

2017

Middle School Teacher Perspectives of LDC in a Rural Southeastern North Carolina School District

Adrain Shavonne Batten

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/education_etd



Part of the [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#), [Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Commons](#), and the [Junior High, Intermediate, Middle School Education and Teaching Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Batten, Adrain Shavonne, "Middle School Teacher Perspectives of LDC in a Rural Southeastern North Carolina School District" (2017). *Education Dissertations and Projects*. 235.
https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/education_etd/235

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the School of Education at Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Education Dissertations and Projects by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University. For more information, please see [Copyright and Publishing Info](#).

Middle School Teacher Perspectives of LDC in a Rural Southeastern North Carolina
School District

By
Adrian Shavonne Batten

A Dissertation Submitted to the
Gardner-Webb University School of Education
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Gardner-Webb University
2017

Approval Page

This dissertation was submitted by Adrian Shavonne Batten under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Gardner-Webb University School of Education and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Gardner-Webb University.

Joey Bullis, Ed.D.
Committee Chair

Date

Dale Lamb, Ed.D.
Committee Member

Date

Cheryl Lutz, Ed.D.
Committee Member

Date

Jeffrey Rogers, Ph.D.
Dean of the Gayle Bolt Price School
of Graduate Studies

Date

Acknowledgements

“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you” (1 Peter 5:10). Thank you God for your strength! To my pastor, Dr. Pastor Patricia Richardson, who taught me to finish what I start. Thank you for your unwavering love and encouraging words reminding me that all things are possible with God! Thank you for sitting up with me during my most frustrating moments as I typed this dissertation. I love you! To my four babies, my reasons to strive towards greatness, I am thankful to God that he chose me to be your mommy! Thank you for believing in me when I did not believe in myself. I love you Anteja, SyAja, Abrien, and CeeJai! To Dr. C.S. Richardson, you are simply amazing! I thank you for keeping me steady, listening to my complaints, and trying to keep me calm! (smile) I love you Cee! To Deacon Dallas Richardson Jr., the world greatest PaPa! I thank you for taking us under your wings to ensure things are well with us. Dr. Joe Bullis, I thank you for all that you have done! Dr. Dale Lamb, I appreciate your confidence and belief in me. Thank you for stern but compassionate presence. (I can’t make this stuff up!) You are awesome!! Dr. Cheryl Lutz, I thank you for your gentle voice throughout the years. I really hope that this “kiddo” has made you proud! Dr. Stephen Laws and Dr. Doug Eury, thank you for the foundation to get me here!

Abstract

Middle School Teacher Perspectives of LDC in a Rural Southeastern North Carolina School District. Batten, Adrian Shavonne, 2017: Dissertation, Gardner-Webb University, Literacy Design Collaborative/Literacy Program/Teacher Perspective

The mixed-method phenomenological study surveyed middle school teacher perceptions of the Literacy Design Collaborative (LDC). The study population consisted of 16 sixth through eighth grade English language arts, science, or social studies teachers. The data for this study were analyzed from the 2011-2012 school year until the 2015-2016 year. The researcher utilized Stufflebeam's (2003) context, input, process, product (CIPP) model to create the research questions.

The following research questions guided the study: (1) To what extent does the LDC model influence middle school teacher decisions in the type of the instructional strategies they choose to use in their classrooms; (2) What specific types of instructional strategies do middle school teachers report to use when implementing the LDC model; (3) To what extent do teachers feel adequately prepared to make decisions regarding the types of instructional strategies they choose to implement in the LDC classrooms; and (4) What instructional challenges or successes do teachers experience when they implement the LDC model?

The findings of this study indicated the need for providing professional development regarding the implementation of LDC for middle school teachers. Additionally, it was suggested that research of program implementation and implementing programs with fidelity take place for district leadership as well as principals. It was also recommended that a thorough needs assessment be conducted within the school district.

Table of Contents

	Page
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Introduction.....	1
Adolescent Literacy	8
Literacy as Writing	9
Literacy as Reading.....	10
Literacy Gap.....	11
Teaching Literacy in the Content Classes	15
Background of the Study	16
Statement of the Problem	18
Purpose of the Study	19
Conceptual Framework.....	20
Summary.....	22
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	23
Strategies and Research to Improve Adolescent Literacy (Reading)	23
Strategies and Research to Improve Adolescent Literacy (Writing)	29
Common Core.....	32
ESSA.....	35
Conceptual Framework	37
LDC.....	37
Strategies for Teaching Literacy in Content Classes	39
Summary.....	41
Chapter 3: Methodology	42
Participants.....	42
Data Collection	43
Validity	44
Reliability	45
Research Method	46
Sampling	46
Program Evaluation	47
LDC	48
Rationale for Proposing a Program Evaluation	49
Rationale for using the Stufflebeam Model	50
CIPP	50
Research Questions.....	52
Analysis.....	53
Summary	54
Chapter 4: Results	56
Introduction.....	56
Participants.....	57
Research Design.....	58
Discussions of Findings	59
Qualitative Data Analysis	62
Research Question 1	65
Research Question 2	66

Research Question 3	67
Research Question 4	67
Data Analysis for Superintendent Interview	70
Summary	74
Chapter 5: Discussion	76
Introduction	76
Summary of the Study	76
Discussion of Findings	77
Research Question 1	77
Research Question 2	78
Research Question 3	78
Research Question 4	78
Summary of Findings	79
Limitations	84
Recommendations	85
Conclusion	85
References	87
Appendices	
A Superintendent Permission Letter	105
B Informed Consent Letter: Superintendent	107
C Superintendent Interview Questions	109
D Teacher Consent Form	111
E Teacher Questionnaire	113
Tables	
1 Linking Instruction with Needs, Interests, and Dispositions	28
2 Instructional Shifts	34
3 The Language Strand	35
4 Stufflebeam's CIPP Model	52
5 Frequency of Teacher Responses	59
6 Percentages of Sixth Grade Reading EOG Proficiencies	63
7 Percentages of Seventh Grade Reading EOG Proficiencies	63
8 Percentages of Eighth Grade Reading EOG Proficiencies	64
9 Percentages of Eighth Grade Science EOG Proficiencies	64
Figures	
1 Instructional Core Model	21
2 LDC Module	49
3 CIPP Model	51

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

If knowledge is power, then literacy is the key to the kingdom (Ippolito, Steele, & Samson, 2008); however, the nation's educational system is turning out readers who are ill prepared for the literacy demands of the 21st century (Goldman, 2012, p. 90).

Adolescents entering the adult world in the 21st century will read and write more than at any other time in human history. They will need advanced levels of literacy to perform their jobs, run their households, act as citizens, and conduct their personal lives. They will need literacy to cope with the flood of information they will find everywhere they turn. They will need literacy to feed their imaginations so they can create the world of the future. In a complex and sometimes even dangerous world, their ability to read will be crucial. Continual instruction beyond the early grades is needed. (Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw, & Rycik, 1999, p. 3)

Adolescent literacy in the 21st century is understood as the ability to read, write, understand and interpret, and discuss multiple texts across multiple contexts (International Reading Association [IRA], 2012). Students in the 21st century are presumed to be able to interrogate text for purposes of understanding how authors position readers (Harste, 2003). According to the IRA (2012), adolescents in the 21st century are expected to do the following: (a) read a variety of texts including but not limited to traditional print text and digital (multimodal) text; (b) author words and images in fixed domains as well as multimodal settings; (c) talk about a variety of texts with others including teachers, peers, members of their own communities, and the larger world population; and (d) interact with text in discipline-specific ways within and across all

subjects inclusive of but not limited to electives, career and technical education, and visual and performing arts. In recent years, there has been a renewed focus on literacy and adolescents (Graham, Early, & Wilcox, 2014). Literacy—the ability to read, write, speak, listen, and think effectively—enables adolescents to learn and communicate clearly about what they know and what they want to know (Meltzer, Smith, & Clark, 2001). Becoming a fluent reader is a prerequisite for success in any academic area and for success in our society (Benner, 2005). All young people should graduate from high school able to read and write, so they can earn a good living and lead richer intellectual lives (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006).

The young people enrolled in middle and high school who lack the broad literacy skills to comprehend and learn advanced academic subjects will suffer serious social, emotional, and economic consequences. Improving literacy rates would not only make for a safer and more prosperous country but also a healthier one (Cardoza, 2013). Low literacy rates can have wide-ranging effects (Cardoza, 2013). According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation (2010), an estimated 75% of Americans aged 17-24 cannot join the U.S. military—26 million young Americans—mostly because they are poorly educated. Heller (2017) found that struggling adolescent readers may develop low self-esteem, become discouraged with their academic progress, and lose interest in school altogether. Today's high school graduates are expected to judge the credibility of sources, evaluate arguments, and understand and convey complex information in the college classroom (Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy, 2010). The lasting local and personal effects are often so much greater than the national fiscal burdens (Balcazar, 2014). In summary, struggling secondary readers are characterized by the consequences of years of reading failure (Peterson, Caverly, Nicholson, O'Neal, & Cusenbary, 2001).

Keefe and Copeland (2011) stated, “It is beyond the scope of this paper to address the history of national attempts to address the issue of literacy in the United States of America” (p. 94). It is not difficult to look back over the past 150 years and find a constant and consistent level of concern about the abilities of young people to read and write (Williams, 2007). Our 21st century nation is economically and educationally more “at risk” now than when the National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE) proclaimed it so in 1983 (Hersh, 2009). As a country, the repercussions of a national literacy crisis will seriously hinder this nation’s ability to sustain its social, political, and economic well-being in this century (National Association of State Boards of Education [NASBE], 2006). Ensuring adequate ongoing literacy development for all students in the middle and high school years is a more challenging task than ensuring excellent reading education in the primary grades for two reasons: first, secondary school literacy skills are more complex, more embedded in subject matters; second, adolescents are not as universally motivated to read better or as interested in school-based reading as kindergartners (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006).

Many excellent third-grade readers will falter or fail in later grade academic tasks if the teaching of reading is neglected in the middle and secondary grades (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006). Most people in the United States have a fundamental belief that all students should learn the basics of reading in the primary grades and continue to build on those skills throughout their elementary and secondary school years (Hock & Deshler, 2003). The need to explain is pivotal to the development of literacy engagement (Guthrie, 1996). The reality is that more than five million high schoolers do not read well enough to understand their text books or other material written for their grade level (Hock & Deshler, 2003).

Roughly 80% of high school dropouts are poor readers and students who are poor readers have trouble in all of their subjects in school and constitute a large proportion of students who coast, become disciplinary problems. In too many cases, go on to populate the nation's prisons. (Coddling, 2001, p. 22)

Johannessen and McCann (2009) stated,

In the climate of assessment and accountability engendered by the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), school leaders who disaggregate achievement test data see time and again that, as a group, the learners for whom English is a second language and learners from low-income homes are the adolescents who appear to be struggling with literacy. (p. 65)

However, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed by President Obama on December 10, 2015. The previous version of the law, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, was enacted in 2002 (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). The law was scheduled for revision in 2007 and over time NCLB's prescriptive requirements became increasingly unworkable for schools and educators (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). The LEARN Act within ESSA states that local education agencies (LEAs) must use any grant funds they receive under the LEARN Act to support high quality professional development for teachers, teacher leaders, principals, and specialized instructional support personnel to improve literacy instruction for struggling readers, writers, and adolescent literacy programs (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2017).

Literacy is a big part to the everyday world of adolescents (Irvin, Meltzer, & Dukes, 2007). Literacy is defined as "an individual's ability to use printed information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential" (Kirsch, Jungeblut, Jenkins, & Kolstad, 1993, p. 2). Literacy and reading,

though related, are neither synonymous nor unambiguous terms (Alvermann, 2002). The Literacy Development Council of Newfoundland and Labrador (2011) stated that literacy not only involves competency in reading and writing but goes beyond this to include the critical and effective use of these in people's lives and the use of language (oral and written) for all purposes. At the middle school and high school levels, these issues are aggravated by the lack of a substantive research base for the sequencing of language skills across the grades (Applebee, 2013). In reality, struggling readers do lack requisite reading skills and strategies, but they also experience failure on a daily basis (O'Brien & Dillion, 2008).

Given the importance of literacy to a free society, it is no surprise that among the three "Rs" of formal schooling—reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic—the first two emphasize literacy (Ippolito et al., 2008). According to the National Reading Panel (2000), reading and writing have a reciprocal relationship—one is used to learn and enrich the other and vice versa. As a writer, the reader has a more intimate knowledge of the writing process, allowing them to have a greater connection to another author's text. There are approximately 8.7 million fourth through twelfth graders in America whose chances for academic success are dismal because they are unable to read and comprehend the material in their textbooks (Kamil, 2003). A large proportion of students still complete middle school without mastering the necessary knowledge-based competencies they will need throughout adulthood (Reardon, Valentino, & Shores, 2012).

Addressing the literacy of adolescents now is especially timely (Moore, Hinchman, & Vacca, 2005, p. 1); there is currently a volatile push-pull dynamic intensifying in public schools. The push factor is that students are increasingly bored in school and ever more so as they go from grade to grade (Fullan, 2013); many have poor

or unsophisticated academic literacy skills (Irvin, 2009). Reading success in the early grades certainly pays off later, but early achievement is not the end of the story (Moore et al., 1999). Just as children pass through stages of turning over, sitting up, crawling, walking, and running as they develop control of their bodies, there are developmental stages of reading and writing (Moore et al., 1999).

This nation is confronted with the realities of low literacy levels among many young adults while at the same time facing the growing imperative of providing everyone with a high-level education that includes training through and beyond high school. The need to address adolescent literacy has created a growing realization that instructional practices need to change (St. Onge, Scalia, & Vega, 2008). Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy (2010) stated that during the last 20 years, the United States educational system has scored some extraordinary successes, especially in improving the reading and writing skills of young children in kindergarten through third grade. The pace of literacy improvement has not kept up with the pace of growth in the global economy nor have literacy gains been extended to adolescents in the secondary grades.

Hundreds of thousands of high school students can barely read on the eve of their high school graduation (Joftus, 2002, p. 1); in fact, the reading scores of high school students have not improved over the last 30 years (Kamil, 2003). The problem begins earlier in our nation's middle schools (Joftus, 2002, p. 1). American youth need strong literacy skills to succeed in school and in life (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006). Contrarily, large numbers of adolescents enter high school lacking the necessary reading skills to be academically successful. The demand for strong reading and writing skills increases as students get promoted to high school grades (Corrin et al., 2012).

Research has shown U.S. eleventh graders have placed very close to the bottom; behind students from the Philippines, Indonesia, Brazil, and other developing nations (Kamil, 2003, p. 2). One of the most commonly cited reasons for this is that students simply do not have the literacy skills to keep up with the high school curriculum which has become increasingly complex (Kamil, 2003; Snow & Biancarosa, 2003). This poor performance contrasts with rankings in Grade 4, when U.S. students have placed close to the top in international comparisons (Kamil, 2003, p. 2). As the U.S. has a longer history of public education than India, there are opportunities for India to learn from the successes and failures in the American education system and to collaborate in tackling shared challenges. Despite these improvements, keeping children in school through graduation is still an issue, and dropout rates continue to be high (Sahni, 2015).

As indicated in a report by Hooker and Brand (2009), 1.3 million students, approximately 7,200 students daily, are falling through the cracks of the high school pipeline every year. According to the Alliance for Excellent Education (2017), without essential literacy skills, students are more likely drop out of high school. The problem is that policies and funding streams are too fragmented; programs too segmented by children's age and grade; and key interventions too partial to get widespread, positive results (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2010). Bob Wise, president of the Alliance for Excellent Education (2015), stated in a Press Release,

Instead, students need continued reading and writing support throughout their educational career—especially as they encounter more challenging reading material in middle and high school. Unfortunately, few states provide this continued support and as a result the majority of today's students leave high school without the reading and writing skills necessary for success in an

information-age economy. (para. 2).

Reading well not only provides practical tools for communication for work and most importantly for learning itself, it also helps citizens participate fully in the choices that govern communities and the nation; yet reports from research and the larger educational community suggest that too many students leave school without knowing how to read well (McKeown, Beck, & Blake, 2009).

Substantive changes in instruction and assessment will not occur without substantive changes in our notion of literacy (Langer, 2009). Over the last few years, federal policymakers have begun for the first time to make serious investments in middle and high school literacy instruction (Heller, 2017). In 2006, the National Governors Association (NGA) Center for Best Practices awarded \$50,000 planning grants to eight states—Arizona, Delaware, Florida, Idaho, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Jersey, and North Carolina—to help them design new policies and initiatives to support adolescent literacy instruction (Heller, 2017). In May 2009, the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) issued a report calling upon its 16 member states to take specific steps to improve reading instruction in their secondary schools (Heller, 2017).

Adolescent Literacy

Adolescent literacy emphasizes the wide range of literacy practices in which adolescents engage, especially their use of nonprint electronic texts (Moje, Young, Readence, & Moore, 2000). Literacy is generally taken to connote only reading and writing (Langer, 2009); however, adolescent literacy also has implications for the current trend toward standardization in goals, methods, and assessment which have certainly been as prominent in literacy education as in other fields (Rycik, 2008). Adolescent literacy is the result of factors that form a complex network of both national and regional

level context factors, education and individual level circumstances, and choices in everyday life (Sulkunen, 2013). According to Short and Fitsimmons (2007), developing academic literacy is a complex endeavor that involves reading, writing, listening, and speaking for multiple school-related purposes using a variety of texts and demanding a variety of products. Adolescent learners in our schools must decipher more complex passages, synthesize information at a higher level, and learn to form independent conclusions based on evidence (Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy, 2010). They must also develop special skills and strategies for reading text in each of the differing content areas (Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy, 2010).

Literacy as Writing

Adolescent perceptions of how competent they are as writers, generally speaking, will affect how motivated they are to learn in their subject area classes (Alvermann, 2002). Writing assignments are an excellent way to cultivate critical thinking skills (Sanchez & Lewis, 2014). American education will never realize its potential as an engine of opportunity and economic growth until a writing revolution puts language and communication in their proper place in the classroom (The College Board, 2003). When writers consider their readers, they consider the transactions in which readers are likely to engage. Readers respond to what writers are trying to get them to do as well as what the readers themselves perceive they need to do (Tierney, LaZansky, Raphael, & Cohen, 1983). This has been spurred in part by concerns that the majority of students in the United States do not read or write well enough to meet grade-level demand (Graham et al., 2014). Basic writing itself is not the issue; the problem is that most students cannot write with the skill expected of them today (The College Board, 2003). Gregorian stated in the preface of the Writing Next publication that

American students today are not meeting even basic writing standards, and their teachers are often at a loss for how to help them. In an age overwhelmed by information (we are told, for example, that all available information doubles every two to three years), we should view this as a crisis, because the ability to read, comprehend, and write—in other words, to organize information into knowledge—can be viewed as tantamount to a survival skill. (Graham & Perin, 2007, p. 2)

Along with reading comprehension, writing skill is a predictor of academic success and a basic requirement for participation in civic life and in the global economy (Graham & Perin, 2007). Today, young people spend a lot of time writing and sending each other half-thought-out text messages (Southeastern Regional Educational Board, 2013).

Literacy as Reading

We define literacy as the process of using reading, writing, and oral language to extract, construct, integrate, and critique meaning through interaction and involvement with multimodal texts in the context of socially situated practices (Frankel, Becker, Rowe, & Pearson, 2016). The importance of reading well has never been in dispute (McKeown et al., 2009). In today's schools, too many children struggle with learning to read (Armbruster & Osborn, 2001). Experts in adolescent literacy estimate that as many as 70% of students struggle with reading in some manner (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006). Students who read at low levels often have difficulty understanding the increasingly complex narrative and expository texts that they encounter in high school and beyond (Slavin, Cheung, Groff, & Lake, 2008). Torgesen et al. (2007) stated,

Academic literacy is usually defined as the kind of reading proficiency required to construct the meaning of content-area texts and literature encountered in school.

It also encompasses the kind of reading proficiencies typically assessed on state-level accountability measures, such as the ability to make inferences from text, to learn new vocabulary from context, to link ideas across texts, and to identify and summarize the most important ideas or content within a text. Notice that the definition of academic literacy includes not only the ability to read text for initial understanding but also the ability to think about its meaning in order to answer questions that may require the student to make inferences or draw conclusions.

(p. 3)

Problems with any of the reading skills can contribute to reading difficulties in middle school (Peabody College, 2017). Secondary students with reading difficulties commonly have difficulties with decoding and fluency which result in poor reading comprehension (Hougen, 2014). Unfortunately, the supports provided to students in Grades 4-12 in applying comprehension strategies, learning vocabulary, and building fluency are sporadic (NASBE, 2006). For example, some of these students struggle because they have not had instruction on how to break down the word into pronounceable chunks (e.g., cat-a-stroph-ic; Peabody College, 2017). According to the Public Schools of North Carolina Literacy Plan, reading is the fundamental skill needed for success in life, especially in the 21st century.

Literacy Gap

Clearly, there is a need to improve adolescent literacy, and this need is all the more pertinent because of the rapidly accelerating challenges of modern society (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006). Judging from the level and magnitude of interest in the literacy achievement gap, there is a problem (Alvermann, 2009, p. 15). We hear much less about a parallel crisis in adolescent literacy development, the magnitude of which is

yet to be fully measured let alone confronted and addressed (Vacca, 1998). Estimates are that 90 million U.S. adults lack adequate literacy to be literate today (Goldman, 2012, p. 90). Such data raised concern about the ability of the nation's youth to participate productively in a workforce that was facing an increasingly complex world economy (Jacobs, 2008, p. 8). A substantial number of recent public high school graduates feel that gaps exist between their high school education and the skills, abilities, and work habits that are expected of them today. Though most students aspire to go on to some form of postsecondary education, they are not preparing for it. We are setting too many of our college-bound students up for disappointment. The need to improve the way children are educated has taken on new urgency in the past few years, particularly as the link between well-educated students and America's international competitiveness has become increasingly clear.

A Nation at Risk was published over 30 years ago, and the report indicated that major weaknesses in education existed including a high level of illiteracy (NCEE, 1983). According to the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, n.d.), numerous amounts of eighth-grade students do not have the capacity to perform the higher-order cognitive work required for deep learning of content through reading. The 2015 average score for eighth-grade students was two points lower than in 2013. Reading scores of high school students have not improved in the last 30 years (Kamil, 2003). There is no doubt that teachers continue to face tough odds in the ongoing effort to improve literacy nationwide (Urquhart & Frazee, 2012). Literacy improvement has not kept up with the pace of growth in the global economy (Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy, 2010). Consistent with the NAEP results, experts in adolescent literacy estimate that as many as 70% of students struggle with reading in

some manner (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006).

Ewing (2016) suggested that literacy encompasses the knowledge and skills students need to access, understand, analyze, and evaluate information; make meaning; express thoughts and emotions; present ideas and opinions; interact with others; and participate in activities at school and in their lives beyond school. When adolescents critique their academic experiences as boring and disconnected from their lives, their feelings can be understood as a catch basin for other, more nuanced critiques that speak to the consequences of being sorted, tracked, and labeled by the system (Intrator & Kunzman, 2009). Those who struggle to acquire the literacy skills required by schools, communities, and workplaces may find their options limited in our fast-paced technological society (Alvermann & Hinchman, 2012). Any discussion of adolescents who struggle with literacy invites definitions of literacy and of struggling adolescents (Johannessen & McCann, 2009). Benner (2005) stated that reading is the pivotal skill that allows children to achieve at high levels and become reflective, lifelong learners. Successful students today need strong literacy skills and also need to be able to use those skills as tools for ongoing learning (Graham & Hebert, 2010).

Peterson et al. (2001) suggested years of failing can also leave struggling readers with emotional consequences such as anxiety. Students may be unmotivated to engage with reading and writing for a variety of reasons, including the following: (a) students may not have the skills to succeed with a reading or writing assignment, so they get frustrated and just stop trying; (b) students may have trouble focusing or caring about school work when they confront challenges associated with life circumstances: health, nutrition, or other issues; (c) students may not understand why they need to improve their reading and writing; (d) students may not care about the topics they are reading or

writing; and (e) students who struggle with reading or writing may not feel that it is safe to try or that it will not matter if they try because they are so far behind (Irvin, Meltzer, Mickler, Phillips, & Dean, 2009). If adolescents are not motivated to engage with reading and writing, they will most likely fail to develop the confidence and competence needed to be successful in higher education (Irvin et al., 2009). Motivation is the driving force by which each of us achieve our goals (Balls, Eury, & King, 2011). O'Brien and Dillon (2008) suggested for teachers to reverse disengagement with self-efficacy. Struggling readers have already disengaged, and educators who work with adolescents cannot turn back the clock to intervene in early grades or easily change some students' generally negative self-perceptions about ability; however, teachers can try to build or rebuild self-efficacy, which depends on an individual's beliefs about his or her ability to perform a particular task (Hinchman & Sheridan-Thomas, 2014).

Furthermore, the social and economic consequences of not reading well can be cumulative and profound: the failure to attain a high school diploma, a barrier to higher education, underemployment or unemployment, and difficulty in managing personal and family life. Guensburg (2006) suggested that without a high school diploma, it is harder to make a decent salary. Low-performing students are a good indicator of a national level of adolescent ability to meet the current literacy demands (Sulkunen, 2013). Literacy refers to a lifelong continuum of experiences with the processing, interpretation, and production of texts of all sorts (Johannessen & McCann, 2009). Practices based on key motivation constructs can be used by educators to revive student confidence and self-efficacy and convince struggling readers that they can use and develop skills and strategies that result in meeting goals (O'Brien & Dillion, 2008). Struggling readers often have a difficult time transferring old knowledge to new situations (Kelly &

Campbell, 2013). A good language arts program for the 21st century continues to be comprised of three components—meaning making, language study, and inquiry-based learning; but (and this is a big but) the emphasis is different (Harste, 2003, p. 8).

Teaching Literacy in the Content Classes

Heller and Greenleaf (2007) suggested every content area has its own set of characteristic literary practices. Students must learn that in all classes they are expected to follow written instructions to the letter (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007). In classrooms studying English, math, science, social studies, art, or a foreign language, being able to read and write at the appropriate level is fundamental to gaining a deeper understanding of the subject matter at hand (Teach for America, 2010). Teachers of different subject areas traditionally have employed content-area literacy strategies, an approach to reading instruction that helps students understand information (Chauvin & Theodore, 2015). This is not to say that middle and high school students should be expected to become experts in the way scientists, historians, and other disciplinary specialists read and write (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007); but as adolescents move up through the middle and high school curriculum, they will have to read and write in increasingly varied ways in various content areas (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007). It is common to believe that literacy instruction is solely the charge of language arts teachers; but frankly, this just is not so (Alber, 2010). All teachers in every discipline have reasons to emphasize certain kinds of reading and writing over others, depending on the nature of the specific content and skills they want their students to learn (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007). For example, writing and talking are ways learners can make their mathematical thinking visible. Both writing and talking are tools for collaboration, discovery, and reflection (Whitin & Whitin, 2000). In order to integrate reading and writing instructions successfully into the academic

disciplines, district, state, and federal policymakers must ensure that (a) they define the roles and responsibilities of content area teachers clearly and consistently, stating explicitly that it is not those teachers who provide basic reading instruction; (b) members of every academic discipline define the literacy skills that are essential to their content and which they should be responsible for teaching; (c) all secondary school teachers receive initial and ongoing professional development in teaching the reading and writing skills that are essential to their own content areas; and (d) school and district rules and regulations, education funding mechanisms, and state standards and accountability systems combine to give content area teachers positive incentives and appropriate tools with which to provide reading and writing instruction (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007).

Background of the Study

McREL (2009) stated,

The mission of the North Carolina State Board of Education is that every public school student will graduate from high school globally competitive for work and postsecondary education and prepared for life in the 21st century. This mission requires a new vision of school leadership and a new set of skills that teachers must use daily in order to help their students learn 21st century content and master skills they will need when they graduate from high school and enroll in higher education or enter the workforce or the military. (p. 4)

More than 8 million U.S. students in Grades 4-12 struggle to read, write, and comprehend adequately (Guensburg, 2016); consequently leading to many students struggling with their coursework, falling behind, and eventually dropping out (Bridgeland, DiIulio, & Balfanz, 2009). Students who enter high school with poor literacy skills face long odds against graduating (Slavin et al., 2008). Poor academic skills are consistently linked with

higher dropout rates (NASBE, 2006). Clearly, there is a noticeable epidemic of high school dropouts in America. Moreover, according to Jerald (2016), America's educators are about to be faced with a sizeable new challenge—fixing the nation's dropout problem. Growing awareness of these realities has produced a common consensus around the need to mobilize and invest in dropout prevention; however, the process of dropping out begins long before a child gets to high school. It stems from loss of interest and motivation in middle school, often triggered by the retention in grade and the struggle to keep up academically (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2010).

Reports from research and the larger educational community suggest that too many students leave school without knowing how to read well (McKeown et al., 2009). According to Hock and Deshler (2003), more than 5 million high schoolers do not read well enough to understand their textbooks or other material written for their grade level. Reading scores stubbornly remain flat; and in recent years, twelfth grader scores have decreased significantly (Kamil, 2003). Furthermore, students who struggle with reading often lack the prerequisites to take academically courses that could potentially lead to more wide reading exposing them to advance content ideas as well as vocabulary (Au, 2000).

As indicated in a report from The World Literacy Foundation (2015), the cost of illiteracy to the global economy is estimated at \$1.2 trillion USD. North Carolina state government will spend more than \$20 million on North Carolina's high school dropout prevention program. That money will be used to try to prevent 350,000 of the state's 1.1 million students—students considered at risk—from dropping out of school, educators say (Barnett, 1989). According to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) in 2016, average grade-level reading proficiency for economically

disadvantaged children in our region was 40% and for all students it was 58%.

Statement of the Problem

Nationally, over 6 million American students in Grades 6-12 are at risk of failure because they read and comprehend below—often considerably below—the basic levels needed for success in high school (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). According to recent data released from the National Education Association (NEA, 2017), a total of 3,131,221 students graduated from high school in 2015-2016, up 1.1% from 3,309,762 in 2014-2015; however, all high school graduates are facing an increased need for a high degree of literacy, including the capacity to comprehend complex texts. Contrarily, comprehension outcomes are not improving (Snow, 2002). Tirozzi (2005) stated,

Today, our nation is in danger. The danger I am describing here is pervasive and will attack the very core of our democracy. It comes from a lack of the most basic foundation of knowledge: the ability to read, write, and speak in a way that promotes further learning and advances ideas among diverse people. Without education, the wealthiest nations on earth can fall into poverty because—just like any organization—a nation’s greatest asset is its people. As important as food and shelter are to human survival, education is to human development. Education makes it possible to think, dream, act, and build further knowledge. And there can be no education without literacy. (p. v)

According to an NCDPI news release, the state’s 4-year high school cohort graduation rate, which factors into the letter grades for high schools, continued its upward trend for the class of 2016, reaching a new high 85.9%; however, students who enter high school with poor literacy skills face long odds against graduating and going on to postsecondary education or satisfying careers (Slavin et al., 2008). A substantial number

of recent public high school graduates feel that gaps exist between their high school education and the skills, abilities, and work habits that are expected of them today (Hart, 2005). According to Darling-Hammond (2006), efforts of NCLB to support more equitable education have leveraged important attention to school reform and to the relative success of students of color and low-income students who have traditionally been poorly served by comprehensive high schools. The Obama administration's national education agenda expresses clear support for addressing the dropout crisis through preventive measures implemented during the middle-school years and reforming NCLB. Part of what makes it so difficult to meet the needs of struggling readers and writers in middle and high school is that these students experience a wide range of challenges that require an equally wide range of interventions (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006). Problems acquiring needed literacy skills are heightened for students who do not speak English as their first language; students who have a disability; or students who are black, Hispanic, or Native American (Graham & Herbert, 2010).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact and effectiveness of adolescent literacy in a rural southeastern North Carolina school district. Despite the work of conscientious teachers, reading supervisors, curriculum coordinators, and principals in middle schools and high schools across the country, young people literacy skills are not keeping pace with societal demands of living in an information age that changes rapidly and show no sign of slowing (Alvermann, 2002).

According to Vacca (1998), the literacy development of early adolescents and teenagers is more critical than ever. Moreover, the Literacy Council of Buncombe County (2010) stated literacy skills benefit not only the struggling reader but everyone in

the community regardless of age, race, gender, or background. Schools that specifically embark on a journey to improve literacy and learning have a better chance of graduating greater numbers of students who are active learners, proficient readers, and fluent writers (Irvin, 2010). By 2020, 67% of jobs in North Carolina will need postsecondary education.

Conceptual Framework

Approximately 1.3 million students nationwide drop out of school between eighth and twelfth grades (NASBE, 2006). In adolescence, developing adequate literacy skills is urgent, as the shortcomings in such a key competence are likely to grow over time Sulkunen (2013). Interventions help adolescent at-risk readers make large gains in reading, which helps protect them against dropping out (Carbo, 2010). Over the last few years, federal policymakers have begun for the first time to make serious investments in middle and high school literacy instruction (Heller, 2017).

The Instructional Core, shown in Figure 1, is a comprehensive model that provides the basic framework for how to intervene in the instructional process so as to improve the quantity and level of student learning. The seven principles of the instructional core are (a) increases in student learning occur only as a consequence of improvements in the level of content, teacher knowledge and skill, and student engagement; (b) if you change any single element of the instructional core, you have to change the other two; (c) if you cannot see it in the core, it is not there; (d) task predicts performance; (e) the real accountability system is in the tasks that students are asked to do; (f) we learn to do the work by doing the work, not by telling other people to do the work, not by having done the work at some time in the past, and not by hiring experts who can act as proxies for our knowledge about how to do the work; and (g) description

before analysis, analysis before prediction, prediction before evaluation (Carbo, 2010).

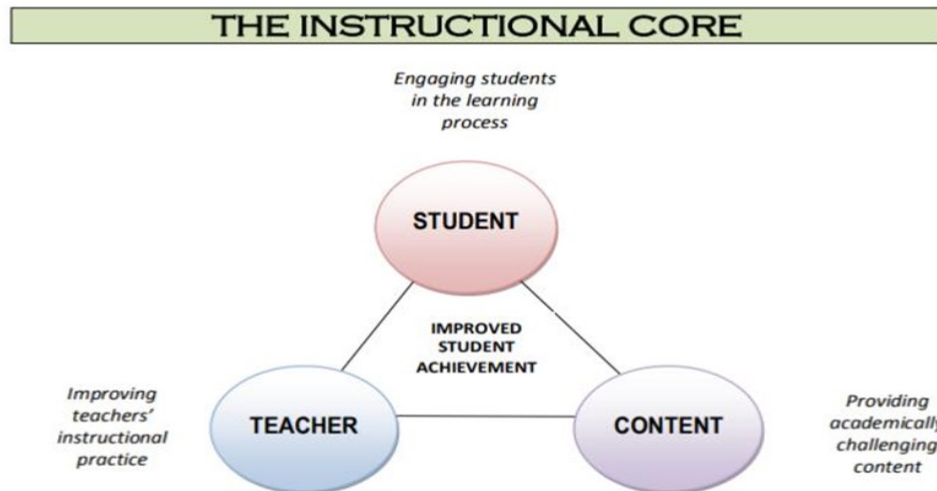


Figure 1. Instructional Core Model.

The literacy education of adolescents is critical as the National Endowment for the Arts (2007) reported:

The story the data tell is simple, consistent, and alarming. Although there has been measurable progress in recent years in reading ability at the elementary school level, all progress appears to halt as children enter their teenage years. There is a general decline in reading among teenage and adult Americans. Most alarming, both reading ability and the habit of regular reading have greatly declined among college graduates. These negative trends have more than literary importance. The declines have demonstrable social, economic, cultural, and civic implications. It is a serious national problem. If, at the current pace, America continues to lose the habit of regular reading, the nation will suffer substantial economic, social, and civic setbacks. (pp. 5-6)

Summary

Adolescents are currently living through massive transformations in literacy practices (Watson & Hugo, 2015). The understanding of reading comprehension has shifted substantively over the past 25 years (Meltzer et al., 2001); but for students who struggle with reading assignments, peer pressure, and humiliation in front of peers, this exacerbates their sense of inadequacy, leading to feelings of total defeat (Lewis, 2009). The practices in which the teacher engages impact the literacy growth of children. A key aspect of the theory is that teacher knowledge of content becomes confounded with their knowledge of instructional strategies, since what prospective teachers learned is tied to how they were taught (Lortie, 1975). This suggests then that children may demonstrate greater gains depending upon the beliefs of the teacher and the subsequent practices in which the teacher engages. This study evaluated teacher perspectives of the impact of Literacy Design Collaborative (LDC) and its implementation into the rural middle school classroom of a southeastern North Carolina school district.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This literature review provides necessary background to understand the experience of being a middle school teacher during the adolescent literacy crisis. Current literature in the chapter review relates to (a) strategies and research to improve adolescent literacy (reading); (b) strategies and research to improve adolescent literacy (writing); (c) common core; (d); ESSA; (e) conceptual framework; (f) LDC; and (g) strategies for teaching literacy in content areas.

Strategies and Research to Improve Adolescent Literacy (Reading)

Adolescents need well-developed repertoires of reading comprehension strategies such as questioning themselves about what they read; synthesizing information from various sources; identifying, understanding, and remembering key vocabulary; recognizing how a text is organized and using that organization as a tool for learning; organizing information in notes; interpreting diverse symbol systems in subjects such as biology and algebra; searching their own understanding; and evaluating author ideas and perspectives (Moore et al., 1999). The National Reading Panel (2000) identified five components that are essential for learning to read successfully: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Phonemic awareness. According to the Board of Directors of the IRA, there is no single definition of phonemic awareness; however, Reading Rockets defined phonemic awareness as the ability to notice, think about, and work with the individual sounds in words. Without phonemic awareness, phonics makes little sense (DIBELS). Adolescents who are phonemically aware, for example, understand that three phonemes (/k/, /a/, and /t/) form the word cat (National Institute for Literacy, 2007). The National Institute for Literacy (2007) postulated another concern: If this awareness has not been

fully developed and exercised, middle and high school students may experience difficulty with phonemic awareness when they encounter words that are unfamiliar to them (p. 4).

Phonics. Phonics involves the relationship between sounds and their spelling (Blevins, 2017). Additionally, Blevins (2017) stated phonics instruction plays a key role in helping students comprehend text. Furthermore, readers who focus on sounding out letters rather than learning whole words tap into that part of the human brain best wired for developing reading skills (Schaffhauser, 2015). Nicholson (2000) noted that students of phonics learn word attack skills that will enable them quickly to decipher virtually any word they may encounter. A child who can identify and blend only these sounds already has the word attack skills to read well in excess of 1,200 words (Nicholson, 2000).

Fluency. According to Bainbridge (2017), reading fluency refers to the ability to read quickly, smoothly, easily, and with expression. Reading with expression means that a child is not reading in a monotone with all words getting equal emphasis (Bainbridge, 2017). Moreover, many researchers (Armstrong, 1983; Breznitz, 1987; Knupp, 1988; Lesgold, Resnick, & Hammond, 1985; Pinnell et al., 1995) have found that fluency is highly correlated with reading comprehension—that is, when a student reads fluently, that student is likely to comprehend what he or she is reading.

Vocabulary. The English Club (2017) defined vocabulary into three components: (a) all of the words in a language; (b) the words used in a particular context; (c) the words an individual person knows. According to Moore (n.d.), vocabulary plays an important role in reading comprehension and student success. Many researchers emphasize the crucial effects of vocabulary knowledge on reading comprehension (Anjomshoa & Zamanian, 2014). It includes both oral vocabulary—words we use in speaking or recognize in listening—and reading vocabulary—words we use or recognize

in print (Sunnyvale School District, n.d.).

Comprehension. As indicated in the research from the National Institute for Literacy (2007), both phonics and phonemic awareness instruction should occur within the context of an integrated approach to developing student comprehension and use of academic language and should focus on only one or two skills or strategies at a time. Comprehension is a crucial aspect of reading (Kelly & Campbell, 2003). It is imperative that teachers and administrators familiarize themselves with the concept that students must construct meaning from text and understand the foundations of literacy instructions such as phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (Johnson & Mongo, 2008). What the researcher wants to see in curriculum is an abundance of opportunities for students to explore their own inquiry questions using reading, writing, and other sign systems as tools for learning (Harste, 2003). To improve student achievement, teachers must view themselves as teachers of reading and possess the skills necessary to address the difficult task of teaching expository (Johnson & Mongo, 2008). Literacy means different things to different groups (Harste, 2003). Again, it is crucial to draw on students' cultural background, prior knowledge, and ability to make connections to the world as they know it (Johnson & Mongo, 2008). The reading process must be taught with an understanding that reading is applicable in all subject areas and should not be relegated to textbooks only (Johnson & Mongo, 2008).

Graham and Herbert (2010) stated that the evidence shows that having students write about the material they read does enhance their reading abilities. In fact, 57 of 61 outcomes (93%) were positive, indicating a consistent positive effect for writing about what is read. Billmeyer and Barton (2002) suggested that

there are a few "truths" that emerge from the data: (a) reading is declining as an

activity among teenagers; (b) college attendance no longer guarantees active reading habits; (c) even when reading does occur, it competes with other media; (d) American families are spending less money on books than at almost any other time during the past two decades; (e) among high school seniors, the average reading proficiency score has declined for virtually all levels of reading; (f) reading proficiency rates are stagnant or declining among all adults. (p. xi)

Before and during reading assignments, teachers should encourage students to make and confirm predictions by asking questions to help them elaborate and refine their thinking (Johnson & Mongo, 2008).

Biancarosa and Snow (2006) developed the following middle and high school reading strategies to assist struggling readers: (a) direct, explicit comprehension instruction which is instruction in the strategies and processes that proficient readers use to understand what they read including summarizing, keeping track of one's own understanding, and a host of other practices; (b) effective instructional principles embedded in content including language arts teachers using content-area texts and content-area teachers providing instruction and practice in reading and writing skills specific to their subject area; (c) motivation and self-directed learning which includes building motivation to read and learn and providing students with the instruction and supports needed for independent learning tasks they will face after graduation; (d) text-based collaborative learning which involves students interacting with one another around a variety of texts; (e) strategic tutoring which provides students with intense individualized reading, writing, and content instruction as needed; (f) diverse texts which are texts at a variety of difficulty levels and on a variety of topics (g) intensive writing including instruction connected to the kinds of writing tasks students will have to perform

well in high school and beyond; (h) a technology component which includes technology as a tool for and a topic of literacy instruction; (i) ongoing formative assessment of students which is an informal, often daily assessment of how students are progressing under current instructional practices; (j) extended time for literacy which includes approximately two to four hours of literacy instruction and practice that takes place in language arts and content-area classes; (k) professional development that is both long term and ongoing; (l) ongoing summative assessment of students and programs which is more formal and provides data that are reported for accountability and research purposes; (m) teacher teams which are interdisciplinary teams that meet regularly to discuss students and align instruction; (n) leadership which can come from principals and teachers who have a solid understanding of how to teach reading and writing to the full array of students present in schools; and (o) a comprehensive and coordinated literacy program which is interdisciplinary and interdepartmental and may even coordinate with out-of-school organizations and the local community. Irvin et al. (2007) suggested to help improve adolescent literacy habits, teachers should incorporate the needs of the adolescent student indicated in Table 1.

Table 1

Linking Instruction with Needs, Interests, and Dispositions

Adolescent Needs, Interest, and Dispositions	Possible Instructional Response
Need for control/autonomy	Provide choices in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment topics • Assessment modes • Books to read • Order to complete work
Interest in technology/media	Use technology to support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Presentation • Research
Need to be heard	Provide authentic audiences, expectations, and opportunities for writing/speaking beyond the teacher
Disposition to debate	Plan many opportunities for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • debate • text-based discussion • opinion boards • blogs • letters to the editor • student feedback of content/format errors
Need to make a difference	Set up opportunities for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reading to/tutoring others • research into real issues • apprenticeships • creating informational websites • writing articles for publication • peer editing
Need to belong	Create a classroom culture that supports the development of a community of readers, writers, and thinkers.
Sense of accomplishment	Teach students how to participate in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • literacy goal setting • progress monitoring • use of rubrics • collaborative team for completion of literacy tasks

Note. ©2007 by Judith Irvin (Irvin et al., 2007).

Educators should reduce the anxiety over reading as a performance or process and focus on reading as just one avenue toward activity or action (O'Brien & Dillon, 2008). Intrinsically motivated students seem to retain information and concepts more readily (Balls et al., 2011). Practices based on key motivation constructs can be used by educators to revive student confidence and self-efficacy and additionally to convince struggling readers that they can use and develop skills or strategies that result in meeting goals (O'Brien & Dillon, 2008). Efforts by five states—Alabama, Florida, Kentucky, New Jersey, and Rhode Island—to improve adolescent literacy implemented the following five strategies: (a) engaging key stakeholders to make adolescent literacy a priority; (b) setting rigorous state literacy goals and standards with other state policies aligned to support them; (c) aligning resources to support adolescent literacy goals; (d) building educator capacity to support adolescent literacy programs at state, school, and classroom levels; and (e) measuring progress and using data to make decisions and provide oversight (Bates, Breslow, & Hupert, 2009).

This difficulty in setting clear descriptions of student advancement is especially troubling because reading is fundamental across disciplines, and on-track reading is crucial for student success. There is a significant gap between texts used in high school and texts used in elementary school. One key root of the gap is disparities in literacy achievement (Snow & Biancarosa, 2003). A group named the Common Core (not affiliated with the Common Core State Standards Initiative [CCSSI]), funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, has developed curriculum maps for the English language arts (ELA) in order to close the literacy gap.

Strategies and Research to Improve Adolescent Literacy (Writing)

Competence and confidence in literacy, including competence in grammar,

spelling and the spoken word, are essential for progress in all areas of the curriculum (Scottish Government's Literacy Action Plan, 2012). According to Graham and Perrin (2007), there are 11 elements of current writing instruction found to be effective for helping adolescent students learn to write well and to use writing as a tool for learning:

- (a) writing strategies which involve teaching students strategies for planning, revising, and editing their compositions;
- (b) summarizing which involves explicitly and systematically teaching students how to summarize texts;
- (c) collaborative writing which uses instructional arrangements in which adolescents work together to plan, draft, revise, and edit their compositions;
- (d) specific product goals which assign students specific, reachable goals for the writing they are to complete;
- (e) word processing which uses computers and word processors as instructional supports for writing assignments;
- (f) sentence combining which involves teaching students to construct more complex, sophisticated sentences;
- (g) prewriting which engages students in activities designed to help them generate or organize ideas for their composition;
- (h) inquiry activities which engage students in analyzing immediate, concrete data to help them develop ideas and content for a particular writing task;
- (i) process writing approach which interweaves a number of writing instructional activities in a workshop environment that stresses extended writing opportunities, writing for authentic audiences, personalized instruction, and cycles of writing;
- (j) study of models which provides students with opportunities to read, analyze, and emulate models of good writing; and
- (k) writing for content learning which uses writing as a tool for learning content material.

Effective adolescent literacy programs must include an element that helps students improve their writing skills (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006). Research supports the idea that writing instruction also improves reading comprehension. For example, students who are given the opportunity

to write in conjunction with reading show more evidence of critical thinking about reading (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006).

Too often in the past, we have reduced the study of language to phonics in reading, spelling, and grammar in the area of writing (Harste, 2003). Graham (2008) developed the following seven recommendations for teaching writing: (a) dedicate time to writing, with writing occurring across the curriculum, and involve students in various forms of writing over time; (b) increase student knowledge about writing; (c) foster student interest, enjoyment, and motivation to write; (d) help students become strategic writers; (e) teach basic writing skills to mastery; (f) take advantage of technological writing tools; and (g) use assessment to gauge student progress and needs. Merten (2015) suggested a formative writing assessment collected early the first quarter also provides a baseline writing assessment. In addition, annotating informational text becomes a natural segue for notes. For example, students are taught Cornell note setup as a whole class instruction (Merten, 2015). Effective writing is a skill that is grounded in the cognitive domain. It involves learning comprehension, application, and synthesis of new knowledge (Defazio, Jones, Tennant, & Hook, 2010). Hamilton (2009) suggested the key to mastering the writing process is to break it into manageable segments so the writer can focus on one task at a time. The Florida Department of Education Division of Public Schools (2005) implemented the following strategies in ELA classrooms to increase their adolescents' writing skills: (a) teach writing as a process, stressing the revision and editing stages; (b) require students to read and interpret a prompt independently, to organize their thoughts and plan their writing, and to write an elaborated (well detailed and thorough) response; (c) share examples of student writing from each of the score points and ask students to give suggestions for improving the essay; (d) provide oral and

written feedback to students, emphasizing all four elements of writing (focus, organization, support, and control of conventions); (e) use mini-lessons to emphasize the writer's craft such as leads and conclusions; showing, not telling; anecdotal details; audience awareness; sentence combining; and (f) emphasize that high-quality writing has a clear focus, extensive elaboration of detail, a mature command of language, and appropriate sentence variety.

Common Core

With the view from *A Nation at Risk*, a stronger prescription was placed in the lens of education (Balls et al., 2011). In the spring of 2009, in an effort unprecedented in the history of U.S. education, governors and state commissioners of education from across the United States formed the CCSSI (Kendall, 2011). Common Core State Standards (CCSS), released by the NGA and the Council of Chief State Schools Officers in 2010, is the culmination of at least 25 years of emphasis on systemic school reform, using high-stakes assessments as a lever to improve the achievement of American schoolchildren (Applebee, 2013). The high-stakes testing environment created by NCLB has privileged reading as the essential element of the ELA curriculum, leaving writing instruction at risk; however, NCLB has been replaced by ESSA. ESSA is the main federal law for K-12 general education; it covers all students in public schools. CCSS, on the other hand, elevate writing to a central place, not only giving it the same number of individual standards as reading but also making writing the central way in which content knowledge is developed and shared (Applebee, 2013).

The published version of CCSS ended up with a long, awkward, and misleading title: Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (Applebee, 2013). The title is

misleading in that the standards for ELA (as for the other disciplines) are really standards for literacy, paying no attention to the disciplinary knowledge in language, literature, and composition that provide the primary contexts within which students will develop their literacy skills (Applebee, 2013). Writing and reading skills are closely allied in both instruction and assessment (Torgesen & Miller, 2009). The states that signed on with CCSS agreed to fully implement these standards by the 2014-2015 academic year, the same year when the assessments for CCSS would be launched (National Council of Teachers of English [NCTE], 2013). They help educators improve student achievement levels, an outcome that will benefit students personally while also fueling our nation's future economic success (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2010).

Local, state, and, federal policymakers should do more to encourage larger numbers of math, English, history, science, and other content area teachers to integrate literacy instruction into their everyday classroom practice (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007). Moreover, content area teachers need to be assured that they will not be held responsible for teaching basic reading skills to middle and high school students (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007). CCSS have become a political punching bag in states and districts across the country (Herman, Epstein, & Leon, 2016). Only a handful of states did not initially adopt the ELA CCSS; and although a number of states have reviewed the standards in response to political pressure, only a small number have fully repealed them, with other states making smaller adjustments (Herman et al., 2016). As indicated by NCTE (2013), ELA CCSS have been designed to make students college and career ready. CCSS were released in June 2010, and have since been adopted by 45 states seeking to be eligible for Race to the Top funds offered by the U.S. Department of Education. Developers of CCSS describe six instructional shifts that will be necessary to the implementation of the

ELA standards as seen in Table 2.

Table 2

Instructional Shifts

Balancing informational and literary texts	Students read a mixture of informational and literary texts in ELA classes along with informational texts in other courses.
Building knowledge in disciplines	Texts play a key role in providing information for students to learn in all subjects.
Moving up the staircase of textual complexity	Students read increasingly challenging texts as they move from grade to grade.
Focus on text-based answers	Class discussions give significant attention to textual evidence.
Writing from sources	Students use textual evidence to make arguments in writing.
Creating an academic vocabulary	Students continually build the academic vocabulary essential to complex text in all disciplines.

The goal of this initiative? To develop a set of shared national standards ensuring that students in every state are held to the same level of expectations that students in the world's highest-performing countries are and that they gain the knowledge and skills that will prepare them for success in postsecondary education and the global arena (Kendall, 2011). This situation is one reason CCSS were developed. CCSS provide an established set of standards whose mastery will provide each student with the skill and knowledge to advance in study (Kendall, 2011). Within each strand, standards are organized under a set of topics which apply across all grades (Kendall, 2011). For example, the language strand is depicted below in Table 3 to demonstrate the function of the structure.

Table 3

The Language Strand

Conventions of Standard English

1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Knowledge of Language

3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.
 5. Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.
 6. Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression
-

CCSS outline 32 literacy standards— subdivided into four strands: reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language—that are conceptualized as an integrated model of literacy (Buehl, 2013).

ESSA

The U.S. Department of Education (2017) reported ESSA was signed by President Obama on December 10, 2015, reauthorizing the 50-year-old Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the nation’s longstanding commitment to equal opportunity for all students. ESSA represents a change from NCLB, shifting power and responsibility

for policy to the states. The major shifts under ESSA are as follows: (a) reduces the role of the federal government; (b) allows for more fiscal flexibility; (c) eliminates requirement to implement state-designed teacher evaluation systems, link results to student test scores, or both; (d) eliminates annual yearly progress and highly qualified teacher provisions; (e) shifts the focus from “college and career readiness” to “all children receive a high-quality education” and “closing student achievement gaps”; and (f) expands support for early learning and other factors affecting student learning, including literacy (International Literacy Association, 2016). Although ESSA mandates district and school intervention in the lowest performing 5% of schools and in high schools graduating fewer than 67% of students, it does not specify what the specific interventions should be; this is left to the state to define and determine with school districts (International Literacy Association, 2016).

Mandatory use of funds in Grades 6-12 include the following: (a) developing and implementing a comprehensive literacy instruction plan; (b) using funds to train principals, teachers, and staff to develop high quality comprehensive literacy instruction initiatives; (c) assessing the quality of adolescent comprehensive literacy instruction as part of a well-rounded education; (d) providing time for teachers to meet to plan evidence-based literacy instruction; and (e) coordinating the involvement of principals, teachers, and appropriate staff in high-quality literacy plans (International Literacy Association, 2016). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2017), the LEARN Act within ESSA connects policy and practice directly by investing in the knowledge and skills of educators. LEAs must use any grant funds they receive under the LEARN Act to support high quality professional development for teachers, teacher leaders, principals, and specialized instructional support personnel to improve literacy instruction for

struggling readers and writers in early childhood, elementary, and adolescent literacy programs.

Conceptual Framework

The instructional core includes three interdependent components: teacher knowledge and skill, student engagement in their own learning, and academically challenging content (Elmore, 2014). What the instructional core does is it helps us identify where we are trying to improve (Elmore, 2014). According to Elmore (2009), the instructional core is composed of the teacher and the students in the presence of content. One cannot just focus on an element of the core; all elements must be addressed. That is, one must simultaneously work to improve teacher skills and knowledge, student levels of engagement and participation in learning, and the rigor of the content being taught (Washington State Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2011).

LDC

With funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, development of LDC began in 2009 with literacy experts building a framework to help teachers incorporate literacy instruction into core subject instruction. LDC offers a research-based approach to incorporating literacy into all areas of content in middle and high school by providing a common framework that facilitates teacher creativity and builds literacy skills across content areas. LDC therefore incorporates all three elements of Elmore's (2009) instructional core which he theorized are the only ways to directly improve student learning at scale: raising the level of content, increasing the skill and knowledge of teachers, and increasing the level of active student learning. According to Herman et al. (2016), LDC supports secondary teacher CCSS transition by providing flexible, module

templates to enable teachers to seamlessly incorporate ELA into their disciplinary instruction.

Reumann-Moore, Lawrence, Sanders, Shaw, and Christman (2011) conducted research regarding the implementation of LDC and found that (a) teachers reported the LDC framework is a strong model for teaching literacy in the content areas; (b) 92% of teachers using literacy tools reported the tools provide them with new information about student knowledge of subject matter and student skills; (c) some teachers reported early perceptions of tool benefits including that they provided a better understanding of student strengths and weaknesses as readers and writers and that the resulting student work increased their expectations for what students can do; and (d) 88% of teachers using the literacy tools reported that they increase student engagement in literacy learning.

According to Merten (2015), teachers can also create their own expository writing assessment. Tanriverdi and Apak (2004) stated if a teacher does not believe that a particular design is valuable, the implementation of the curriculum may be not effective at all. As strong believers in clear, consistent standards that focus on what students need to be prepared for college and careers, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation was proud to support the Common Core work (Phillips & Wong, 2012). LDC template tasks are fill-in-the-blank “shells” that allow teachers to insert the texts to be read, writing to be produced, and content to be addressed. When filled in, template tasks create high quality student assignments that develop reading, writing, and thinking skills in the context of learning science, history, English, and other subjects. For example, the template for a task requiring students to defend an argument based on evidence from informational texts is demonstrated below. It addresses the standards for reading (argumentation) and for writing (argumentation):

- Task 1. After researching ____ (informational texts) on ____ (content), write ____ (essay or substitute) that argues your position on ____ (content). Support your position with evidence from your research.
- Level 1. Be sure to acknowledge competing views.
- Level 2. Give examples from past or current events or issues to illustrate and clarify your position. (Argumentation/Analysis).

The LDC platform provides access to exemplary Common Core-aligned curriculum modules, a library of mini-literacy performance tasks, and a variety of online classroom resources (Literacy Design Collaborative, 2014). LDC Core Tools, a teacher-created online instructional platform, guides educators through a curriculum design and professional development experience that enables them to master the instructional shifts of the Common Core (Literacy Design Collaborative, 2014). The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (2010) intended to continue investing in the assessments and tools that will make the standards real and productive—primarily those targeted for classroom use.

Strategies for Teaching Literacy in Content Classes

Hervey (2013) at Generation Ready developed the following strategies for effective teachers of literacy: (a) know the literacy processes and the pedagogy that determines how their students learn; (b) know what their students need to understand and be able to do to meet the standards; (c) know their students as learners; (d) have high expectations for their students and encourage risk taking; (e) flexibly use a range of instructional practices; and (f) engage students in challenging learning experiences. According to Urquhart and Frazee (2012), generic literacy strategies are cognitive and metacognitive approaches shown to improve achievement in the content areas. Urquhart and Frazee revealed that discipline-based literacy strategies, when used intensively and

purposefully, support adolescent literacy development in almost startling ways. Hervey (2013) developed some procedures that teachers should utilize to enhance their literacy practices: (a) understand literacy learning; (b) know the standards; (c) know their students as learners; (d) set high expectations for students and encourage risk taking; (e) use a flexible range of teaching strategies; and (f) engage students in challenging content

The IRA (2012) Commission on Adolescent Literacy Position Statement advocated that there are eight principles for supporting adolescent literacy growth: (a) adolescents deserve content area teachers who provide instruction in the multiple literacy strategies needed to meet the demands of the specific discipline; (b) adolescents deserve a culture of literacy in their schools with a systematic and comprehensive programmatic approach to increasing literacy achievement for all; (c) adolescents deserve access to and instruction with multimodal, multiple texts; (d) adolescents deserve differentiated literacy instruction specific to their individual needs; (e) adolescents deserve opportunities to participate in oral communication when they engage in literacy activities; (f) adolescents deserve opportunities to use literacy in the pursuit of civic engagement; (g) adolescents deserve assessments that highlight their strengths and challenges; and (h) adolescents deserve access to a wide variety of print and nonprint materials.

Langer (2001) argued literacy gained from a well-developed middle and high school English curriculum is high literacy. Additionally, Langer (2001) asserted, While basic reading and writing skills are included in this definition of high literacy, also included are the ability to use language, content, and reasoning in ways that are appropriate for particular situations and disciplines. Students learn to ‘read’ the social meanings, the rules and structures, and the linguistic and cognitive routines to make things work in the real world of English language use;

and that knowledge becomes available as options when students confront new situations. This notion of high literacy refers to understanding how reading, writing, language, content, and social appropriateness work together, and using this knowledge in effective ways. It is reflected in students' ability to engage in thoughtful reading, writing, and discussion about content in the classroom; to put their knowledge and skills to use in new situations; and, to perform well on reading and writing assessments including high-stakes testing. (p. 838)

Summary

Proficient reading skills are essential to learning mathematics, science, and social studies concepts (Johnson & Mongo, 2008). Teachers who integrate reading and writing in content-area instruction often view it as a natural fit: (a) they are reciprocal processes where writers learn from reading and vice versa; (b) they are parallel processes—both are purposeful and dependent on background knowledge and both focus on the construction of meaning; (c) they naturally intersect in the process of learning; and (d) both are social activities driven by a need for communication (Urquhart & Frazee, 2012). Promoting literacy among young people is a task that can be pursued on many fronts (Zagreb, 2005). Literacy opens, to those who have, it the accumulated wisdom of people from all times and places (Zagreb, 2005).

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this study was to determine middle school teacher perspectives of adolescent literacy in a rural southeastern North Carolina school district. Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines perspective as “the interrelation in which a subject or its parts are mentally viewed.” Most educators recognize the significance of literacy; however, many teachers lack the appropriate toolbox to infuse daily literacy into their classrooms (Sprinkle, 2013). Johnson and Mongo (2008) stated that instruction in content areas such as mathematics, science, and social studies typically relies on textbooks as the reading source, yet engagement and comprehension continue to hinder literacy achievement. With states and districts implementing new academic standards based on CCSS, teachers have more opportunities than ever to collaborate around the shared goals of strengthening curriculum design, classroom practices, and student learning (Vasudeva & Slamp, 2016).

Participants

This study focuses on a small, rural, low-performing school district in southeastern North Carolina. The site of the research was conducted in a southeastern North Carolina county that was a major farming industry over 30 years ago. This brought numerous migrant families to the area during peak farming seasons. In the past 8 years, economic hardship has caused the rural district to dismantle because of the decline in farming. Although the farming industry deteriorated drastically, some of the migrant families have created residences within the county. Additionally, a surplus of subsidized housing has been added to the county. According to United States Census Bureau (2016), the population of the county is 33,741. There are 25.4% of the residents living in poverty. The ethnic makeup for the county is as follows: White 60.8%, Black 56.3%, American Indian 3%, Asian 0.3%, and Hispanic 7.7%. The high school graduate rate for

residents over 25 is 79.2%. The number of residents who have a bachelor's degree or higher is 13.8%.

This rural school district consists of six primary schools, Grades K-5; four middle schools, two of the four middle schools are Grades 6-8 and the other two middle schools are Grades 5-8; one school, Grades K-8; and two high schools. However, for the foci of the evaluation, the researcher only distributed questionnaires to middle school teachers from the four middle schools in the county and only the Grades 6-8 middle school teachers from the K-8 school which totaled 16 classroom teachers. According to the North Carolina School Report Card, the rural school district has 1,323 students in Grades 5-8.

Data Collection

After composing an email to the superintendent for permission to complete the study (Appendix A), the researcher was granted permission to complete the study from the superintendent. Additionally, the researcher solicited participation in the study from the superintendent as well in the form of an interview that was conducted at the district office. The superintendent agreed to participate in the study and signed a consent form (Appendix B). The researcher used the questions in Appendix C as a guide for the interview with the superintendent. Teachers were given informed consent forms to review and sign if they agreed to participate in the study (Appendix D). The researcher distributed questionnaires to middle school teachers. Please refer to Appendix E for the questionnaire. An understanding of beliefs and attitudes surrounding respondents was the ultimate goal of the study and was achieved by an exploration of personal experiences and perceptions (Booker, 2009). Constructs and themes within the data were gathered and assessed through the use of triangulation in order to assure the validity of the

research study (Kohlbacher, 2006). Once the questionnaires and interview with the superintendent were completed, a conventional content analysis was conducted to analyze data (Elo & Kyungas, 2008; Kohlbacher, 2006). Using content analysis methodology allowed the researcher to identify the existence of specific words, themes, patterns, or phrases in texts in order to draw conclusions, identify trends, and make generalizations about the concept being examined (Busch et al., 2012).

Validity

According to Maxwell (2005), the term validity in qualitative research means that the observations, interviews, and content analysis contain the information the researcher thinks they contain. Patton (2003) stated that validity and reliability are related in qualitative research and are factors that any qualitative researcher should be concerned about when designing a study, analyzing results, and judging the quality of the study. This study employed a number of strategies to ensure validity. These strategies included member checking and peer debriefing. To determine the accuracy of the qualitative findings, the researcher reviewed the interview transcript and narratives of the focus group questionnaire data to determine whether the participants considered the account to be accurate. Qualitative research, by design, allows for the interpreted construction of social reality and the exploration and description of individual lived experience (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The researcher adjusted any responses as specified by the participants and noted these adjustments in the final narratives. This process is referred to in research as member checking (Creswell, 2009). Triangulation is another technique used to aid in the trustworthiness of results of a study. This study used triangulation of multiple data sources (interviews, field notes, audiotapes, self-reports, and documentation) to assist in producing data analysis that was trustworthy. Skillful open-ended questions are high on

validity because they get comprehensive answers in respondents' own words (Guthrie, 2010).

Reliability

Reliability in qualitative research represents dependability. Maxwell (2005) stated that reliability in qualitative research means that the data collection process is not self-contradictory and the data collection is both consistent and stable. Data collected by interviews, observation, and self-report are types of gathering methods that generally have personal bias, error, misinterpretation, and personal perceptions that come into play; and therefore, data gathered this way can be challenging to prove as reliable (Shank, 2006). Verifying information and ensuring thoroughness can offer a level of reliability and accuracy that would not otherwise be present. The results of a study should be consistent over time and have the ability to be replicated under similar methodology. Roberts (2004) believed that exemplary case study design ensures that the procedures used in it are well documented and can be repeated with the same results over and over again.

The researcher verified the work with the superintendent and teachers to ensure review of the data throughout the process. Bringing together a small group of individuals for discussion during the phase of data collection is many times more valuable than having a representative sample. According to Jowett and O'Toole (2006), conducting interviews in a group setting allows the researcher to speak with several participants at once, more efficiently using limited time and resources to gather data and formulate more specific research questions. Qualitative research, with its keen eye on the powerful meaning of human experience, allows the researcher to gain a more defined perspective of the participant (Booker, 2009).

Research Method

According to (Creswell, 2013) qualitative research is especially useful when the researcher does not know the important variables to examine. Additionally, Creswell (2007) stated that qualitative researchers tend to collect data at the site where participants experience the issue or problem under the study. Qualitative methods can provide in-depth analysis of the experience (Griffin, 2004). Qualitative methods can also allow researchers a degree of flexibility in the conduct of a particular study (Griffin, 2004). Atieno (2009) stated that qualitative methods are highly appropriate for questions where preemptive reduction of the data will prevent discovery. SmartPoint Research (2014) suggested advantages of qualitative research are that we are able to discover the “why” behind certain behaviors; this is because instead of analyzing numbers, we are able to use language and behavior. The literature might yield little information about the phenomenon of study, and you need to learn more from participants through exploration (Creswell, 2013). The researcher sought to establish the meaning of the phenomenon from the views of participant (Creswell, 2013).

Sampling

Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines sampling as “the act, process, or technique of selecting a representative part of a population for the purpose of determining parameters or characteristics of the whole population.” Sampling is a technique widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources (Patton, 2003). This involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals who are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). According to Patton (2003), sampling involves cases that offer insight into issues of

central importance to the purpose of an evaluation; therefore, the researcher selected teachers who have used LDC as an instructional tool.

Program Evaluation

According to Fitzpatrick, Sanders, and Worthen (2004), a good evaluation is an essential part of good programs. In the United States and many other countries, the public and nonprofit sectors are grappling with complex issues: educating children for the new century and reducing functional illiteracy (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004). Fitzpatrick et al. (p. 68) classified program evaluations into five categories.

1. Objectives-oriented approaches in which the focus was on specifying goals and objectives and determining the extent to which they have been attained.
2. Expertise-oriented approaches which depended primarily on the direct application of professional expertise to judge the quality of whatever endeavor is evaluated.
3. Management-oriented approaches in which the central concern is on identifying and meeting the informational needs of managerial decision makers.
4. Consumer-oriented approaches in which the central issue is developing evaluative information on products, broadly defined, and accountability, for use by consumers in choosing among competing products, services, and the like.
5. Participant-oriented approaches in which involvement of participants (stakeholders in that which is evaluated) is central in determining the values, criteria, needs, data, and conclusions for the evaluation.

The researcher determined the participant-oriented approach would be more

beneficial for this study. Focus group participants were utilizing LDC in their classrooms. Additionally, the superintendent chose to implement LDC in the county. Moreover, Fitzpatrick et al. (2004) suggested it is wise to consider all potential stakeholders in a program when planning the evaluation, mainly because each group may have a different picture and different expectation of the program.

LDC

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation funded the LDC initiative in 2009. The vision of LDC is to equip teachers with the tools and training needed to effectively implement college and career readiness standards in classrooms. LDC empowers teachers to build student literacy skills in science, history, literature, and other academic assignments. The LDC framework creates a support solution based on a set of core principles: (a) aligns with CCSS; (b) distributes responsibility for reading and writing; (c) makes tasks central; (d) connects reading and writing instruction; (e) uses back-mapping; (f) fosters a responsive system; (g) encourages local choice; and (h) strives to be teacher friendly (Crawford, Galiatsos, & Lewis, n.d.). LDC uses modules (templates) and teaching tasks to provide an instructional plan for teachers. The templates allow flexibility for teachers to incorporate reading and writing instructional strategies. An overview of a module is indicated in Figure 2.

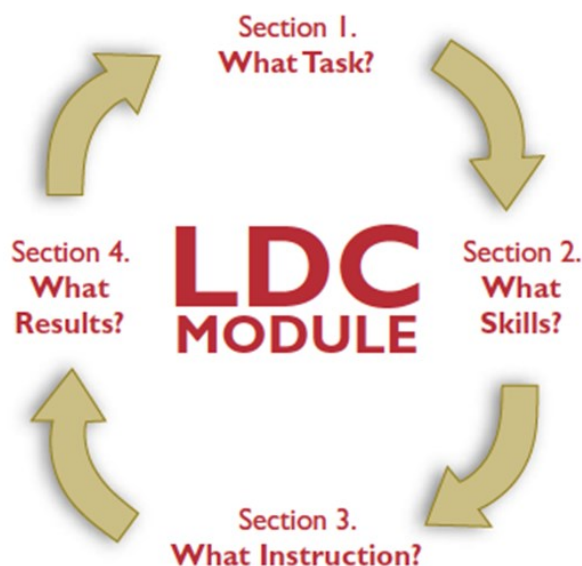


Figure 2. LDC Module.

Each LDC task is a reading and writing prompt, asking middle or high school students to take on an important issue in science, history, ELA or another subject. The LDC system starts with “template tasks” that have the CCSS literacy standard “hardwired in.” A module provides an instructional plan for the teaching task. An LDC module takes a thoughtful approach to defining the literacy skills students must develop to have success on the teaching task. Modules can stand alone, but they are even more powerful when used as part of a larger instructional design. LDC modules can be used as building blocks to create new courses and as options inserted into existing courses (Crawford et al., n.d.).

Rationale for Proposing a Program Evaluation

The researcher met with the school district superintendent to discuss the effectiveness and teacher perspectives of LDC. During this conversation, the superintendent requested the evaluation of LDC to determine teacher perspectives of the

literacy program. Additionally, this study reviewed student test scores to check for the impact LDC had, if any, on student achievement. Stufflebeam's model was used in the study *Evaluating Innovation by CIPP Model* in 2012. Moreover, Wei, Kuo, Lin, and Yang (2012) stated that formative evaluation when implementing components from the CIPP model including stages, stakeholders, administrators and teachers could provide better efforts to maintain innovation and program fidelity.

Rationale for Using the Stufflebeam Model

Any attempt to formally evaluate something involves coming to grips with a wide range of concepts such as value; merit; worth; growth; criteria; standards; objectives; needs; and, of course, the term evaluation itself (Stufflebeam, Madaus, & Kellaghan, 2002). Fitzpatrick et al. (2004) classified program evaluation into five categories: objectives-oriented approaches, consumer-oriented approaches, expertise-oriented approaches, participant-oriented approaches, and management-oriented approaches. Moreover, Stufflebeam and Zhang (2017) stated, "sound evaluation is essential to effective programming in all sectors of a society" (p. 1). The CIPP Evaluation Model is one of a number of legitimate approaches to evaluations (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). The CIPP Model is a comprehensive framework for guiding formative and summative evaluations of projects, programs, personnel, products, institutions, and systems (Stufflebeam, 2003).

CIPP

This definition summarizes the key ideas in the CIPP model.

Evaluation is the process of delineating, obtaining, providing, and applying descriptive and judgmental information about the merit of some object's goals, design, implementation, and outcomes to guide improvement decisions, provide

accountability reports, inform institutionalization/ dissemination decisions, and improve understanding of the involved phenomena. (Kellaghan & Stufflebeam, 2003, p. 34)

Yahaya, Asas, and Pendidikan (2001) asserted that poor program planning poses a problem and lowers the level of confidence in teachers. The receptiveness of the teacher toward changes must be considered because teachers are the important source in determining the success of the program.

Key Components of the CIPP Evaluation Model and Associated Relationships with Programs are located in Figure 3.

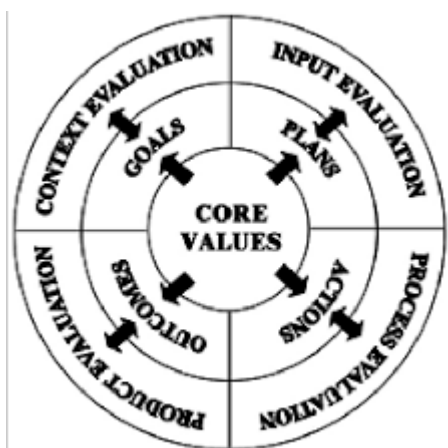


Figure 3. CIPP Model.

The model's core concepts are denoted by the acronym CIPP, which stands for evaluations of an entity's context, inputs, processes, and products (Stufflebeam, 2003). The CIPP model has been used in school districts and state and federal government agencies (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004). Stufflebeam (2003) developed an evaluation framework to serve managers and administration facing four different kinds of decisions:

(a) context evaluation, to serve planning decisions; (b) input evaluation, to serve structuring decisions; (c) process evaluation, to serve implementing decisions; and (d) product evaluation, to serve recycling decisions.

Table 4

Stufflebeam's CIPP Model

Core Concepts	(Dubrowski & Morin, 2011)	(Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017)
Context	gather empirical data to characterize the educational environment, identify the weaknesses and the shortcomings of the current program, and uncover the problems that need to be addressed	assess needs, problems, assets, and opportunities, (relevant) contextual conditions, and dynamics
Input	involves the assessment of various approaches to meeting these needs and objectives	assess strategy, action plan, staffing arrangements, and budget for feasibility and potential cost-effectiveness to meet targeted needs and achieve goals
Process	evaluate to what extent the program has been implemented according to the original plan, and try to identify the problems encountered	monitor, document, assess, and report on the implementation of plans
Product	measure to what extent the program has met the needs of the targeted beneficiaries.	identify and assess costs and outcome—intended and unintended, short term and long term

Research Questions

The purpose of this program evaluation was to examine the effectiveness of the LDC implementation in a middle school, and the following research questions guided this investigation. Good qualitative studies answer clearly stated, important research

questions (Frankel & Devers, 2000). Stufflebeam (2002) stated,

Corresponding to the letters in the acronym CIPP, this model's core parts are context, input, process, and product evaluation. In general, these four parts of an evaluation respectively ask, what needs to be done? How should it be done? Is it being done? Did it succeed? (p. 1)

The questions that guided input from the teachers on the questionnaire are located in Appendix E.

Using the CIPP model, four focus research questions were created implementing the criteria.

1. To what extent does the LDC model influence middle school teacher decisions in the type of the instructional strategies they choose to use in their classrooms?
2. What specific types of instructional strategies do middle school teachers report to use when implementing the LDC model?
3. To what extent do teachers feel adequately prepared to make decisions regarding the types of instructional strategies they choose to implement in the LDC classrooms?
4. What instructional challenges or successes do teachers experience when they implement the LDC model?

Analysis

Views of participants are explored through narrative analysis without preconceived notions (Booker, 2009). According to Rabiee (2004), a 1-hour interview could easily take 5-6 hours to transcribe in full, leading to 30-40 pages of transcript. An important factor in a qualitative study is a researcher able to provide human perspective

allowing adaptability to adjust to circumstances as they happen (Booker, 2009). Qualitative data is information that is represented usually as words, not numbers (Guthrie, 2010). The researcher transcribed the information that was obtained from the interview with the superintendent and responses from the questionnaires. When analyzing data collected by the researcher, Guthrie (2010) suggested the researcher narrate it as a chronological story, which is usually the most straightforward for both writer and reader. Additionally, the researcher plotted student test scores 1 year prior of the implementation of LDC until 2016-2017 test scores to determine if LDC had an impact on student achievement. The data provided evidence if LDC increased learning, learning remained stagnant, or learning decreased.

Summary

This qualitative case study focused on the experiences, attitudes, and opinions of 16 teachers who were assigned to a rural district in southeast North Carolina where the educational LDC initiative was being implemented to improve literacy rates. Using an accessible population from the school district where the phenomenon exists enabled the researcher to determine teacher perspectives on the effectiveness of instruction and its effects on literacy gaps in their respected schools. Data regarding teacher perspectives of LDC were collected using five researcher-created interview questions to investigate the teacher experience to supplement and corroborate the qualitative data. The researcher used the middle school students' test scores (Grades 6-8 only) before the implementation of LDC until the present time to determine the impact LDC had in the rural school district. The information gathered was used to acquire new knowledge that may (a) improve educational practices, (b) develop or confirm theories, (c) explain the educational phenomenon that exists at the school site (Trochim, 2006), and (d) promote

improvement of literacy rates at the study district.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

Literacy is a set of ordered skills that can be used to accomplish diverse tasks (Hock & Deshler, 2003); to be literate today means being able to use reading and writing to acquire knowledge, solve problems, and make decisions (Goldman, 2012). Literacy is the cornerstone to our freedom (Ippolito et al., 2008). At no other time in our history has the ability to read been so important to all members of society (Coyne, Kame'enui, & Carnine, 2011). Learning to read is the most important skill our students can learn in school, serving as the very foundation of all other academic subjects (Marchand-Martella, Martella, Modderman, Petersen, & Pan, 2013). Older youth have not received instruction to help them read increasingly complex texts as they have progressed through the grades (Greenleaf & Hinchman, 2009). For some students, content area literacy instruction is necessary but not sufficient, and additional intervention is needed (Greenleaf & Hinchman, 2009). Most content teachers do not have the expertise or time to attend to youth's more significant literacy needs (Greenleaf & Hinchman, 2009). Ensuring adolescents become literate, productive members of society is an undertaking that may increase the number of students who not only graduate from high school but also succeed in college (Marchand-Martella et al., 2013).

The purpose of this qualitative study was to gain middle school teacher perspectives of LDC in a rural southeastern North Carolina school district. Additionally, this study solicited feedback from the superintendent about the implementation of LDC. Guided by Stufflebeam's CIPP model, four research questions were created. These four questions addressed the criteria of an evaluation: What needs to be done? How should it be done? Is it being done? Did it succeed? Using the CIPP model, four focus research

questions were created implementing the criteria.

1. To what extent does the LDC model influence middle school teacher decisions in the type of the instructional strategies they choose to use in their classrooms?
2. What specific types of instructional strategies do middle school teachers report to use when implementing the LDC model?
3. To what extent do teachers feel adequately prepared to make decisions regarding the types of instructional strategies they choose to implement in the LDC classrooms?
4. What instructional challenges or successes do teachers experience when they implement the LDC model?

Participants

The target population was 16 middle school teachers in science, ELA, and social studies from a rural southeastern North Carolina district. Due to the confidentiality of such a small group of participants, limited demographics can be provided about the participants. The grade levels for the participants are sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. The years of experience varies and ranges from teachers who have 0 years of experience to teachers who have been teaching for over 20 years. Most of the teachers are responsible for teaching one grade level of a single subject, but there are a few teachers who have to teach multiple grade levels. The superintendent of the school district was also a participant. The superintendent has been in this rural southeastern North Carolina school district for 6 years. The superintendent is responsible for 13 schools in the district.

Research Design

During a grade level content collaboration day in August 2017, the researcher distributed 20 questionnaires to middle school content area teachers in following areas: ELA, science, and social studies. Sixteen questionnaires were returned. Each participant was instructed to read the consent form and ask any questions prior to signing. All participants were made aware that their names would not be used and all efforts would be made to secure and maintain confidentiality. Additionally, the participants were informed that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time. The researcher gave each participant background information of the study and the desired outcome of the study's purpose. The participants had the option to consent to a face-to-face interview if they preferred. One respondent indicated that they wanted to participate in a face-to-face interview to answer the questions on the questionnaire; however, the participant did not follow the proper protocol for the interview. So that each participant's identity would remain anonymous to the researcher, the researcher instructed the participants to leave their questionnaires on the table. The researcher collected the questionnaires and stored them in a secured location. The researcher analyzed responses from the 16 questionnaires in order to triangulate the data. Table 5 displays the frequency of answered questions by participant. The researcher examined all responses from the questionnaires. The researcher looked for similarities in responses in order to determine a common theme. This included revisiting the data several times to code responses as positive or negative and identify synonymous terms. Upon completion, four themes were derived: inconsistent staff development on LDC, teachers were unaware of expectations, implementation of the LDC program lacked fidelity, and poor planning at the district level.

Table 5

Frequency of Teacher Responses

	Teachers															
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Question 1																
A	*		*			*	*				*				*	*
B	*	*	*		*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
C	*	*	*		*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Question 2																
A	*	*	*		*	*	*			*	*	*				
B								*			*		*	*	*	*
C	*		*		*	*	*				*	*		*		*
D	*	*	*		*	*	*				*	*				*
Question 3																
A	*		*		*	*	*	*			*	*		*	*	*
B			*		*		*				*	*				
C											*	*		*	*	
D			*									*				
Question 4																
A	*	*	*		*						*	*		*	*	
B	*	*	*		*						*	*		*	*	
Question 5																
A		*	*		*		*				*	*		*	*	
B	*	*	*		*		*	*			*	*		*	*	

Note: *indicates teacher responded to the question.

Discussions of Findings

Data analysis was conducted based on the research questions in determining the relationship of the following independent variables: (a) LDC instructional strategies, (b) LDC influence of instructional strategies, (c) teacher preparedness, and (d) LDC challenges and successes. Themes present in this study include

1. Implementation of the LDC program lacked fidelity.
2. Teachers were unaware of expectations.

3. Inconsistent staff development on LDC.
4. Poor planning at the district level.

Theme 1: Inconsistent staff development on LDC. Biancarosa and Snow (2006) asserted that professional development does not refer to the typical one-time workshop. Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy (2010) averred effective professional development programs provide frequent and ongoing opportunities for teachers to write and to examine theory, research, and practice together systematically. Professional development works, if it works at all, by influencing what teachers do (Elmore, 2008). According to the Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy, teachers who are well informed and effective in their practice can be successful teachers as well as partners in educational research, development, and implementation. Elmore (2008) stated that the quality and impact of professional development depends on whether teachers can make the practices they are being asked to try work in their classrooms.

Theme 2: Teachers were unaware of expectations. Teachers are the most important element of the education system (Kunter, 2013). Districts and schools should consider collecting systematic data on teachers; additionally, systematic collection and use of such data could help districts avoid costly mistakes (Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy, 2010). Biancarosa and Snow (2006) suggested using data from research studies of adult learning and the conditions needed to effect sustained change. It is important that all subject matter teachers use teaching aids and devices that will help at-risk students better understand and remember the content they are teaching (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006). Unsuccessful outcomes may be attributed to poorly designed intervention, in which case intervention redesign is warranted (Swanson,

Wanzek, Haring, Ciullo, & McCulley, 2011).

Theme 3: Implementation of LDC lacked fidelity. McKenna, Flower, and Ciullo (2014) stated that teachers have access to a variety of resources on evidence-based practices; poor implementation can adversely affect their effectiveness. Fidelity of implementation refers to the extent to which an intervention is implemented as intended (Gresham, MacMillan, Beebe-Frankenberger, & Bocian, 2000). According to Biancarosa and Snow (2006), stakeholders should select programs and interventions creating a planned variation and evaluate implementation using a common process. O'Donnell (2008) made several recommendations of fidelity reporting: (a) establish a theory that drives the intervention and determine what it means to implement with fidelity, (b) scores, (b) conducting regular observations of the intervention, (c) using a checklist of treatment components to record whether the most critical aspects of the intervention occurred, (d) providing a record of the number of days or sessions the intervention was conducted, and (e) reporting interrater reliability among observers. Fidelity can be measured using direct and indirect methods (Keller-Margulis, 2012). Fidelity data are especially important when trying to account for negative or ambiguous findings and allow researchers to determine whether unsuccessful outcomes are due to ineffective interventions or due to a failure to implement the intervention as intended (Swanson et al., 2011). Measuring intervention fidelity and taking steps to improve procedures of an academic or behavior strategy can contribute to improved student outcomes (McKenna et al., 2014).

Theme 4: Poor planning at the district level. According to Schmoker (2006), if the environment in which we place our teachers does not have a fully developed plan, neither teachers nor students can articulate what they are supposed to be learning that

day. Time, energy, and materials are focused on areas deemed critical for raising student achievement (Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy, 2010). Additionally, outcomes and procedures for evaluation are detailed (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006). Focused feedback requires clear descriptions of levels of performance (Marzano, Frontier, & Livingston, 2011). Irvin et al. (2007) suggested after a plan has been developed and implemented, school leaders must then collect data to monitor its success, including the effectiveness of specific literacy intervention.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The researcher gained permission from the superintendent to request test scores from the testing coordinator. The researcher requested science and ELA test scores for all of the district's middle schools to compare test scores before and after the implementation of LDC. The researcher reviewed all test data and created tables to show how well students were able to perform on the end-of-grade (EOG) test before and after LDC implementation. Data analysis was conducted to answer research questions that investigate teacher perceptions of LDC. There were several changes that took place across the state during the course of these years. In 2011-2012 school year, North Carolina utilized the standard course of study for curriculum standards. In addition, the levels of proficiency were 3 & 4. Common Core Career and College Ready standards were adopted and implemented in 2012-2013. The proficiency levels changed to 3, 4, & 5. There were significant drops in proficiency throughout the district. Also during the 2012-2013 school year, LDC started its initial training. The expectation was for LDC implementation to take place during the following school year. LDC was implemented in the 2013-2014 school year. Overall, the district's performance across the grade levels increased in the 2013-2014 school year with the exception of School D. School D had a

2% decrease in performance.

Table 6

Percentages of Sixth Grade Reading EOG Proficiencies

Subject/ Content Area	Standard Course of Study (SCOS) 2011-12 % Proficient (Lvl 3&4)	Levels 3 and 4		Common Core Levels 3, 4, 5	
		Common Core Career and College Ready (CCR) 2012-13 % Proficient (Lvl 3&4) CCR	2013-14 % Proficient (GLP)	Grade Level Proficient (GLP) 2014-15 % Proficient (GLP)	2015-16 % Proficient (GLP)
District X READING Gr6	63.5%	34.3%	43.9%	40.9%	41.2%
School A	60.6%	26.5%	35.2%	30.7%	42.9%
School B	68.50%	56.0%	71.9%	64.0%	48.4%
School C	66.70%	26.3%	34.6%	33.3%	33.3%
School D	53.90%	16.8%	33.3%	32.1%	34.7%
School E	66.10%	38.4%	36.4%	36.4%	46.3%

Table 7

Percentages of Seventh Grade Reading EOG Proficiencies

Subject/ Content Area	Standard Course of Study (SCOS) 2011-12 % Proficient (Lvl 3&4)	Levels 3 and 4		Common Core Levels 3, 4, 5	
		Common Core Career and College Ready (CCR) 2012-13 % Proficient (Lvl 3&4) CCR	2013-14 % Proficient (GLP)	Grade Level Proficient (GLP) 2014-15 % Proficient (GLP)	2015-16 % Proficient (GLP)
District X READING Gr7	55.6%	33.3%	50.0%	43.5%	49.4%
School A	47.5%	25.0%	53.6%	37.6%	33.8%
School B	73.2%	47.7%	65.0%	64.8%	66.7%
School C	48.0%	47.1%	55.0%	45.8%	40.0%
School D	37.2%	23.9%	28.0%	28.1%	48.5%
School E	56.1%	31.8%	48.4%	43.7%	50.0%

Table 8

Percentages of Eighth Grade Reading EOG Proficiencies

Subject/ Content Area	Standard Course of Study (SCOS) 2011-12 % Proficient (Lvl 3&4)	Levels 3 and 4		Common Core Levels 3, 4, 5	
		Common Core Career and College Ready (CCR)		Grade Level Proficient (GLP)	
		2012-13 % Proficient (Lvl 3&4) CCR	2013-14 % Proficient (GLP)	2014-15 % Proficient (GLP)	2015-16 % Proficient (GLP)
District X READING Gr8	62.0%	25.2%	35.7%	37.0%	40.3%
School A	67.0%	22.1%	27.4%	35.9%	29.5%
School B	67.0%	38.9%	45.1%	48.5%	62.5%
School C	66.7%	27.3%	30.8%	46.2%	38.5%
School D	51.9%	10.7%	26.8%	22.9%	28.6%
School E	58.0%	22.2%	41.0%	37.5%	30.1%

Table 9

Percentages of Eighth Grade Science EOG Proficiencies

Subject/ Content Area	Standard Course of Study (SCOS) 2011-12 % Proficient (Lvl 3&4)	Level 3 and 4		Common Core Levels 3, 4, 5	
		Common Core Career and College Ready (CCR)		Grade Level Proficient (GLP)	
		2012-13 % Proficient (Lvl 3&4) CCR	2013-14 % Proficient (GLP)	2014-15 % Proficient (GLP)	2015-16 % Proficient (GLP)
District X SCIENCE Gr8	73.5%	50.1%	55.3%	56.6%	56.3%
School A	78.9%	46.8%	47.40%	60.2%	44.3%
School B	85.2%	64.3%	64.6%	70.7%	71.6%
School C	72.2%	42.9%	69.2%	53.8%	57.7%
School D	51.3%	31.3%	45.1%	28.9%	50.5%
School E	72.8%	52.0%	58.3%	63.6%	59.4%

The testing data show great decline from year to year with a minimum increase in some schools; but as the table shows, there were several changes that happened during each year. The old Standard Course of Study was changed to common core and grade level proficiency ratings were raised which will display inconsistency in the data. The testing data shows no pattern on the level of improvement once the LDC program was implemented, but the study is desiring to focus on teacher perceptions of LDC.

According to Zehm and Kottler, (1993), no educational reform has achieved success without teachers committing themselves to it; no school has improved without the commitment of teachers.

Research Question 1

To what extent does the LDC model influence middle school teacher decisions in the type of the instructional strategies they choose to use in their classrooms? According to the data analysis, the test data did not prove helpful in determining teacher perceptions of LDC. The researcher also conducted teacher questionnaires to help answer Research Question 1. The questionnaires were distributed at a district content area meeting.

Teacher questionnaire question 1: As a teacher at a Literacy Design

Collaborative (LDC) school, can you help me understand what Literacy Design

Collaborative (LDC) is and what it is used for? All teachers responded differently.

Teacher 1 stated, “It’s used to cover multiple standards.” Teacher 3 stated, “LDC uses data driven instruction to focus on student challenges and influence class instruction design.” Teacher 7 stated, “LDC modules contain task for units that combines cross curriculum standards.” Teacher 6 stated, “To ensure all students are prepared for college.” Teacher 12 stated, “LDC explicitly goes through a lesson with a writing focus.” Fifty-six percent of the middle school teachers did not know anything about the LDC

program. The first theme that derived from this study was implementation of the LDC program lacked fidelity. A fidelity checklist was created to assist with the implementation process. The five key elements are (a) program differentiation, (b) adherence, (c) duration, (d) quality of delivery, and (e) participant responsiveness. According to Fisher, Smith, Finney, and Pinder (2014), program differentiation answers the question, “What are the program components and specific features?” Moreover, adherence addresses the question, “Are these program features being implemented” (Fisher et al., 2014)? The participants could not answer either question from the fidelity checklist. The participants did not know the purpose of the program or their role as the facilitator. Therefore, the researcher concluded there has to be an issue with fidelity based upon the responses.

Research Question 2

What specific types of instructional strategies do middle school teachers report to use when implementing the LDC model?

Teacher questionnaire question 2: I understand that all teachers at a Literacy Design Collaborative (LDC) school have a web-based program for instructional units which allow teachers to have instructional support. Do you use this program, and if so, how helpful has it been for you? Teacher 12 stated the instructional support saves a lot of valuable time to focus on other responsibilities. Teacher 5 stated LDC provides insight to the curriculum and alternate teaching methods. Teacher 6 stated they use it as a supplement to their instruction. The remaining teachers knew very little or found the instructional support not to be useful because they were already utilizing enough programs. The second theme that derived from this study is teachers were unaware of expectations. Detailing program features provides an

operational definition of the programming (Fisher et al., 2014). The responses from the participants indicated they did not understand the expectations of implementing LDC because the ranges of responses were inconsistent and dissimilar.

Research Question 3

To what extent do teachers feel adequately prepared to make decisions regarding the types of instructional strategies they choose to implement in the LDC classrooms?

Teacher questionnaire question 4: Have you received, or participated in, any training in the use of Literacy Design Collaborative (LDC); either one-on-one or through formal training with the school district? If so, could you briefly tell me what you learned and how helpful those trainings were? Teacher 11 stated they have been in at least three professional developments on LDC and all were well taught and work wonderfully when teaching content. Teacher 12 stated trainings were extremely helpful, and they have presented LDC at school, county, and state level. Teacher 13 stated they only used LDC when it was required; training was not necessary. Teacher 14 stated they know how to implement LDC into daily lessons. Teacher 15 stated they had not received training since 2013, and the trainings were periodic. At least five teachers stated they had not received training and did not know training was available. The third theme derived is inconsistent staff development on LDC. The researcher encountered varying imbalanced responses. Teacher 13 indicated that LDC was utilized in their classroom, but training was not necessary. Teacher 11 had only been three times for professional development, and Teacher 15 had not been trained since 2013.

Research Question 4

What instructional challenges or successes do teachers experience when they implement the LDC model?

Teacher questionnaire question 4a: Can you help me understand what is used to determine the effectiveness of the LDC instruction? Teacher 2 stated feedback from students always helped to determine if a LDC lesson was effective and personal reflection. Teacher 3 used testing data. Teacher 5 stated student participation and formative assessments. Teacher 12 stated students produce quality writing and understand the whole process. Teacher 15 said the completion process and having the end in mind. The remaining teachers either had no response or they were unsure. The fourth theme derived from this analysis was LDC lacked a plan. Teacher responses revealed they did not understand how to measure LDC. The responses yielded confusion and various perplexities.

According to the conceptual framework, the seven principles can be applied to further respond to the themes derived from this study. Elmore (2008) posed seven principles for improvement of student learning.

Principle 1: Defining the instructional core. There are only three ways to improve student learning at scale.

1. Raise the level of content that students are taught.
2. Increase teacher skill and knowledge they bring to teaching that content.
3. Increase the level of student active learning (engagement) of the content.

The level of content, skill and knowledge of teachers, and level of student engagement define a school's instructional core. Professional development only works to increase student learning if it influences what teachers do and if its effect lies the areas of Principle 1.

Principle 2: Change one part of the core/change all three. For any positive impact on student learning to take place, changes in any single element of the

instructional core must be accompanied by corresponding changes in the other two elements. Raising the level of learning expectation and content would have to be accompanied by development of teacher skill levels in teaching the new content. Elmore (2008) found that we often spend too much time worrying about what we are teaching and how it is being taught and not enough focus on whether students are interested in, engaged in, and able to explain their thinking about what adults are trying to teach.

Principle 3: Can't see it in the core, it isn't there. Here the central idea is the academic task. Often through curriculum mapping and common assessment schedules we think all students are getting the same instruction; but Elmore (2009) found that while curriculum and assessment may be common, what different teachers expect of their students, variance in the skill with which the teachers deliver the curriculum, and the varying levels in which students were actively involved (not just “doing” what they are given but digesting it and making connections and new applications to deepen and extend knowledge) produce significant differences in student learning.

Principle 4: Task predicts performance. What predicts performance is not what teachers do but what the students are actually doing. Students must know what they are expected to do and also how they are expected to do it and what knowledge and skills they need to learn in order to do it well. It is also vital to have students know why they should want to do the work. It should have value and meaning to the student.

Principle 5: Real accountability is in the tasks. Better assessments will not necessarily translate into better teaching and learning. Educators need to attend to ensuring that students are indeed doing what they need to do to get the desired learning results at the classroom and school level. It is essential that educators work on the observation and analysis of teaching practice and watch students (not just see what they

are assigned to do but what they are actually doing).

Principle 6: Learn by doing the work. Elmore (2009) warned that we learn by doing the work, not by telling other people to do the work, not by having done the work at some time in the past, and not by hiring experts who can act as proxies for our knowledge about how to do the work. Elmore (2009) advocated “instructional rounds” (groups observing one another, processing together, and sharing and learning from one another’s experience and practice) should be implemented in order to have a productive school climate.

Principle 7: Description before analysis/analysis before.

Elmore (2009) urged us to develop a “common culture of instruction” expressed through a common set of understandings about practice and a common language to use in describing what is going on in classrooms. He defined analysis as the ability to identify and group observations in agreed upon categories of practice (CSTPs, Bloom’s, etc.).

Data Analysis for Superintendent Interview

Superintendent Interview Question 1: As the superintendent of a county that has implemented LDC, do you feel that your five middle schools had adequate staffing to implement LDC?

When you say adequate staffing, do you mean support or the number of teachers? (The number of teachers.) I would say the answer to that is yes. Really when it comes down to it is that you have teaching staff and make a decision to implement a curriculum program the idea that those teachers would engage in it and do it with fidelity. So I know that we had adequate staff that obviously required some training for the teachers. So, yes, I would say that we had adequate staffing.

As the researcher triangulated the data from the teacher questionnaires and the superintendent's interview there was no consistency throughout all the middle schools. Some teachers did not feel adequately prepared to implement the LDC program and some teachers did not know or understand what was expected of them.

Superintendent Interview Question 2: How much did LDC cost to implement in the county?

Essentially, the biggest portion would be for the professional development for the trainers to come in and train. That could run \$18,000 to \$20,000 per year.

Really, that number will grow depending upon how long you have the trainers to come in and continue the training. We probably spent around \$40,000 to \$50,000 in professional development. The great thing for the county is that the particular company that we had working with us to doing the training did as much work "in kind" as well. But you could look at roughly \$18,000 per year in professional development cost.

Do you feel that LDC was cost effective?

I think it was cost effective. When you think about the quality of the work that the individuals provided. The quality that LDC provides in terms of changing how teachers teach their content area and curriculum. I think it was well worth it. Our professional development is not cheap. But it's great when you get good professional development and you pay a fair price for it.

Superintendent Interview Question 3: Have teachers been evaluated using LDC?

I would say in terms of a formal evaluation, there was not one that was conducted at the district level. But we do expect principals to have those types of

conversation and get feedback from the teaching staff so we can make changes and what we do with the implementation. Most of what we gotten has been informal feedback and those teachers that have engaged in LDC did it with fidelity and thought it was great. Part of the informal feedback that we did receive that there were some teachers that were resistant of LDC. Like most things, people have a tendency to reject anything that requires them to do something new or different. That is feedback that we did get. Like I said, informal feedback but principals are involved with the more informal feedback when the professional development was done at the school level when the trainer came in.

Superintendent Interview Question 4: What conceptual or theoretical framework did the district use to determine the implementation of LDC?

Well the part of the decision to implement LDC was made before I came to the district, so that work was being done the year before I came. So what we know about LDC we supported whatever decision that was made to implement LDC in the county. We recognize that if you're talking about hypothetically a language arts, science, or social studies teacher by engaging in the Literacy Design Collaborative it helps them to better implement their curriculum in their content area. But the same time it enhances the language arts skills that any student has. So to me, you're getting to sets of work out of an instructor. Killing two birds with one stone is the best way to say it. So the concept of doing something like that, I think was great. It really forces a teacher to look at their pedagogy and look at doing it a different way is more effective. To me, that makes sense.

Superintendent Interview Question 5: Is the progress of LDC monitored at

the district level?

(The interviewer stated: You kind of alluded to that already.) I would say yes we do monitor the progress at the district level. The most difficult thing with the LDC implementation is staff turnover. You can spend a tremendous amount of time, money, and energy training staff, but when that staff leaves, it leaves a big hole. That has probably been the most difficult thing implementing any program including LDC. There is one middle school in particular where we had a lot of involvement. It was perhaps the best implementation of LDC in the county. But we had many of those teachers to leave, take positions as administrators, or go to other districts and it left those huge gaps. By the time you go back through trying to train the new personnel and they leave, that's what makes it difficult. It's the turnover that's the problem.

Superintendent Interview Question 6: What outcome did you expect for your students from implementing LDC?

The outcome I really expected was a greater involvement in the understanding and engagement of in the lesson by the student. All though it involves a lot of reading and writing that's what we want students to do. Once they begin to understand that they can access content and knowledge through reading and writing process. Then that engages them more heavily in the work that they do. That was really the outcome we were looking for increase student knowledge and understanding and increase teacher pedagogy skills. Meaning that we want to make teachers better and stronger teachers. Not just the same teacher teaching the first way they did their first year teaching and so that for thirty years. We want to make stronger teachers and that's what's going to lead to the better student

outcome.

Superintendent Interview Question 7: Overall, are you satisfied with LDC?

We're very satisfied with LDC. It is something we will have to continue in the district. The main thing that we have to overcome is staff turnover and the training that's necessary to prepare the new staff. But I'm definitely satisfied with the results. I definitely want to see the research when it's done because hopefully we can use that to better guide what we do in the district.

The superintendent response to interview question 7 correlated with theme 4, inconsistent staff development on LDC from the teacher questionnaire results. The superintendent recognized because of staff turnover, some staff members are ill-trained to implement LDC. Teacher perceptions of the implementation of LDC has shown no patterns conclusive enough to determine whether teachers are adequately prepared and feel confident using the program in their day-to-day instruction or as an instructional support tool. The responses from the superintendent did not coincide with the responses from the teachers. For instance, the superintendent felt that teachers received adequate training and professional development. Contrarily, Teacher 15 stated they had not received training since 2013, and the trainings were periodic.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to gain teacher perspectives of LDC in a rural southeastern North Carolina school district. DeFord (1985) indicated that a teacher's orientation influences certain classroom practices such as

- goals teachers set for the classroom;
- behaviors teachers perceive as reflecting appropriate reading behaviors of students;

- the procedures teachers put into place and the materials used to teach students;
- the weight teachers give to various pieces of diagnostic information;
- the environment teachers believe to be best for student growth in reading; and
- criteria that is utilized to assess student growth in reading.

A skills-range orientation is characterized by the belief that reading should be taught by isolating skills with an emphasis on word recognition. A phonics-based orientation is characterized by isolation of phonemes with an emphasis on decoding. Whole language orientation emphasizes the isolation of skills for practice with developing a sense of the story and text (DeFord, 1985). While the goal of each orientation is to teach students the skills and processes necessary to read, the approach of each orientation is different. As stated in Chapter 2, literacy has a direct effect on health, financial awareness, and social skills. This approach supports the use of guided reading, strategy grouping, and other forms of direct instruction found within the balanced literacy framework. Qualitative data from questionnaires and an interview with the superintendent were analyzed. Overall, results showed inconsistencies and contradictories with teacher responses and the superintendent; however, test scores across the district increased after the implementation of LDC.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of data disseminated from the questionnaires distributed to middle school teachers, Grades 6-8, and the interview with the superintendent of a southeastern North Carolina school district. The purpose of the mixed-method study was to determine teacher perceptions of LDC. A qualitative research approach was used to collect data regarding teacher perspectives of the implementation of LDC.

Summary of the Study

Initial data for the study was in the form of an interview with the superintendent of a rural southeastern North Carolina school district. Additional data for the study were collected in the form of questionnaires. The researcher distributed questionnaires to middle school classroom teachers who taught science, social studies, and ELA in Grades 6-8. The superintendent interview responses were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. The researcher triangulated the data from the questionnaire as outlined in Chapter 4 utilizing the methodology in Chapter 3. The lack of significant relationship between the duration of implementation and the amount of training was surprising. Research by Fullan (2001) indicated that these two concepts have a great impact on the implementation of programs. The initial step in the process of change and effective implementation is the process of developing buy-in and support for the program. Implementers need to take the time and make sure that each participant understands and agrees with the concepts and principles held within the core of the program. This can be done with a variety of processes including the use of steering committees or, in these cases, school climate committees that have the central task of leading the change. The

committees must include all stakeholders in the program including parents, community members, teachers, school administrators, and the middle school level students. The initial task of this group is to develop and come to consensus on the core values and recommendations for the program's process of implementation.

Discussion of Findings

The researcher analyzed middle school teacher perceptions of LDC. The researcher focused on four research questions in this study: (a) To what extent does the LDC model influence middle school teacher decisions in the type of the instructional strategies they choose to use in their classrooms; (b) What specific types of instructional strategies do middle school teachers report to use when implementing the LDC model; (c) To what extent do teachers feel adequately prepared to make decisions regarding the types of instructional strategies they choose to implement in the LDC classrooms; and (d) What instructional challenges or successes do teachers experience when they implement the LDC model?

Research Question 1

To what extent does the LDC model influence middle school teacher decisions in the type of the instructional strategies they choose to use in their classrooms?

The teachers in this study had varying opinions. Some teachers fully implement the LDC strategies, and some teachers were not unaware the LDC program possessed content specific instructional strategies. The teachers did not understand how to use LDC as a resource. Contrarily, the superintendent indicated during the interview that teachers were to utilize LDC and supplement LDC with additional strategies. The superintendent stated, "LDC forces teachers to look at their pedagogy and look at doing it a different way that is more effective."

Research Question 2

What specific types of instructional strategies do middle school teachers report to use when implementing the LDC model?

Some teachers did not use any of the instructional strategies available which is consistent with the superintendent's interview results, because he stated most of the teachers who were trained in LDC are no longer with the district.

Research Question 3

To what extent do teachers feel adequately prepared to make decisions regarding the types of instructional strategies they choose to implement in the LDC classrooms?

Questionnaire findings on classroom implementation of the LDC were inconsistent. Some teachers reported that spending classroom time on the modules and using a variety of formative assessment and feedback strategies was useful. Some teachers did not utilize LDC at all in their classroom because they felt like they already had enough to they did not know how to effectively implement LDC in their instruction. Some teachers felt that administrators did not have a firm understanding of the LDC program. Some teachers were never trained on LDC.

Research Question 4

What instructional challenges or successes do teachers experience when they implement the LDC model?

From the data analysis, there were inconsistent challenges and successes because some teachers were not using the instructional strategies provided by the LDC program. On a positive, one teacher was trained and served as a local and state trainer on LDC. This teacher responded that LDC helped the teacher and students think about the assignments with the end in mind. The researcher has no way to know which schools the

participants were representing because the questionnaires did not require them to disclose that information; however, the data displayed four of the five schools had an increase in test scores after the implementation of LDC. One school declined 2% from the previous year. There was not enough data for the researcher to substantiate accreditation to LDC for the increase, but it was enough data to validate there was an increase.

Summary of Findings

Participation within the study encouraged sixth- through eighth-grade teachers to voice their opinions in relation to the implementation of the LDC program. The comments from the questionnaires indicated that some teachers perceive LDC to be a useful tool to increase student literacy achievement. Overall, qualitative analysis revealed skewed perceptions. More than five negative statements were shared through the open-ended responses, representing 31.25% of responses from questionnaires. The teacher questionnaires were at most times inconsistent with the statements from the superintendent's interview sessions.

This dissertation provides deeper insight into what teachers have to say about the LDC program as well as the achievements of their students and themselves as teachers. This study discovered several important findings about teacher perceptions of LDC. One was related to the training the teachers received to use the program. It is important to note that the teachers needed to be well trained in order to implement the program. Their comments on their training covered a wide range of perspectives. Some teachers who had previous knowledge about LDC considered the training they received to be adequate. Other teachers reported that although they had received some type of training with an in-service teacher, they were responsible for effectively implementing the program and learning how to navigate the available resources. These teachers felt they needed more

formal training. Consequently, some of the teachers stated that they had never heard of LDC. According to the teachers, it made a difference in the training if you were already familiar with the program. Consequently, those who were not knowledgeable about LDC were concerned not receiving adequate training. Several new teachers said they received no training at all and were just told, “This is program mandated to use to improve literacy, and that’s it!”

One tenured teacher said that they did not care for the program in the beginning and felt that the training was insufficient. They recalled feeling pessimistic about the program. They confirmed that they were not going to deal with the implementation of another program and did not think the program would coincide with the district’s curriculum. Another teacher who lacked enthusiasm for using the program stated that they did not see a correlation between the LDC and the district’s curriculum. They also believed that the students saw themselves as having fun while they were accelerating in literacy skills.

This study found that the participants viewed the LDC program as an instructional resource that showed significant differences in the classroom compared to when the program was not there. One of the participants recommended it as a supplemental tool, because it gives the students time to review as well as a little preview of concepts not taught yet. Another participant spoke about the importance of having this LDC program to reinforce what had been taught previously.

After conducting the data analysis based on the research questions, four emergent themes were discovered.

Emergent theme 1: Inconsistent staff development on LDC. A common finding among participants was an inconsistent amount of training for current and new

teachers. Provisions for professional development should be included in the theory of action to provide stakeholders the understanding and skills to use programs to reflect on improving instructional practices and how to align best practices of instruction with the district, school, and grade-level goals.

Recommendations. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2006),

The term “high-quality professional development” means professional development that meets the criteria contained in the definition of professional development in *Title IX*, Section 9101(34) of ESEA. Professional development includes, but is not limited to, activities that: (a) improve and increase teachers’ knowledge of academic subjects and enable teachers to become highly qualified; (b) are an integral part of broad schoolwide and districtwide educational improvement plans; (c) give teachers and principals the knowledge and skills to help students meet challenging State academic standards. (p. 1)

Part of a collaborative documented planning process consists of (a) clarifying the focus or content of a plan for teacher/s or other staff; (b) supporting subsequent implementation of a plan; (c) determining the effectiveness of teaching and learning adjustments; and/or (d) making valid judgements about student progress or achievement (Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education, 2013). A professional development plan should include the following criteria while in the brainstorming process: (a) be created with teacher needs in mind; (b) be based on instruction you have observed; and (c) be anchored to the needs of your students (Ocasio, 2014). Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson, and Orphanos (2009) suggested that professional development should be intensive, ongoing, and connected to practice; professional development should focus on student learning and address the teaching of specific curriculum content; and professional

development should align with school improvement priorities and goals.

Emergent theme 2: Participants were unaware of expectations. Schools that are especially effective in teaching students to read are characterized by vigorous instructional leadership. The leader is usually the principal (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985). The school principal has developed from that manager or supervisor to instructional leader (Tanner & Tanner, 1995). Today, the principal is valued for leading professional development activities, helping school councils make decisions by consensus, preparing and facilitating analysis of standardized testing results, and leading their schools in ways that demand a complete understanding of effective instructional practices. The top-down decision-making model is being replaced (Barnet, 2004). This requires principals to rethink leadership strategies and policies (Lashway, 1998). The superintendent's interview data results showed that the implementation of LDC was supposed to be monitored by the principals.

Recommendation. Getting a new idea adopted, even when it has obvious advantages, is difficult (Rogers, 1995). Rogers (1995) acknowledged diffusion as being the process by which innovations are communicated through certain channels over time among the members. If a school or district has clearly defined what should be taught and when, it could have a significant impact on whether or not your students meet standards (Protheroe, 2008). Moreover, Rogers (1995) stated communication is a process in which participants create and share information with one another in order to reach a mutual understanding. When implementing a program, operations require consistency and efficiency (Kahan, 2013). Shermis and DiVesta (2011) discovered feedback from assessment helps in making decisions regarding (a) effectiveness of instruction, (b) identification of the need for changes in instructional methods, (c) adaptation to or

accommodation of individual differences, (d) monitoring teaching in terms of student progress, (e) setting of appropriate curricular goals in terms of content standards, and (f) remedial strategies needed to fix ineffective instructional methods. According to Rogers (1995), there are five common characteristics that people use to evaluate the attributes of innovations: (a) relative advantage, (b) compatibility, (c) complexity, (d) trial ability, and (e) observability.

Emergent theme 3: Implementation of LDC lacked fidelity. LDC is an instructional design system that encourages collaboration among educators to lead to the best possible instruction to ensure student success. The quality of modules and mini-tasks is typically highest when colleagues work together throughout the process by using protocols for “looking at student work,” formative assessment, lesson study, and/or instructional reflection and revision.

Recommendation. Despite growing interest in developing measures to examine the fidelity of implementation between the 1960s and 1980s, research suggests that the study of implementation had not yet been fully adopted and perhaps valued (Meyers & Brandt, 2015).

Fidelity indicates an alignment between the written and enacted lesson (Remillard, 2005). Last, judgment rests on participants and the level of fidelity which a program is implemented is crucial to understanding whether or not the program works as intended (Meyers & Brandt, 2015). A program or approach that is effective in other settings can be ineffective in yours if the way it is being implemented takes it far away from its original design (Protheroe, 2008). Measuring implementation fidelity is an important component of any program evaluation (Meyers & Brandt, 2015).

Emergent theme 4: Poor planning at the district level. The researcher believes

the district needs to create a detailed project plan specifying exact timelines, milestones, and steps to take to meet that expected outcome; action for each step; and deadlines for each one. An action plan should have been in place prior to implementing LDC.

Timelines should be established for the various phases of implementation of LDC.

Proper arrangements for monitoring teachers should be in place. Additional in-classroom and in-service training should be provided.

Recommendation. Implementation fidelity acts as a potential moderator of the relationship between interventions and their intended outcomes (Carroll et al., 2007). Educational Development Center (2013) stated proper preparation is key to successful implementation of programs and practices. It is critical to (a) learn as much as you can about how the program is working; (b) engage key stakeholders to ensure a receptive environment; and (c) provide implementers with adequate training and support to ensure effective implementation. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (2009) found that project development requires a commitment to a systematic, iterative process of assessment, design, implementation, and evaluation. By describing, monitoring, and systematically measuring fidelity, the program developer learns how to improve applications (Meyers & Brandt, 2015).

Limitations

The findings from this research study are only applicable to a particular rural southeastern North Carolina school district. Additionally, the sample consisted of 16 participants and the superintendent. According to Price and Murnan (2004), limitations of the study are those characteristics of design or methodology that impacted or influenced the interpretation of the findings from your research. Limitations are potential weaknesses in your study and are out of your control (Simon, 2011).

Recommendations

First, the district leadership should conduct a thorough needs assessment throughout the entire district. District and school leadership need to help teachers address the time challenges that can undermine teacher participation in LDC. The district needs to be prepared to assist new teachers and have formal training prepared for the new teachers. Leaders can communicate that LDC implementation is a priority and can also assist with scheduling and strategic support for resolving the time challenges. District and school leaders can help teachers align LDC tool use with their pacing guides. Teachers continued to express concern about the time it takes to teach modules. District and school leadership should work with teachers to revise pacing guides so the use of LDC modules is no longer compromising curriculum coverage but an important part of that particular curriculum. District and school leaders should communicate the degree to which LDC will prepare students for current assessments. Some teachers continue to express concerns about whether LDC is aligned to current state assessments. When teachers perceive that the LDC tools are misaligned with assessments, they may be more reluctant to use them with fidelity. District and school leaders can help ease this tension by showing how these tools are aligned with state assessments. Data presented an increase in the North Carolina State Assessment (EOG test) of as much as 16.7% across the district in Grade 7 ELA. Additionally, School A had 25% proficiency in ELA prior to the implementation of LDC and 53.6% proficiency in ELA after the implementation of LDC. The superintendent stated, “The outcome we were looking for was to increase student knowledge.”

Conclusion

Findings from this study indicated that teachers in a rural southeastern North

Carolina school district perceived the implementation of LDC negatively. These negative feelings may have originated from not having effective training prior to implementation of LDC, the program was not implemented with fidelity, and the lack of follow-up training. Additionally, teachers in this school district could not thoroughly give the researcher a clear depiction of LDC or the primary purpose of the implementation of LDC. The superintendent of the rural school district contrarily felt that the implementation and training were sufficient for teachers. The superintendent informed the researcher that teachers who had participated in the training sessions left the classrooms. New staff members have not been trained on LDC, but there is an expectation for them to implement literacy and strategies in their classrooms. Additionally, there was not a clear precise method to monitor LDC. Each teacher had to develop their own way to collect data, but there was not a plan to analyze and disseminate data after collection. Overall, the student performance increased after the implementation of LDC with the exception of one grade level at a particular school. The qualitative data revealed a county-wide increase in student proficiency. The researcher had inclusive data to validate the effectiveness of LDC based upon the qualitative data; however, the overall teacher perspective was negative.

References

- Alber, R. (2010, August 4). How important is teaching literacy in all content areas? Retrieved from <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/literacy-instruction-across-curriculum-importance>
- Alliance for Excellent Education. (2015, August 13). *Report: With more than half of the nation's students struggling with reading, NCLB rewrite must address students' literacy needs* [Press release]. Retrieved from <https://all4ed.org/press/report-with-more-than-half-of-the-nations-students-struggling-with-reading-nclb-rewrite-must-address-students-literacy-needs/>
- Alliance for Excellent Education. (2017). *Every student succeeds act primer: Literacy* [Brochure]. Retrieved from https://all4ed.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/FINAL_ESSA-Primer-Literacy.pdf
- Alvermann, D. E. (2002) Effective literacy instruction for adolescents. *Journal of Literacy Research*, 34(2), 189-208.
- Alvermann, D. E. (2009). Sociocultural constructions of adolescence and young people's literacies. In L. Christenbury, R. Bomer, & P. Smagorinsky (Eds.), *Handbook of adolescent literacy research* (pp. 14-28). New York: Guilford.
- Alvermann, D. E., & Hinchman, K. A. (2012). *Reconceptualizing the literacies in adolescents' lives: Bridging the everyday/academic divide*. New York: Routledge.
- Anderson, R. C., Hiebert, E. H., Scott, J. A., & Wilkinson, I. A. G. (1985). *Becoming a nation of readers: The report of the Commission on Reading*. Champaign, IL: Center for the Study of Reading.
- Anjomshoa, L., & Zamanian, M. (2014). The effect of vocabulary knowledge on reading comprehension of Iranian EFL learners in Kerman Azad University. *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature*, 2(5), 90-95. Retrieved from <https://www.arcjournals.org/pdfs/ijSELL/v2-i5/13.pdf>
- Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2010). *Early warning! Why reading by the end of third grade matters*. Baltimore, MD. Retrieved from <http://www.aecf.org/resources/early-warning-why-reading-by-the-end-of-third-grade-matters/>
- Applebee, A. N. (2013). The promise and the peril of the common core state standards. *English Journal*, 103(1), 25-33. doi:10.4135/9781483333489.n1
- Armbruster, B. B., & Osborn, J. (2001). Put reading first. Retrieved from https://lincs.ed.gov/publications/html/prfteachers/reading_first_print.html

- Armstrong, S. W. (1983). The effects of material difficulty upon learning disabled children's oral reading and reading comprehension. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 6, pp. 339–348.
- Atieno, O. P. (2009). An analysis of the strengths and limitation of qualitative and quantitative research paradigms. *Problems of Education in the 21st Century*, 13, 13-18. Retrieved from http://www.scientiasocialis.lt/pec/files/pdf/Atieno_Vol.13.pdf
- Au, K. H. (2000). A multicultural perspective on policies for improving literacy achievement: Equity and excellence. *Handbook of Reading Research* (Vol. III, ch. 43).
- Bainbridge, C. (2017). How children learn to read by decoding. Retrieved from <https://www.verywell.com/reading-fluency-1449169>
- Balcazar, S. (2014, January 14). Early literacy intervention strategies help prevent high school dropout. Retrieved from <https://readingpartners.org/blog/early-literacy-intervention-strategies-help-prevent-high-school-dropout/>
- Balls, J. D., Eury, A. D., & King, J. C. (2011). *Rethink, rebuild, rebound: A framework for shared responsibility and accountability in education*. Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Barnet, D. (2004, September 22). School leadership preparation programs: Are they preparing tomorrow's leaders? Retrieved from <https://www.questia.com/library/journal/1G1-124940270/school-leadership-preparation-programs-are-they-preparing>
- Barnett, B. (1989). Poverty and education: A costly problem for North Carolina. *North Carolina Insight*, 106-121. Retrieved from https://nccppr.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Poverty_and_Education_-_A_Costly_Problem_for_NC.pdf
- Bates, L., Breslow, N., & Hupert, N. (2009). Five states' efforts to improve adolescent literacy (Issues & Answers Report, REL 2009–No. 067). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northeast and Islands. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>
- Benner, G. J. (2005, May 15). When nothing seems to work: Best practices for improving the responsiveness of students with chronic behavioral challenges to reading instruction. Retrieved from <http://archive.education.jhu.edu/PD/newhorizons/strategies/topics/literacy/articles/when-nothing-seems-to-work/index.html>

- Biancarosa, C., & Snow, C. E. (2006). *Reading next—A vision for action and research in middle and high school literacy: A report to Carnegie Corporation of New York* (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.
- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. (2010). Fewer, clearer, higher: Moving forward with consistent rigorous standards for all students. Retrieved from <https://docs.gatesfoundation.org/documents/fewer-clearer-higher-standards.pdf>
- Billmeyer, R., & Barton, M. L. (2002). *Teaching reading in the content areas. If not me, then who?* Aurora, CO: McREL.
- Blevins, W. (2017). Understanding phonics. Retrieved from <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/understanding-phonics/>
- Booker, K. (2009). Shifting priorities: Reflections on teaching qualitative research methods. *The Qualitative Report*, 14(3), 389-394.
- Breznitz, Z. (1987). Increasing first graders' reading accuracy and comprehension by accelerating their reading rates. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 79(3), 236-242.
- Bridgeland, J. M., Dilulio, J. J., & Balfanz, R. (2009). On the front lines of schools: Perspectives of teachers and principals on the high school dropout problem. Retrieved from <http://www.civicenterprises.net/pdfs/frontlines.pdf>
- Buehl, D. (2013). *Classroom strategies for interactive learning*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Busch, C., De Maret, P. S., Flynn, T., Kellum, R., Le, S., Meyers, B., ... Palmquist, M. (2012). Content analysis. Writing@CSU. Colorado State University. Retrieved from <https://writing.colostate.edu/guides/guide.cfm?guideid=61>
- Carbo, M. (2010, March). What helps at-risk adolescent readers? *Educational Leadership*. Retrieved from http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational_leadership/mar10/vol67/num06/What_Helps_At-Risk_Adolescent_Readers.aspx
- Cardoza, K. (2013, November 4). Adding up the cost of low literacy among adults. Retrieved from <http://www.npr.org/2013/10/30/241910094/adding-up-the-cost-of-low-literacy-among-adults>
- Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy. (2010). *Time to act: An agenda for advancing adolescent literacy for college and career success*. New York, NY: Carnegie Corporation of New York.

- Codding, J. (2001). An up ramp for struggling readers. *Principal Leadership (High School Ed.)*, 2(2), 22-25.
- Carroll, C., Patterson, M., Wood, S., Booth, A., Rick, J., & Balain, S. (2007, November 30). A conceptual framework for implementation fidelity. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1186/1748-5908-2-40>
- Chauvin, R., & Theodore, K. (2015, Spring). Teaching content-area literacy and disciplinary literacy. *SEDL Insights*, 3(1), 1-19. Retrieved from https://www.sedl.org/insights/31/teaching_content_area_literacy_and_disciplinary_literacy.pdf
- The College Board. (2003). The neglected "R": The need for a writing revolution. Report of The National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges.
- Corrin, W., Lindsay, J. J., Somers, M., Myers, N. E., Myers, C. V., Condon, C. A., & Smith, J. K. (2012, December). Evaluation of the content literacy continuum. Retrieved from <https://www.mdrc.org/publication/evaluation-content-literacy-continuum>
- Coyne, M. D., Kame'enui, E. J., & Carnine, D. W. (2011). *Effective teaching strategies that accommodate diverse learners*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Crawford, M., Galiatsos, S., & Lewis, A. C. (n.d.). *The 1.0 guidebook to LDC*. Retrieved from https://ldc.org/sites/default/files/LDCBook_web.pdf
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed method research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2006). No child left behind and high school reform. *Harvard Educational Review*, 76(4), 642-667.
- Defazio, J., Jones, J., Tennant, F., & Hook, S. A. (2010). Academic literacy: The importance and impact of writing across the curriculum – a case study. *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 10(2), 34-47. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ890711.pdf>

- DeFord, D. E. (1985). Validating the construct of theoretical orientation in reading instruction. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 20(3), 351-367. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/748023>
- Dubrowski, A., & Morin, M. (2011). Evaluating pain education programs: An integrated approach. *Pain Research and Management*, 16(6), 407-410.
- Educational Development Center. (2013). A framework for effectively implementing evidence-based programs and practices (EBPs). *Promote Prevent*, 1-24. Retrieved from http://www.promoteprevent.org/sites/www.promoteprevent.org/files/resources/Framework%20for%20Effectively%20Implementing%20Evidence-Based%20Programs_Practices%20%282%29.pdf
- Elmore, R. (2008). *Improving the instructional core*. Harvard University School of Education. Retrieved from <https://sd48seatosky.files.wordpress.com/2014/03/changing-the-instructional-core-elmore.pdf>
- Elmore, R. (2009). *Instructional rounds in education: A network approach to improving teaching and learning*. Cambridge: Harvard Education Press.
- Elmore, R. F. (2014). The Instructional Core. In *Instructional rounds in education: A network approach to improving teaching and learning* (pp. 21-38). Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.
- Elo, S., & Kyungas, H. (2008). The qualitative content analysis process. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 62(1), 107-115.
- The English Club. (2017). What is vocabulary? Retrieved from <https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/what.htm>
- Ewing, R. (2016, November 17). Phonics: Its place in the literacy story. Retrieved from <https://readingaustralia.com.au/2016/11/phonics-its-place-in-the-literacy-story/>
- Fisher, R., Smith, K., Finney, S., & Pinder, K. (2014). The Importance of Implementation Fidelity Data for Evaluating Program Effectiveness. *About Campus*, 19(5), 28-32. doi:10.1002/abc.21171
- Fitzpatrick, J. L., Sanders, J. R., & Worthen, B. R. (2004). *Program evaluation: Alternative approaches and practical guidelines*. Saddle River, NH: Pearson.
- Florida Department of Education Division of Public Schools. (2005). *Proven instructional practices for high-quality writing* [Brochure]. Author. Retrieved from <https://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/GetRendition/Document-2924/html>

- Frankel, K. K., Becker, B. C., Rowe, M. W., & Pearson, P. D. (2016). From “what is reading?” to what is literacy? *Journal of Education*, 196(3), 7-17.
- Frankel, R. M., & Devers, K. J. (2000). Study design in qualitative research--1: developing questions and assessing resource needs. *Education for Health: Change in Learning & Practice (Taylor & Francis Ltd)*, 13(2), 251.
- Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a culture of change* (1st ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass Ltd.
- Fullan, M. (2013). The new pedagogy: Students and teachers as learning partners. *LEARNing Landscapes*, 6(2), 23-29. Retrieved from <https://michaelfullan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Commentary-Learning-Landscapes-New-Pedagogy.pdf>
- Goldman, S. R. (2012). Adolescent literacy: Learning and understanding content. *The Future of Children*, 22(2), 89-116. Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1519298179?accountid=458>
- Graham, S. (2008). *Effective writing instructions for all students*. Wisconsin Rapids, WI: Renaissance Learning, Inc. Retrieved from <http://doc.renlearn.com/KMNet/R004250923GJCF33.pdf>
- Graham, S., Early, J., & Wilcox, K. (2014). Adolescent writing and writing instruction: Introduction to the special issue. *Reading and Writing*, 27(6), 969-972. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11145-014-9497-0>
- Graham, S., & Hebert, M. A. (2010). *Writing to read: Evidence for how writing can improve reading*. A Carnegie Corporation Time to Act Report. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.
- Graham, S., & Perin, D. (2007). *Writing next: Effective strategies to improve writing of adolescents in middle and high schools*. A report to Carnegie Corporation of New York. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.
- Greenleaf, C. L., & Hinchman, K. (2009). Reimagining our inexperienced adolescent readers: from struggling, striving, marginalized, and reluctant to thriving. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 53, 4-13. doi:10.1598/JAAL.53.1.1
- Gresham, F. M., MacMillan, D. L., Beebe-Frankenberger, M. E., & Bocian, K. M. (2000). Treatment integrity in learning disabilities intervention research: Do we really know how treatments are implemented? *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, 15(4), 198-205.
- Griffin, C. (2004). The advantages and limitation of qualitative research in psychology and education. *Psychology and Psychotherapy Theory, Research and Practice*, 78, 249-270.

- Guensburg, C. (2006, February 1). Why Johnny (still) can't read: Schools meet the challenge of producing teen readers. Retrieved from <https://www.edutopia.org/why-johnny-still-cant-read>
- Guthrie, J. T. (1996). Educational contexts for engagement in literacy. *The Reading Teacher*, 49(6), 432-445.
- Guthrie, G. (2010). *Basic research methods: An entry to social science research*. New Delhi, India: Sage Publications Pvt. Ltd.
- Hamilton, F. S. (2009). 5-step process to help a struggling writer succeed. *The Old Schoolhouse*. Retrieved from <https://creation.com/images/pdfs/home-school-corner/teaching-writing/69195-step-process-for-struggling-writers.pdf>
- Harste, J. (2003). What do we mean by literacy now? *Voices from the Middle*, 10(3), 8-12. Retrieved from http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson1140/VM0103What.pdf
- Hart, P. D. (2005, February). *Rising to the challenge: Are high school graduates prepared for college and work?* (Rep.). Retrieved from https://www.achieve.org/files/pollreport_0.pdf
- Heller, R. (2017). All about adolescent literacy. Retrieved from http://www.adlit.org/adlit_101/scope_of_the_adolescent_literacy_crisis/
- Heller, R., & Greenleaf, C. L. (2007). *Literacy instruction in the content areas: Getting to the core of middle and high school improvement*. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.
- Herman, J., Epstein, S., & Leon, S. (2016). Supporting common core instruction with literacy design collaborative. *AERA Open*, 2(3), 1-15. doi:10.1177/2332858416655782
- Hersh, R. (2009, April 20). Our 21st-century “risk” teaching for content and skills. *Education Week*, 28, 28-29. Retrieved from http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2009/04/22/29hersh_ep.h28.html
- Hervey, S. (2013). What is effective teaching of literacy? *Generation Ready*. Retrieved from <http://www.generationready.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Effective-Teaching-of-Literacy.pdf>
- Hinchman, K. A., & Sheridan-Thomas, H. K. (2014). *Best practices in adolescent literacy instruction*. New York: The Guilford Press.

- Hock, M. F., & Deshler, D. D. (2003). "No child" leaves behind teen reading proficiency. *The Education Digest*, 69(4), 27-35. Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/218194121?accountid=458>
- Hooker, S., & Brand, B. (2009). *Success at every step: How 23 programs support youth on the path to college and beyond*. Washington, DC: American Youth Policy Forum.
- Hougen, M. (2014). Evidence-based reading instruction for adolescents, grades 6-12 (Document No. IC-13). Retrieved from University of Florida, Collaboration for Effective Educator, Development, Accountability, and Reform Center website: <http://cedar.education.ufl.edu/tools/innovation-configurations/>
- International Literacy Association. (2016). Every student succeeds act [advocacy toolkit]. Newark, DE: Author.
- International Reading Association. (2012). A position statement of the International Reading Association (Rev. 2012 ed.). Newark, DE: Author. Retrieved from <https://www.literacyworldwide.org/docs/default-source/where-we-stand/adolescent-literacy-position-statement.pdf?sfvrsn=8>
- Intrator, S. M., & Kunzman, R. (2009). Who are adolescents today? Youth voices and what they tell us. In L. Christenbury, R. Bomer, & P. Smagorinsky (Eds.), *Handbook of adolescent literacy research* (pp. 29-45). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Ippolito, J., Steele, J. & Samson, J. (2008). Why adolescent literacy matters now. *Harvard Educational Review Special Issue*, 78(1). Retrieved from http://hepg.org/her-home/issues/harvard-educational-review-volume-78-issue-1/herarticle/why-adolescent-literacy-matters-now_638
- Irvin, J. L. (2009). *Meeting the challenge of adolescent literacy: Practical ideas for literacy leaders*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Irvin, J. L. (2010). *Taking the lead on adolescent literacy: Action steps for schoolwide success*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Irvin, J. L., Meltzer, J., & Dukes, M. (2007). Taking action on adolescent literacy. Retrieved from <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com>
- Irvin, J. L., Meltzer, J., Mickler, M. J., Phillips, M., & Dean, N. (2009). *Meeting the challenge of adolescent literacy: Practical ideas for literacy leaders*. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/299282054_Meeting_the_Challenge_of_Adolescent_Literacy_Practical_Ideas_for_Literacy_Leaders

- Jacobs, V. (2008). Adolescent literacy: Putting the crisis in context. *Harvard Educational Review*, 78(1), 7-39. doi:10.17763/haer.78.1.c577751kq7803857
- Jerald, C. D. (2006). Dropping out is hard to do. Retrieved from http://www.ldonline.org/article/Dropping_Out_is_Hard_to_Do
- Joftus, S. (2002, September). Every child a graduate: A framework for an excellent education for all middle and high school students. Retrieved from <http://webpages.uncc.edu/~amedina1/21%20C%20adol/Joftus%20every%20child%20a%20graduate.pdf>
- Johannessen, L. R., & McCann, T. M. (2009). Adolescents who struggle with literacy. In *Handbook of adolescent literary research* (pp. 65-79). New York: The Guilford Press.
- Johnson, V. & Mongo, J. (2008) Literacy across the curriculum in urban schools. *Leadership Compass*, 5(3), 1-3. Retrieved from https://www.naesp.org/resources/2/Leadership_Compass/2008/LC2008v5n3a2.pdf
- Jowett, M., & O'Toole, G. (2006). Focusing researcher's minds: Contrasting experiences of using focus groups in feminist qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, 6(4), 453-472.
- Kahan, S. (2013). *Getting innovation right: How leaders leverage inflection points to drive success*. Retrieved from <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com.contentproxy.phoenix.edu>
- Kamil, M. L. (2003). *Adolescents and literacy: Reading for the 21st century*. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.
- Keefe, E. B., & Copeland, S. R. (2011). What Is literacy? The power of a definition. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 36(3), 92-99. doi:10.2511/027494811800824507
- Kellaghan, T., & Stufflebeam, D. L. (2003). *International handbook of educational evaluation*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Acad. Publ.
- Keller-Margulis, M. (2012). Fidelity of implementation framework: A critical need for response to intervention models. *Psychology in the Schools*, 49(4), 342-352.
- Kelly, C., & Campbell, L. (2003, March 15). Helping struggling readers. Retrieved from <http://www.fordyslexia.com/2013/03/helping-struggling-readers/>
- Kendall, J. (2011). *Understanding common core state standards*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

- Kirsch, I. S., Jungeblut, A., Jenkins, L., & Kolstad, A. (1993). Adult literacy in America: A first look at the results of the National Adult Literacy Survey. In *National Center for Educational Statistics*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.
- Knupp, R. (1988). *Improving oral reading skills of educationally handicapped elementary school-aged students through repeated readings*. Practicum paper, Nova University (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 297275).
- Kohlbacher, F. (2006). The use of qualitative content analysis in case study research. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 7(1), 1.
- Kunter, M. (2013). *Cognitive activation in the mathematics classroom and professional competence of teachers: Results from the COACTIV project* (Mathematics teacher education, v. 8). New York: Springer.
- Langer, J.A. (2001). Beating the odds: Teaching middle and high school students to read and write well. *American Educational Research Journal*, 38(4) 837-880.
- Langer, J. A. (2009). Contexts for adolescent literacy. In *Handbook of adolescent literacy research* (pp. 49-64). New York, NY: Guilford. Retrieved from <https://www.guilford.com/excerpts/christenbury.pdf>
- Lashway, L. (1998). Instruments for evaluation. *School Administrator*, 55(9), 14-16.
- Lesgold, A., Resnick, L. B., & Hammond, K. (1985). Learning to read: A longitudinal study of word skill development in two curricula. In G. Waller & E. MacKinon (eds.), *Reading research: Advances in theory and practice*. New York, NY: Academic Press.
- Lewis, J. (2009). *Essential questions in adolescent literacy: Teachers and researchers describe what works in classrooms*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Literacy Council of Buncombe County Importance of Literacy. (2010). Importance of literacy. Retrieved from <http://litcouncil.com/why-literacy/importance-of-literacy/>
- Literacy Design Collaborative. (2014, January 13). *Literacy design collaborative receives three-year grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to scale work nationwide* [Press release]. Retrieved from https://ldc.org/sites/default/files/New%20LDC%20Organization_PressRelease_011314.pdf
- Literacy Development Council of Newfoundland and Labrador. (2011). UNM: Definitions of literacy. Retrieved from <http://www.unm.edu/~devalenz/handouts/literacy.html>

- Lortie, D. C. (1975). *Schoolteacher: A sociological study*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Marchand-Martella, N., Martella, R. C., Modderman, S. L., Petersen, H. M., & Pan, S. (2013). Key areas of effective adolescent literacy programs. *Education & Treatment of Children*, 36(1), 161-184. Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1312445581?accountid=458>
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. (Eds.). (2006). *Designing qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Marzano, R. J., Frontier, T., & Livingston, D. (2011). *Effective supervision: Supporting the art and science of teaching*. Retrieved from <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com.contentproxy.phoenix.edu>
- Maxwell, J. A. (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- McKenna, J. W., Flower, A., & Ciullo, S. (2014). Measuring fidelity to improve intervention effectiveness. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 50(1), 15-21. doi:10.1177/1053451214532348
- McREL. (2009). North Carolina State Board of Education: North Carolina teacher evaluation process. Retrieved from <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/effectivenessmodel/ncees/instruments/teach-eval-manual.pdf>
- Meltzer, J., Smith, N. C., & Clark, H. (2001). *Adolescent literacy resources: Linking research and practice*. Providence, RI: Brown University, Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory.
- Merten, S. (2015). Reading and writing alignment across content areas. *Science Scope*, 13-18. Retrieved from <http://www.covington.kyschools.us/userfiles/15/My%20Files/6th%20gr%20add%20chg/reading%20and%20writing%20across%20content%20areas.pdf?id=360>
- Meyers, C. V., & Brandt, W. C. (2015). *Implementation fidelity in education research: Designer and evaluator considerations*. New York: Routledge.
- McKeown, M. G., Beck, I. L., & Blake, R. G. K. (2009). Reading comprehension instruction: Focus on content or strategies? *Perspectives on Language and Literacy*, 35(2), 28-32. Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/200236512?accountid=458>

- Moje, E., Young, J., Readence, J., & Moore, D. (2000). Commentary: Reinventing adolescent literacy for new times: Perennial and millennial issues. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 43(5), 400-410. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40017077>
- Moore, D. W. (n.d.) Why vocabulary instruction matters. (SLL13-0469A). Retrieved from http://ngl.cengage.com/assets/downloads/edge_pro0000000030/am_moore_why_vocab_instr_mtrs.pdf
- Moore, D. W., Bean, T. W., Birdyshaw, D., & Rycik, J. A. (1999). *Adolescent literacy: A position statement*. Newark, DE: Commission on Adolescent Literacy of the International Reading Association.
- Moore, D. W., Hinchman, K. A., & Vacca, R.T. (2005). *Teaching adolescents who struggle with reading: Practical strategies* (2nd ed.). New York: Allyn & Bacon.
- National Assessment of Educational Progress (n.d.). 2015 mathematics & reading assessments. Retrieved from https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/reading_math_2015/#reading?grade=4
- National Association of State Boards of Education. (2006). *Reading at risk: The state response to the crisis in adolescent literacy*. Alexandria, VA: Author.
- National Commission on Excellence in Education. (1983). *A nation at risk*. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/pubs/NatAtRisk/risk.html>
- National Council of Teachers of English. (2013). *Implementation of the common core state standards* [Brochure]. Author. Retrieved from <http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Resources/Journals/CC/0231-sep2013/CC0231Brief.pdf>
- National Education Association. (2017). Rankings of the states 2016 and estimates of school statistics 2017. Retrieved from <http://www.nea.org/home/70716.htm>
- National Endowment for the Arts. (2007). *To read or not to read: A question of national consequence* (Rep. No. 47). (2007). Retrieved from <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/ToRead.pdf>
- National Institute for Literacy. (2007). Adapted from *What content-area teachers should know about adolescent literacy*. Retrieved from http://www.nifl.gov/nifl/publications/adolescent_literacy07.pdf
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. (2009, April). *Designing education projects: A comprehensive approach to needs assessment, project planning and implementation, and evaluation* (Publication No. 2nd Ed.). Retrieved from http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/leadership/DEP_Manual_2ndEdt_Final.pdf

- National Reading Panel. (2000). *Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching children to read*. Rockville, MD: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.
- Nicholson, T. (2000). *Reading the writing on the wall: Debates, challenges and opportunities in the teaching of reading*. Palmerston North, NZ: Dunmore Press.
- O'Brien, D. G., & Dillon, D. R. (2008). The role of motivation in engaged reading of adolescents. In K. Hinchman, & H. Sheridan-Thomas (Eds.), *Best practices in adolescent literacy instruction* (pp. 78-96). New York, NY: Guilford.
- Ocasio, T. (2014, May 6). School leaders: A step-by-step guide to creating a professional development plan [web log post]. Retrieved from <http://www.marzanocenter.com/blog/article/school-leaders-a-step-by-step-guide-to-creating-a-professional-development/>
- O'Donnell, C. L. (2008). Defining, conceptualizing, and measuring fidelity of implementation and its relationship to outcomes in K-12 curriculum intervention research. *Review of Educational Research*, 78(1), 33-84. Retrieved from <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.3102/0034654307313793>
- Patton, M. Q. (2003). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Peabody College. (2017). Why do so many adolescents struggle with content-area reading? Retrieved from <https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/sec-rdng2/perspectives-and-resources/q1/p01/>
- Peterson, C. L., Caverly, D. C., Nicholson, S. A., O'Neal, S., & Cusenbary, S. (2001). *Building reading proficiency at the secondary level: A guide to resources* (introduction). Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Lab.
- Phillips, V., & Wong, C. (2012, April 6). Teaching to the common core by design, not accident. Retrieved from http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2012/04/01/kappan_phillips.html
- Pinnell, G. S., Pikulski, J. J., Wixson, K. K., Campbell, J. R., Gough, P. B., & Beatty, A. S. (1995). *Listening to children read aloud: Data from NAEP's integrated reading performance record (IRPR) at grade 4* (NCES Publication 95-726). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics.
- Price, J. H., & Murnan, J. (2004). Research limitations and the necessity of reporting them. *American Journal of Health Education*, 35, 66-67.
- Protheroe, N. (2008, September/October). *The impact of fidelity of implementation in effective standards-based instruction* (Rep.). Retrieved from https://www.naesp.org/sites/default/files/resources/1/Principal/2008/S-O_p38.pdf

- Rabiee, F. (2004). Focus-group interview and data analysis. *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society*, 63, 655-660.
- Reardon, S., Valentino, R., & Shores, K. (2012). Patterns of Literacy among U.S. students. *The Future of Children*, 22(2), 17-37. Retrieved from <http://0-www.jstor.org.bravecat.uncp.edu/stable/23317409>
- Remillard, J. T. (2005). Examining key concepts in research on teachers' use of mathematics curricula. *Review of Educational Research*, 75(2), 211-246.
- Reumann-Moore, R., Lawrence, N., Sanders, F., Shaw, K., & Christman, J. B. (2011, March 4). *CCSS literacy and math tools: An interim report on implementation and sustainability during the pilot year* (Rep.). Retrieved from https://8rri53pm0cs22jk3vvqna1ub-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Reumann-Moore_R_CCSS_Literacy_and_Math_Tools_Executive_Summary.pdf
- Roberts, C. M. (2004). *The dissertation journey: A practical and comprehensive guide to planning, writing, and defending your dissertation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Rogers, E. M. (1995). *Diffusion of innovations*. New York: The Free Press.
- Rycik, J. A. (2008). A decade of adolescent literacy. *American Secondary Education*, 37(1), 62-64. Retrieved from <https://search-proquest-com.contentproxy.phoenix.edu/docview/195186330?accountid=134061>
- Sahni, U. (2015). *Primary education in India: Progress and challenges*. Brookings Institute. Retrieved from <http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2015/01/20-primary-education-inindia-progress-challenges-sahni>
- Sanchez, B., & Lewis, K. D. (2014). Writing shapes thinking: Investigative study of preservice teachers reading, writing to learn, and critical thinking. *Texas Journal of Literacy Education*, 2(1), 55-68. Retrieved from http://www.texasreaders.org/uploads/8/6/6/5/8665759/sanchez__lewis.pdf
- Schaffhauser, D. (2015). How phonics is taught can affect how well a child learns to read. Retrieved from <https://thejournal.com/articles/2015/07/02/how-phonics-is-taught-can-affect-how-well-a-child-learns-to-read.aspx>
- Schmoker, M. J. (2006). *Results now: How we can achieve unprecedented improvements in teaching and learning*. Alexandria, VA: Assoc. for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

- Scottish Government's Literacy Action Plan – Interim Progress Report. (2012, September). *Literacy Action Plan* (Rep.). Retrieved from https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/literacy_-_literacy_action_plan_-_interim_progress_report_2012_-_final_pdf_version.pdf
- Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education. (2013). Missouri Professional Learning Guidelines for Student Success. Section IV. The Planning, Implementation and Evaluation of Professional Learning. Retrieved from <https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/Professional-Learning-Guidelines-section-4-with-cover.pdf>
- Shank, G. D. (2006). *Qualitative research: A personal skills approach* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Shermis, M. D., & DiVesta, V. J. (2011). *Classroom assessment in action*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Short, D., & Fitzsimmons, S. (2007). Double the work: Challenges and solutions to acquiring language and academic literacy for adolescent English language learners – A report to Carnegie Corporation of New York. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.
- Simon, M. K. (2011). *Dissertation and scholarly research: Recipes for success* (2011 Ed.). Seattle, WA: Dissertation Success, LLC.
- Slavin, R. E., Cheung A., Groff C., & Lake C. (2008). Effective reading programs for middle and high schools: A best-evidence synthesis. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 43(3), 290-322.
- SmartPoint Research. (2014). The advantages of qualitative research. Retrieved from <http://smartpointresearch.com/the-advantages-of-qualitative-research/>
- Snow, C. E. (2002). *Reading for understanding: Toward an R & D program in reading comprehension*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand.
- Snow, C., & Biancarosa, G. (2003). *Adolescent literacy and the achievement gap: What do we know and where do we go from here?* New York: Carnegie Corporation of New York.
- Sprinkle, P. (2013, January 17). Literacy in the social studies classroom. Retrieved from <http://www.uft.org/teacher-teacher/literacy-social-studies-classroom>
- St. Onge, B., Scalia, S., & Vega, L. F. (2008, January 1). Addressing adolescent literacy. Retrieved from <https://www.districtadministration.com/article/addressing-adolescent-literacy>

- Stufflebeam, D. L. (2002). CIPP evaluation model checklist. Retrieved July 19, 2017, from <http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/checklists/cippchecklist.pdf>
- Stufflebeam, D. L. (2003). The CIPP model of evaluation. In T. Kellaghan, D. L. Stufflebeam, & L. A. Wingate (Eds), *International handbook of educational evaluation. Part 1: Perspectives* (Vol. 9). Dordrecht, Germany: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Stufflebeam, D. L., Madaus, G. F., & Kellaghan, T. (2002). *Evaluation models: Viewpoints on educational and human services evaluation*. Boston: Kluwer Academic.
- Stufflebeam, D. L., & Zhang, G. (2017). *The CIPP evaluation model: how to evaluate for improvement and accountability*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Sulkunen, S. (2013). Adolescent literacy in Europe: An urgent call for action. *European Journal of Education*, 48(4), 528-542.
- Sunnyvale School District. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.sesd.org/Page/1183>
- Swanson, E., Wanzek, J., Haring, C., Ciullo, S., & McCulley, L. (2011). Intervention fidelity in special and general education research journals. *The Journal of Special Education*, 47(1), 3-13. doi:10.1177/0022466911419516
- Tanner, D., & Tanner, L. (1995). *Curriculum development: Theory into practice* (3rd ed.). Columbus: Prentice Hall.
- Tanriverdi, B., & Apak, Ö. (2004). Pre-service teachers' beliefs about curriculum orientations. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 116, 842-848. Retrieved from https://ac.els-cdn.com/S1877042814003255/1-s2.0-S1877042814003255-main.pdf?_tid=2fcd4400-ac0b-11e7-95dd-00000aab0f02&acdnat=1507455150_df8fb6d96f459707ff43031e7e1c985a
- Teach for America. (2010). *Elementary literacy: 2010*. Retrieved from http://www.teachingasleadership.org/sites/default/files/Related-Readings/EL_2011.pdf
- Tierney, R. J., LaZansky, J., Raphael, T., & Cohen, P. (1983). Author's intentions and reader's interpretation. In *Understanding readers understanding*, edited by R. J. Tierney, P. Anders, and J. Mitchell. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, in press.
- Tirozzi, G. N. (2005). *Creating a culture of literacy: A guide for middle and high school principals* (preface). Retrieved from <https://www.nassp.org/Documents/nassp/Letters%20to%20Policymakers/Creating%20a%20Culture%20of%20Literacy%20Guide.pdf?SSO=true>

- Torgesen, J. K., Houston, D. D., Rissman, L. M., Decker, S. M., Roberts, G., Vaughn, S., ... Rivera, M. O. (2007). *Academic literacy instruction for adolescents: A guidance document from the Center on Instruction*. Portsmouth, NH: RMC Research Corporation, Center on Instruction.
- Torgesen, J. K., & Miller, D. H. (2009). *Assessments to guide adolescent literacy instruction*. Portsmouth, NH: RMC Research Corporation, Center on Instruction.
- Trochim, W. M. K. (2006). Research methods knowledge base (2nd ed.). Retrieved from [http:// www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/](http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/)
- United States Department of Education. (2006, October 5). Improving teacher quality state grants ESEA Title II, Part A. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/teacherqual/guidance.doc>
- United States Department of Education. (2017). Every student succeeds act (ESSA). Retrieved from <https://www.ed.gov/esea>
- Urquhart, V., & Frazee, D. (2012). *Teaching reading in the content areas: If not me, then who?* Alexandria, VA: ASCD. Retrieved from <http://www.ebrary.com.ezproxy.gardner-webb.edu>
- Vacca, R. T. (1998). Let's not marginalize adolescent literacy. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 41(8), 604-609. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.gardner-webb.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.gardner-webb.edu/docview/216934126?accountid=11041>
- Vasudeva, A., & Slamp, A. (2016). Teachers collaborate across state lines to design high-quality units. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 98(1), 36-39. doi:10.1177/0031721716666052
- Washington State Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. (2011, April). *What is quality teaching?* Retrieved from http://www.wsascd.org/downloads/critical_questions/2011_04.pdf
- Watson, A. P., & Hugo, W. (2015). Adolescent literacies: Chatting and learning across different planes of composition. *Education as Change*, 19(1), 120-147. doi:10.1080/16823206.2015.1024141
- Wei, R. C., Darling-Hammond, L., Andree, A., Richardson, N., Orphanos, S. (2009). Professional learning in the learning profession: A status report on teacher development in the United States and abroad. Dallas, TX. National Staff Development Council.
- Wei, H., Kuo, L., Lin, H., & Yang, H. (2012). Evaluating innovation by CIPP model. In H. Wei (Author), *Recent advances in communications, circuits and technological innovation*. Retrieved from <http://www.wseas.us/e-library/conferences/2012/Paris/CICOCOM/CICOCOM-22.pdf>

- Whitin, P., & Whitin, D. (2000). *Math is language too: Talking and writing in the mathematics classroom*. Urbana, IL: NCTE.
- Williams, B. T. (2007). Why Johnny can never, ever read: The perpetual literacy crisis and student identity. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 51(2), 178-182. Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/216925056?accountid=458>
- World Literacy Foundation. (2015). *The economic & social cost of illiteracy: A snapshot of illiteracy in a global context* (Rep.). Retrieved from <https://worldliteracyfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/WLF-FINAL-ECONOMIC-REPORT.pdf>
- Yahaya, A. H., Asas, J. P., & Pendidikan, F. (2001). *The using of model context, input, process and products (CIPP) in learning programs assessment*. (Issue brief). Retrieved from <http://eprints.utm.my/13287/1/aziziyahcipp.pdf>
- Zagreb, C. (2005, July 30). Promoting literacy for Roma children and young people. Retrieved from www.npage.org/IMG/doc/Promoting_Literacy_Roma_Children.doc
- Zehm, S., & Kottler, J. A. (1993). *On being a teacher: The human dimension*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Appendix A

Superintendent Permission Letter

Letter Seeking Permission to Distribute Questionnaires

Name: Adrian Batten
Institution: Gardner-Webb University
Department: Educational Leadership

██████████:

I am a doctoral student from Gardner-Webb University writing my dissertation titled:

Middle School Teachers' Perspective of Literacy Design Collaborative in a Rural

Southeastern North Carolina School District. My dissertation committee chair is Dr. Joey

Bullis who can be reached at ██████████.

I would like your permission to use the attached questionnaire in my research study. I

will also use testing data from the 2011-2012, 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and

2015-2016 school year. I would like to analyze the answers to the questions. I will use the

analysis of the questionnaires results only for my research study and will not sell or use it

with any compensated or curriculum development activities.

If there are acceptable terms and conditions, please indicate so by replying to me through

e-mail: ██████████.

Sincerely,

Adrian Batten

Appendix B

Informed Consent Letter: Superintendent

Superintendent Informed Consent Form

You are being asked to take part in a study that focuses on middle school teachers' perspective of Literacy Design Collaborative (LDC) in a rural North Carolina school district. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in the study. Participation in the study is voluntary. The results of this research will be published in a doctoral dissertation through Gardner-Webb University with any identifying elements (i.e. school names) given a pseudonym.

The researcher will conduct this interview with questions focused on middle school teachers' perspective of LDC. Primarily, your experience as an administrator implementing LDC in the school district. The interview will take approximately fifteen minutes to complete. The interview will be conducted at the district office.

Your anonymity is guaranteed throughout the interview. The interview will be recorded, but the recording will only be heard by the researcher or, if necessary, her dissertation committee.

By signing the statement below, your consent is given to participate in the study:

I, _____, agree to participate in the study. The researcher has satisfactorily answered any questions that I had about the study. I understand that the interview will be recorded.

Thank you for time and consideration.

For questions or concerns, please contact Adrian Batten at [REDACTED].

Appendix C

Superintendent Interview Questions

Superintendent Interview Guide

(15 minutes)

1. As the superintendent of a county that has implemented LDC, do you feel that your five middle schools had adequate staffing to implement LDC?
2. How much did LDC cost to implement in the county?
 - *Do you feel that LDC was cost effective?*
 - *How much money was allocated for professional development for LDC?*
3. Have teachers been evaluated using LDC?
 - *If yes: What tools were used to evaluate the teachers?*
 - *If no: Why?*
4. What conceptual or theoretical framework did the district use to determine the implementation of LDC?
5. Is the progress of LDC monitored at the district level?
 - *If yes: How is it monitored?*
 - *If no: Why isn't it monitored?*
6. What outcome did you expect for your students from implementing LDC?
7. Overall, are you satisfied with LDC?
 - *If yes: Do you plan to continue LDC in the county?*
 - *If no: Are you going to discontinue LDC in the county?*

Appendix D
Teacher Consent Form

Teacher Informed Consent Form

You are being asked to take part in a study that focuses on middle school teachers' perspective of Literacy Design Collaborative (LDC) in a rural North Carolina school district. Participation in the study is voluntary. The results of this research will be published in a doctoral dissertation through Gardner-Webb University with any identifying elements (i.e. school names) given a pseudonym.

The researcher will use a written questionnaire focused on your experience as a teacher in a school districted that has implemented LDC to collect data. The questionnaire will take approximately ten to fifteen minutes to complete. If you are willing to participate, please sign below. Your anonymity is guaranteed throughout the research process.

By signing the statement below, your consent is given to participate in the study:

I, _____, agree to participate in the study. The researcher has satisfactorily answered any questions that I had about the study. I understand that my response may be published.

☐ Please check the box if you would prefer to speak privately to answer the questions on the questionnaire.

Thank you for time and consideration.

For questions or concerns, please contact Adrian Batten at [REDACTED].

Appendix E
Teacher Questionnaire

Teacher Questionnaire

(30 minutes)

1. As a teacher at a Literacy Design Collaborative (LDC) school, can you help me understand what Literacy Design Collaborative (LDC) is and what it is used for?
 - *How helpful is LDC data for you and why?*
 - *Do you have any concerns using LDC and why?*

2. I understand that all teachers at a Literacy Design Collaborative (LDC) school have a web-based program for instructional units which allow teachers to have instructional support. Do you use this program, and if so, how helpful has it been for you?
 - *If no, why not?*
 - *How often do you log into this program?*
 - *Do you have any suggestions about how to improve this instructional database?*

3. How often do you collect Literacy Design Collaborative (LDC) for students who are struggling in your class in literacy?
 - *Do you collect progress monitoring data for students who are struggling?*
 - *If yes: Why do you collect such information?*
 - *If no: How do you track the progress of students who are struggling?*
 - *If teacher does not collect such data, who collects such information?*

4. Have you received, or participated in, any training in the use of Literacy Design Collaborative (LDC); either one-on-one or through formal training with the school district? If so, could you briefly tell me what you learned and how helpful that/those trainings were?
 - *Can you help me understand what is used to determine the effectiveness of the LDC instruction?*
 - *How do you collect or use that data?*
5. What other types of instructional strategies do you use throughout the school year in your classroom or school to improve literacy, and do you have any concerns about how to use the LDC instruction in addition to using other instructional strategies?
 - *Do you have any concerns about LDC that I have not addressed?*