCQ, I created interview questions by adapting pertinent parts of the SoCQ upon receiving permission from the American Institutes for Research (Appendix G). The SoCQ aligns with the SoC, which assists organizations in understanding concerns related to a new implementation (George et al., 2013).

The interview questions and SoC were mapped to the RQs (Appendix F) to show the relationship between the sources used for the study. I captured field notes during interviews and data analysis and coded the notes on teachers' responses to determine patterns and themes. Johnson et al. (2021) and Rutakumwa et al. (2020) suggested creating field notes to capture important details and nonverbal characteristics of participants to interpret emerging themes and patterns in the interview process. The data analysis encompassed examining and coding transcripts and field notes to identify reoccurring patterns and themes.

Transferability is another criterion for ensuring trustworthiness. As a part of transferability, the research results from one study can be applied to other settings or groups of people (Tuval-Mashiach, 2021). To achieve transferability, researchers should

articulate the context in which the research was undertaken, including the choices researchers made during the data collection and analysis process and possible challenges they might have faced (Daniel, 2019). I established transferability by selecting sites and participants across the LSD to represent the district's diversity. Additionally, I used NVivo to transcribe interview data verbatim to accurately reflect participants' responses to their interview questions. Also, I used a reflective journal and field notes for recording my thoughts and biases during interviews.

Strategies to further ensure trustworthiness included dependability and confirmability. Dependability in a study relates to reporting results so that others may arrive at similar interpretations if they review the data (Campbell et al., 2020; Nassaji, 2020). Conversely, confirmability involves describing the research study steps from the beginning of the process to the end (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). I ensured transparency by documenting all researcher activities and the data analysis process. A peer debriefer reviewed 10% of the study to include codes and themes resulting from participant interviews. The peer reviewer examined the accuracy of the codes and themes to ensure that the resulting themes were grounded in the data. Also, reflexivity accounted for my personal and professional perceptions during all phases of the study. I used a reflexive journal to document biases and interests. Amin et al. (2020) suggested that when researchers reflect on experiences and biases throughout the research process, a co-constructor of knowledge exists that deepens the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon.

Discrepant Cases

Identifying discrepant cases in qualitative research is essential to ensure the credibility, transferability, and dependability of data analysis and research findings. Maxwell (2013) described discrepant cases as data that does not align with existing conceptions. Discrepancies in data analysis may occur when collected data contradict identified themes (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011). In discrepant cases, researchers should seek to find ways in which their research frames the phenomenon (Maxwell, 2013). By including discrepant cases that contradict findings, researchers increase the validity of the claims through their research (Rose & Johnson, 2020). Although discrepant cases offer contradictory evidence, it allows researchers to revisit themes and information with participants, enhancing the findings of the study (Maxwell, 2013; Yin, 2015).

Data Analysis Results

Generated, Gathered, and Recorded Data

Twelve third grade teachers agreed to participate in the study. Participants had at least one year of experience teaching the HMH: Into Reading curriculum. After receiving authorization from principals to conduct research with volunteers from selected schools, I gathered the teachers' names and email addresses from the school's website that met the requirements. I sent prospective participants the informed consent form requesting participation in the study. The consent form described the research's specifics and the risks and non-benefits of involvement. Upon receiving the participants' responses, I arranged a day and time for the interview. The teacher interview protocol contained eight semistructured open-ended questions and five follow up questions to provide participants

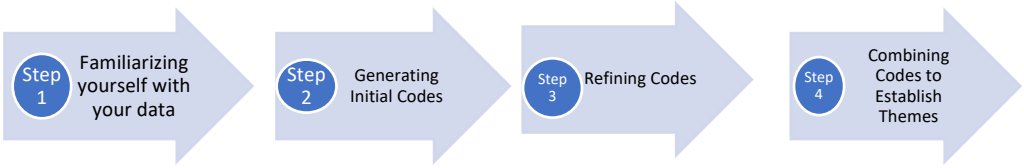
with opportunities to offer in-depth data aligned with the qualitative methodology. Each interview took place on the Zoom platform. I recorded each interview using Zoom, uploaded, and transcribed the data using the NVivo qualitative analysis software. Data analysis included identifying codes to create themes based on the problem and RQs.

Coding Data to Establish Themes

Data analysis included four steps (Figure 1) to establish themes. Twelve teachers participated in the interview process. I analyzed the data by comparing it to the key elements within the CBAM conceptual framework, specifically the Stages of Concern. After transcribing the data in NVivo, I familiarized myself with the data by reading the transcripts several times and noting initial ideas. Step 2 included generating initial codes from the data that had reoccurring patterns. Next, I organized and refined the initial codes by adding, subtracting, combining, or splitting codes based on further data analysis. The fourth step included examining the codes to establish patterns and themes that identified the data's meaning. The newly created themes made a meaningful contribution to answering the RQs.

Figure 1

Data Analysis Process



Patterns, Relationships, and Themes

The problem was that in the years since the inception of this new curriculum, reading proficiency scores remained low, and the district had not explored teacher experiences and challenges with the implementation of the new curriculum. Twelve third grade teachers completed the interview process. The resulting data highlighted teachers' experiences and challenges in implementing the HMH: Into Reading curriculum. Patterns, relationships, and themes aligned to the problem, and RQs illustrated various levels of concern teachers experienced when implementing the curriculum. Table 2 outlines the summary of themes found in the study. Themes were developed based on the elements within the CBAM conceptual framework, specifically the SoC. Appendix F illustrates the connection between the RQs, interview questions, and the SoC. To create alignment between RQs, interview questions, and SoC, each SoC mapped to the interview questions that embodied the description of the stage. Stages 1, 2, 4, and 6 aligned to the interview questions related to RQ1. However, Stages 0, 3, and 5 aligned with the interview questions related to RQ2. Table 2 outlines the summary of themes found in the study.

Table 2.

Summary of Themes

Theme	Description
1	Concerns About Lack of Collaborative Learning and Classroom Support
2	Time Management of Nonacademic Requirements
3	Concerns Regarding Professional Development
4	Navigating to Curriculum Complexity
5	Concerns About Curriculum Alignment

RQ1: What are the experiences of 3rd grade teachers in the LSD with implementing the HMH: Into Reading curriculum?

Theme 1: Concerns About Lack of Collaborative Learning and Classroom Support

Theme one signified teachers' appeal for additional help in the classroom and collaborative learning opportunities to improve student outcomes. Participants acknowledged that extra assistance in the classroom would empower them to deploy the new curriculum more effectively. Also, the data highlighted the potential value of collaborative learning and sharing best practices among teachers and principals.

Collaborative Learning

The data underscored the need for specialist-led sessions and collaborative learning that could help teachers familiarize themselves with the curriculum's specifics and improve instructional delivery. T4 suggested, "Administrators should provide opportunities for peer observation and visits to classrooms where the curriculum is successfully implemented." T10 shared, "There should be a session with the reading specialist to ensure everyone knows how to navigate the new curriculum." T10 further suggested: “Trying to get the support that you need sometimes may not always be there when you actually need it. Having access to someone like an instructional lead teacher on a consistent basis…I think that's it.”

T6 admitted, "I'm not really sure how I'm really implementing this program. I'm very challenged. I am not familiar with the program. I was told that I would have a mentor." T3 proposed,

> I think that administration should take time to demonstrate lessons…in order for them to understand how and why we're implementing the curriculum the way that we're doing. They have to teach it themselves to actually see and feel what it is that the teacher is experiencing trying to maneuver, you know, and trying to balance and juggle all these different things.

T5 stated, "Provide more time for me to go into my colleagues' classrooms and see how they're teaching so that I can learn from my colleagues in that manner. When do the teachers get to do walkthroughs? I may not be knowledgeable, but my teacher next door may have this down pat. When is it implemented or when are they going to understand that we can learn from each other?"

Additional Classroom Support

Several teachers' responses focused on staffing and the desire for increased classroom support. Seven out of 12 teachers suggested additional classroom support would improve curriculum implementation. T7 expressed,

> In a perfect world, we would have perhaps two teachers in a room or a main teacher with a strong support staff. If we could do that, it would be easier to implement the lesson plan. We could then break the class down into two or three groups, ensuring everyone can access the material more equitably.

T1 advanced, "Well, the biggest one would be more help in the classroom. After we receive PDs, maybe we could have office hours to ask question that would help us in class." The data highlighted the necessity for better staffing and supportive resources,

emphasizing their role in facilitating curriculum implementation and catering to struggling students.

Other teachers went on to express the necessity for additional adult support. T5 explained, "So to me, if you want me to be a teacher who's following the curriculum with fidelity, I need a go to person in my building that can help me implement it." T3 expressed, "If you are not an inclusion classroom you do not have that extra support…you still need another adult…because while you as the teacher do one part the aid could be doing another part." Teachers' responses illustrated the necessity for better staffing and supportive resources, emphasizing their role in facilitating curriculum implementation and catering to diverse student needs.

Theme 2: Time Management of Nonacademic Requirements

Third grade teachers experienced complications managing their time between academic responsibilities and nonacademic tasks. The results supported that 67% of teachers expressed needing more time and support to balance grading, parent communication, administrative tasks, and classroom interruptions. T2 emphasized the multifaceted nature of teaching by saying,

> Anyone that's been in the field of teaching knows that there are a lot of additional things that come with teaching. So having to put in grades, having to call parents, having to do any kind of other contact outside of teaching this program is expected.

T5 stated, "…if you see a pattern out of your 26 students and you're teaching six subjects. You're supposed to…call parents and say your child is failing. Can you please look at their grades?" T5 continued,

> When a student is absent for three days…I as a classroom teacher is required to track that data and then call the parent. To me, there should be a PPW in place, or the guidance counselor should be tracking that, or maybe it's the school secretary who gets our attendance every day, every week, who should be tracking that and making calls.

The data showed the wide variety of tasks accompanying teaching beyond curriculum delivery.

Administrative Burden

Several teachers indicated a desire for more administrative support to alleviate the burden of nonacademic tasks, enabling teachers to focus more on teaching and less on administrative work. T3 stated, "I think the administrator is another support that can help out. If they take the time to do that nonacademic stuff for me, I can spend all my time and energy teaching the curriculum and helping my students learn." T5 lamented, "Data collection for PBIS behavior. I'm so sorry. Do we not have a PBIS team? We have data that we are being required to collect for our administrator's goals. Not necessarily for our goals. So not only are you expecting us to support our students that we're academically trying to reach, but we're now doing extra work in order for you to be able to do your job." T1 remarked, "You may end up getting like 10 emails asking for something. Tomorrow, you know, and I do not think administration thinks about that." The data

illuminated the personal impact of the time-intensive nature of requirements outside the duty of providing instruction.

Classroom Interruptions

The data underscored the hidden workload of teachers that goes beyond classroom instruction, raising questions about how to manage administrative duties better. T9 explained, "Dealing with situations in the classroom that have nothing to do with the lesson…answering the phones, people coming into the classroom or whatever the case may be…responding to emails is a concern." T1 stated, "You have to grade those, then you have to input your grades and then you have administrative stuff to the to the principal, secretary and instructional lead teachers… by the time you look up, it's 7:00 o'clock and you are nowhere near your mark." T11 declared, "It is a great concern because I work from 7-3 each day. I have grading, research, copying, coursework, and that does not include extra time spent at school. I work an additional 12 hours a week that are not compensated." T7 said, "Talk about it because you know especially the elementary level there's a lot of interruptions."

Theme 3: Concerns Regarding Professional Development

The data illuminated teachers' eagerness for professional development that was individualized to their specific needs and the requirements of the new curriculum. Teachers highlighted the need for ongoing, job-embedded, personalized sessions to aid their more profound understanding and successful curriculum implementation. The data indicated that 67% of teachers mentioned the significance of including PD to improve curriculum implementation.

Targeted Professional Development

The data amplified the demand for personalized professional development, focusing on grade-specific training to improve the teachers' proficiency in the curriculum's application. T3 emphasized, "To teach effectively, we need to comprehend how the curriculum is structured. However, without proper training or professional development, implementing the curriculum becomes arduous. Particularly for new teachers…targeted professional development can provide much-needed support." T5 expressed frustration over the lack of specificity in professional development, sharing, "During countrywide professional developments, all grades from kindergarten through fifth sit in one Zoom meeting. One grade level, which was not mine, was chosen to demonstrate how to implement the material. I believe the training should be grade specific. If there were more in-house support and grade-specific training from the county, I would be more comfortable implementing and using the material as intended."

Frequent Job-Embedded Professional Development

Teachers indicated a need for frequent PD to improve the focus on the needs of students. T1 stated, "Not I think, I know that would help me be more successful to have more frequent and slower paced PD's. I went to this PD, and I have no idea what they said. I came out, you know, as confused as I went in." T5 said, "Maybe having more sessions of PD or listening to the comments that teachers make after sessions and realizing that okay PD is done but not the understanding." T8 suggested, "Although teachers held weekly planning sessions; however, it may have been beneficial if we

received frequent PD to ensure that we were all implementing and selecting the learning outcomes for the students to enable them to achieve success."

Impact of Professional Development in the Classroom

Grade three teachers professed the fundamental role of receiving PD before curriculum implementation to empower teachers to implement the program effectively. T6 expressed, "I think. Any kind of professional development training with the HMH and especially being new to a system. That would have supported it. I lack a background. I lack training." T9 offered, "So first and foremost, what kind of training am I going to get and what kind of support am I going to get in order to be able to successfully do whatever it is requiring or need to do." T10 declared, "When you start to create a new curriculum having enough time to learn about the new curriculum and being able to understand it and to be able to teach to your students. Maybe that can be a professional development…maybe like of a session with your instructional lead teacher or reading specialist to go over the new curriculum." T6 stated, "They knew I was new coming into third grade…the training should have come from the district building…the fact that they were not able to share that information put me in a bad spot."

RQ2: What challenges and concerns do 3rd grade teachers in the LSD report with implementing the HMH: Into Reading curriculum?

Theme 4: Navigating to Curriculum Complexity

Theme four encapsulated the concerns and challenges that educators experienced in navigating and adapting to the complex aspects of a new reading curriculum. It highlighted the specific curriculum areas that posed difficulties and how teachers

strategized to address the challenges. Most teacher responses reflected the inherent intricacies of implementing the reading curriculum as prescribed.

Content Level Complications

The data underscored the variety of difficulties and concerns that can arise from implementing curriculum lessons, resulting in changes to the curriculum to ensure effective teaching. T1 pinpointed a particularly challenging part of the curriculum: "The section that poses the greatest challenge for me, and it seems I'm not alone in this, is the poetry section." T1 continued, "Grammar seems to be the area where I find I have most problem and I tend to stray away from the curriculum a little bit and make it my own." T3 mentioned, "I think the most challenging aspect of implementing the curriculum is because there are so many different components to teach, but you don't have enough time to do it." T8 stated, "The challenges with the alignment consist of having the assumption that the students have the background knowledge to apply the strategies being introduced." Similarly, T1 shared, "So my concern is that the students are maybe confused because they do not have the background knowledge or the foundational skills to get that topic."

Scope and Sequence

Many teachers expressed that content level complications relating to scope and sequence and difficulties with the poetry and phonics units make it difficult to implement the curriculum with fidelity. T1 pinpointed a challenge with the poetry unit, "…the poetry portion is too far back …and when you get to it, you have to rush…it doesn't give you enough time to explore all the areas of poetry." Others spoke about challenges regarding

implementing the phonics benchmark portion of the curriculum. T4 remarked, "Uh, the one that is not implemented as directed is the phonics portion." T12 informed, "As far as the Benchmark Advanced Phonics. I didn't use it."

Time Management Barriers

Many teachers expressed the complexity of balancing time constraints with implementing the curriculum. The data informed that 83% of teachers considered time constraints a concern, often requiring curriculum modifications. T8 stated, "My concerns stem from the overwhelming task of coordinating between different resources due to imperfect curriculum alignment, leaving me with little time for other important tasks." T9 lamented, "The curriculum does not quite mesh with the timelines and expectations. They are speaking on something totally different than what could effectively be implemented." T3 mentioned, "I would change the time for the reading block because you have students who are all over the place. Several teachers mentioned the inconsistency related to the time frames for the entire reading block. T5 explained, "Alright, so what I don't follow with fidelity is the time usage that the curriculum gives. It's supposed to be a 90 minute block. Based on our school schedule, we actually do read only for 75 minutes." T9 posited, "I don't even have a full 90 minutes, first of all…So we're talking probably, I want to say 70 minutes, you know, 75 minutes that they're trying to fit this 90 minute worth of curriculum into."

Supporting Struggling Readers

The study's data highlighted teachers' concerns regarding the inefficient focus on students below grade level. Teachers expressed concerns about the need for more

resources to meet the needs of diverse students. Focusing on the challenges of teaching students with diverse learning needs, T7 remarked, "My biggest concern lies in assisting students who are significantly behind. I often need to spend extra time reteaching fundamental skills before progressing. For example, we must solidify understanding of basic elements like CVC and CVVC words before moving forward." T2 stated, "You get a lot of fictional text… but then when I'm looking at my scores and they need help with informational on the comprehension. I notice most of the nonfiction text I've seen that they are exposed to it comes towards the end of the year and it's like, I wish more that would be implemented up front of the school." T3 commented, "I think the curriculum a lot of times the challenges are that curriculum is geared to on grade level students. So then that means you have to scramble as a teacher to get, you know, the things that you need for your below babies." T7 explains, "So a lot of times there's not enough minutes in the day or enough time in the classroom to be able to go over the basics." Many teachers remarked that, technically, even though the reading block is 90 minutes, the time is less than 70-75 minutes according to class schedules. The time constraints often result in curriculum modifications.

Supporting Struggling Writers

The findings showed that 50% of teachers experienced challenges implementing the writing component of the curriculum. T7 explained, "It's not that I don't implement the writing of essays, but it is extremely difficult." T9 stated, "So, just the foundational instruction that has to happen is beyond what the analytical writing teaches." T2 articulated, "The HMH text did not align with the essay that the students needed to

complete." T10 proposed the need to modify the curriculum, "You're doing analytical writing, well the kids are struggling to read so you're not doing much of the analytic writing. So, you have to find ways to modify." T5 articulated, "A lot of the writing workshops do not follow the standards so I will introduce my own writing." Lastly, T12 remarked, "More time is needed for the writing cycles because it is not possible to take them through all of the nuances of the writing process in eight days."

Technology Integration

Teachers acknowledged technology as an integral part of implementing the curriculum. Five out of 12 teachers related challenges to using technology, while two agreed that technology provided a positive way to engage students. Challenges included needing more time to access several different links for one lesson. Also, teachers mentioned that because many resources are only online, it sends them scrambling to find replacement resources when the internet goes down.

T10's challenge relates to technology usage by the teachers, "Sometimes I find that it's confusing trying to locate everything that you need to find…it just seems overwhelming." Similarly, T12 revealed, "What I don't like is the teacher portal because it is not user friendly." T5 argued, "When you look at the CIM, you must go to multiple documents and use multiple texts in order to teach the curriculum. You must click a link which takes you outside of the CIM. Everything should be embedded into one document." T3 explained concerns regarding students' technology usage,

> And the technology is a challenge, you know, they want them to do these assignments and stuff on online. But guess what? If you do not have a computer,

> how you going to do it? Or if you decide to leave your computer at home because you didn't want to bring it or whatever. How are they going do the lessons? And we don't have extra computers…Then they are just lost.

T9 expressed, "I use, you know, online resources that were provided." T7 explained, “So with the smart TV... You know, a lot of children love technology…So you do get far more engagement using the HMH read aloud."

Theme 5: Concerns About Curriculum Alignment

Participants acknowledged concerns regarding curriculum alignment. Ten out of 12 teachers identified challenges when implementing the curriculum due to content, scope and sequence, or assessment continuity and coherence. T5 shared, "A lot of the writing workshops do not follow the standards and connections the students are supposed to make in order to do well on the benchmark assessments." T5 further explained, "Also, the cycle planner that's in the curriculum doesn't always align with the conventions and standards that the state says that the students need to know when you're teaching a specific module or cycle for the state standardized assessments." T10 remarked, "As I am new, I find that and I'm still learning the HMH platform and everything. I find sometimes that the cycle assessments to me don't really align, like with what we're reading or what we're talking about. And it is confusing to me." T2 offered, "We had an essay that students had to write and now however we're using the text in HMH, but the text did not really align with the essay the students needed to complete."

Grammar Lessons

Three out of 12 teachers mentioned concerns about the need for more tools and resources for teaching grammar lessons. T12 noted, "I have found the HMH teacher's materials and student materials a little bit lacking when it comes to the grammar lessons. And so, I will follow the pacing guide when it comes to what to teach for grammar, but I tend to teach that in my own way, using my own materials." T11 acknowledged, "Simply finding adequate grammar lessons and resources for the TAG students was a challenge at first but I had to do some research." T1 explained, "I try to put as much emphasis on grammar as possible. But that seems to be the area where I find I have the most problem, and I tend to stray away from the curriculum a little bit and make it my own." Teachers concluded that more resources caused a need to explore resources outside the curriculum to accompany the lessons.

Small Groups

Participants shared that the time frame allotted for small groups needed to align appropriately with the reading block's other elements. T9 lamented, “I wish I could meet with two groups a day, but that proved to be very difficult for me because even in doing that, there were other students during that time period that needed attention…it seemed like it took away from me being able to give the most to the whole group." T3 said, "The small group, I use my discretion. You know whatever it is, the kids, the students need the most help on that. Those are the skills that I cover that I meet with them on." T5 admitted, “I do not follow it with fidelity and to be completely honest, I have not done small groups for the last two years. Small groups are supposed to be 45 minutes a day. You're supposed to be meeting with two groups per day. I do not follow it with fidelity

because with the lack of teachers and especially the lack of support with my sped students, I'm spending more time with my sped group than with my whole group."

Teachers complained that based on the daily schedule, the time allotted for small group lessons needed to meet the curriculum's expectations. T9 lamented, "I've been finding it difficult to meet in small groups with my students on a regular basis for 45 minutes of their 90 minutes and continue to teach the other requirements." Managing the small group expectations outlined in the curriculum resulted in teachers requesting additional support.

Salient and Discrepant Data

The salient pattern in the data resulted from the common idea that considering the district provided a curriculum instructional map for the reading curriculum, many teachers believed implementation fidelity proved unattainable. District curriculum developers modified the HMH reading curriculum based on the state standards. Seven of the 12 participants expressed concerns regarding the issue and believed many implementation decisions stemmed from incongruency between the instructional map and the HMH curriculum. The remaining participants did not mention the curriculum instructional map. During data analysis, no discrepant cases in the data or between the peer debriefer and member checking occurred.

Study Evidence of Quality

The procedures to support accuracy included peer debriefing, member checks, and reflexivity. In connection with this investigation, one peer debriefer was allowed to make clarifying statements about the study. A peer debriefer reviewed 10% of the study to

include codes and themes resulting from participant interviews. The peer reviewer examined the accuracy of the codes and themes to ensure that the resulting themes were grounded in the data. Also, reflexivity accounted for my personal and professional perceptions during all study phases. I used a reflexive journal to document biases and interests. As part of this study, I acknowledged biases that might influence my interpretation of findings. I maintained an audit trail during data analysis by keeping research notes. In addition, I sent participants my preliminary finding to confirm that appropriate interpretations resulted from the data as a means of member checking.

Summary of Outcomes

The problem was that in the years since the inception of this new curriculum, reading proficiency scores remained low, and the district had not explored teacher experiences and challenges with the implementation of the new curriculum. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the experiences and challenges of 3rd grade teachers when implementing the new required reading curriculum. Based on this problem and purpose, and in alignment with the CBAM as the conceptual framework, the research questions guided the study. Five themes resulted in performing the data analysis. The outcomes linked to the results provided logical and systematic information concerning the problem, RQ, and themes (Figure 2):

RQ1: What are the experiences of 3rd grade teachers in the LSD with implementing the HMH: Into Reading curriculum?

The interview data illustrated that most teachers attempted to implement the HMH: Into Reading curriculum to the best of their ability. The themes connected to RQ1

included themes 1, 2, and 3. Teachers emphasized the need for increased classroom support, resources, collaborative learning, and professional development to better comprehend and implement the HMH Into Reading curriculum. Although 87% of teachers placed a high value on teaching the curriculum with fidelity, the data showed that teachers experienced several barriers to implementing the curriculum as prescribed by developers.

Teachers highlighted concerns about the impact the curriculum will have on student outcomes based on the relevancy of the curriculum and their ability to implement the curriculum. Teachers' experiences focused on the impact of the curriculum on student learning, hinting at the need for better ways to engage students in active learning. Eutsler and Long (2021) suggested that teachers concerned with the curriculum's consequences should focus on making the curriculum relevant, engaging, and accessible for all students. Research indicates that providing teachers with opportunities to engage in collaborative continuous PD will support their implementation endeavors (Byrne & Prendergast, 2020; Dele-Ajayi et al., 2021; Geng et al., 2019; Trapani & Annunziato, 2019).

RQ2: What challenges and concerns do 3rd grade teachers in the LSD report with implementing the HMH: Into Reading curriculum?

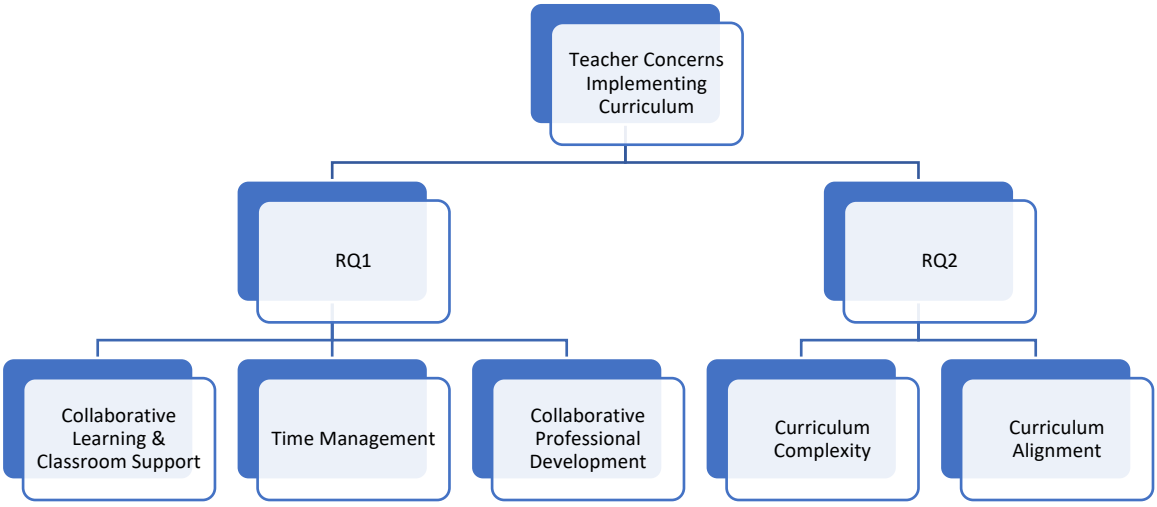
The interviews highlighted the varying challenges and concerns expressed by teachers. The themes linked to RQ2 included themes 4 and 5. Teachers' concerns involved complexities related to implementation and challenges regarding curriculum alignment. Significant complexities involved navigating and adapting to the curriculum,

time management, and technology integration challenges leading to curriculum adaptations. Additional concerns for teachers included content-related elements, scope and sequence, and assessment continuity and coherence. Most teachers, 83%, reflected on changes made to the curriculum based on not having enough time to implement lessons prescribed by developers. Other teachers spoke about using classroom time to manage the overwhelming task of coordinating between different resources. Many of the teachers mentioned challenges regarding implementing the curriculum's core content. While others expressed concerns about the need for foundational lessons to ensure struggling students had access to the curriculum.

Teachers experienced concerns about organizing and executing different aspects of the curriculum, understanding the optimal ways to utilize resources, and fitting the implementation process into the constraints of their daily schedules. Dele-Ajayi et al. (2021) explained that teachers immersed in concerns regarding managing the curriculum should receive comprehensive PD with a concerted effort to show the significance of using the curriculum and how to utilize the curriculum in the classroom best. In addition, the researchers suggested creating a community of learners by leveraging more experienced teachers to train less experienced teachers.

Figure 2

Problem, RQs, Theme Alignment



Section 3: The Project

Based on the research findings, the project selection aligned with the professional development (PD) curriculum and materials genre. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the experiences and challenges of 3rd grade teachers when implementing the new required reading curriculum. The results of the data analysis highlighted teachers' challenges and concerns with implementing the new curriculum. Consequently, this study's deliverable project (Appendix A) included a 3-day learning opportunity for third grade teachers to develop collaborative lesson plans, participate in peer-led lesson demonstrations, and create checklists to improve and sustain curriculum implementation fidelity. In Section 3, I discussed the relationship between the data results, content-focused PD, and the use of professional learning community (PLC) components to improve the implementation of the new curriculum. More specifically, I discuss the goals for the project, details on the rationale, and the literature review that supports the project. Also, Section 3 contained a project description, evaluation plan, and implications.

Description and Project Goals

A 3-day professional learning opportunity will occur to support teachers with developing collaborative lesson plans for small groups, writing, grammar, and phonics, peer-led model lesson demonstrations, and evidence-based checklists to improve the curriculum implementation. McMaster et al. (2020) suggested using checklists to assist teachers in developing and monitoring processes and procedures to ensure that the focus remains on the needs of students. Third grade teachers from the LSD and principals will

receive invitations to the training. The catalyst for the training entailed providing support based on teachers' concerns when implementing the third grade curriculum. Each day participants will view a slide presentation, collaborate, and execute hands-on activities during the interactive PD. The facilitator will access the speaker notes to cover all components thoroughly.

On the first day, the facilitator will encourage participation by leading a team-building activity based on teachers' knowledge of curriculum components. In addition, teachers will learn the importance of implementation fidelity and begin developing model lessons for small group instruction. The project's primary goal is to provide third grade teachers with the support needed to promote implementation fidelity. The goals for the first day are to provide information that will allow teachers to understand HMH's positive impact on student outcomes and their significant role in using best practices to implement the curriculum as developers prescribed.

Teachers will begin creating evidence-based checklists for small group instruction on the second training day. Checklists are used to adhere to critical steps, encouraging users to continue the task until completion (Baldwin & Ching, 2019). Teachers will better understand the HMH's scope and sequence and share ideas about resources to improve student engagement. Also, teachers will explore the significance of students' learning styles and how to use resources to support concerns regarding curriculum complexities and misalignments. The goals include understanding how to create and maintain a collaborative environment to strengthen the appropriate use of the curriculum's processes and procedures.

On the last day, teachers will develop a model lesson based on the concerns presented in the study. Teachers will join colleagues to role-play, collaborate, and self-assess the knowledge gained throughout the training. Also, teachers will create evidence-based checklists to deliver future lessons systematically. The goal for the last day includes creating sustainable methods to enhance teachers' instructional practices.

Rationale

The learning genre selected for the project focused on using PD to enhance the implementation of the new curriculum. The selection relied on the data analysis results, teachers' appeals, and documented benefits derived from PD. Lau and Jong (2022) affirmed that eliciting teachers' concerns is essential to addressing them constructively. Teachers' concerns were analyzed using the conceptual framework CBAM, specifically the SoC. Data analysis results indicated that teachers' primary concerns aligned with Stages 3 and 4 of the SoC. Teachers within Stage 3 concerns centered on managing tasks, resources, and processes. In contrast, Stage 4 challenges stemmed from teachers' concern about the new curriculum's impact on students. Recommended actions to address the concerns and challenges regarding Stages 3 and 4 included providing PD to demonstrate what appropriate implementation looks like and sharing examples of how the change positively impacts students (Alnujaidi, 2021; Bullard et al., 2017; Natividad & Abrogena, 2023).

The study results highlighted teachers' challenges and concerns regarding increased classroom support, resources, collaborative learning, and professional development to improve comprehension and implement the reading curriculum. Kim et

al. (2019) suggested that to promote active learning amongst students, leaders must regard teachers as learners and provide PD that inspires the type of learning expected in the classroom. Improved student outcomes lie in teachers' context-specific understanding of the best practices and meaningful ways to support students' learning (Kim et al., 2019). As such, the research data concluded that many teachers agreed that barriers to implementing the curriculum with fidelity involved complexities with aligning content-specific requirements, resources, and time constraints to implement the curriculum. The data amplified the demand for collaborative content-specific training to improve the teachers' proficiency in the curriculum's application. The content related to the project considered teachers' concerns about curriculum management and the consequences on students' learning.

In the current study, grade three teachers professed the importance of receiving PD before curriculum implementation. They desired a collaborative environment to develop the best practices necessary to implement the curriculum with fidelity. Nawaz and Akbar (2019) indicated that PD acts as a conduit to assist teachers in meeting the demands of curriculum designers' intentions. De Simone (2020) researched how collaborative PD affects teachers' ability to transfer knowledge in the classroom. PLCs provide opportunities for active learning while encouraging teachers to remain socially connected (Oddone et al., 2019). Also, PLCs promote collaboration between school staff and principals, nurturing conscious communications, active listening, and authentic engagement (Johnson & Voelkel, 2021). Based on data analysis results, CBAM, and the

problem, the project used PLC components to address teachers' concerns to support further curriculum implementation.

Review of Literature

Specific Project Genre

The utilization of PD remains imperative to ensuring teachers' preparedness to enact curriculums and student achievement. In this study, the problem was that in the years since the inception of the new curriculum, reading proficiency scores remained low, and the district had not explored teacher experiences and challenges with the implementation of the new curriculum. PD accounts for a viable and effective way to improve student achievement (Gupta & Lee, 2020). PD is structured professional learning that enhances teacher practices and student learning (Byrne & Prendergast, 2020). Additionally, Brown and Militello (2016) extended the definition of PD as a comprehensive and sustained process of improving the effectiveness of teachers and principals to increase student achievement. Ensuring that school staff members receive PD ensures teachers have the foundation to implement curriculums as intended, leading to improved student achievement.

Collaboration in a PD experience will result in educators successfully using the material in their classrooms. Teachers should participate in continuous and collaboratively situated professional development opportunities to enhance instructional practices (Geng et al., 2019). De Simone (2020) researched how collaborative PD affects teachers' ability to transfer knowledge to the school. The researcher concluded that when

teachers are part of a collaborative workgroup, it increases a person's self-efficacy, which improves cognition, leading to a likelihood of successful outcomes (De Simone, 2020).

Collaborative and continuous PD equally provide the foundation for strategic professional development. Continuous professional development (CPD) involves methods to enhance personal growth to improve the overall capability of teachers (Tulu, 2019). Aldahmash et al. (2019) proposed that the central tenants of CPD beyond traditional professional development enable teachers to work collaboratively with peers, provide mentoring and coaching, and sustain learning over time. Professional development should focus on teaching and learning specific content connected to school initiatives to provide teachers with the capacity to build knowledge collectively (Geng et al., 2019; Trapani & Annunziato, 2019).

Additionally, professional development and ongoing job-embedded training are essential to ensure comfort when implementing the curriculum (Darling-Hammond & Oakes, 2021). LaChausse et al. (2014) suggested a training sequence aligning with implementation logic models to improve implementation fidelity and acquire more substantial program outcomes. Providing collaborative CPD will assist teachers in building their capacity to instruct students.

Additional factors that affect teachers' capacity to implement the curriculum as prescribed include opportunities to plan with peers and ensure the quality of instructional resources (Bettini et al., 2020). Billingsley et al. (2019) posited that professional development promotes mechanisms that school districts use to assist teachers in effectively managing factors that impact instructional practices. PD experiences should

allow teachers to work collaboratively with colleagues, relate learning to the classroom, and address subject specific and pedagogy knowledge needed to assist students in accessing the curriculum (Dimmock et al., 2021). Based on data analysis findings, participating in PD will address LSD teachers' concerns and help improve teachers' effectiveness in the classroom.

How the Search was Conducted

I utilized the Walden Library to conduct searches on the educational database sources of APA PsycInfo, EBSCOHost, SAGE Journals, Taylor and Francis Online, Education resources Information, Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), Google Scholar, Google, ProQuest Central, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, Directory of Open Access Journals, and SocINDEX. Key terms and phrases consisting of the following were included in the search: *characteristics of professional development, content-focused professional development, effective professional development, pedagogical-focused professional development, peer collaboration, professional development, professional development using Concerns Based Adoption Model, professional development using Stages of Concern, subject matter knowledge, professional learning communities.*

Characteristics of Effective Professional Development

Over the last two decades, evidence surfaced that PD improves teaching and student outcomes (Fletcher-Wood & Zuccollo, 2020; Lynch et al., 2019). Although several definitions exist for PD, Sims et al. (2021) referred to it as a “structured, facilitated activity for teachers intended to increase their teaching ability.” The features of

effective PD include content-focused learning, active learning, duration, coherence, and collective participation (Lindmeier et al., 2020; Parrish et al., 2020; Richardson et al., 2019).

Specifically, Ekinci and Acar (2019) conducted a study to establish a valuable model for implementing effective PD. The researchers collected interview data from 20 teachers. The participants provided opinions regarding their thoughts centered around different concepts and processes associated with the effective implementation of PD. An outcome from the study identified fulfilling a need, goal setting, planning, development process, and evaluation as a model for an effective PD program. For the current study, one of the themes resulting from data analysis entailed teachers' desire for frequent, targeted job-embedded PD. Providing teachers with content-focused PD addresses the problem and findings from the study that supports the project.

Content-Focused Professional Development

Content-focused PD refers to specific training focused on improving teachers' subject matter knowledge and their knowledge about specific pedagogical practices. In education, subject matter knowledge refers to learning in a discipline taught by a teacher (Chen et al., 2020). Conversely, pedagogical knowledge is akin to the skills and strategies used to teach the content (Wells et al., 2023). Teachers can utilize subject-specific content and improve instructional strategies when PD addresses content-focused development. Gess-Newsome et al. (2019) conducted a study to examine the effects of teachers' PD relating to subject and pedogeological knowledge and student achievement. The researchers concluded that teachers' practices aligned significantly more with the

curriculum expectations when content-focused learning guides the PD. The data analysis related to the study illustrated a need for content-focused PD, considering that teachers shared various concerns relating to implementing grammar and writing content and time management barriers resulting from implementation requirements. According to CBAM, understanding the concerns of implementors offers leaders opportunities to provide targeted support for the concerns (SEDL, n.d.).

Like Gess-Nesome et al. (2019), Richter et al. (2021) explained that content-focused PD may fill the gaps when teachers lack subject matter expertise, building teachers' skills where needed. In their recent study, Richter et al. (2021) asked, "How teachers' attendance in PD programs correlates with aspects of teacher quality?" To assess the type of PD teachers participated in, independent raters categorized PD activities as content- or noncontent-focused. The researchers used paper and pencil tests to assess teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge. The outcomes suggested that teachers with high achievement in training spent more time engaging in content-focused training. Richter et al. (2021) affirmed that schools should seek to develop a content-focused PD system to support teachers' needs to ensure high quality teaching for all students.

Research indicates that teachers who participate in content-focused PD improve their ability to instruct students (Luesse et al., 2022; Pak et al., 2020; Smith et al., 2020). One such study conducted by Parrish et al. (2020) set out to determine how mathematics teachers perceived content-focused PD. Forty-three mathematics teachers participated in PD sessions, including content- and curriculum-focused activities. The researchers

concluded that content-focused PD allowed the teachers to deepen their mathematical content knowledge. In addition, teachers reported learning multiple strategies to apply during classroom instruction to increase students' engagement and active learning. Teachers consistently identified collaborating with peers and active learning experiences as highlights of content-focused PD. In the current study, teachers reported concerns about needing collaborative learning opportunities. Data analysis results illustrated teachers' concerns regarding best practices when organizing and executing different aspects of the curriculum to meet curriculum timelines and schedules. Offering content-focused PD will improve teachers' ability to utilize aspects of the curriculum to improve student achievement.

Research suggests that when it comes to students' performance, teachers have the most influence on outcomes, with two to three times the effect of any other school factor (Opper, 2019). Providing effective PD assists teachers in meeting the needs of students. Gore et al. (2021) found that including a pedagogical approach to PD provides teachers with tools to develop knowledge to improve students' learning. Gore et al.'s (2021) study selected a cluster randomized controlled trial designed to examine the efficacy of teacher participation in pedagogy-focused PD to improve student achievement in mathematics, reading, and science. The study's findings indicated a positive effect on student outcomes in mathematics and showed promising results for readers. Elements for the PD project included collaboratively identifying pedagogical strategies to support data analysis results relating to concerns about curriculum complexities. Teachers expressed struggling with content level requirements regarding struggling readers and writers.

Traditionally, PD provides an avenue to improve student outcomes. Smith et al. (2020) suggested providing PD with an emphasis on pedagogy and PLC elements building the repertoire of schools attempting to offer mechanisms for improving teachers' best practices. Gore and Rosser's (2022) research showed that utilizing a pedagogy-focused PD, coupled with learning in PLCs, significantly improves teachers' best practices. The data used for the analysis consisted of teacher and school leader interviews and focus groups. The researchers' results generated the following themes:

1. Fresh pedagogical insights resulted across grades/subject areas.
2. Participants experienced enhanced collegiality.
3. Ongoing collaboration occurred in schools following the PD program.

Gore and Rosser (2022) concluded that the study does not lessen the significance of content-focused PD. Instead, the results show that pedagogy-focused PD united with the use of PLCs contributes to the variety of PD models available to enhance teaching in general. Comparably, the PD project's adoption of PLC elements will equip teachers through collaborative discussions and support regarding time management and nonacademic requirements concerns.

Professional Learning Communities

Utilizing PLCs improves communication between students, teachers, parents, and school leaders (Meyer-Looze et al., 2019). Traditionally, teachers' primary role includes implementing curricula using their skills, experiences, and educational backgrounds. When teachers engage in PLCs, school environments become conducive to collaborative activities resulting in improved student outcomes (Meeuwen et al., 2020). Often, teachers

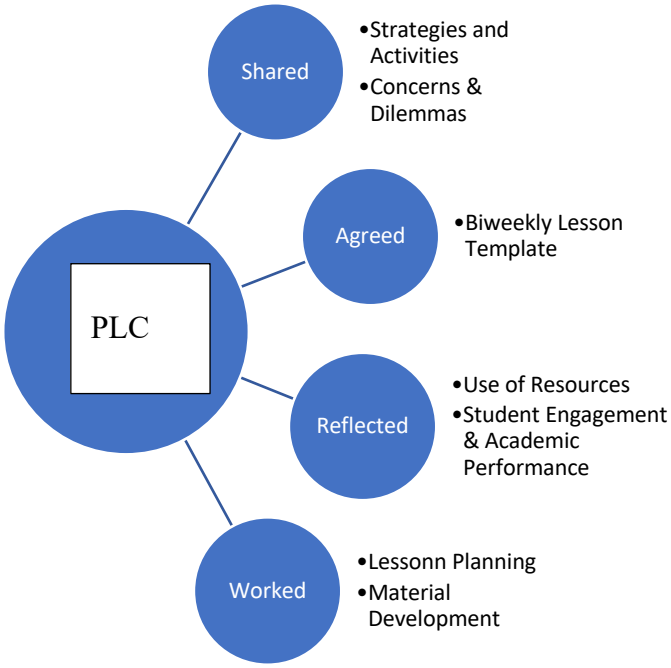
work in isolation which may hamper their ability to leverage knowledge. Involving teachers in PLCs allows teachers to become less isolated and more willing to share best practices necessary to improve collective knowledge benefitting the school community (Anderson & Olivier, 2022; Meyer-Looze et al., 2019). Aligned to CBAM, PLCs provide a platform for school staff and leadership to collaboratively understand concerns, barriers, and challenges inherent during program changes to strategize resolutions.

Establishing and maintaining PLCs are beneficial when adopting reforms in schools. Wan (2020) argued that schools managing reform initiatives should utilize PLCs to improve innovation adoption. When educational leaders champion school changes, integrating PLCs becomes necessary to ensure that the adoption positively impacts the school's culture (Agsonsua & Prasertphorn, 2020). Principals must facilitate connecting the use of PLCs to making practical changes in the school that subsequently affects learning for all students and teachers (Meyer-Looze et al., 2019). As part of the PLC process, principals must promote mutual trust between staff members to ensure the sustainably of PLCs (Meyer-Looze et al., 2019). One of the themes from the current study highlighted teachers' concerns about the lack of collaborative opportunities. Teachers expressed a desire to learn from peers and administrative leaders. Many teachers expressed ideas about performing walk-throughs and establishing teacher partnerships to leverage instructional strategies and resources. Consequently, the project will take advantage of PLC components by inviting principals to attend PD to promote sustained collaborative efforts within the school.

He et al. (2022) affirmed that teachers' participation in PLCs impacts instructional practices and students' accessibility to the curriculum. The researchers conducted a study to explore the impact of PLCs on teachers' knowledge, skills, and instructional practices. The pertinent research question was how does PLC engagement impact the implementation of school curricula where both English and a partner language are used in content area instruction? Based on the study results, the researchers found that the PLC positively supported increased teachers' overall teaching ability. He et al. (2022) outlined several benefits of incorporating PLCs (see Figure 2). The project will use the PLC outcomes to support the structure of the PD in creating a collaborative network to engage teachers in sustained collaborations.

Figure 3

PLC Outcomes



Professional Development Based on Concerns

Using CBAM in educational settings guides stakeholders in identifying concerns and variations of use throughout the implementation of school programs (Hall & Hord, 2020). Lau and Jong (2022) affirmed that eliciting teachers' concerns is essential to address them constructively. Johnson and Voelkel (2021) suggested using PLCs to collectively build relationships and skills to improve team planning and student achievement.

Curriculum Complexity

Olson et al. (2020) conducted a study to evaluate the ongoing implementation of a school district's strategic plan. School-based instructional staff from four schools and

building and district leadership completed the SoC and interviews to identify the concerns and levels of use regarding implementing the school's plan. Similarly, in my study, one of the highest levels of concerns identified related to Stage 3. Based on the data, teachers were immersed in the implementation but needed additional information to implement the program entirely. The researchers analyzed the data and met with participants to collaboratively generate actionable items supporting concerns expressed during data collection. Olson et al. (2020) posited that using CBAM allowed the district to create timely feedback and data-driven recommendations to ensure continuous improvement and support. Using the tenants of CBAM, the PD project will use teachers' concerns and challenges to create a safe environment to address needs collaboratively.

Before making recommendations to address concerns, research indicates the need to understand implementors' concerns. Magallanes et al. (2022) applied CBAM to assess the level of teachers' concerns associated with implementing a school initiative. Four hundred teachers completed the SoCQ. The goal involved finding connections between students' poor assessment scores on the Programmed for International Student Assessment and recently implemented educational programs. The results from the SoCQ ranked most teachers in Stage 3 Management and second Stage 4 Consequences of the SoC. Identical to my study results, the stages indicated that teachers' concerns encompassed the programs' impact on students and identified methods to improve the current teaching methodology. Magallanes et al. (2022) and Dizon et al. (2019) suggested that teachers and principals engage in collaborative PD to equip them with the proper skills and strategies to implement the programs. The researchers offered that PD should

include a system to monitor outcomes to ensure the sustainability of changes. Also, Baldwin and Ching (2019) recommended using checklists to support concerns regarding curriculum complexities. Checklists allow users to break down complex tasks or concepts into manageable steps, making it easier to understand if procedures meet the requirements provided in the learning material (Baldwin & Ching, 2019). The PD project incorporates the recommendations shared by Magallanes and Dizon and Baldwin and Ching.

In today's technology-driven environment, insufficient time and insufficient technology affect teachers' curriculum implementation. Chemagosi (2020) studied primary teachers' readiness to implement a school-based curriculum. Forty eight teachers from two counties within a district completed a questionnaire and participated in interviews and observations. Based on low state test scores, several main concerns include teachers needing adequate time for teaching and learning, noncompliance with digital devices competency, and nonadherence to curriculum instructional approach to education. The researchers affirmed that 65% of teachers considered time constraints a barrier to successfully implementing the curriculum. Also, 69% believed that challenges regarding technology impeded their ability to implement the curriculum as prescribed by developers. Teachers expressed that nonacademic requirements, including preparing professional records and attending to parents, negatively impacted their teaching ability. The researchers suggested continuous job-embedded PD to improve teachers' capacity for teaching competence. My PD project will explore time management and technological concerns collaboratively.

Curriculum Alignment

Trapani and Annunziato (2019) used CBAM to conduct a study assessing the implementation of the Understanding by Design (UbD) instructional framework. As part of the case study, twenty seven teachers completed the SoCQ and participated in interviews and classroom observations. Data analysis results indicated that 87% of teachers admitted to consistently questioning the quality of UbD, causing possible modifications while implementing the program. Also, less than 50% of teachers acknowledged always collaborating with colleagues about the UbD program.

The second phase of the research included teachers' completion of an intervention survey. Participants responded to the questions, "What kind of professional development do you need to advance your uses of the UbD framework?" Most teachers wanted PD to include paired collaboration and interactive workshops. Interactive workshops offer collaborative activities where teachers can receive guidance on specific program components. Based on the data, the researchers suggested a set of transparent goals and expectations developed through the collaborative efforts of teachers and school leaders should guide implementation. Creating a checklist is recommended to identify if expectations and critical components of the curriculum support students' skill acquisition (Yates et al., 2020). My PD project plan will utilize the specifics outlined by the researchers to enhance curriculum implementation.

Project Description

Based on the teachers’ concerns and data analysis results, a 3-day PD will focus on developing collaborative lesson plans, peer-led lesson demonstrations, and evidence-

based checklists to improve and sustain the fidelity of curriculum implementation. The PD will occur for three consecutive days, whereby teachers will participate in well-structured training with interactive activities to create a community learning environment each day. Santarossa and Woodruff (2020) suggested that having clearly defined training with clarity of specific roles within the group will contribute to the success of the PD. To successfully conduct the training, the following materials are needed: laptops, Smartboard, chart paper, and markers. Participants will receive an evaluation at the end of each session to provide feedback concerning the training.

Existing Supports

The training will occur in the school library to facilitate 20 people per session. Each table will allow up to four individuals to sit comfortably. The limited number of participants may provide a platform for deep conversations and reflections. Byrne and Prendergast (2020) expressed that collaborative PD yields positive consequences for participants. A tray with markers, paper, sticky notes, and mints will be at the center of the table. Two pieces of chart paper marked with the titles Parking Lot and Back Burner will hang on either side of the room. I will encourage participants to add questions, ideas, and comments relevant to the training on the Parking Lot chart. Teachers will place fewer related comments on the Back Burner chart. Teachers will bring laptops, but I will ask that all laptops remain closed until it is time to access material collectively.

Potential Barriers and Solutions

Potential barriers to effective PD included participants' negative attitudes towards training, inconvenient course time, and monotony of course content (Eroglu & Donmus,

2021). The researchers posited that PD should consider content based on the needs of participants. My PD related to the concerns and needs of third grade teachers, according to the study. The course should follow the characteristics of effective PD to ensure the quality of the training (Lindmeier et al., 2020). The features of effective PD include content-focused learning, active learning, duration, coherence, and collective participation (Parrish et al., 2020). The PD project will include role play, brainstorming, and problem based learning to ensure teachers' active engagement. Also, the PD sessions will occur during the time teachers can participate. Another potential barrier might be technical difficulties. The solution to this possibility is that all participants will receive a hard copy of the presentation.

Another barrier to consider is acquiring authorization from the principal to conduct the PD. Currently, there is a teacher and substitute shortage in the LSD. Due to budgetary constraints, the principal may need more support to acquire substitutes for the teachers to attend the training. I will forward a summary of the data results to support the training. Also, if the principal does not authorize consecutive full 3-day training days, I will request to present the PD during monthly staff meetings during the school year.

Proposal for Implementation and Timetable

The PD will support teachers' significant concerns resulting from the data analysis. Consequently, a 3-day professional learning opportunity will occur to develop collaborative lesson plans for small groups, writing, grammar, phonics, peer-led lesson demonstrations, and evidence-based checklists to improve the curriculum implementation. Day 1 will begin with activities focused on acquiring teacher buy-in for

the PD. Teachers will engage in a Kahoot activity to identify what they know about the reading curriculum. The questions will determine the significant lesson components and the days and times each element is taught.

Teachers will build collaborative units by participating in the activity with group members. Next, the facilitator will provide evidence showing positive outcomes for students accessing the curriculum. Teachers will participate in an activity on their laptops to match state standards with the HMH lesson contents. Then, teachers will receive four cards showing the 2020 state test reading scores for the LSD and the surrounding three counties. Each learning group will discuss the scores and attempt to match the scores with the correct county. The LSD has the lowest test scores of the surrounding districts.

After a break, teachers will watch a video demonstration of a small group lesson. Teachers will discuss the positive and negative aspects of the example lesson. Then, the facilitator will form new learning groups, provide materials, and request that teachers develop a model small group lesson. Upon completion, each group will present their lesson, one member taking on the role of the teacher while the others act as students. Collaboratively, teachers will watch the presentations and chart the significant portions of the lesson that made it a positive experience for students. The facilitator will combine the evidence and provide an evidence-based checklist for teachers to finalize on day two of the training. Teachers will complete and self-assessment and a formative evaluation rating the PD content and instructors' performance.

Day 2 will consist of finalizing the small group checklist developed on day one, understanding how the HMH curriculum aligns with the state standards, examining the

HMH scope and sequence, and brainstorming about resources used to encourage students' active participation during instruction. The facilitator will provide the collaboratively created small group checklist. Teachers will use sticky notes to add comments reflecting preferred changes to the checklist. The facilitator will make necessary corrections and provide the final checklist on Day 3. Next, the facilitator will supply cards showing the reading curriculum's lesson contents, time frames, and the numbers 1-8. Teachers will order the lesson contents in groups with the days and time frames. Teachers will glue the cards onto chart paper, and each group will present their interpretation of the scope and sequence of the curriculum. Upon completion, the facilitator will use a group's example and show the scope and sequence for the eight day cycle of the HMH curriculum. Next, teachers will discuss understanding and using students' learning styles to improve curriculum implementation. Lastly, teachers discuss different resources to inspire students' active engagement during reading lessons. The resources may include videos, websites, games, activities, or anything else teachers use as a resource. Each group will chart and present their findings. Teachers will complete and self-assessment and a formative evaluation rating the PD content and instructors' performance.

On Day 3, teachers will review new resources, align them with students' learning styles, and develop and present model lessons for writing, grammar, and phonics lessons. Using the charts developed on Day 2, teachers will match resources with the type of learning style it involves. The facilitator will discuss the importance of collaborating with team members on instructional strategies and resources to increase teachers' capacity to deliver instruction to meet all students' diverse needs. Next, teachers will access the

curriculum to examine grammar, writing, or phonics lessons. Based on a consensus within each group, members will develop lessons and create a role-play to present the results. One member will be the teacher, and others will act as the students. After each group presents, a collaborative discussion will occur to identify key evidence teachers should remember when implementing the lesson.

The facilitator will ask for one volunteer from each group to take notes as the whole group analyzes each presentation and highlights significant ideas to remember. Based on the information, teachers will create evidence-based checklists for writing, grammar, and phonics lessons by the end of the PD. Lastly, teachers will receive an evaluation form to complete, bringing the PD to a close.

Roles and Responsibilities

Researcher and Facilitator

My role as a researcher included exploring academic material to acquire information on providing PD based on the study's data analysis results. I read peer reviewed articles to understand the connection between the data results and the PD curriculum and materials genre. Upon selecting the genre, I developed the project goals, rationale, and conducted a review of literature that aligned with the PD genre. In addition, I developed a PD project for the study site to support the concerns expressed by the participants. As the facilitator of the PD project, I created a slide presentation encompassing engaging details and activities to support teachers' concerns regarding the implementation of the required reading curriculum. Also, I structured the PD to engage teachers in peer related activities to begin building a collaborative network to improve

and sustain future implementations. Burgess et al. (2020) suggested that facilitators should ensure learning meets the needs of students, challenge students through high level questioning, and cultivate critical thinking.

Teachers

Teachers will engage in the interactive activities presented by the PD facilitator. Participants will create model lessons for small groups, writing, grammar, and phonics lessons. An outcome of generating the lessons will be evidence-based checklists that will support the implementation of the reading curriculum. Also, through collaborative efforts, teachers will develop a list of resources for encouraging actively engaged students. Teachers will align the resources to students' learning styles to support students' diverse learning needs. Lastly, teachers will complete the self-assessments and provide formative feedback on days 1 and 2, and at the end of day three, complete the summative evaluation.

Principals

Once the principal approves the PD, I will confirm the dates and times for the training. Also, the principal must authorize other PD logistics and budgetary considerations. Principals control the training and support opportunities, teacher assignments, and allowable planning time (Stockard, 2020). The principal will receive an invitation to attend the PD. I will discuss the importance of administrative buy-in to inspire teachers' positive responses to the training. To ensure the development of teachers' ability to deliver the curriculum as prescribed, principals need to ensure that teachers participate in relevant and continued PD (Chabalala & Naidoo, 2021).

Project Evaluation Plan

The PD project utilized the formative and summative evaluation format. A unique aspect of formative evaluation is that data are shared with participants during the study to adapt and improve the training process (Elwy et al., 2020). During the PD, teachers will develop and present model lessons. Peers will collaboratively assess the model lessons and offer feedback on each other's adherence to the curriculum's implementation requirements. Upon completion of each lesson, peers will have an opportunity to ask clarifying questions before completing the formative peer lesson evaluation form. Formative evaluations align with the project, allowing teachers to complete self-assessments based on peer feedback. Using formative evaluations encourages collaborative discussions, self-reflection, and possible future instructional adaptations. Also, teachers will complete a self-assessment after presenting model lessons. Wylie and Lyon (2020) suggested that conducting formative evaluations offers learners a pathway to provide constructive feedback and self-assessments. The goal of the evaluation reflects an opportunity for teachers to collaborate and adjust instructional strategies aimed at improving the implementation of the curriculum.

At the end of days one and two, teachers will receive an evaluation form to offer feedback regarding the facilitator's performance and the PD content. Formative assessments are conducted to evaluate an individual's learning process and are used to alter, modify, and improve PD (Bin Mubayrik, 2020). The goal of the evaluation represents a method for the facilitator to acquire data to inform training for the next day.

The evaluation will gauge levels of engagement, learning capacity, and learning concerns. Upon reviewing the data, the facilitator will change the materials if necessary.

At the close of day 3 of the training, teachers will receive a final summative evaluation form to rate teachers' overall PD experience. Completing a final evaluation aims to support the facilitator with self-reflection and possible adjustments to future training opportunities (Wylie & Lyon., 2020). The goal is to use critical feedback to improve training for prospective participants.

Overall Evaluation Goals

The overall evaluation goal included improving student growth through PD and collaborative, reflective learning of teachers. Both formative and summative evaluations provided awareness of the effectiveness of the PD program. The evaluation forms will assist teachers' understanding of their coherence to the curriculum implementation processes and procedures prescribed by developers. Evaluating the PD could indicate whether individuals or groups positively experienced the program (Bin Mubayrik, 2020; McIntyre et al., 2019). Teachers will complete self-assessments to identify active engagement during the PD. Conducting an evaluation will provide evidence to show if the PD's features promoted active learning and ownership of the process (Compen et al., 2019). Teachers will receive a summative evaluation for thoughts regarding the overall content of the PD. Summative assessments incorporating scale questions provide a range of data on whether the PD goals and outcomes met the established criteria (Ahmed et al., 2019). The overall goal for the facilitator encompassed using the information to allow for self-assessment regarding the design and content of the PD. Collaboratively designed PD

combines learning with peer support, providing teachers with ongoing feedback and guidance to support student outcomes (Hargreaves & Elhawary., 2019; Karlberg & Bezzina., 2022).

Key Stakeholders

The critical stakeholders for the project included students, teachers, and principals. Students will benefit from the project because teachers will improve their ability to implement the reading curriculum. Didion et al. (2020) posited that students of teachers who received quality PD performed better than students whose teachers did not receive PD. Teachers are vital stakeholders because of the skills, knowledge, and collaborative practice learned during training. Teachers benefitting from the training will understand best practices and develop a network of peers to implement the curriculum with fidelity. Principals are integral because they must give the authorization to conduct the program. Also, principals share the responsibility for change implementation, including providing opportunities for professional development for teachers (Acton, 2021; Meyer-Looze et al., 2019).

Project Implications

The possible social change involved the increased teacher capacity developed through integrating the PD at the school level. The PD project addressed the concerns of teachers implementing the HMH reading curriculum. When collaborative learning acts as the foundation of PD, participants' ability to implement curricula improves. Teachers participating in practical, continuous, and systematic PD potentially increase the quality of literacy instruction (Miller et al., 2019; Mystakidis et al., 2021).

Teachers' learning outcomes from the project included collaborating to share instructional best practices, modeling lessons adhering to the curriculum requirements, and building a network of users capable of sustaining implementation fidelity. The principal of the LSD received an invitation to attend the training. Another possible social change involved principals' understanding of teachers' concerns to improve future curriculum implementation endeavors. When principals understand teachers' concerns, an environment of collaborative problem solving may lead to improved implementation fidelity (Olson et al., 2020).

More significant context implications for potential social change included providing school leaders with data to assist them in making systemic changes before and during the implementation of a reading curriculum to improve student progress in reading. Harris and Graham (2019) suggested that teachers do not welcome curriculum change. Understanding teachers' concerns may give district leaders the knowledge surrounding the support needed in schools to promote teacher buy-in for school innovations before mandating a new curriculum. Also, being privy to teachers' challenges may allow school leaders to create mitigation strategies to address the issues before and during implementation (Nollmeyer et al., 2019).

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Project Strengths

The development of the project study used CBAM for the conceptual framework, specifically the SoC. CBAM constituted a strength because it provided the basis for understanding the experiences, challenges, and concerns of third grade teachers in the LSD. Another strength included the structure of the deliverable for the project, which was a 3-day PD aligned to the themes resulting from the data analysis. Initially, teachers were grounded in activities meant to promote teacher buy-in. Sims and Fletcher-Wood (2021) suggested that teachers become personally invested and more engaged when they support the program. Several interactive activities included exploring the curriculum's positive track record regarding student outcomes. Also, teachers collectively compared state reading assessments with neighboring districts and examined the significance of the teachers' role in adhering to the scope and sequence prescribed by curriculum developers.

Additional strengths included the hands-on, collaborative nature of the PD and evaluation plan. Effective PD should include collective participation to promote active learning (Lindmeier et al., 2020; Parrish et al., 2020; Richardson et al., 2019). Most activities allowed teachers to leverage joint knowledge and experiences to create model lessons and evidence-based checkpoints during the PD. Lastly, the evaluation plan represented another strength of the project. Wylie and Lyon (2020) suggested that conducting evaluations offers learners an opportunity to provide constructive feedback and self-assessments. Teachers evaluated peer-led model lessons and provided each other with data to promote reflection and self-assessment. Also, teachers evaluated the

facilitator by providing valuable insights used to improve the content and presentation offered.

Project Limitations

The PD program will provide teachers at the LSD with the skills and knowledge required to improve curriculum fidelity, but limitations exist. The project's design offers a consecutive 3-day PD to allow for consistency and flow of the content. Previously scheduled required training and budgetary constraints may prove challenging for the LSD. Principals control the budgetary factors enabling training opportunities (Stockard, 2020). If the principal does not authorize consecutive days for training, I will request to present the PD during our monthly staff meetings during the school year.

Another limitation of the study relates to the experience of the researcher. Groothuijsen et al. (2019) suggested facilitators need subject matter expertise, the ability to manage collaborative learning, and self-efficacy to conduct PD successfully. The current study was my first experience researching and analyzing data. After taking courses related to my program of study, I completed a research course and read peer reviewed articles describing research processes, procedures, and strategies.

Teachers' predisposition factors may become a limitation for the PD project. Smith and Gillespie (2023) claimed that teachers' characteristics, motivation for attending, background knowledge, and attitudes play an integral role in their uptake and engagement of PD. During the PD, teachers will collectively create model lesson plans, demonstrate exemplary instruction, and brainstorm solutions to concerns. A limitation may exist if teachers are unwilling to participate or need more foundational knowledge to

capture lessons learned from the content. Also, due to the interactive nature of the training, teachers need to actively participate to ensure the experiences can garner beneficial learner outcomes. On the first day of training, teachers will participate in activities to secure their buy-in.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

A different approach to address the problem may have been to develop a policy recommendation utilizing a detailed position paper. The goals of the position paper would be to provide leadership with a problem statement, a summary of the data from research findings, and recommendations to solve the problem. The LSD mandated using a curriculum map to accompany the reading curriculum. Many teachers regarded the curriculum map as the reason lesson activities did not align with expectations causing them to modify implementation. Developing a position paper would reflect an appropriate scholarly foundation for the particular problem, as district leaders could receive a report detailing teachers' concerns and viable recommendations for continuing, augmenting, or excluding the curriculum map. The position paper format varies but traditionally includes a persuasive argument to support recommendations.

Researchers use position papers in education for many reasons. Perrotta and Selwyn (2020) offered a position paper with recommendations for using deep learning to predict aspects of educational performance. Lee (2019) provided a position paper examining the benefits of written feedback in school. Lastly, Ungar et al. (2019) suggested recommendations for enhancing the development of young people's resilience

in the form of a position paper. Consequently, using the position paper is a viable alternative to the current project.

Another alternative to addressing the problem involves completing a developmental program evaluation to determine the quality of program delivery and the quality of the curriculum. Program evaluations are intended for the decisionmaker to understand program processes and outcomes (Patton, 2010). Program evaluations require the collection of data on the program to identify the strengths, weaknesses, and overall effectiveness of a program. The study used interviews to collect teachers' concerns about implementing the curriculum. Cooper et al. (2020) posited that the developmental evaluation is an option at the beginning or developmental phase of the adoption of a program. Teachers were in the third year of utilizing the reading curriculum. Using the evaluation approach could provide leaders with the data needed to make recommendations for the continued implementation of the curriculum and a guideline for selecting curricula in the future.

An alternative to the problem's definition could be that the LSD did not collaborate with enough stakeholders before selecting a new curriculum. Several teachers mentioned becoming aware of the new curriculum at the beginning of the school year. A solution to the problem is consulting teachers, principals, and reading specialists before mandating the implementation of the new program.

Scholarship, Project Development, and Leadership and Change

I graduated with my master’s degree in 2004. I began working as an elementary school teacher shortly after receiving my degree. Educating students remains one of the

constant joys in my life. As I continue teaching students, I have become a lifelong learner. Becoming involved in the Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment program at Walden has taken my zest for continuous education to new heights. Reaching this point of creating the project for my study has been no easy task. Throughout the process, I have learned many things about my level of scholarship. Actual achievement takes patience, resourcefulness, and perseverance.

Being a project developer involves reading scholarly articles with purpose while understanding the significance of teasing out pertinent details necessary for project development. As a practitioner, my newly acquired skillset allowed me to gain knowledge, understand the problem, plan, and design my project. Handling the iterative process of scholarly writing allowed me to build the perseverance necessary to encounter any challenge confidently.

At the start of the project development, I received many resources. It took me a while, but finally, I honed my library skills, utilized the writing and academic skills centers to improve my writing skills, found articles suited for my project, and acquired knowledge to create slides. However, becoming resourceful became an integral part of my scholarship. Through my experiences, I learned to become open to new ideas in my attempts to meet the needs of my project. Along the way, I developed relationships with others in my program and my committee members to strive toward developing my project. Experiencing the process of creating my project provided opportunities to learn the leadership qualities necessary to manage future personal, career, and academic events.

Reflections on the Importance of the Work

In reflecting on the importance of the work, I found that revealing the significance of teachers' concerns outweighed the sometimes overwhelming workload involved with researching the topic. The lessons learned throughout this process included the necessity of being meticulous, organized, and honest. Balancing research efficacy with maintaining scholarly writing principles was the foundation for my research.

Teachers have the most influence on the learning of students. Developing reading comprehension skills may influence students' academic success and future real world experiences. Consequently, understanding the pathway to improve teachers' instruction becomes germane to providing teachers with processes and procedures to fulfill their professional duties. The study aimed to explore the experiences and challenges of 3rd grade teachers when implementing the new required reading curriculum. Developing a project aligned with the research provided a significant addition to the literature on understanding teachers' concerns when fostering student achievement.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

This study on teachers' experiences and challenges when implementing the reading curriculum may support positive social change for students, teachers, families, and district leaders. The study's findings illustrated that teachers needed help implementing the reading curriculum with fidelity. Teachers expressed concerns that student achievement was at risk because of the complexity related to curriculum alignment, inconsistent adaptations, and lack of collaborative opportunities. The PD addressed teachers' concerns by providing strategies to mitigate concerns and improve

classroom instruction and curriculum implementation fidelity. The potential for positive social change at the student, teacher, and family level included teachers' enhanced skillset to share best practices with colleagues and implement the curriculum with fidelity.

Realizing positive social change on a school district and societal level involved stakeholders gaining new knowledge from the research findings and PD project evaluations. Based on the results, leaders will have the information needed to address teachers' concerns regarding implementing the current reading curriculum. Considering teachers' primary concern related to the lack of collaborative processes within the LSD, providing the data and conducting PD will assist leaders with possibly including more stakeholders before implementing new school innovations.

Directions for Future Research

A recommendation for future research encompassed using the conceptual framework CBAM to uncover principals' concerns about their leadership practices in leading collaborative innovation within the school. Traditionally, school principals create new ideas and processes to manage school changes (De Jong et al., 2022). These innovation processes can be shared more widely through collaboration interaction between principals, teachers, and other stakeholders. Principals should feel equipped to support the implementation of new school programs. Consequently, understanding principals' concerns could offer insights into improving their practice and methods used to support teachers.

In the future, using a mixed-methods methodology could help to determine principals' concerns about their leadership practices in leading collaborative innovation

within the school. The mixed-method approach may provide a more complete basis for complex decision making than currently offered by a single method (Stern et al., 2021). For the current study, components of CBAM were used as the conceptual framework leading to categorizing the approach as qualitative. Additional CBAM components include quantitative and other qualitative tenants for data collection. The SoCQ is a questionnaire to ask implementors about their concerns when faced with a new program. The Levels of Use provides a tool for leaders to gather information on the degree of program fidelity. Utilizing all aspects of CBAM may provide an opportunity to deepen knowledge regarding principals' leadership practices for future research opportunities.

Conclusion

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the experiences and challenges of 3rd grade teachers when implementing the new required reading curriculum. The problem was that in the years since the inception of the new curriculum, reading proficiency scores remained low, and the district had not explored teachers' experiences and challenges with the implementation of the new curriculum. Teachers' concerns regarding why they could not implement the curriculum with fidelity encompassed inconsistent curriculum adaptations based on content level disparities, time management barriers, technology integration, and the lack of collaborative opportunities. Based on data analysis, a 3-day PD project was developed to address the needs of teachers. The training incorporated effective components of PD, including content-focused learning, active learning, and collective participation. Many of the findings and

PD contents could have potential applications and positive social impact throughout schools worldwide.

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Appendix A: The Project

Professional Development Program

The data analysis results showed that five themes represented teachers' concerns regarding implementing the HMH reading curriculum. The themes included concerns about lack of collaborative learning and classroom support, time management of nonacademic requirements, ineffective professional development, navigating to curriculum complexity, and concerns about curriculum alignment. Considering teachers' concerns, a 3-day PD project was developed to support the needs of the LSD teachers. The targeted audience included third grade teachers. The purpose, goals, and learning outcomes supported the development of a collaborative network as teachers learned best practices needed to ensure curriculum fidelity aimed at improving student outcomes.

Purpose	• Improving the implementation fidelity • Teachers' understanding of HMH's positive effects on student outcomes • Promoting sustainable collaborative learning between peers • Creating model lessons plans and checklist for instructional purposes
Goals	• Gain Understand of HMH's Impact on Student Outcomes • Significance of using best practices to implement the curriculum • How to Create and Maintain a Collaborative Environment • Understanding Curriculum Scope & Sequence • Enhancing Teachers' Instructional Practice • Creating Sustainable Best Practices
Learning Outcomes	• HMH's Positive Student Outcomes • Create viable Small group Lesson Plan • Develop small group checklist • Understand the reading scope and sequence for Day 1 – 8 • Brainstorm resources to engage active learning • Benefits to collaborating with team members • Model lesson plans for writing, grammar, and phonics • Evidence-Based Checklist for writing, grammar, and phonics lessons

Proposed Activities

Day 1 will begin with activities focused on acquiring teacher buy-in for the PD. Teachers will engage in a Kahoot activity to identify what they know about the reading curriculum. The questions will determine the significant lesson components and the days and times each element is taught. Teachers will build collaborative units by participating in the activity with group members. Next, the facilitator will provide evidence showing positive outcomes for students accessing the curriculum. Teachers will participate in an activity on their laptops to match state standards with the HMH lesson contents. Then, teachers will receive four cards showing the 2020 state test reading scores for the LSD and the surrounding three counties. Each learning group will discuss the scores and

attempt to match the scores with the correct county. The LSD has the lowest test scores of the surrounding districts.

After a break, teachers will watch a video demonstration of a small group lesson. Teachers will discuss the positive and negative aspects of the example lesson. Then, the facilitator will form new learning groups, provide materials, and request that teachers develop a model small group reading lesson. Teachers will complete an evaluation form, offering suggestions about the content of their lessons. Upon completion, each group will present their lesson, one member taking on the role of the teacher while the others act as students. Collaboratively, teachers will watch the presentations and chart the significant portions of the lesson that made it a positive experience for students. The facilitator will combine the evidence and provide an evidence-based checklist for teachers to finalize on day two of the training. Teachers will complete and self-assessment and a formative evaluation rating the PD content and instructors' performance.

Day 2 will consist of finalizing the small group checklist developed on day one, understanding how the HMH curriculum aligns with the state standards, examining the HMH scope and sequence, and brainstorming about resources used to encourage students' active participation during instruction. Teachers will combine the evidence and provide an evidence-based checklist for teachers to finalize on day two of the training. The facilitator will provide the small group checklist. Teachers will use sticky notes to add comments reflecting preferred changes to the checklist. The facilitator will make necessary corrections and provide the final checklist on Day 3. Next, the facilitator will supply cards showing the reading curriculum's lesson contents, time frames, and the

numbers 1-8. Teachers will order the lesson contents in groups with the days and time frames. Teachers will glue the cards onto chart paper, and each group will present their interpretation of the scope and sequence of the curriculum. Upon completion, the facilitator will use a group's example and show the scope and sequence for the eight day cycle of the HMH curriculum. Next, teachers will discuss understanding and using students' learning styles to improve curriculum implementation. Lastly, teachers discuss different resources to inspire students' active engagement during reading lessons. The resources may include videos, websites, games, activities, or anything else teachers use as a resource. Each group will chart and present their findings. Teachers will complete and self-assessment and a formative evaluation rating the PD content and instructors' performance.

On Day 3, teachers will review new resources, align them with students' learning styles, and develop and present model lessons for writing, grammar, and phonics lessons. Using the charts developed on Day 2, teachers will match resources with the type of learning style it involves. The facilitator will discuss the importance of collaborating with team members on instructional strategies and resources to increase teachers' capacity to deliver instruction to meet all students' diverse needs. Next, teachers will access the curriculum to examine grammar, writing, or phonics lessons. Based on a consensus within each group, members will develop lessons and create a role-play to present the results. Teachers will complete an evaluation form, offering suggestions about the content of their lessons. After each group presents, a collaborative discussion will occur to identify key evidence teachers should remember when implementing the lesson.

The facilitator will ask for one volunteer from each group to take notes as the whole group analyzes each presentation and highlights significant ideas to remember. Based on the information, teachers will create evidence-based checklists for writing, grammar, and phonics lessons by the end of the PD. Lastly, teachers will receive an evaluation form to complete, bringing the PD to a close.

Hour-by-Hour Detail of Training

Session	Activities	Timeline	Resource Material
Day 1	● Participate in Kahoot to identify curriculum knowledge ● Team building activity ● Learn about curriculum success stories, importance of curriculum fidelity ● Match state standards with HMH curriculum Review state assessment scores for LSD and three other counties ● Importance of implementation fidelity ● Watch and discuss small group video ● Watch Video, create small group lesson, role play small group lesson	8:00-9:00 9:00-10:00 10:00-11:00 Break 11:00-11:15 11:15-12:15 Lunch 12:15-1:15 1:15 – 2:15	Power point presentation, Smart Board, laptops/phone, Chart Paper, markers HMH article State score cards for activity Handout – state standards and template Small group lesson plan template

Session	Activities	Timeline	Resource Material
Day 2	● Develop small group lesson checklist, finalize the small group lesson checklist, Team Building Activity ● Group learning to discover HMH scope and sequence ● ·Facilitator will review appropriate scope and sequence directly from online platform ● ·Explore significance of student learning styles ● Groups will explore resources to engage students ● Groups will present resources	8:00-9:00 9:00-10:00 10:00-11:00 Break 11:00-11:15 11:15-12:15 Lunch 12:15-1:15 1:15 – 2:15	Power point presentation, Smart Board, laptops, Chart Paper, markers Small group lesson checklist Cards for scope and sequence activity

Session	Activities	Timeline	Resource Material
Day 3	● Group will match resources with learning styles from ● Present resources based on students' learning styles ● Discuss importance and ways to encourage collaboration ● Group members will collaborate/create writing, grammar, or phonics model lessons ● Group presentation of lessons, peer reflections ● Create evidence-based checklist for writing, grammar, phonics lessons and positives for using	8:00-9:00 9:00-10:00 10:00-11:00 Break 11:00-11:15 11:15-12:15 Lunch 12:15-1:15 1:15 – 2:15	Power point presentation, Smart Board, laptops, Chart Paper, markers Learning styles/resource template Lesson plan template Peer Reflection Templat Checklist template

Professional Development Slides

HMH READING CURRICULUM PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

LET'S LEARN TOGETHER

COLLABORATIVE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES SERIES

1

Day 1 - Agenda

Topic	Time
Welcome, Identify curriculum knowledge, Team Building Activity	8:00-9:00
HMH - Success Data, Importance of Fidelity	9:00-10:00
Connection Between HMH & State Standards, State Assessment Scores	10:00-11:00
Break	11:00-11:15
Implementation Fidelity, Small Group Lessons	11:15-12:15
Lunch	12:15-1:15
Create Small Group Model Lessons, Lesson Role-Play	1:15-2:15

2

Overall Program Goal - provide support needed to promote implementation fidelity.

Day 1 - Goals:

- Gain Understand of HMH's Impact on Student Outcomes
- Significance of using best practices to implement the curriculum

Learning Outcomes:

- HMH's Positive Student Outcomes
- Comparison of 2020 State Standard Reading Scores - 3 Surrounding Districts
- Significance of curriculum fidelity
- Understand How HMH standards Match HMH Contents
- Create viable Small group Lesson Plan

3

Study Results

- Twelve 3rd grade teachers were interviewed (10 females and 2 males)
- Each teacher had between one to 18 years of teaching experience

Primary Teacher Concerns:

- Curriculum Misalignment - content, time constraints
- Not enough resources for struggling students
- Additional support to implement the writing, grammar, and phonics lessons
- Strategies for improving small group instruction
- Lack of collaborative opportunities and grade level PD
- Managing time - non-academic requirements

4

Instructions - teachers will all stand in a circle. Each person must share something they appreciate about the person standing to the right of them. Once everyone has had a turn, everyone must take turns sharing something they appreciate about the person standing to the left of them.

5

Building Teacher Buy-in

What Do You Know About HMH: Into Reading?

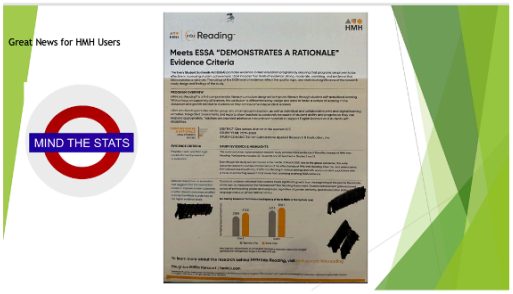
Complete a Kahoot

Positive Impact on Students

Stats about HMH

6

Slides 7-12



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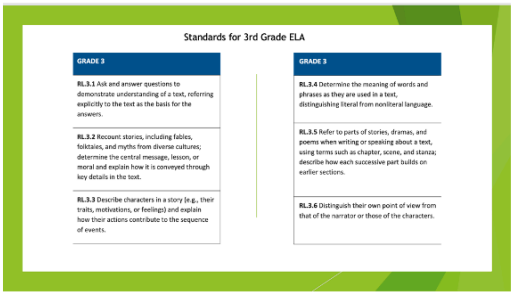

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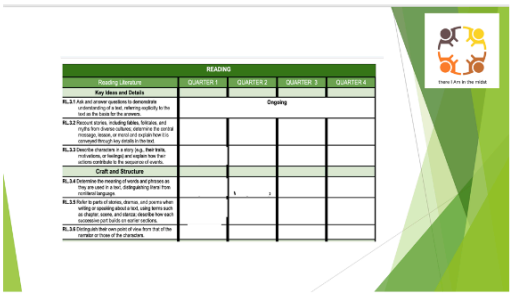

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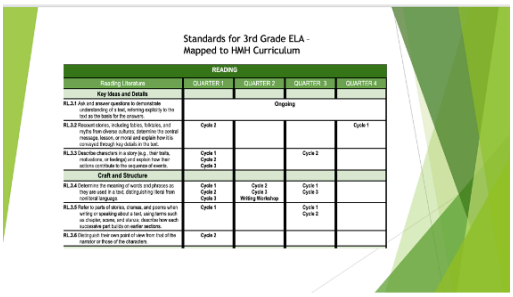

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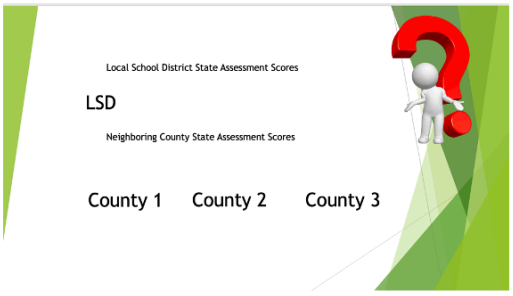

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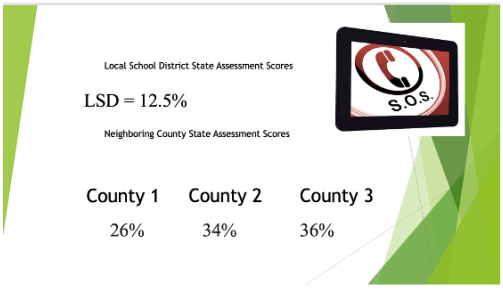

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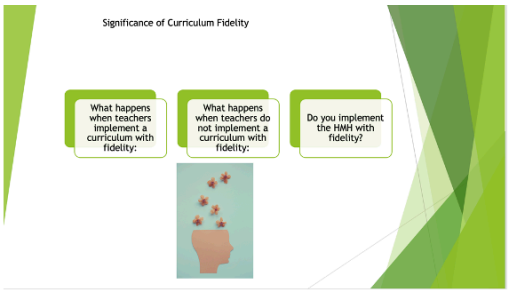
Slides 13-18



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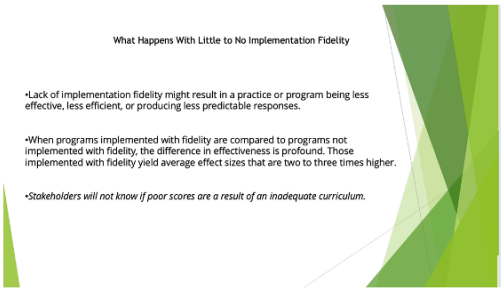

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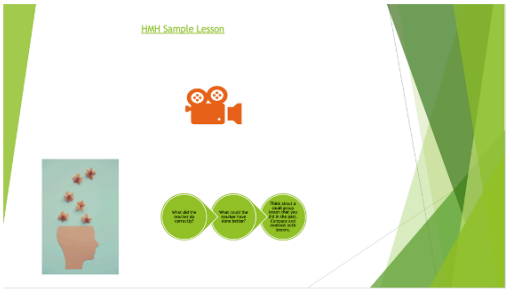

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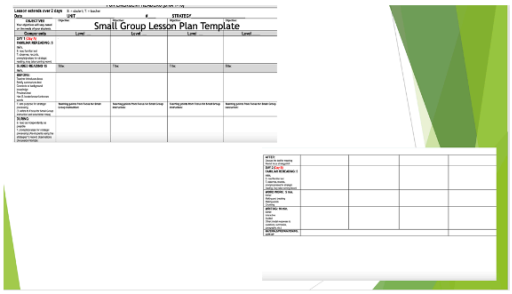

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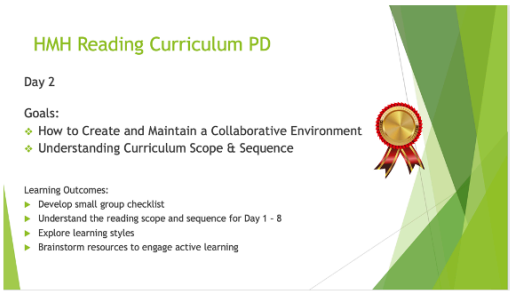

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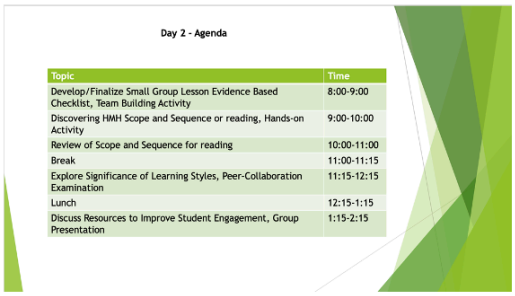
Slides 19-24



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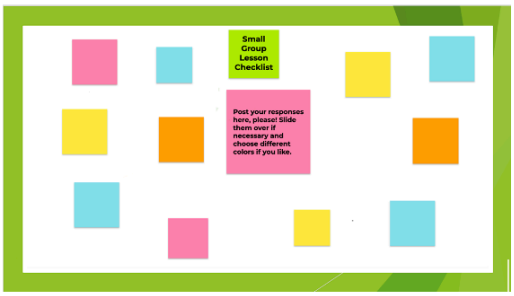

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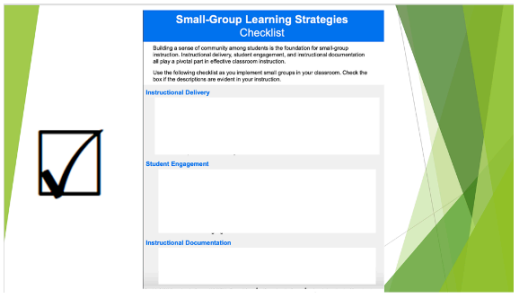

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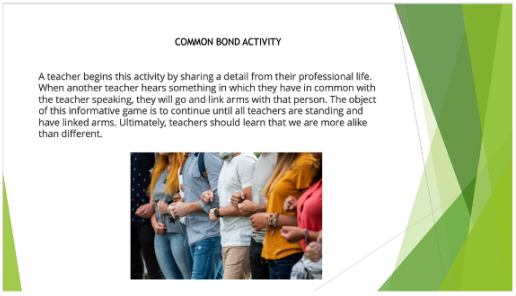

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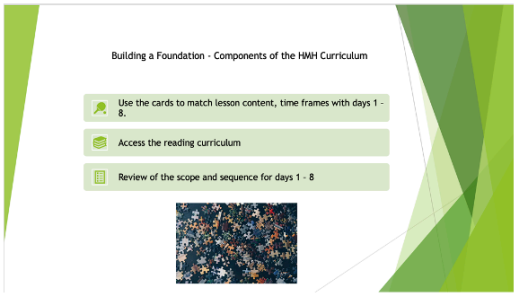

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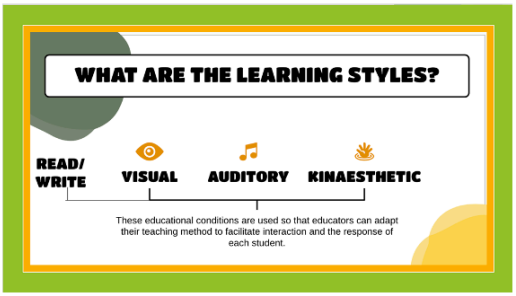

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Slides 25-30

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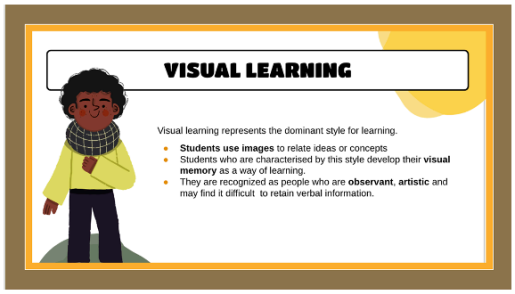

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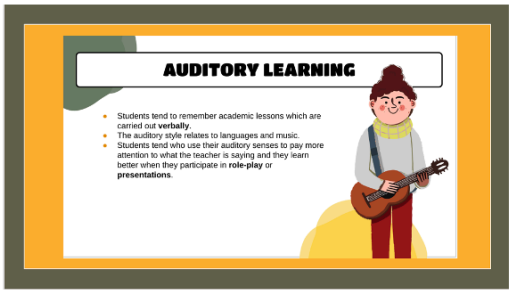

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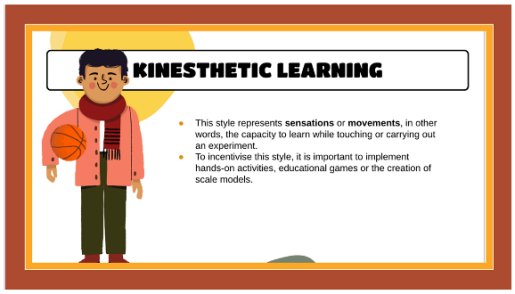

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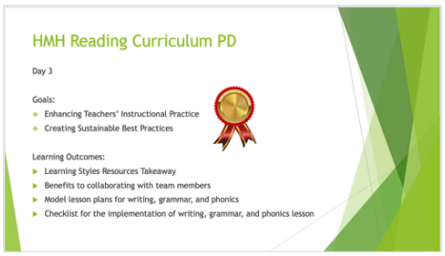
Slides 31-37



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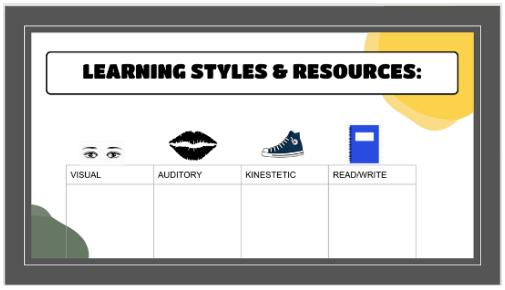

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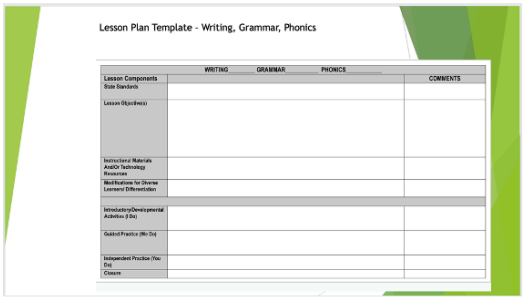

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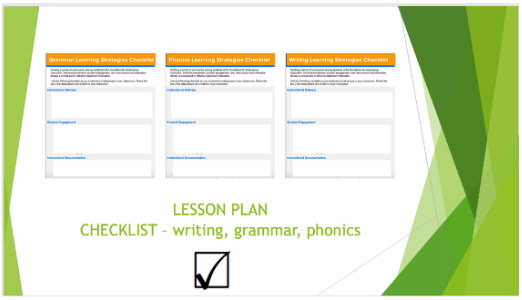

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Formative Evaluation – Peer Model Lesson Notes

Day 1 or Day 3 (circle)

Instructor _____

Lesson Objective_____

Please provide direct, brief, and useful feedback.

Before Reading

How did the teacher engage the student in preparation for the lesson?

_____
_____
_____

Did the teacher briefly summarize text, connect to background knowledge, preview the text, discuss critical vocabulary?

_____
_____
_____

During Reading

Did the teacher cover the curriculum requirements provided in the curriculum?

_____
_____

After Reading

How did the teacher discuss the text for meaning?

_____
_____

Explain how the teacher revisited focus strategies/skills

_____
_____

Formative Evaluation (Self-Assessment)

Day 1 or Day 3 (Circle)

Was the lesson received well by other teachers?

What worked well?

What could I have done better?

What did I learn from this experiences?

Formative Assessment

Day 1 or 2 (Circle)

Name of Instructor_____

Directions – Read the statements. Add a number to the blank box that corresponds with your thoughts and feelings.

5-Strongly Agree 4-Agree 3-Neutral 2-Disagree 1-Strongly Disagree

The training met my expectations.	
The learning outcomes/objectives for each day were clear.	
The instructor was knowledgeable and presented information professionally.	
The content was well organized.	
I will be able to use the content in my instructional practice.	

Summative Assessment

Final Day

Name of Instructor_____

Directions – Read the statements. Add a number to the blank box that corresponds with your thoughts and feelings.

5-Strongly Agree 4-Agree 3-Neutral 2-Disagree 1-Strongly Disagree

The goals were clearly communicated each day.	
The content was relevant to my concerns when implementing the curriculum.	
The information presented inspired me to work collaboratively with peers.	
The instructor was well organized and presented the information clearly.	
I received useful “take-aways” to implement in my classroom.	
The training left me with unanswered questions about the curriculum.	

Appendix B: Site Permission Form

[redacted] County Public Schools

DIVISION of ACCOUNTABILITY

DEPARTMENT of TESTING, RESEARCH and EVALUATION

Principal Permission

Authorization Date	Authorization Expiration Date	DRE Application Number
_____	_____	_____

_____ has received conditional authorization from the Office of Research and Evaluation to conduct the following researcher study:

_____

_____

In Prince George's County Public Schools. The researcher would like to conduct the study in:

_____
School

Implementation of this study is contingent upon securing the permission of the principal in the above-listed school in which the study will be conducted.

_____
DTRE Staff Signature

_____Approved _____Disapproved

Principal Name	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____

Appendix C: Email to Respondents Not Qualifying or Meeting Threshold

Dear (insert name),

Thank you for showing interest in my study, Teacher Perceptions on the Implementation of a New Reading Curriculum in Third Grade. I genuinely appreciate your willingness to participate. Unfortunately, based on the criteria, you did not qualify to be part of the study's sample. The criteria for participation included being a third-grade reading teacher and having one year of experience teaching the reading curriculum.

You did not meet the following criteria:

___third-grade reading teacher

___one year experience teaching the reading curriculum

Sincerely,

Orchid Hill
Walden University
EdD Doctoral Candidate

Dear (insert name),

Thank you for showing interest in my study, Teacher Perceptions on the Implementation of a New Reading Curriculum in Third Grade. I genuinely appreciate your willingness to participate. Unfortunately, you did not qualify for the study's sample because the participant threshold has been met. The study requirements included 12–14 participants.

Again, thank you for your willingness to volunteer.

Sincerely,

Orchid Hill
Walden University
EdD Doctoral Candidate

Appendix D: Confidentiality Form

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Name of Signer:

As a peer debriefer for the research study being conducted by Orchid Hill, titled: "Teacher Perceptions on the Implementation of a New Reading Curriculum in Third Grade," I will have access to information, which is confidential and should not be disclosed. I acknowledge that the information must remain confidential, and that improper disclosure of confidential information can be damaging to the participant.

By signing this Confidentiality Agreement I acknowledge and agree that:

1. I will not disclose or discuss any confidential information with others, including friends or family.
2. I will not in any way divulge, copy, release, sell, loan, alter or destroy any confidential information except as properly authorized.
3. I will not discuss confidential information where others can overhear the conversation. I understand that it is not acceptable to discuss confidential information even if the participant's name is not used.
4. I will not make any unauthorized transmissions, inquiries, modification or purging of confidential information.
5. I agree that my obligations under this agreement will continue after termination of the job that I will perform.
6. I understand that violation of this agreement will have legal implications.
7. I will only access or use systems or devices I'm officially authorized to access and I will not demonstrate the operation or function of systems or devices to unauthorized individuals.

Signing this document, I acknowledge that I have read the agreement and I agree to comply with all the terms and conditions stated above.

Signature: **Date:**

Appendix E: Interview Questions

Participants: Third Grade Elementary Teachers

Interview Date: _____ Interview Time: _____

Interviewee Pseudonym: _____

Demographic Information

A. Number of years in current position _____ B. Gender____

B. Educational Background (i.e., degrees)_____

Hello, my name is Orchid Hill. Thank you for taking the time to participate in my study on exploring the experiences and challenges of 3rd grade teachers when implementing the new required reading curriculum. I will ask questions regarding your perceptions of implementing the reading curriculum. All information shared will be kept secure by using a pseudonym to maintain confidentially during the data collection process. The interview will occur on Zoom and your responses to the interview questions will be recorded with the recording function on the Zoom platform. Therefore, please make yourself comfortable and remember that you may stop the interview at any time.

1. Please tell me how you implement the HMH: Into Reading curriculum as directed? (Follow up questions – Which components do you not implement as directed? Are there any components you do not implement as directed?)
2. When teaching HMH: Into Reading, what value do you place on teaching the curriculum with fidelity, as prescribed by developers?

3. If you were able to revise any part of the curriculum, based on experiences or needs of the students, what part would that be? (Follow up question - Explain.)
4. What administrative actions would have better supported the implementation of the HMH: Into Reading curriculum?
5. When asked to implement any new curriculum, what are your initial concerns or perspective?
6. What are you concerns or challenges with implementing the HMH: Into Reading curriculum?
7. What has been the most challenging aspect of implementing the HMH: Into Reading curriculum? (Follow up question – What support or resources might have mitigated those challenges?)
8. What concerns do you have about time spent working with nonacademic requirements related to the curriculum? (Follow up question - And what support or resources could mitigate those concerns?

Appendix F: RQs, Interview Questions, SoC Mapping

Research Question	Interview Question	Follow-Up Question	SoC
RQ1: What are the experiences of 3rd grade teachers in the LSD with implementing the HMH: Into Reading curriculum	Please tell me how you implement the HMH: Into Reading curriculum as directed?	Which components do you not implement as directed? Are there any components you do not implement as directed?	Stage 2: Personal
	When teaching HMH: Into Reading, what value do you place on teaching the curriculum with fidelity, as prescribed by developers?		Stage 2: Personal
	If you were able to revise any part of the curriculum, based on experiences or needs of the students, what part would that be?	Explain?	Stage 4: Consequences Stage 6: Refocusing
	What administrative actions would have better supported the implementation of the HMH: Into Reading curriculum?		Stage 1: Informational
RQ2: What challenges and concerns do 3rd grade	When asked to implement a new curriculum, what		Stage 0: Unconcerned

teachers in the LSD report with implementing the HMH: Into Reading curriculum?	are your initial concerns or perspective?		
	What are your concerns or challenges with implementing the HMH: Into Reading curriculum?		Stage 3: Management
	What has been the most challenging aspect of implementing the HMH: Into Reading curriculum?	What support or resources might have mitigated those challenges?	Stage 3: Management Stage 5: Collaboration
	What concerns do you have about time spent working with nonacademic requirements related to the curriculum?	And what or resources could mitigate those concerns?	Stage 3: Management

Appendix G: American Institutes for Research Authorization

AIR Copyright Help Desk
RE: AIR Copyright Request: SEDL Stages of Concern Questionnaire
To: orchid.hill@waldenu.edu, Cc: AIR Copyright Help Desk, Litke, Brian & 5 more

November 10, 2022 at 10:24 PM
Details

Dear Orchid,

The American Institutes for Research (AIR) is pleased to grant you permission to reprint, in whole or in part, the SEDL Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoCQ 075) in your doctoral dissertation. In addition, you may adapt the SoCQ instrument by changing statements to questions as appropriate for your research study.

Use of this survey is limited to educational, research, and nonprofit use. The suggested citation is as follows:

> George, A. A., Hall, G. E., & Stiegelbauer, S. M. (2013). *Measuring implementation in schools: The stages of concern questionnaire*. SEDL. https://sedl.org/cbam/socq_manual_201410.pdf. Reprinted with permission.

We wish you much success as you work toward earning your doctorate.

Kind regards,

Kim O'Brien
Editor and Copyright Specialist
AIR Studio: kobrien@air.org
AIR Copyright Help Desk: AIRCopyright@air.org

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Improving Lives.

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Arlington, VA 22202-3289
+1.202.403.5000 | AIR.ORG

-----Original Message-----
From: blitke@air.org <blitke@air.org>
Sent: Monday, November 7, 2022 3:01 PM
To: O'Brien, Kim <kobrien@air.org>; Litke, Brian <blitke@air.org>; AIR Copyright Help Desk <copyright_PS@air.org>
Subject: AIR Copyright Request Form

The following e-mail was received from the AIR "Copyright Request Form" page:

From: Orchid Hill
E-mail: orchid.hill@waldenu.edu