

Association of Literacy Educators and Researchers Yearbook, Volume 40

Engaging All Readers Through Explorations of Literacy, Language, and Culture



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ENGAGING ALL READERS THROUGH EXPLORATIONS OF LITERACY, LANGUAGE, AND CULTURE



The Fortieth Yearbook: A Double Peer-Reviewed Publication of the Association of Literacy Educators and Researchers

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ISBN: 978-1-883604-04-2

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Our editorial team of Juan Araujo, Alexandra Babino, Nedra Cossa and Robin Johnson are in its second year of heading the publication of the *Yearbook*. It is a humbling experience to read and recognize the tremendous work our Association of Literacy Educators and Researcher friends and family contribute to the organization, as they seek answers to their inquiries and burning questions. This was a splendid year with respect to quality and variety of topics as our authors explored ways of engaging all readers through literacy, language, and culture.

First, we wish to thank all the authors whose insightful thinking brought forth inquiries that add to and extend the body of knowledge on a wide variety of literacy topics. As you read you will find a balance between the study of strategies for teachers and literacy leaders, trends in teacher education programs, and studies relating to preservice teachers. We also want to take a moment to recognize the keynote speakers and award winners for submitting their work for publication. We especially thank our editorial board members, as they thoughtfully evaluated submissions and offered additional perspectives to strengthen each piece. This collaboration resulted in the creation of high-quality articles and continues to add rigor to this *Yearbook's* publication. Additionally, we are grateful to the members of the Board of Directors who continually support the editorial team and the publication of the *Yearbook*, as well as Dr. Sheri Vasinda, the Publication Committee Chairperson.

Finally, we are very fortunate and grateful for the ongoing support provided by our individual universities. At Texas A&M University-Commerce, we appreciate the support of Dean Timothy Letzring of the College of Education and Human Services and Dr. Jennifer Sennette, Department Head of Curriculum and Instruction, for providing support for this publication. At Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, we appreciate the support of Dean Dr. David Scott of the College of Education and Human Development and Department Chair of Curriculum, Instruction, and Learning Sciences, Dr. Kathleen Lynch-Davis. We also thank at Georgia Southern University, Dean Thomas Kabolla of the College

of Education and Department Chair of Elementary and Special Education
Dr. John Hobe.

We further recognize and appreciate the assistance provided by the administrative assistants in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at Texas A&M University-Commerce, Nicole Askew and Maureen Preston. Of course, we are immensely thankful to our families, friends, colleagues, and readers who provide ongoing moral support and encouragement.

John Dewey's calling urging us to consider new problems and entertain new ideas lives on today. He wrote, "The path of least resistance and least trouble is a mental rut already made. It requires troublesome work to undertake the alteration of old beliefs." From authors to reviewers to university support and every support in between, this publication reflects each team member's contribution focused on a worthwhile goal.

—Juan J. Araujo, Alexandra Babino, Nedra Cossa, & Robin Johnson

INTRODUCTION

The theme for the 61st annual conference of the Association of Literacy Educators and Researchers was Engaging All Readers through Explorations of Literacy, Language, and Culture. Dr. Tami Craft Al-Hazza, then Program Chair, wrote in her message to ALER members in the conference program:

“Welcome to the 61st Annual Meeting of the Association of Literacy Educators and Researchers (ALER). The theme of this year’s conference is Engaging all Readers through Explorations of Literacy, Language, & Culture. This theme was chosen to recognize the broad and diverse nature of literacy learning. It envisioned our members creating a thought-provoking multifaceted collection of presentations that demonstrate the creative literacy activities, language investigations, and cultural explorations that can be used to motivate all literacy learners.”

The powerful work we do as literacy professionals is reflected in this message and in the thinking that was shared as we gathered together in St. Petersburg, FL in 2017. Our annual conference provides opportunities to learn from and with each other, during keynotes and sessions, as well as the incidental learning resulting from the conversations and collaborations that occur as mutual interests are discovered during sessions, between sessions, and at social gatherings. ALER is known for a supportive collegiality and camaraderie in which educators and researchers at every stage of their careers learn from each other and are inspired to grow professionally and personally from these encounters.

In the first section of the Yearbook, Dr. David Paige shared his Presidential Address titled *Systems Without a Process: Know What To Do and Then Do It Well*. Then, in *Reclaiming Creative Literacy Practices*, Dr. Thomas Bean wrote, “Understanding creativity theory and scholars who support project-based curriculum that embraces the arts in teaching can go a long way toward ameliorating the negative impacts of high stakes test-centered curriculum. “These two articles, along with the other featured speakers and award winners, described the need for teacher educators and researchers to rise to the challenge of preparing the next

generation to embrace diversity and implement best practices in literacy instruction that will meet the needs of ALL learners. In Section two, the authors write about innovative strategies for teachers and teacher leaders. Section three showcases the research trends within teacher education programs. Finally, in Section four focuses on innovative and seminal strategies for preservice teachers. All of the articles within this *Yearbook* represent a sampling of the sessions presented at the conference. After a peer-review process for conference acceptance, the ensuing articles underwent an additional round of peer review for acceptance in the *Yearbook*. The articles reflect the theme and broaden it in terms teachers and literacy leaders, trends literacy education, and the support of preservice teachers.

—JA, AB, NC & RJ

SYSTEMS WITHOUT A PROCESS: KNOW WHAT TO DO AND THEN DO IT WELL

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

David D. Paige, Ed.D.
Bellarmine University

*David D. Paige, Ed.D. is Associate Professor of Education at Bellarmine University in Louisville, Kentucky. After a 20-year career in business, Dr. Paige began his educational career as a special educator in an urban middle school in Memphis, Tennessee. Dr. Paige completed his doctoral studies at the University of Memphis under Dr. Robert B. Cooter. Paige's research interests are framed around literacy issues concerning the acquisition of foundational skills, reading fluency, and assessment in children at-risk for reading development. Research by Dr. Paige has been published in *The Reading Teacher*, *Reading Psychology*, *the Journal of Research in Reading*, *JAAL*, *Literacy Research and Instruction*, and *the Journal of Educational Research*. David and his wife Elizabeth live in a restored, circa 1890 home in the Old Louisville Victorian district.*



Abstract

Despite research practices that have advanced reading knowledge and the billions of dollars spent in the U.S. to improve reading outcomes, why is that too few students fail to read at levels that promote post-secondary academic achievement? In his keynote

address David Paige draws on his experience working in a large-district initiative to improve reading instruction in kindergarten through third-grade. From his work and that of others, insights suggest both barriers and solutions to reading achievement. Because these issues appear widespread across the nation they suggest “school systems without a process.” David discusses these roadblocks, and what they mean in the continuing effort to improve reading outcomes in America.

I want to thank the Executive Committee, the Board, and all of you for the honor of serving as President of ALER. We have a vibrant organization that’s made a deep impact on me through the relationships and learning opportunities that I’ve been able to enjoy over the years and for that I am very grateful.

The U.S. has spent large sums over many decades to improve reading outcomes, but the progress has been slow. Between 1992 and 2015 fourth-grade NAEP scores have risen by six points, from 217 to 223, a less than three percent rise. If this were viewed as an economic investment in the youth of our country it’s an average annual return of one-tenth of one-percent. While NAEP shows a solid one-third of students achieving well, with some student segments experiencing growth, this leaves the large majority of students behind. We must ask how we can build on what we know to accelerate improvement. If reading is a fundamental prerequisite to educational achievement, how can we make substantial improvements in the half to two-thirds of students who struggle? Douglas Englebart, the inventor of the computer mouse and the namesake of Englebart’s law, the observation that the intrinsic rate of human performance is exponential has stated - we must *improve our ability to improve*. This causes me to wonder *what could be, and then ask “why not?”* I’m going to discuss several factors that influence our potential to improve reading outcomes, and then suggest an emerging approach to improvement that’s gaining traction. But first, listen to this parable called *The Ripple Effect*. It goes like this:

The Master was walking through the fields one day when a young man with a troubled look approached him. “On such a beautiful day, it must be difficult to stay so serious,” the Master said. “Is it?” The young man said. Watching intently, the Master asked the young man to join him. The two walked to the edge of a calm pond and sat down. The Master then instructed the young man to “Find a small stone, and throw it in the pond.” The Master then said “Tell me what you see.” “I see ripples” said the young man. “Where did the ripples come from?” “From the pebble I threw in the pond, Master.” The Master said, “Please reach your hand into the water and stop the ripples.” The young man then stuck his hand in the water, only to cause more ripples. He was now completely

baffled. “Were you able to stop the ripples?” the Master asked. “No, of course not.” “Could you have stopped the ripples, then?” “No, Master. I only caused more ripples.” “What if you had stopped the pebble from entering the water to begin with?” The Master smiled such a beautiful smile; the young man could not be upset. “The next time you are unhappy with your life, catch the stone before it hits the water. Do not spend time trying to undo what you have done. Rather, change what you are going to do before you do it.” “But Master, how will I know what I should do before I do it?” The master answered, “Do not just treat the ripples. Keep asking questions.” The young man stopped, “Are you saying I know the answers?” “You may not know the answers right now, but if you ask the right questions, then you shall discover the answers.” “But what are the right questions, Master?” “There are no wrong questions, only those that go unasked. We must ask, for without asking, we cannot receive answers. But it is your responsibility to ask. No one else can do that for you.”

I recently had a colleague lament “*Why can't we just implement good reading instruction?*” This is a simple question with the quick response being “Well of course we can!” But the solution is anything but simple, as teaching is just one factor in an extraordinarily complex instructional system. We can begin by first recognizing that education is a socio-political-corporate juggernaut with highly disparate interests that can sometimes seem overwhelming and depressing. So too often when a wider perspective is needed to address the complexity we double down on familiar, but failing strategies. Within all this complexity teaching is just one factor, albeit a very important one. And while teaching is what we spend our energies trying to improve, I want to suggest that a broader perspective might help in our work to create a more literate society. But first, what are a few of the factors impeding “good reading instruction?”

Factors Influencing Reading Instruction

Once a child enters the school building research tells us that the teacher is critical to that child's success. So the first factor reveals itself in the answer to this question: how deep is the capacity for delivering effective reading instruction across the U.S.? We can think of capacity for delivering reading instruction as an “output” resulting from what one learns in a teacher certification program plus the subsequent experience and continued professional growth that occurs once one is engaged in practice. But what do teachers know about reading instruction? About ten years ago a team at Utah State developed an assessment called the *Literacy Instruction Knowledge Scale* or LIKS to measure a teachers' declarative knowledge about reading and their classroom practice. After administering the

LIKS to 13,000 teachers across the country they found that teachers had little knowledge about reading, and for those who did know more it had little to no effect on the reading achievement of their students. These results raise concern about how reading teachers are being prepared. They also suggest that factors beyond the teacher may effect reading outcomes. Another piece of insight into teacher capacity is gained from a project I've been working in over the past four years in Louisville. The JCPS/Bellarmine Literacy Project is an initiative to improve third-grade reading outcomes. When we began the BLP we assessed 4,500 first-, second-, and third-grade students from 31 schools on their understanding of letter-sound correspondence. We found that by the end of first-grade students knew beginning and ending consonants and some vowel sounds. Second-graders knew a few more vowels and blends than did first-graders, while third-graders knew *no more* about letter-sound correspondences than did their second-grade counterparts. To no surprise these students were also not fluent readers. This told us first, that what students knew about decoding words they learned by the end of second-grade and secondly, their skills were insufficient to support adequate reading development. The results also suggested that the 187 teachers who instructed these students either did not have the capacity to develop their students beyond basic letter-sound correspondence or if they did, factors in the system were constraining their work. While these two examples are quite different and certainly not definitive, they bring to question what other researchers have been asking – are reading teachers sufficiently prepared? As schools of education we must take this question seriously.

After the effects of the teacher, those of the principal are also important to student success. As an individual who can multiply or diminish reading achievement in a school, the role of the principal is important to reading instruction. How might this be? Consider that many elementary principals were at some point, former reading teachers. However, this does not mean they are highly knowledgeable about effective reading instruction. In fact, our work in the BLP suggests it can sometimes be the opposite. For example, we have a trend occurring in our area where secondary teachers are becoming elementary school principals. In one way this could be an advantage as they are often aware they know little to nothing about reading instruction and so are open to help. On the other hand, they are also susceptible to false information because they don't know what they don't know. While principals need many skills beyond knowledge of effective reading instruction, this trend suggests that perhaps core reading instructional knowledge may not be valued by districts choosing those who will be expected to be a school's instructional leader. It could also be that deep reading knowledge is a difficult-to-find skillset in principal candidates, so it goes to the wayside

in the selection process. While we have found principals who have instituted ideas that have greatly helped their teachers be more effective, we have seen actions taken by others that have undermined reading growth in students. Principals are part of the instructional system and they must be considered in the solution to improve reading outcomes.

A third factor contributing to the ineffectiveness to improve reading outcomes is the epidemic of *solutionitis*, which I might define as the chasing of a quick solution to a problem with little understanding as to its complexity in the hope it will magically improve. The dangers of quick solutions are first, they ignore the complexities that often entangle many educational challenges. Second, such strategies detract attention from pursuit of the deeper solution needed to improve the problem while third, years of *solutionitis* leads to what I call *ambivalitis*, the state among teachers of permanent ambivalence towards new initiatives. *Solutionitis* does not leverage the multiplicative value that a systemic perspective can bring to addressing problems. Effective solutions are often complicated and require deep learning and hard work over an extended period of time. I spent some of last week at a meeting sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers for state literacy leaders from about 22 states. In my workshops it was interesting the range of complex problems being addressed, and the difficulty that was present in finding solutions.

A fourth factor I will mention briefly, and it rose to the surface during these CCSSO workshops, was the negative effect of state legislatures on reading outcomes as they often ignore educational research brought to them by state DOE leaders and others. A prime example is the law implemented by 15 states and the District of Columbia that requires third-grade retention for poor reading while 9 more states have made it an option. Despite the fact that such laws do nothing to improve the core reading instruction that could reduce retention, these laws continue to gain traction. The logic of elected representatives to “blame the lazy kids” is absolutely baffling.

So How Can We Improve Reading Outcomes

I’ve mentioned only a few factors and of course there are more. But if we accept the view that the improvement of reading outcomes across the country is *critical and urgent*, I suggest that as literacy educators we must begin to venture outside our normal boundaries as what we’ve been doing is not working. We can start by *asking different questions* that extends what we already know to a larger and different systemic perspective and solution. What do I mean?

Some of us may remember the 1960's when "Made in Japan" was a moniker for cheap and low quality. If you're under 45 or so this might come as a surprise, but it was true. Changing that connotation from "cheap" to "world-class" by the 1980s can be largely attributable to an American named Edward Deming. Now Deming was a Yale physicist and mathematician who used the principles developed earlier by Walter Shewhart, another physicist and statistician who worked at Bell Labs in New Jersey in the first half of the twentieth century. In case you don't know, Bell Labs was the pre-imminent experimental think-tank in its time responsible for hundreds of innovations in the early to mid-twentieth century that added much to the wealth of the U.S. The processes developed by Shewhart identified and measured the root causes contributing to product quality. This method provides valuable insight into where to find improvements in the process and eventually leads to higher quality products and services. Throughout the 60's and 70's Deming worked intently with Japanese manufacturers to improve the processes that led to improved product quality. Now interestingly, Deming had first offered his ideas to American industry but was quite pompously rejected as they didn't think they needed to measure anything. Our titans of industry knew exactly what was good or bad - until the 1980s when consumers began to disagree. You see it was then that American products, particularly cars, had become infamous for their poor quality and unreliability. I'm still trying to forget my Pontiac Sunbird that died at 75,000 miles, my Dodge that caught fire while my wife and son were in it, and the Plymouth van whose parts literally fell out of the engine. Detroit's arrogance opened the door for Japanese cars that had become far superior through Deming's quality improvement techniques. Today, most every major corporation, whether they're a service company or manufacturer, and this includes some universities, has an on-going quality improvement initiative based on the fundamentals of Shewhart and Deming. Some of you may know it as Six Sigma, the point at which only 34 defects occur for every 1 million units. In fact, it's not a stretch to say that companies without a rigorous quality improvement initiative cannot compete in today's economy because customers won't put up with poor quality - they will take their money and walk away, but not before posting a scathing on-line review. Unfortunately K-12 education has ignored process improvement methods, most often in deference to *solutionitis*.

Given the challenges at improving reading achievement I must ask why education doesn't use a proven process as a mechanism for systemic improvement. As the parable I read earlier suggests, if improvement is to happen we must ask different questions that involve different answers and different work; hard questions that demand new learning and new skills. Because reading achievement is fundamental to academic achievement, and because many students are

failing to acquire it to the necessary levels, it's extracting a cost our country can't afford. So I offer you three things to consider as you travel back to your respective institutions.

First and fundamentally, can we be satisfied with the present state of reading attainment? Reading is not only a social equity issue, it's one that ultimately drives economic development for our communities, our states, and our nation. So is it acceptable that across our country, no matter how it's measured, one-third to one-half of our children are gaining acceptable reading skills while the other half to two-thirds are not? Is this an acceptable *failure rate*? In my home state of Kentucky I hear little outcry about poor reading results. While there is grouching over less-than-desirable achievement when end-of-year test scores are released, few adults are upset because too few children have adequate reading skills. I suggest to you that we must speak up and engage those accountable in rigorous and urgent conversations directed at changing reading outcomes. *If you are not currently involved in the conversation in your community or state, think about how you can insert your voice.*

Second, it is clear to me that changing reading outcomes must be viewed as a *systemic process* that involves not just teachers, but numerous other stakeholders. In contrast is the perspective that improving reading is viewed as a school improvement objective that's satiated with a few PDs or some reading "focus" for the school year. In this misguided paradigm no one is accountable for improvement. It's not really the responsibility of district administrators, not the school board, not attributable to the curriculum, not the union, not the state who certifies school personnel, not the accountability assessment systems, not the politicians who make the laws, and not the domain of schools of education. It *might* be the principal's fault, but more often than not the rest of the system says through its actions that fault rests solely with teachers because they instruct the students. And with this *I disagree*. The paucity of reading improvement tells me that success will not come without addressing all parts of the macro system because they directly and indirectly influence what happens in the classroom. *Ask how you can be a catalyst to systemic solutions for reading improvement.*

The third and obvious question then is what is the way forward, how do we improve this juggernaut of a system that produces such poor reading outcomes? The School of Education at the University of Michigan has adopted Shewhart's and Deming's principles of process improvement in what they call *improvement science*. Now to be sure, an old dog by a new name makes it neither young nor new, but it might get some well-deserved attention. Improvement science at Michigan applies the quality improvement methods that have been in use for over 90 years to effect change in the instructional process. Implementing

successful quality improvement is difficult, slow, and laborious, and there are no shortcuts. But it's also the only approach that when properly implemented is consistently successful across all kinds of organizations. And it can be effective at improving reading outcomes too, *but it requires new learning on the part of everyone working in the system.*

In 2015 Anthony Bryk, now president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, wrote an article appearing in *Educational Researcher* entitled “*Accelerating How We Learn to Improve*,” which takes to heart Englebart’s call to improve how we improve. Bryk espouses the methods of improvement science as a systematic process for educational improvement. If we want significant improvement in reading outcomes across the United States we must first accept that while what we’ve been doing is necessary, it is not sufficient. To gain improvement traction we must ask new questions and expand our skillsets beyond instruction. We must recognize that we work inside a very complex system that does not know how to improve. As schools of education we must become the leaders in improving how we improve which means we must engage in new learning. Our students, our principal candidates, and our future superintendents must understand that “continuous improvement” is not a simple slogan that we nod our head to in agreement. Rather, it is a rigorous system that can improve the quality of instructional *outputs* and change reading *outcomes* for millions of students if only we are willing to engage in the work. Quality improvement works because it brings a disciplined mindset for improvement to a plan-do-study-act process based on asking questions. If we are to make substantial improvement in the percentage of students with adequate reading skills it is insufficient to stay in our present mindset. As educators we must expand our perspectives, adopt new methods, and then teach them to our students. In the words of Deming, we must learn what to do, and then do it well.

RECLAIMING CREATIVE LITERARY PRACTICES

GENERAL ASSEMBLY KEYNOTE SPEAKER

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Abstract

As literacy educators we are well aware of the deleterious effects of narrowing the curriculum to center on high stakes tests and low-level thinking. In our globally connected, cosmopolitan world this focus on low-level skills puts our students at a disadvantage. Understanding creativity theory and scholars who support project-based curriculum that embraces the arts in teaching can go a long way toward

ameliorating the negative impacts of high stakes test-centered curriculum. I first provide a brief introduction to creativity theory, followed by examples of this process in action.

Introduction

I regularly teach a content area literacy course with graduate students who teach Kindergarten through high school levels. In addition to vocabulary, comprehension, and disciplinary literacy elements (Bean, Readence, & Dunkerly-Bean, 2017), we explore a big question issues, in this case climate change and sea level rise (Goodell, 2017).

About two years ago I took to heart Australian literacy scholar Allan Luke's (2013) call to engage students in thinking about big questions like climate change, following on the heels of Brisbane's destructive flooding. In this YouTube video clip from Allan Luke's 2013 curriculum talk in Toronto, he alludes to the stark distance between narrow curriculum (e.g. coloring national flags), and creative, transformative literacy pedagogy (e.g. Freire & Macedo, 1987). Critical discussion in classrooms around big questions like climate change and sustainable environmental practices positions students as co-creators of knowledge rather than victims of a "banking model" of education (Freire, 1970).

I decided to center our class small group projects on climate change, a significant and daily challenge with sea level rise a serious threat in our Virginia Tidewater region of the country. Because I have students planning to or already teaching Kindergarten through high school levels, possible topics within the climate change arena range from weather, recycling, water pollution, and other related topics depending on the age level of their students.

To begin this topic, I typically share some of my own efforts to recycle items, particularly plastics through whimsical yard art. Following this introduction I consider some of the scholarship around climate change, as well as satirical works aimed at climate change skeptics (see John Oliver for a YouTube clip on the skeptics versus scientists).

Yard Art and Creativity Theory

In a family of four, with our rising 9th grader and rising 6th grader, we manage to generate a significant amount of garbage each week, including plastics that seem to accompany much of what we consume and use. Author Stuart Kallen in his book, *Trashing the Planet: Examining our Global Garbage Glut* (2018, p. 6) observes that: "On a global scale, humans create around 2.6 trillion

pounds of waste each year” and much of it ends up in our oceans. In an effort to chronicle this growing pollution for 3rd through 6th graders, the 20 page nonfiction children’s book entitled, *Plastic ahoy!: Investigating the Great Pacific Garbage Patch* shows how powerful currents carry this trash out to sea (Newman & Crawley, 2014).

One of my hobbies, apart from surfing, playing guitar, and kayaking, involves creating yard art out of scrap material that I collect in the garage like an American Picker. I construct wind chimes, assemblages, collages, and other objects out of this scrap material. Figure 1 shows one of these I dubbed “Vacuum Bird” because it consists of a broken Hoover hand vacuum, a broken snorkel and seashell wings from the Chesapeake Bay. Much of the bird is plastic that would otherwise end up in a landfill.

What I love about this process is that no two assemblages are alike as the materials vary. For example, Figure 2 shows a broken push scooter with the body consisting of a worn out toaster and the inscription “This Scooter is Toast” and two pieces of blackened cedar “toast.” All of this begs the question, is yard art creative?



Figure 1. Vacuum Bird.



Figure 2. This Scooter is Toast.

Creativity Theory

Defining creativity requires thinking about three possibilities, a creative person, a process or activity, and, in the case of the yard art mentioned earlier, a product or artifact (Paul & Kaufman, 2014). In addition, two important conditions must be met: The artifact must be *new* and *novel*, as well as of *value* (Paul & Kaufman, 2014). Indeed, there seems to be consensus around this definition. For example Catterall (2015), founding director of the Centers for Research on Creativity in Los Angeles and London, notes:

Being generally creative means continuously engaging ways of thinking that are new or unconventional, welcoming possible new conceptions of things, flipping problems on their heads, and challenging knee-jerk assumptions about the difficulties or opportunities you fear. (p. 13)

In essence, creativity involves a willingness to take risks and this begs the question, “can we teach for creativity?” (Bean & Dunkerly-Bean, 2016). As it turns out, we can. For example, Catterall has found that high quality programs in

theatre, music, social problem solving, graphic design, and integrated arts and science foster creativity in students.

In large measure, creativity is a disposition that can be taught (Gaut, 2014). At the outset, experience in a domain is a kind of prerequisite for messing around with normative elements in a discipline (Wilson-Lopez & Bean, 2017). For example, as an undergraduate student at the University of Hawai'i I explored being an art major (sculpture) for a while. Prior to that I took a painting class, art history, and in high school I had a surfboard repair business. That led to producing abstract resin art that involved mixing surfboard resin, catalyst and enamel paints in a mold.

At times these paintings caught on fire in our carport if I miscalculated the ratio of catalyst to resin. I now realize these were what contemporary artists term "toxic art" with materials that would normally require breathing apparatus and an air vent system to flush out the carcinogen laden fumes. I eventually migrated to being an English major, realizing that, despite the creative elements in sculpture, I would probably become a "starving artist."

One of the key variables in creativity in the arts and learning to be creative is *time* (Murphy & Pauleen, 2009). In our current high stakes testing environment (Au, 2007) we know that narrowing the opportunities for student creativity runs counter to the intellectual capital needed for innovation in a knowledge economy (Murphy & Pauleen, 2009). Rather, "creative knowledge produces structure without rules or codes or norms (Murphy & Pauleen, 2009). Thus, learner centered classrooms where time and space are allocated to intellectual invention tend to foster creativity (Beghetto & Plucker, 2006).

Creative classrooms where time is allocated to productive problem solving like Project Based Learning (Buck Institute for Education 2018, Kilpatrick, 1918, Schneider, 2014) offer students materials, space, and time to invent and create in the spirit of progressive education and John Dewey's vision. In addition to time, Csikszentmihalyi's (2013) widely cited research on creative flow states and creative individuals notes that they typically keep a diary, notes, or lab records to preserve, and often alter the trajectory of their artifacts. It is also clear from this body of work that providing students' with uninterrupted time to think is crucial but a very challenging element in a busy school day. Ongoing state standards and related pressure to cover content and prepare students for high stakes testing runs counter to the creative competencies needed for a knowledge society.

One of the advantages of project-based learning is the degree to which students are likely to develop deep understanding of a topic. For example, in the climate change units, students are introduced to its causes, effects, and possible

solutions. The process of sustained inquiry and the creation of an authentic product (e.g. “The Climate Change Blues”) for a real audience goes beyond memorizing scientific facts. Assessments and rubrics take this into account and are available online from the Buck Institute for Education (2018). Indeed, state standards are flexible enough to support project-based learning.

In a world of constant bombardment with online news, Facebook posts, blogs, and a host of other distractions, attention becomes a kind of commodity to be carefully guarded at times. Philosopher and classic motorcycle restoration expert, Matthew Crawford (2015) argues persuasively that “External objects provide an attachment point for the mind; they pull us out of ourselves” (p. 27). Thus, when I get stumped on one of my yard art creations I mull over possible solutions to the design, modifications I might make, and ultimately try out before gluing up or clear coating the assemblage. Indeed, this process takes me out of the world of distractions, social media, and other intrusions.

This small effort to recycle and repurpose plastics and other detritus that ends up in our landfills and oceans provides a window for my graduate students on what might be possible if we tackle a big issue like climate change in a fashion that is appropriate for the level of students they are teaching. In order to get us started on this journey, I walk through a PowerPoint that explains current thinking about climate change and reviews some of the key readings in this area.

Climate Change and Sea Level Rise

As Allan Luke (2013) argued, there is a deep divide between artificial, often contrived lessons in science for their own sake and real pressing human issues like climate change and flooding. Similarly, Crawford (2015,) noted:

The more basic issue is the disembodied nature of the curriculum, which divorces the articulate content of knowledge from the pragmatic setting in which its value becomes apparent. By contrast, suppose a student is building a tube frame chassis for a race car. Suddenly trigonometry is very interesting indeed. (p. 257)

To get us started on this journey I walk through a PowerPoint I created that examines some of the findings chronicled in recent books and articles on climate change. The ultimate goal is to have students work collaboratively in small groups that meet toward the end of each class to create a unit. The content

area and disciplinary strategies that we work with in class center on climate change vocabulary, comprehension, and metacognition (Bean, Readence, & Dunkerly-Bean, 2017).

The key readings that inform this introduction to the class include full-length books by Joseph Romm (2015), Michael Bloomberg and Carl Pope (2017), and Jeff Goodell (2017). These are listed in the reference section. Notably, the Goodell book features a chapter devoted to nearby Naval Station Norfolk where, “sea levels are rising in Norfolk roughly twice as fast as the global average” (p. 192). This topic hits close to home for my students and their families, many associated with the military.

I have yet to encounter any climate change resistance on the part of educators in the course, despite a good deal of political wrangling to argue against this well documented phenomenon over many years of data collection. For example, over 60 years ago, scientist Charles Keeling began measuring the rise in carbon dioxide by placing monitors on Mauna Loa, high atop the Big Island of Hawai‘i (Sachs, 2015). What is now known as the “Keeling Curve” mapped the annual rate of carbon dioxide’s increase in the atmosphere. In 1958 it was 320 ppm (parts per million), now measuring at 400 ppm. What does this data mean? “Human activity is pushing the planet into a climate zone completely unknown in both human history and Earth’s recent history” (Sachs, 2015, p. 402).

In addition to content related to climate change, we consider transmediation (Siegel, 1995) where the arts play a role in content learning by tapping into multimodal sign systems including lyric writing, music, hip hop, film and other media. In the space of this paper I focus on Project Based Learning and climate change, as well as a cooperative song we composed, “The Climate Change Blues.”

Project Based Learning and The Climate Change Blues

The units my students created in small groups spanned weather with fourth graders, reduce, conserve, and use renewable energy sources with sixth graders, and steps to reuse and recycle items with a class of eight graders. In preparation for their units, I offered various examples available on YouTube from sites in Florida where high school students created fishing line recovery stations out of PVC material to prevent birds and other wildlife from getting trapped in discarded fishing line. We looked at a clip about an outdoor learning and environmental education program in Minneapolis, and other examples from Australia. The Climate Change Blues lyric writing was designed to model how music might further support the topics in their small group unit development.

Rewrite and the Climate Change Blues.

ReWrite (Bean, 2010) combines concept learning and the composition of musical versus. You can use virtually any musical genre. I have had good success with the blues and I usually take my guitar into class as small groups engage in writing lyrics. In the case of the Climate Change Blues, small groups each created lyrics around three categories based on what we learned about climate change: a) Causes, b) Effects, and c) Solutions. (The URL for the tune on YouTube is in the reference list).

Thus, this was a culminating activity in class. We could have just as easily written a poem, a letter to government leaders, or a hip-hop composition. I find that the predictable structure of a 12-barr blues lends itself to this process. The steps are as follows (Bean, Readence, & Dunkerly-Bean, 2017):

1. The teacher creates an opening verse that helps create a pattern but has little essential information in it. This verse often becomes the chorus.
2. Students in small groups write their verses.
3. I take the rough song home and weave it together for the next class where we perform the song and play it with a shuffle rhythm in the key of E (with an A harmonica (termed “cross harp” in blues talk versus playing in the same key as the song). Cross harp allows for bending notes on the harmonica and it’s integral to the blues sound.

A video clip of the song can be found on my YouTube channel under the moniker “Surfbumblues.”

The Climate Change Blues

Climate Change Blues
(E Chicago Shuffle, A harmonica)
READ 680 Reading Across the Curriculum
Intro (guitar and harp)

CHORUS:

E

I got the climate change blues, there's too much carbon in everything we do

A

E

I got the climate change blues, there's too much carbon in everything we do

B7

A

I'm gonna ride my bike and spread the news

E

We gotta stop these nasty climate change blues

E

Coals the planet earth killer, it's the baddest of them all

A

E

Coals the planet earth killer, it's the baddest of them all

B7

A

E

Exploiting mother natures resources and burning it all

E

It's feeling hot this year, can't let all the ice disappear

A

E

It's feeling hot this year, can't let all the ice disappear

B7

A

E

While the water's rising, the coral reefs are dying

BRIDGE (harp)

18 ENGAGING ALL READERS THROUGH EXPLORATIONS

E

The waters are rising and fish are dying in the sea

A

E

The waters are rising and fish are dying in the sea

B7

A

E

Somebody tell the Coca Cola Bear his glacier is history

BRIDGE (harp)

E

We gotta find a solution to these climate change issues

A

E

We gotta find a solution to these climate change issues

B7

A

E

You can start by recycling your paper and tissues

BRIDGE (harp)

CHORUS AND END

Summary

The other important element of project-based learning is sharing information with each other and, ultimately, with a larger audience of stakeholders through websites, school news reports, and other media. And, in the spirit of Allan Luke's 2nd wave curriculum aimed at tackling big questions, climate change, pollution, and sea level rise, as well as human health hang in the balance.

For example, estimates are that Americans only recycle 30 percent of our trash each year. A large portion of this trash is plastic and ends up contributing to the Great Pacific Garbage Patch (Kallen, 2018). Currents shunt worldwide garbage into this vortex, estimated to be the size of Texas and 9 feet deep. Most of this is plastic and much of it is in the form of "nurdles," tiny plastic pellets

smaller than a pencil eraser. Plankton, and ultimately fish and birds ingest this mess, thinking this is viable food.

There are some impressive efforts underway to reduce the amount of detritus that ends up in our fragile ecosystems. For example, a New Yorker named Colin Beavan and his family sought to live for a year while creating zero garbage (Kallen, 2018). Dubbed “No Impact Man,” they ceased to purchase anything in plastic packaging, grew their own food, and used city water for drinking water. Beavan created a blog to help others reduce their consumer impact on the planet (the URL for his blog is in the reference list).

A highly creative 16-year old, Boyan Slat from the Netherlands, created a design dubbed “The Ocean Clean Up Array” that involves a floating barrier 62 miles long that can ride along the surface of the ocean, scooping up plastics carried by the currents (Kallen, 2018). Indeed, Slat delivered a TEDxTalk that has resulted in funding for Slat’s design.

In conclusion, more than ever before we need creative, risk-taking citizens that can move well beyond narrow factoids and begin to tackle our biggest questions including climate change, pollution, human rights violations, hunger, peace, poverty, and a host of other issues. Most importantly, by demonstrating this process through project based learning and multimodal arts, we can have an impact that magnifies the effect on multiple teachers and their students.

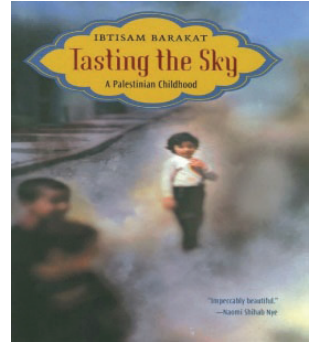
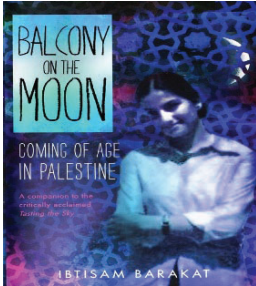
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IBTISAM BARAKAT

AWARDS BREAKFAST KEYNOTE ADDRESS



About the Author:

Ibtisam Barakat is a Palestinian-American poet, translator, artist, educator, and award-winning author in both English and Arabic. She is also a human rights advocate whose work focuses on healing social injustice and the hurts of war especially those involving young people. She emphasizes that conflict is more likely to be resolved by creativity, kindness, education, and inclusion rather than by force, violence, ignoring and exclusion. She has taught courses in Language Ethics and Creative Writing at Stephens College and is the founder of Write Your Life seminars to help people negotiate their life stories, including composing a book of life that includes everyone's perspectives. Ibtisam's books include the critically acclaimed memoirs Tasting the Sky, a Palestinian Childhood, which won several best-book awards; and Balcony on the Moon, Coming of Age in Palestine which has received numerous honors and is currently on the short-list for the Palestine Book Award. Both memoirs accompany the reader into the world of a Palestinian family from the perspective of a young person. Her writings have also appeared in publications

including *The Nation*, *The Washington Post*, *Amnesty International Books*, *World Literature Today* magazine, *Book Bird* and others. An international speaker, she has addressed audiences at venues including *The John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts* in Washington, DC; *The Faulkner Words and Music festival* in New Orleans; the *Margaret Mitchell House and Museum*; and the *Center for Civil and Human Rights* in Atlanta. Additionally, she has visited a large number of schools and learning communities, was a delegate to the UN third conference on ending racism, intolerance and xenophobia, and has performed as a judge in the national finals of *Poetry Out Loud* competition organized by the *National Endowment for the Arts* and the *Poetry Foundation*. For more information on Ibtisam Barakat visit <http://www.ibtisambarakat.com>.

In her own words:

Good morning everyone! Thank you for inviting me to speak. The first thing I am going to do is to teach you an Arabic word so that you can have fun congratulating the winners of the ALER awards in Arabic if you choose to. The word is *Mabrook!* It means: Congratulations! The answer to it would be *Shukran*, which means: thank you!

I chose to begin with teaching Arabic words because I am invited to speak about Arab culture—and language is central to any culture.

“Pre-judice”

I love words so I will explore some of them innovatively during this keynote speech. As I listened to the awards being announced, one of the expressions that caught my attention is:

The culturally-responsive classroom related to the award won by a professor from Hunter College. Also, I remember the idea of continuing to organize through prejudice that could (exists) also within the organization.

The (world) “prejudice” itself reveals the struggle inherent in facing it: Prejudice means to pre-judge. When one pre-judges before enough experience and knowledge, one practices prejudice, which is forming an opinion that ignores the richness, the continuous change, and the multi-dimensional reality of the people or the circumstances that are being prejudged.

Representative opinions and judgements generally require research and ongoing learning and unlearning. This applies to opinions related to others, and related to the self also. The word opinion in Arabic is *Ray*, and this comes from the concept related to the “angle of looking.” To change the angle of looking means to change the opinion. It’s similar to perspective, which is the angle of “specting”.

In a hierarchical society one sees a particular reality because of where they stand, not because this is the reality remains the same when seen from other

angles. In rigid societies, the picture does not change because one is rigid in judgement or position, not because there is no change. To be aware, one can see that living on a planet that is rotating constantly is perhaps an organic calling for all of us, and an invitation, to see from many perspectives.

Now to speak from the perspective of literacy, the act of pre-judging before honest experience is an act of intellectual and social illiteracy. In my estimation, prejudice is an expression of profound illiteracy.

The remedy for prejudice and the remedy for pre-judging is to admit that we do not know. Not knowing creates fear. This can be healed by engaging an ongoing journey of education and upgrading of perspective. Essentially one pre-judges for the convenience of the self that deems a circumstance or a group of people unworthy of the time and the effort needed for getting to acknowledge and know them as one hopes to be acknowledged and known before being judged themselves.

As esteemed researchers, all of you in this room know that knowledge is cumulative and much of it eventually must be dismissed over time and replaced with what is more accurate. A century ago we believed and practiced thoughts and behaviors that make us shudder today. Didn't our people buy and sell fellow human beings, and hit children to teach them? Didn't our society segregate people to keep a group comfortable in exploiting another? Didn't people work without weekends for a long time and children worked to death literally too, and a few only learned to read and write? And later on people will look at us and not believe how primitive in our practices we are in the twenty first century. Someone will laugh at our calling the internet high speed.

Response-ability

One of my favorite words in the English language is "responsibility." This is what educators hope to teach in the classrooms. However, I often see behaviors that disable the learner from "responding". I see teaching responsibility as helping the learners to improve their "ability to respond". Think about it: How do we disable children or segments of the society from responding well and powerfully? When one is responsible one is "response-able." We become more able to respond to the world by learning more and more about it, by having training and practicing, by having enough appropriate resources, by having support, and by learning more and more about ourselves as we navigate. In some classrooms, given the current cultural climate, many students come to the school and must become "disabled" about their home culture, their first language, their real self, their real concerns, the questions that live in their minds, in order to fit in the school culture. So after twelve years of education, or disabling certain parts of the self every day, the Arab

child most likely becomes a culturally “disabled Arab” who only practices their culture in a very limited way and only in limited places and contexts, in order to become an “abled and acceptable American at this time.” The mono-culturalism and the hierarchical dominance of one culture in a multi-cultural country is a form of disability to respond to the rich reality of real life in America. One knows this from many examples in history: Women were disabled from speaking up in society for a long time and from leading and from protecting themselves physically and from disagreeing with rules that profoundly affected their lives adversely. Those rules lasted because the disabling of women lasted. Women began to organize for empowering themselves to respond differently and with more ability and so do other groups at all times. It’s a passage from dis-ability, to response-ability.

There is much complexity in the learning process when “pre-judging” happens and disabling of responses is enforced by quiet exclusion and making individuals and groups invisible, silent, and less than they actually are.

Nothing!

I asked one of the members of ALER who was sitting next to me this morning if they knew anything about Arab culture, and the response was: “Nothing! Absolutely nothing and I cannot answer even one question about it.”

This is a standard response. I have met many people who know “nothing” about Arab culture I think I need to create a book titled, *All the Things the Majority of Americans Know About Arab Cultures*, and the book would be a blank book—all of its pages. Nothing pages about the Egyptians and nothing pages about the Lebanese; nothing pages about North Africa and nothing pages about the Holy Land. Then as a person learns they themselves can write things on the pages. Let’s see what one may put on some of these blank pages:

Arabic Numbers

Arab culture is one of the biggest roots of Western civilization. So it is an act of illiteracy not to know about the Arabs. I am re-defining literacy here, to include a larger vocabulary, to include a bigger library of life, to include the field for knowledge of a multi-layered world, historically, geographically and humanly. As an author and poet, I like the literacy and literature and I see the *Lit* part of them – light traveling in every direction, turning the seeming nothingness and unseen places and people, to richness in the presence of a moving source of light: that’s our knowledge.

The Arabs have given the world the counting system of the “Arabic numbers”. And a Muslim mind working in Arabic gave Algebra. Can you look around this room? See the clock, the digital numbers everywhere? Or look in your purse, do you see Arabic numbers? Or when you go to your office, can a minute go without seeing Arabic numbers?

Then why do teachers of mathematics classes in America not begin teaching by including this piece of information so that children will know about Arab culture and love something about it? The numbers are called Arabic numbers for a reason. The English word for the number one is from the Arabic *Wahad*; the English word for two is from the Arabic *Ethmain*; the English word for three is from the Arabic *Thalatha* and so on. And here is a new thought that just occurred to me now: The Arabic for word number is *Addad*. So could it be that the English word “add” relates to *Addad*? It’s exciting to find out relationships because they tell us history, and history is full of magic and is home to a huge amount of forgotten or ignored knowledge.

If we teach our children, and the grownups, and teach ourselves also that literacy is focused on learning how to live on Earth, with other people, and with other cultures, and there are many veins of knowledge from every culture, and we are not in charge of the world or own it, then knowing about everyone’s contributions would make the world safer for everyone. We can teach a broad perspective about who gave us the elements of the education that saves and builds our lives every day. I think that the first class in any school needs to be, let’s find out who invented paper, printing, the alphabets we use to write, the numbers we use, who invented the pen and pencil, ink, screens, fabric of our school clothes etc. I think that children need to know that the entire world is culturally exciting, and is supporting their education every day, and the world expects the children to grow up and to respect those who helped in their education, and eventually to give the world and humanity, not only to one culture.

The world and the learning process become more enjoyable for everyone when we learn broadly. Why isn’t bilingualism required in America? It would be beneficial for brain development, and along the life span it would enhance memory and cognitive development.

This also would increase the desire to go to other parts of the world, to connect, to make peace, to cooperate, to do more intelligent research rather than avoid and think poorly of, be afraid of, or be at war with. We can go to other parts of the world to be with others rather than go to other parts of the world with the intention to know them through the process of dominance and therefore justify our cultural smaller scope and comfortable isolation.

If cultures could be people, the Middle East would be one of the great grandmas of the world. That “cradle of civilization” is from where Western civilization got nurtured as a young “liz” so to speak. I just gave her this nick name “Liz” or Lizzi perhaps would be good for a young civilization!

Who in their integrity would be constantly working to damage the reputation of, dismiss the great contributions of, and vilify their grandma who gave them greatly much for the journey? Maybe the grandma seems cranky at this time because she is old and has unresolved issues from her own childhood, but that does not make it right to dismiss her contributions and her desire to go on and contribute anew and flourish again.

Education and literacy can be geared toward war or toward healing of humanity. The journey begins in the classroom. Family and home environment are the first classroom. But the academia follows.

Loving the world means being gentler and smarter and more creative in solving problems in the world. And to be gentle and creative indeed require a set of skills and are a field of much-needed literacy. A human’s being domain of building literacy cannot draw its circle smaller than all of humanity and at the same time remain good for the human child whose family is humanity.

When we teach our children values that lead to acquiring aggressively from other cultures, e.g. oil, land, wealth, markets, freedom, voice, and consider that a gain, we are saying that things are more important than people, and quickly this begins to apply to our own lives in our own country – things are more important than people and acquiring things begins to enslave us, define us, and consume our lives. We sacrifice people and ourselves for the sake of things. Capitalism has encouraged this behavior. And many people enjoy capitalism. Capitalism and all large-scale commerce require the Arabic numbers and much mathematics. We can learn the literacy to calculate for the concepts of kindness and concern for others too.

Alphabets

The word “alphabet” itself comes from Aleph, Ba, Ta, the first three letters of Arabic. The word Alphabet in the West is traced to Latin or Greek, but the Arabs with their ancient, largest and unbroken Semitic language, had that thousands of years before Latin and Greek. The Semitic root is earlier than the Latin-Greek root. The number of alphabets that were invented in what is now known as the Arab world is simply astonishing.

Music

Do you like string instruments? The violin, the guitar, the viola, and other string instruments originate from ancestor instruments such as the Arabic *Rabab*, the early violin, or the Oud (the lute), that the Persians (Persia is Iran and is not Arab but is Muslim), and then the Arabs and the Middle Eastern minds invented and developed and gave to the world. The oud ignited a culture of lasting music and all of the string instruments in any Western orchestra are grandfathered by this instrument. The Rabab, which became the violin, started as a basic one-string instrument that accompanied the Bedouin in the desert and kept the guards near the fire awake at night, and to its tunes people told stories to their guests and gatherings, because music, rhythm and songs, made it easier to remember and to pay attention for longer times. The violin's name was the Arabic word "Rabab" and this name was used in Europe until the 18th century.

The Camera On Your Phone and the Scientific Process

Ibn Al-Haitham, the optician and scientist who worked in the Arabic language and was a Muslim, was the first person to discover how the eye and camera worked though his experiments on the pin-hole camera, and eventually all the cameras could happen. Before him the non-Arab scientists believed that the light came from the eye. His work changed the world.

Alcohol, Sugar, and Bananas

If you like to drink alcohol, add sugar to foods, or eat bananas, all three are Arabic words and all started their names and the journey of being identified as key members of the culinary word in the Arab world. However if you like coffee, know that it started in Ethiopia as a bean that helped the goats to have energy. Then it was made into a bean that was boiled for medicinal properties. The Arabs took it and cultivated it greatly. The Muslim Turks roasted it and then turned it to a drink. And coffee is sitting in front of many of you right now, with sugar next to it.

Furniture

The word sofa and the concept of the couch for home seating, started in the Muslim word as "*saffa*" which was a row of pillows lined against the wall and thickly carpeted the floors. Raising the pillows above the ground to make a sofa made it easier for older people and safer in various environments. Traditional Arabs continue to use the floor *saffa* in addition to the sofa.

Public Libraries

Public libraries; the Arabs invested in public libraries because they wanted knowledge to be democratic as the **Qur'an** had asked all Muslims with no exception to “read.” That was the first command of Islam to all of its followers, so seeking and spreading knowledge became necessary.

Computers

In computer science, the *algorithms* that allow Face Book to be Face Book is named after Al-khawarizmi who founded Algebra. Like Alcohol, Algorithms begin with Al, which means “the” in Arabic. A leading linguist suggests that the article “the” came from the Arabic word “ha-the” which is the word used to point at objects. Additionally, the concept of Zero, which enables binary computer programming, was invented by the Arabs four years before the Indians invented it also. The Chinese culture gave us paper and that changed the world of literacy and publishing. The printing press was innovated in Germany.

While innovating based on the works of many other cultures, European civilization took plenty from the cultures it colonized. And as many scientists left their own countries that became impoverished by colonization, so a huge number of scientists from around the world contribute within Western civilization.

So this world collaborated to give us literacy. When we teach about literacy we cannot exclude the world that created the elements of literacy. If we exclude that we are teaching ill-literacy, not a healthy version of reality. Chopping up the story and throwing portions of it out to keep a perspective that we would like, rather than the real story of humanity and education can make the world become ill at communicating.

I emphasize that history is necessary for understanding now. Just like the history of one's hearth allows the understanding of the picture of one's health, and help one do the right decisions, the health of cultures and the world have the same needs for honest and accurate accounts of history.

Cultural Self-Esteem

For the self-esteem of the Arab child in America, or the multi-cultural child, it is necessary that they know in school that they have come from cultures that have contributed greatly. Schools cannot teach only about the contribution of one group or a few groups and leave out the real picture of the world without harming many of the students. A child who knows that their ancestors have contributed, is

likely to think that they have the roots to contribute now as opposed to thinking that they are nobody, coming from no culture.

For example the African American child who knows that Africa has a huge number of languages, resources, artistic expressions and that even the first human being possibly came from Africa, is likely to feel that they possess a root of greatness in themselves.

The Jewish child, knowing their Jewish history unleashes their genius and creativity. They only have to continue what their culture has started.

To understand the value of history and recording it and quoting it, one only has to see how literacy and books written by certain groups were considered dangerous. So those groups were kept away from literacy, in order to deprive them of their journey of self-expression and documenting their relationship from the world.

Women for example: What happened to women is that we were deprived of knowledge about ourselves, our female culture, for centuries. Until the 19th century or after, there are hardly any stories about women's lives and richness of concerns and imagination and heritage, written by women. Womanhood itself was not defined by women. There is not even one story about a woman giving birth and her feelings and the journey of pregnancy for nine months in different lands and the obstacles and needs and transformations associated with it. This is the most important journey in human history, the nine months that lead to the birth of a human, how much do we know about it in popular literature and form the voices of women? It's often skipped as uninteresting or almost a taboo. How many songs do we have about pregnancy? Poems? And women have been giving birth every day. Right?

A woman with her history of being a slave for a long time and all the traumatic stress associated with that, is not the ideal person to raise a child who is free of mental illness and inclinations toward slavery, but that's all we have. A man with his history of engaging in war and all the traumatic stress following, shutting down his feelings, hiding his truth, is not the ideal person to raise a child free of mental illness either. But that is all we have. These realities can be gradually remedied with the building of various abilities to respond in new ways, and to judge more constructively.

And a quick glance at the human condition of the immigration process, shows us how lacking social literacy we have been in America. Every group that immigrated to America has been resisted, vilified, attacked, and excluded. There is something about all of us that desires community and resists community too. This must be acknowledged. These two forces fight in us and we must pay attention to that and acknowledge that. We are stuck in this place of humanity's

development that wants belonging broadly because that creates knowledge and safety, and fights belonging at the same time because this comes with the need to share resources – in addition to the need to change our beliefs that will be tested and proved wrong more often when we are with others. Being with others tests our “pre-judice” and devastates our uninformed opinions. The literacy curriculum must in reality be the “care-riculum” and expand as we care about more and more things, groups, ideas, actions . . . progressive and developmental.

I will close by reading you A Poem Made of Bread, and after that I can answer more questions during the book-signing segment.

A POEM MADE OF BREAD

By Ibtisam Barakat

Because millions of children every year will not see the inside of a classroom. UNESCO REPORTS.

In the middle of bread—
all loaves, all shapes:
American white,
French baguette, or
Arabic flat—
single flour
or multi-grain
there is the word: read.
All that remains if you break
a loaf of bread is: read.
past and present
eternal like rain
falling from the sky
grain by grain . . .
Those who cannot read
are the hunger of this world.
And dinner will not be ready
until they can read.
Dinner will not be served
until all can read
and the young have books

early in life
to sleep on like pillows
after reading so late,
and the passing to have books
to take to the afterlife—
a gift to the reading angels
who long for human bread.©

Thank you for listening and again, *Mabrook* to the ALER winners!

RESEARCH AWARDS

DISSERTATION AWARD WINNER

DISCURSIVE INTERSECTIONS: TRACING THE BECOMING OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS

Elizabeth Bemiss

University of West Florida

Abstract

The significance of pre-service teacher identity development has been widely reported over the past decade. However, despite this nascent scholarship, little is known about how teacher educators directly intersect with pre-service teachers, especially in what way their discourses influence pre-service teacher identity development. In this article, the author will illustrate how she used an action research methodology to explore how the discourses she used as a teacher educator intersected with pre-service teachers' identity development in an undergraduate literacy methods course. Drawing from class transcripts, course assignments, and other forms of research data, the author analyzed the ways in which two major themes emerged from qualitative and Discourse analysis: discursive intersections—confronting deficit lenses and discursive transformations—releasing deficit lenses. Implications are provided for teacher educators to engage in systematic reflections on how their discourses in the classroom intersect with pre-service teachers as they take on notions of who they are becoming as teachers.

Introduction

Over the past decade, researchers have come to recognize the significance of pre-service teacher identity development. Britzman (2003), for example, purported that a teacher's identity emerges through a process of *becoming* - a "time of formation and transformation, of scrutiny into what one is doing, and who

one can become” (p. 31). She advocated for a dialogic process of learning to teach, where one’s circumstances, lived experiences, commitments, social and cultural contexts, and discourses contribute to what it means to become a teacher. Influenced by the scholarship on pre-service identity development, teacher educators frequently provide pre-service teachers opportunities to explore who they are becoming as teachers. Within this incipient body of research, a few studies have attended to the alignment of pre-service teacher discourses and instructional choices (Assaf, 2005; Britzman, 2003), as well as to the development of pre-service teacher identities in the midst of ideological conflicts and institutional discourses (Larson, 2008; Larson & Phillips, 2005; Smagorinsky, Cook, Moore, Jackson, & Fry, 2004). While this research is important, an analytic focus on pre-service teacher discourses, instructional choices, and institutional discourses does not address the issue of how *teacher educators* intersect with the construction of pre-service teacher identities. Moreover, no scholars have examined how teacher educators’ discourses intersect with pre-service teacher identity performances in university classrooms.

To address this gap in the literature, I conducted action research with pre-service teachers in a literacy methods university course. Specifically, I sought to answer the following research questions: *In what ways do my discourses as a university instructor intersect with the identities pre-service teachers perform in the classroom? What messages about identity are embedded in the discourses I use with pre-service teachers? How do my discourses influence the discourses pre-service teachers use in the classroom?*

As a teacher educator, my goal was for the university classroom to serve as a space in which pre-service teachers could safely explore the complexities of teaching literacy prior to taking on additional roles and responsibilities in elementary classrooms as student teachers. As a result of my research, I present theoretical analysis of how the discourses I used in a teacher education course intersected with pre-service teachers’ development as literacy teachers. By examining multiple data sources from a 14-week semester, my analyses offers a glimpse of the fluid, dynamically evolving, and sometimes conflicting pre-service teacher identity performances, and reoccurring tension points at intersections between myself and pre-service teachers throughout a literacy methods course. Understanding the intersections between teacher educator discourses and pre-service teacher identity development can inform how teacher educators design literacy methods experiences for prospective teachers. My hope was that my research would help teacher educators and literacy researchers better understand how teachers’ discourses intersect with pre-service teachers’ identity constructions.

Review of Literature

The discourses teachers use are essential factors that shape the construction and reconstruction of student identities. Indeed, many studies have attended to the ways that teachers' language and classroom experiences are influential in creating, sustaining, or inhibiting identities among K-12 students (Hall, 2009, 2010, 2012; Handsfield, Crumpler, & Dean, 2010; Harman, 2007; Roche, 2011; Schmidt & Whitmore, 2007; Triplett, 2002, 2007; Wortham, 2003). Some research has documented the ways in which teachers intentionally support the enactment of diverse K-12 student identities (Skerrett, 2012; Rex, 2001). Moreover, a handful of scholars have studied how curriculum programs and institutional Discourses (Gee, 2008) influence the development of K-12 student identities (Brown & Spang, 2008; Dutro, 2009; McCarthey, 2001). However, few scholars have researched the relationship among teachers' language and students' identities in university classrooms, especially methods courses for pre-service teachers. While some have examined the relationship among pedagogies and pre-service teacher identities (Alsup, 2006; Cattley, 2007; Danielewicz, 2001; Moore & Ritter, 2008; Seidl & Conley, 2009), the alignment of pre-service teacher discourses and instructional choices (Assaf, 2005), as well as the development of pre-service teacher identities in the midst of ideological conflicts and institutional discourses (Larson, 2008; Larson & Phillips, 2005; Smagorinsky, Cook, Moore, Jackson, & Fry, 2004), the field of teacher education needs a more cohesive understanding of the relationship between teachers educators' discourses and pre-service teachers' identity performances. The social negotiation of identity, and the concomitant ways identities are constructed from and through language, wields influence in identity construction. In light of the import of identity construction in students' and teachers' lives, their learning, and their relationships maintained in social spaces, teacher education ought to be responsive to how identity may affect both practice and learning.

Theoretical Framework

The intersections among teachers' language and students' identities in university classrooms can be examined through the lenses of Discourses and dialogical views of identity. In the university classroom, pre-service teachers actively construct identities that are complex, dynamic, and multifaceted (Gee, 2008). Social, cultural, and linguistic contexts support the enactment of multiple identities or ways of being (Bakhtin, 1981; Gee, 2008).

Discourses

Gee's (2000) conception of identity encompasses a holistic nature of human expression and the effects of discourse on both bodily world and individual beings. He claimed that when people interact in a given context, others recognize them as certain kinds of people, which can change at a given time and place, from moment to moment, or context to context (Gee, 2000). Being recognized as a certain "kind of person" in a given context is what Gee called *identity*. He (2005) asserted that sociolinguists are interested in how language is used "on site" (p. 7) to enact activities and identities. Gee named these "on site" forms of language as discourse with a little d, "connected stretches of language that make sense, like conversations, stories, reports, arguments, essays, and so forth" (2008, p. 154). He noted that activities and identities are rarely enacted through language alone, and "little d" discourse melds with non-language "stuff" to enact identities through "big D Discourses" (p. 7), which could include one's body, clothes, gestures, beliefs, actions, values, attitudes, and emotions. Gee (2008) maintained that a Discourse is:

a socially accepted association among ways of using language and other symbolic expressions, of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing, and acting, as well as using various tools, technologies, or props that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or 'social network,' to signal (that one is playing) a socially meaningful 'role,' or to signal that one is filling a social niche in a distinctively recognizable fashion. (p. 161)

Everyone is a member of many Discourses, with each Discourse representing one of our multiple identities, "ways of being," or "forms of life" (p. 3). Because Discourses are socially situated identities, they are both *social* and *socially historicized*. Therefore, individuals exhibit multiple, sometimes conflicting identities that are enacted through engagement with others throughout life.

Gee argued that individual language practices and social interactions within particular groups of people are central to identity. He suggested that the human language has two primary functions: 1) it supports the performance of social activities and social identities, and 2) it supports human affiliations within cultures, social groups, and institutions (2005). Thus, we recurrently and actively build and rebuild our worlds through both language and actions, interactions, objects, tools, and distinctive ways of thinking, valuing and believing (Gee, 2005). For Gee, language signals membership in particular groups through

dialogue, negotiation and recognition by others. The recognition of that identity is essential, because as Gee (2000) argued, “One cannot have an identity without some interpretive system underwriting the recognition of that identity” (p. 107). An interpretative system can be a person’s cultural and historical views of nature, or the norms, traditions and rules of institutions. Interpretative systems can also be the discourse and dialogue of others. What is central to identity is that identities can be understood in terms of interpretative systems. People can interpret the same identity trait in different ways, and they can also negotiate and contest how identities are to be seen (Gee, 2000).

Dialogical Views of Identity

Bakhtin (1981) contended for an understanding of self that is dialogical, which resists being characterized as finalized or static. Dialogical views of identity provide a theoretical position that embrace a multiple, fluid and social nature of identity, while concomitantly explaining identity as being unique and individual. For Bakhtin, dialogue is tantamount to the essence of human existence. According to Bakhtin (1981), learning is a social and cultural phenomenon where language serves to organize our experiences and thoughts, while also helping us understand the choices we make and who we become as individuals. Bakhtin purported that who we become as individuals depends on the “process of selectively assimilating the words of others” (p. 341). The spirit of human interactions insinuates the social nature of discourse, where people negotiate and struggle between discourses. This involves not only taking up and receiving words from others, but also responding to them. The act of responding informs our world through others. Meaning is constructed through response and interactions with other beings. This exchange is what Bakhtin called dialogism (Bakhtin, 1981). Language results from meanings and interactions constructed in social relations. Dialogism is central to identity construction because it reminds us that we are always in dialogue with others and our environment through the process of becoming (Assaf, 2005; Britzman, 2003).

In this study, Discourse theories and a dialogical view of identity provides a theoretical position that embraces a multiple, fluid and social nature of identity, while concomitantly explaining identity as being unique and individual. This allows space for pre-service teachers to individually try out and take on fluid identities as they work to shape who they are becoming as future teachers.

Bakhtin (1981) and Gee (2000, 2005, 2008) draw on beliefs regarding the ways in which identities are constructed from and through language. The ways in which pre-service teachers take on identities as developing teachers cannot

be separated from the language used to construct what it means for them to be daughters, sons, siblings, students, etc. Individuals, groups, and institutions all use an array of discourses to construct understandings of the multiple ways of being in the world (Gee 2000, 2005, 2008).

Methods

Context and Participant Selection

In this article, I report on an action research study (McNiff & Whitehead, 2010; Mills, 2011) conducted in *Elementary Literacy Instruction I*, an undergraduate course taught at a public university in the Southeastern United States. Action research in education is a systematic inquiry carried out by teacher researchers, or other stakeholders in the teaching/learning environment to gain insight, develop reflective practice, and improve student outcomes and the lives of those involved in the study (Corey, 1953; Mills, 2011; Stenhouse, 1975). Action research in education is significant because it encourages change in schools, promotes collaboration, and encourages teacher reflection (Mills, 2011). My action research project led me through a cycle of reflective practice where I analyzed the findings of my study to determine how they influenced future action and instruction in my classroom. I hoped that studying my own discourses with my students would lead me to generate new knowledge on effective ways to support pre-service teachers' development in my classroom.

Consistent with Patton's (1990) strategy of purposeful sampling, participants were pre-service teachers in the literacy methods course I taught at the time of the study. The student population enrolled in this course (22 white females, 1 white male, and 1 black male) mirrored pre-service teacher demographics in the United States, where they are mostly white, female, monolingual, and middle class (Howard, 2010).

This was a six credit-hour course that met once a week from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. across a 14-week semester. Within each seven-hour course, I used a range of instructional practices to facilitate learning, including whole group discussions, small group discussions, collaborative, and independent work. The goal of the literacy methods course was to examine and implement key concepts, content, goals, and strategies in teaching reading and language arts in elementary school. Within the education program at the university, methods course instructors drew from a situated learning model where we taught courses on site at local elementary schools so pre-service teachers would have immediate opportunities to translate theory to practice as they studied literacy methods for teaching. I taught the course at a Title I elementary school that was racially and socioeconomically diverse.

Instructional Discourses

The ways in which I planned activities and learning engagements in my classroom sent direct messages to my pre-service teachers about what I valued as a teacher. Because identities are constructed *from* and *through* language, I took into account that my instructional Discourses (Gee, 2005) directly intersected with the opportunities pre-service teachers had to try out and build on (Johnston, 2004) different identities as teachers. The following classroom routines represented the instructional Discourses (Gee, 2005) I drew from as a teacher:

- *Morning meetings*: These brief gatherings provided opportunities for pre-service teachers to ask questions and to share about personal and internship experiences. They also were a place in which I celebrated their learning and shared patterns I noticed across their weekly reflections.
- *Workshop immersion*: Part of becoming a teacher of literacy in this course often included living classroom practices as learners first, such as writer's workshop and literature circles where pre-service teachers participated in experiences similar to those they learned how to use in elementary classrooms.
- *Professional literature discussion groups*: Each week, six pre-service teachers designed a plan for engaging peers in small group conversations surrounding professional literature. They had flexibility and freedom to design literature conversations however they chose; some posed questions derived from readings, while others planned engagements to help peers make connections between literature and their future classrooms (e.g., reading children's books to discuss potential ways to design literacy instruction).
- *Translating theory to practice*: It was important for me to provide pre-service teachers opportunities to critically reflect on how theories and pedagogies converge with classroom practices. Each week in class, pre-service teachers worked one-on-one with a second-grader during reading and writing workshop. Pre-service teachers used kidwatching observations (Goodman, 1985) to understand their children as readers and writers. After each class, pre-service teachers used their kidwatching notes to compose responsive teaching cycles (RTCs) (Mills & O'Keefe, 2006), where they attempted to interpret the meaning of their observations, grounded their interpretations in theory and professional literature, and made decisions on the type of instruction they designed next to support children's literacy progress.

- *Appreciation Circles:* We often closed the day with appreciation circles, where we came together briefly to share out “appreciations” that arose throughout class. I found that it was beneficial to bring closure to our day in this way, as there was a tremendous level of expectation from students in a 6-credit hour course, and appreciation circles often helped alleviate some of the pressure pre-service teachers put on themselves as students.

Data Collection and Analysis

My data collection consisted of: 1) approximately 65 hours of audio recordings from across the semester, with accompanying transcriptions, 2) a teacher journal to account for classroom life experiences (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993), 3) analytic memos, which provided a space for my embodiment of recursive reflexivity (Lather, 2003), 4) course assignments (including professional literature responses, literacy histories, and writer’s notebook entries), 5) RTCs, and 6) email correspondence with pre-service teachers.

I used two different analytical approaches to answer my research questions. On the first level, I conducted thematic analysis where I coded the data using in vivo codes (Saldaña, 2013), which drew from and captured specific language used by pre-service teachers and myself (e.g., “she struggled,” “What do you notice about that?”), descriptive codes (Saldaña, 2013), which assigned labels and provided an account of their topic (e.g., reflecting on student interactions), and pattern coding (Saldaña, 2013), to identify trends and relationships in the data (e.g., describing students via deficit frames, scrutiny of deficit frames). Based on these analyses, I identified smaller portions of data across the study for closer discursive analysis. This approach included Gee’s (2005) Discourse analysis, which allowed me to investigate my language to understand how it intersected with pre-service teachers as they constructed identities. I used two of Gee’s (2005) building tasks, “significance” and “identities,” while looking through my data and asking the questions: 1) How is this piece of language being used to make certain things significant or not and in what ways? and 2) What identity or identities is this piece of language being used to enact? I also used his inquiry tool, “Discourse models,” to ask: What Discourse models are relevant here? What must I, as an analyst, assume that people feel, value, and believe, consciously or not, in order to talk (write), act and/or interact this way?

My study provided me with data that was used formatively and summaratively, and a vast extent of the data collected was used to adapt my instruction during the study (Mills, 2011). This aligns with what McNiff and Whitehead

(2006) purported, that the best action research “becomes real when ideas are linked with action” (p. 13).

Findings

Discursive Intersections: Confronting Deficit Lenses

Marsh (2003) proposed that teacher educators need to understand “that the ways we choose to render our identities as teacher educators provide limits and possibilities for the prospective teachers with whom we work as well as the children who will inhabit their future classrooms” (p. 154), and that we must recognize the discourses that permeate our instruction in order to make choices about the pedagogies we enact in our classrooms. Several discourses permeated my instruction: “bonding,” “relationships,” “deficit (and its avoidance),” “strengths,” “areas for growth,” “reflection,” “responsive(ness),” “support,” “choice,” “engagement,” and “language of pedagogy” (e.g., mini lessons, conferencing, kidwatching, content versus conventions, strategies, meaning making, and data-driven decisions). These discourses intersected with the identities pre-service teachers performed in the classroom. However, even though we thrived in a community where I valued fluid identities, I often experienced tension points between the identities pre-service teachers enacted and the identities I envisioned them taking on as teachers. For the purpose of this article, I will discuss one primary point of dissonance that persisted across the semester: deficit language (e.g., language such as “struggles,” “couldn’t,” “didn’t,” “wasn’t,” “not,” to describe children as learners).

Early in the semester, pre-service teachers began using deficit language to describe their kidwatching interactions with their second graders. In order to help them understand how to outgrow deficit approaches when describing children, I found that I had to systematically reflect on and change my own discourses to embrace more dialogic practices. A dialogic approach in the classroom builds on *learning talk*, talk that actively stimulates learning (Juzwik, Borsheim-Black, Caughlan, & Heintz, 2013). I hoped that this kind of approach with pre-service teachers would help them reflect on their use of deficit language and support one another’s growth as teachers through this process. I sought to help them take on identities as teachers who were advocates for the children with whom they worked. Therefore, it was my responsibility to help them confront and outgrow deficit lenses. I knew that I needed to help them understand the power of language in the ways we describe learners, and how negative language can infiltrate our lenses of the children we teach. During our morning meeting after I noticed this deficit pattern, I engaged them in a discussion on the ways we can frame our observations of children.

Teacher educator/researcher: If you will just listen. And I want you to just notice, I want to hear what you notice. What do you notice from these observations that I share? [Reading] “She struggles reading by herself. He couldn’t find facts quickly. She didn’t keep her eyes on the text. He struggles with writing. He wasn’t quick to answer my questions. He couldn’t come up with words to write. She does not write complete sentences. He’s not a good speller. She does not stay focused.”

Teacher educator/researcher: What do you notice about that?

Alex: [softly] They’re all negative.

Teacher educator/researcher: Say that a little louder.

Alex: They’re all negative [glum tone].

Teacher educator/researcher: They’re all negative. Did you guys notice that? Did anybody else notice that? How does that make you feel when you hear those about a kid? (*silence*, six seconds) What if they were about you? How would that make *you* feel?

Gigi: Like hopeless [inaudible] so much stuff to work on.

Teacher educator/researcher: Maybe a little hopeless, like, gosh, what can I do? Like I have so much to work on, what can I do? So, I want us to start thinking about ways that we can capture what kids *can* do. I always want us to start with what we notice kids can do. Ok. When we start with words like “struggles,” “couldn’t,” “didn’t,” “wasn’t,” “not,” that puts us in a deficit mind frame. And when we’re in a deficit mind frame the language that we use begins to become deficit as well (class transcript, 2.10.15).

I proceeded to help the pre-service teachers understand how to note observations through a strengths based approach by using their examples to guide them on how to note what children *can* do. We went through each deficit example one by one and I asked them to brainstorm ways to build from what children “can’t *yet* do” to name what they could do as learners. I closed our conversation by asking them to think about what Peter Johnston said in the chapter they recently read from *Choice Words*. I said to them:

He [Peter Johnston] said speaking is as much an action as hitting someone with a stick or hugging them. And the same goes with written language as well, ok? So, when we write and say things from a deficit lens,

I want you to think about what happens to us as we reflect on that child as a learner. And I want us to think about trying to change that deficit lens and start building on strengths (class transcript, 2.10.15).

My emphasis on avoiding deficit language sent messages about how I wanted them to develop teaching identities that surrounded a culture of care. I wanted them to understand the power of culturally responsive caring (Gay, 2010), where pre-service teachers could create relationships with children that would “radiate unequivocal beliefs in their promise and possibility” (p. 52). Such a culture must build from strengths and potential, rather than deficits. I deeply cared for both my pre-service teachers and the students they taught, and knew that deficit frames of thinking were detrimental for all involved; though, I also reflected on the notion that the pre-service teachers likely did not deliberately approach their kidwatching observations through a deficit lens.

I used moments such as the one above to help pre-service teachers avoid negativity in the language they used when describing children, and instead embrace children’s potential through interpersonal relationships with children where pre-service teachers could translate strengths and potential into opportunities for success. Such dissonance creates what Fecho (2011) portrays as “wobbling,” where individuals work to understand discrepancies posited by differing belief systems. In essence, a “wobble” draws attention to an alternate response, a change—whether tacit or not. It was my job as a teacher educator to build from deficit related dissonance and help pre-service teachers to experience such a “wobble” in order to confront their beliefs about children and their potential as learners.

Such “wobbling” (Fecho, 2011) led to subtle changes in pre-service teachers’ approaches to describing children. The week after our “deficit language” talk, I noticed that many of them made adjustments in their language when describing their children in their kidwatching notes. For instance, Susie captured observations that described her child’s excitement for books, whereas the week prior she had written that her child “has trouble staying focused when reading.” It was important for me to celebrate small steps with them so they would continue to outgrow deficit mind frames when describing children. Consequently, I wrote celebratory notes on their weekly agendas to applaud their improvement, such as “Kidwatching Notes: [Celebration Emoji] . . . for recording observations that build from students’ strengths and what they *can* do as readers, writers, and learners” (class agenda, 2.17.15). I also sustained dialogic practices in the classroom by engaging pre-service teachers in frequent conversations about their interactions with their second graders. They became accustomed to my prompting of “What

did you notice about your children today?” and “Remember to draw from children’s strengths when describing them as learners.”

While such reflection and dialogic talk helped them embrace more constructive approaches to describing their second graders, they often slipped in and out of deficit frames across the semester. When I noticed that pre-service teachers fell back into framing their kidwatching observations through deficit lenses, I provided direct feedback on alternative ways to reflect on and frame their thinking. For instance, when Natalie wrote in her kidwatching notes one week, “Darrien does not write capital letters at the beginning of his sentences,” I crossed out “does not” and wrote, “Darrien begins his sentences with lower case letters.” I provided new ways for her to view observations throughout her notes and wrote a memo to her at the end, which said, “Take a look above at some places I’ve crossed out and see what you notice. Remember that we want to build on student strengths and notice what they can do.” I continually confronted such deficit dissonance throughout the semester to help pre-service teachers strategically make and remake teacher identities (Lewis, Enciso, & Moje, 2007) that emerged through a constructive lens, rather than a deficit one.

Discursive Transformations: Releasing Deficit Lenses

Through analyzing the ways in which my discourses intersected with pre-service teachers, I noticed that they enacted fluid and diverse identities relative to who they were becoming as teachers. Becoming, in this sense, symbolizes the different aspects that contributed to pre-service teachers’ identities as they merged course experiences and pedagogical knowledge with tangible teaching encounters with children. Paramount to their becoming was, as Britzman (2003) posited, a “scrutiny into what one is doing and who one can become,” *however*, this scrutiny was often missing among pre-service teachers. Therefore, it became essential for me to use discourses that would drive them to scrutinize what they were doing with children as a means of influencing who they were becoming as teachers. Their becoming as teachers shifted as a result of recursive reflections on the ways I nudged them to outgrow deficit language to describe children’s literacy experiences.

Pre-service teachers’ becoming was a recursive process; as they worked to outgrow deficit lenses, they easily tumbled back into negative mind frames. For instance, Lisa, who continually took on fluid identities as a teacher that was constructive at times, while deficit at others, was irritated one day when things did not go well with her second grader. She said aloud to the class, “I can’t even describe how awful today went. Like he started out asking if I knew the names

of some wrestlers and he just got done doing that [for the previous writing piece] so I wasn't getting on to him about it or anything . . . he like just kept getting distracted" (class transcript, 2.24.15). I drew from my repertoire of dialogic talk to open a conversation to the class. I said, "So let's problem solve Lisa's [situation] together as a class. What would you do? What can you say to Lisa to continue to *support* her child?" While I hoped that such a dialogic space would help, I also wanted my emphasis on "support" to trigger constructive suggestions from Lisa's peers. One classmate, Lily, suggested that Lisa could work to make connections so their time together was "a little more personable" because "making small little connections" with her child helped him "open up" and he subsequently became "more interested and engaged." Another peer, Kayla, said that her child was a little disinterested at first as well, so she told him how she was "so excited" to work with him and she tried to make their interactions "fun" to maintain his interest and engagement, which worked for her. After several constructive suggestions from Lisa's peers, I also told the pre-service teachers that it sometimes came with some "trial and error" as they worked to respond to their children in ways "that would work best for them as learners," but that it was important to not lose sight of remaining positive with the children and building from their strengths. I hoped that opening room for such conversations might help not only Lisa, but also other pre-service teachers who may have felt similar frustrations in their position as teacher through their interactions with their second graders. Later in that class, Maggy wrote on her daily reflection, "Deficit mindset. I think it's easy to go to this mindset so being reminded every week not to take this on is helpful" (class reflection, 2.24.15).

Later in the semester, I asked pre-service teachers to look back over all their data on their second graders and record their children's strengths and possibilities for growth as writers on an index card. When I walked around the classroom and looked over their shoulders as they wrote, I noticed some observations written through a deficit lens (e.g., "does not use capitalization/punctuation," "[the student needs to] write better questions-biography interview"). As we transitioned into sharing observations with one another, I reminded them again to be aware of their language when describing children as learners. I said to them, "Remember when you describe your writer to avoid deficit language at all times." I asked them instead to use language that described "strengths" and "possibilities for growth."

Across the course, I continued to work with pre-service teachers to help them build from constructive descriptions of their children as they gained additional practice with kidwatching. By the end of the semester, many pre-service teachers reflected on how they confronted deficit thinking in their final paper, and how this influenced their development as teachers. Cooper, for instance,

reflected on the ways she “unknowingly wrote with a deficit lens” in her kidwatching notes (e.g., “It was difficult for her to write without talking . . . she struggled with spelling”), though she “quickly realized” that meeting children’s needs begins with their strengths as learners (e.g., “She uses her *I’m Not Afraid of My Words* sheet when she is unsure of how to spell a word”). Through Cooper’s realization on the importance of building on strengths, her kidwatching observations began to help her understand how to use constructive observations to “plan future [strengths based] experiences” with her child. Cooper’s reflection demonstrated the ways her becoming as a teacher shifted as she worked to take on more constructive approaches to describing her child as a learner.

Lisa, as shown in aforementioned examples, shifted in and out of identities that were both deficit and constructive when describing her child throughout the semester. I continually confronted the dissonance I experienced when Lisa slipped back into deficit identities as a teacher; we engaged in many conversations about how she could embrace a more constructive lens when reflecting on her instructional interactions with her second grader. In her final paper, she reflected on how she learned to “ensure success” when working one-on-one with children. She wrote:

Before taking this class, I was not sure why I needed to take this class; I believed I knew how to help students with their writing. This class taught me so much about observing students and learning from their behaviors in order to ensure their success. My [second grader] taught me a lot about working one-on-one with a child and using appropriate techniques to ensure their success. I feel more prepared for interacting with my future students in regards to writing and reading (excerpt from final kidwatching project, 4.27.15).

Moje and Lewis (2007) purported that the recognition of literacy practices as social interactions has led “many theorists to recognize that people’s identities mediate and are mediated by the text they read, write, and talk about (Lewis & del Valle, 2009; McCarthey, 2001; McCarthey & Moje, 2002)” (p. 416). However, it was critical for pre-service teachers to not just read, write, and talk about how to build on children’s strengths as literacy learners, but to also *practice* and *reflect* on how to use constructive talk to describe their interactions with second graders. Such practice and reflection served as a pivotal point in their becoming as teachers, which led them to enact identities that were fluid, dynamic, and sometimes conflicting. All the while, I consistently called their

attention to a “wobbling” that would help them engage in authentic reflections on their identities and support their growth as teachers.

Discussion and Implications

This study adds to the gap in literature on how the discourses teacher educators use directly intersect with the development of pre-service teachers as they shift from *student* to *teacher* towards the end their university coursework. The discursive intersections and deficit dissonance identified through this study indicate the importance for teacher educators to create moments for wobbling (Fecho, 2011) in their classrooms, especially as pre-service teachers as take on identities as teachers in educational methods courses.

My discourses that created the wobbling (Fecho, 2011) with my pre-service teachers led me to realization that I needed to find ways to help pre-service teachers embody constructive, rather than deficit, approaches to describing children as learners. In order to accomplish this, I used discourse to encourage pre-service teachers to support one another in embracing such change. I used language such as, “As people share, I’d like for you to listen in and think, what kinds of advice can you give to your peers?”; “What kind of understandings are we beginning to make about this child?”; “How can we support each other in this process [of reflection]?”; “What are your thoughts on this?”; “Let’s problem solve this together as a class.” Through the use of a shift in my language, coupled with intentional wobbling (Fecho, 2011) among my pre-service teachers, I hoped to build a stronger sense of who they were becoming as teachers, while concomitantly helping them outgrow deficit mind frames as teachers. However, this could not have occurred without the “wobble” (Fecho, 2011) I pushed them to experience, whereby I forced them to confront deficit discourses in class discussions and through written reflections.

Teacher educators can use intentional wobbling (Fecho, 2011) in their classrooms to help pre-service teachers engage in reflection regarding their instruction, their decisions as prospective teachers, who they see themselves becoming as teachers, and tension points that arise throughout this process. The ways in which wobbling (Fecho, 2011) can benefit pre-service teachers varies. Some may benefit more by sharing aloud their celebrations and frustrations in order to problem solve collaboratively, while others benefit from listening to reflections from peers and then turning inward to reflect on their own selves as teachers. What matters most, though, is that teacher educators provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to systematically and consistently engage in routine

reflections, where they act as facilitators, listening and responding to reflections and posing thoughtful questions to further support their identity performances as future teachers. Teacher educators can ask themselves questions such as:

1. How did I use intentional wobbling (Fecho, 2011) to provide opportunities for students to reflect on who they see themselves becoming as teachers?
2. How does intentional wobbling provide a chance for students to make changes to who they are becoming as teachers?
3. How did I support students' reflections and/or changes in their performances as teachers?

The use of wobbling (Fecho, 2011), coupled with reflections on how to thwart deficit mind frames among pre-service teachers led to a deeper understanding of how I intersected with the pre-service teachers in my classroom. I was better able to determine who they were becoming as teachers, and how my role as their teacher intersected with their becoming. Teacher educators must reflect on and experiment with our discourses and re-think our pedagogies, just as we ask our students to do, because, as Britzman (2003) eloquently stated, “Learning to teach—like teaching itself—is always the process of becoming.”

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MASTERS AWARD WINNER

UNDERSTANDING REASONING AND ACADEMIC LANGUAGE IN ECONOMICS

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Abstract

Students can learn basic economic concepts and principles to be prepared to fully and effectively participate in a complex global economy as well-informed workers, wise consumers and producers, rational savers and investors, and well-educated citizens. Therefore, fostering an economic way of thinking that requires unique structures, language tools and discourse patterns in the field is essential to help students build economic understanding and reasoning. This paper first addresses national standards for economic education, followed by a discussion of economic reasoning and processes grounded in the expert-novice paradigm. Next, drawing on socio-constructivist and socio-semiotic perspectives, the definition and conceptualization of academic language in existing literature are examined, attending both to academic language patterns across disciplines such as vocabulary and grammar and specific discourse characteristics within economics. In the final section, areas for further inquiry that will contribute to the knowledge base of academic language in economics is suggested.

Introduction

Language is essential in learning and development in which an individual acquires knowledge and skills, negotiates social relationships and self-identities, and is apprenticed into a more complex practice of specific disciplines (Bloom, Carter, Christian, Otto, & Shuart-Faris, 2004; Gee, 1996; Schleppegrell, 2004). In light

of new standards (e.g., Common Core State Standards, C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards, Next Generation Science Standards), it has become increasingly important to address academic language across content areas. For instance, the Common Core State Standards call for teaching academic English (AE) in today's classrooms to cultivate 21st century learners who are competent "in reading, writing, speaking, and listening that are the foundation for any creative and purposeful expression in language" (Standards, 2010, p. 3). Specifically, students who are college and career ready should demonstrate capacities in arguing and reasoning, domain-specific knowledge and literacy skills, critique, and multiple perspectives.

In fact, academic language plays an increasingly essential role in students' knowledge and skills acquisition through teachers, texts and assessments (DiCerbo, Anstrom, Baker, & Rivera, 2014), and is used to convey abstract and complex content and critical thinking (Bailey, Burkett, & Freeman, 2010; Snow & Uccelli, 2009; Solomon & Rhodes, 1995). As students go through upper-elementary and secondary schools, their academic success depends more on their proficiency in domain-specific academic languages, a tool for processing information, critical reasoning, and articulating complex and multifaceted ideas. To that end, academic language becomes one of the critical factors that widen the achievement gap in schools (Wong Fillmore, 2004), as low-performing students are not capable of understanding and mastering the linguistic characteristics of specific disciplines.

A discipline is considered a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Disciplines, as Bazerman (1997) notes, "draw on a common body of resources, cope with the same body of material and symbolic artifacts, master the same tools, and gain legitimacy for any new resources they want to bring into the field by addressing the same mechanisms of evaluation" (p. 305). Besides "domain knowledge" (Rouet, Favart, Britt, & Perfetti, 1997, p. 86), each discipline requires "specialized genre, vocabulary, traditions of communication, and standards of quality and precision" (Shanahan, Shanahan, & Misischia, 2011, p. 395) and literacy skills to shape claims and argumentation (Gee, 1992; Lee & Spratley, 2010; Moje, 2008), and academically perform like a disciplinary expert (Wickens, Manderino, Parker, & Jung, 2015). As articulated in the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards, "Young people need strong tools for, and methods of, clear and disciplined thinking in order to traverse successfully the worlds of college, career, and civic life" (NCSS, 2013, p. 14). However, discourses and practices in disciplinary learning and literacy differ across disciplinary communities. In other words, elements of

evidence-based argumentation such as claims, evidence, principles and inquiry processes vary across disciplines (Moje, 2008; Spires, Kerkhoff, & Graham, 2016; Spires, Kerkhoff, Graham, Thompson, & Lee, 2018).

The complexity of academic language and its manifestations among different disciplines makes it a mystery for many students who fail to understand the patterns and norms of the language used within and across subject areas. Language, as Christie (1985) states, is the “hidden curriculum” (p. 21) of schooling. Culturally and linguistically diverse students suffer from lack of guidance in ways of reading, writing, speaking, and thinking in academic disciplines. Therefore, they may encounter obstacles in comprehending abstract concepts, constructing compelling arguments, and expressing sophisticated opinions. These obstacles, in turn, hinder their interactions with teachers and peers, devalue their voices in class discussions, affect their academic performances in standardized tests and end-of-semester papers. Above all, these groups of students might fail to live up to their potentials and be college and career ready. They need culturally relevant pedagogies and explicit instructional strategies that bridge between their cultural and linguistic heritages and sophisticated thinking and discourse patterns that each discipline demands.

Despite the crucial role of academic language in students’ success (Bailey et al., 2010; Francis, Rivera, Lesaux, Kieffer, & Rivera, 2006), the distinctive characteristics of academic language remain to be explored and expanded. Economics is one area that lacks resources, despite having been identified as one of nine core subject areas in the Goals 2000 Educate America Act.

Students can learn basic economic concepts and principles to be prepared to fully and effectively participate in a complex global economy as well-informed workers, wise consumers and producers, rational savers and investors, and well-educated citizens. Therefore, fostering an economic way of thinking that requires unique structures, language tools and discourse patterns in the field is essential to help students build economic understanding and reasoning.

This paper first addresses national standards for economic education, followed by a discussion of economic reasoning and processes grounded in the expert-novice paradigm. Next, drawing on socio-constructivist and socio-semiotic perspectives, this paper examines the definition and conceptualization of academic language in existing literature, attending to both academic language patterns across disciplines such as vocabulary and grammar and specific discourse characteristics within economics. In the final section, areas for further inquiry that will contribute to the knowledge base of academic language in economics is suggested.

National Standards for Economic Education

Individuals start to develop an economic mindset at an early age, take increasingly more responsibility for their own financial lives in a wide variety of contexts as they mature into adulthood, and navigate the financial landscape as they become consumers, workers, savers, borrowers, and investors at different ages (Council for Economic Education, 2013).

For instance, children learn to save money to buy toys they have been longing for. Facing a tradeoff between wages earned from a part-time job and test scores achieved in school, high school students choose to allocate time rationally. For those who decide to go to college, evaluating and selecting from complex funding packages and projecting the rate of return on their education investment involves sophisticated economic thinking and rational risk-taking. In addition, health care insurances and retirees' pensions add to the complexity of financial decisions that individuals make every day.

Since the 1960s, educational reforms have led to the development of economics content standards and the inclusion of economics in the K-12 curriculum. In recent years, economics as a subject is gaining more attention and popularity. In 1994, economics was identified as one of nine core subject areas in the Goals 2000 Educate America Act. In 1997, the Council for Economic Education (CEE) — then called National Council on Economics Education (NCEE) — developed a voluntary set of content standards of economics for G1-12 (updated version released in 2010) containing 20 essential principles (National Council on Economic Education, 1997). The standards also include a set of benchmarks for grades 4, 8, and 12 that provides the economic reasoning for each standard. In 2013, CEE released the National Standards for Financial Literacy with a specific focus on the body of knowledge and skills that students should learn in a personal finance curriculum. Following a similar format, there are six standards with a set of benchmarks for grades 4, 8, and 12, accommodating students of all socioeconomic statuses with no pre-assumption of prior knowledge. In the same year, the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards was published, of which economics is one of the four core social studies content areas. Economic decision making, exchange and markets, the national economy, and the global economy are four major themes outlined in the framework, divided into achievement levels to be reached by Grade 2, 5, 8, and 12. In practice, there has been modest progress in economic education. In general, these content standards of economics at the national level have provided guidelines for teachers and school districts on economics knowledge and skills that are deemed crucial for students.

Economic Reasoning and Processes

Economic Reasoning

An economic perspective is based upon fundamental assumptions that “All social phenomena emerge from the actions and interactions of individuals who are choosing in response to expected costs and benefits to themselves” (p. 6), pointed out by American economists Paul Heyne, Peter Boettke, and David Prychitko (2006). These assumptions imply that individuals make choices which will collectively be influential at local and/or national levels; choices are made due to internal analysis of costs and benefits (satisfaction) foreseen; rational decision making does not mean outcomes always turn out to be the best due to imperfect information (Harrison, Clark, & Schug, 2017).

The economic way of thinking (EWT) is a set of guiding principles that are commonly used among economic educators and economists and adapted in curriculum publications and student textbooks (CEE, 2000; Schug & Wood, 2011; Wentworth, 1987). The EWT provides an economic lens (Schug & Western, 1990) through which students can understand, analyze, and make sense of personal, daily experiences as well as societal, sophisticated events (Wentworth & Western, 1990), especially when disciplined thinking in economics is counter-intuitive and students are reluctant to give up intuitive but naïve ideas (e.g., Brophy, 1990; Piaget, 1929/2007). Economic reasoning involves both inductive and deductive thinking skills dealing with economic concepts and theories (Baumann, 1996-1997; Wentworth, 1987). The EWT is based on assumptions about human behaviors supported by scientific evidence; it is also applied in the real world to solve an economic problem or predict human behaviors, as opposed to what common sense suggests. Following are guiding principles of the economic way of thinking (CEE, 2000; Harrison et al., 2017; Schug & Wood, 2011; Wentworth, 1987).

1. People make choices because they face scarcity.
2. People’s choices involve costs.
3. People respond to incentives in predictable ways.
4. People create economic systems that influence individual decisions.
5. People gain when they trade voluntarily.
6. People’s choices sometimes create unintended consequences.
7. People make decisions at the margin.

Economic Reasoning Processes

The expert-novice paradigm has been used in cognitive science research to analyze quality performance (Niemi, 1997). An expert is someone who has acquired a great deal of knowledge and/or skills in a given domain. A novice is defined as someone with little or no expertise or knowledge in a particular topic or subject area. Expertise-novice differences lie in knowledge organization, information processing, and abstract generalization and reasoning (Alexander, 1998; Bédard & Chi, 1992; Kalyuga, 2010; Proctor & Dutta, 1995). Such characteristics allow experts to conduct research, propose new perspectives, solve problems, and create new knowledge (Alexander, 1998).

Researchers have inquired into expert-novice reasoning within the discipline of economics. For instance, VanSickle (1992) found that economists (experts), compared with high school students (novices), do not only have a deeper understanding of economic concepts and theories (i.e., declarative knowledge) but also apply the content knowledge more appropriately (i.e., procedural knowledge). In a study conducted by Miller and VanFossen (1994), economists verbalized their thinking process when solving economic problems, which was compared to high school students who went through the same process. Results indicated that procedural knowledge is a critical factor that divides expert and novice thinking in economics.

Watts (2005) claimed that economics requires domain-specific reasoning and problem-solving skills that are not transferable across disciplines. Therefore, economic teachers must not merely concentrate on teaching economic content knowledge, but also teach students to reason economically (Schug & Western, 1990; Siegfried et al., 1991; Wentworth, 1987). Economic teachers should create a learning environment that features authentic, intellectual work (Dewey, 1927) embedded with inquiry-based activities that solve current, real-world problems.

Thinking economically helps individuals to rationalize their choices when it comes to important life decisions. Harrison et al. (2017) proposed a framework to conceptualize and operationalize economic reasoning processes. Aligned with the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001), economic reasoning ability is cultivated through learning foundational economic principles. Next, learners deepen their understandings of economic principles, and it follows that learners apply what they have acquired in real-world cases to test economic principles and explore the affordances and constraints of principles. Finally, students gain the ability to synthesize economic principles into their mental toolbox that they use to solve economic problems in daily life, and interpret and predict human behavior. Only by addressing all four cognitive skills in a sequence should students be able to master economic reasoning ability.

Another framework that guides economic reasoning in high school economics courses is the decision-making model, or the “economic method” (Buckles, 1987, p. 164). Embedded in the cost-benefit analysis and grounded in scientific method, this method breaks down economic reasoning process into five steps.

1. Identify the problem.
2. List options available to the decision makers (e.g., individuals, companies, and governments).
3. Clarify primary goals to target before evaluating the options.
4. Examine each option by analyzing corresponding consequences based on the determined goals.
5. Choose the option that best addresses the targeted goals (Buckles, 1987).

Academic Language

Theoretical Framework

This paper is grounded in both socio-constructivist and functional linguistic perspectives, from which language is viewed as a cultural, cognitive and semiotic tool to construct and present domain-specific knowledge.

Social constructivists believe that learning is a process of internalization through which social activities evolve into internal mental activities (Ormrod, 2016). Vygotsky (1978, 1986) proposed that language mediates an individual’s learning and development in social contexts. Literacy bridges the inner world and outside world to apprentice children into socially and culturally grounded activities that result in effectiveness and efficiency in daily life. Language, serving as the instrument of both social interactions (cultural tool) and verbal thoughts (cognitive tool), is essential in the learning process. The learner first internalizes the cultural tool (the academic language), makes it his/her cognitive tool to learn knowledge and skills, and then constructs meaning (Leont’ev, 1981; Scott, 1997).

Another theoretical underpinning of this view lies in systemic functional linguistics (SFL), which states that language is a “social semiotic” system (Halliday, 1978). Any type of communication involves making choices available in the system concerning the cultural context and social situation. Halliday (1978) claimed that language is functional, semantic (making meaning), and semiotic (selecting from a variety of options to make meaning) in social and cultural contexts.

From a functional linguistics perspective (e.g., Halliday & Hasan, 1989; Schleppegrell, 2004), the lexical and grammatical characteristics of language vary across different purposes, audience, and disciplines. In academic settings, a specific register is needed to create a common frame of reference in a learning environment (Schleppegrell, 2012), as opposed to the one for daily social interactions. In addition, academic texts and social interactions in the school context reveal discourse patterns and language characteristics of a specific discipline (Schleppegrell, 2009), in which “specialized genre, vocabulary, traditions of communication, and standards of quality and precision” are negotiated (Shanahan et al., 2011, p. 395) in the community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Definition and Conceptualization of Academic Language

Academic language, in the broadest sense, refers to the language used in school or other educational settings to acquire knowledge and skills as well as articulate complex ideas (Anstrom et al., 2010; Bailey & Heritage, 2008; Chamot & O’Malley, 1994; Schleppegrell, 2004). Nonetheless, due to a wide range of research approaches guided by theoretical and disciplinary orientations, a comprehensive definition of it remains to be seen. The notion “academic language” in this paper refers to the following terms in the literature: the language of education (Halliday, 1994); the language of school (Schleppegrell, 2001); advanced literacy (Colombi & Schleppegrell, 2002); scientific language (Halliday & Martin, 1993); or, in the context of American education, academic English (Bailey, 2007; Scarcella, 2003).

Historically, academic language is grounded in Cummins’ dichotomy of language acquisition and use (Cummins, 1979, 2000; Scarcella, 2003). In his original work, Cummins (1980, 1981) distinguished social language (BICS) as basic, concrete and informal, which is more often used at home, with friends, and during leisure time to build relationships; academic language (CALP), on the other hand, is complex, abstract, and formal, and commonly used at school, with teachers, and during school time to acquire knowledge and skills. Hence, social language (BICS) is supported by other communication elements (e.g., facial expressions, objects) and contextual cues to articulate meaning, whereas academic language (CALP) stands on its own. In his words, the role of context in language is “illustrated in the different registers required for success in university English literature courses as compared to success as a stand-up comedian” (p. 55).

As Snow and Uccelli (2009) suggested, academic language is contingent upon the context of its use, namely “in school, in writing, in public, in formal settings” (p. 112). Scarcella (2003) defines academic English as “a variety or register

of English used in professional books and characterized by the linguistic features associated with academic disciplines” (p. 9). Similarly, attending to school as a context, Chamot and O’Malley (1994) considers it as “the language that is used by teachers and students for the purpose of acquiring new knowledge and skills . . . imparting new information, describing abstract ideas, and developing students’ conceptual understanding” (p. 40). Rather than a dichotomous view of academic and social languages, Snow (2010) conceptualizes the distinction as a continuum. In her words,

There is no exact boundary when defining academic language; it falls toward one end of a continuum (defined by formality of tone, complexity of content, and degree of impersonality of stance), with informal, casual, conversational language at the other extreme. (p. 450)

Other views of academic language have emerged as well. For instance, Dutro and Moran (2003) defined academic language proficiency as the capacities to make and communicate meaning through oral and written language that features a range of genres and linguistic strategies to facilitate sophisticated thinking. In their metaphor, academic language as a toolbox consists of thinking and language skills to decode and encode complex ideas (Díaz-Rico & Weed, 2002). Another definition views academic proficiency as “knowing and being able to use general and content-specific vocabulary, specialized or complex grammatical structures, and multifarious language functions and discourse structures—all for the purpose of acquiring new knowledge and skills, interacting about a topic, or imparting information to others” (Bailey, 2007, pp. 10–11).

Linguistic Features

Academic language, as previously discussed, is difficult to define as it is abstract, complex and varies across contexts (e.g., audiences, disciplines, grade levels, situations). Numerous studies have investigated approaches to conceptualize and operationalize academic language used in the content area classrooms. For instance, Bailey and colleagues (Bailey, Butler, Borrego, LaFramenta, & Ong, 2002; Bailey, Butler, & Sato, 2007; Bailey, Butler, Stevens, & Lord, 2007) discovered three aspects that in which academic language is distinctive: “the lexical or academic vocabulary level, the grammatical or syntactic level, and the discourse or organizational level” (Bailey, 2007, p. 3). Building upon this conceptualization, Bailey and colleagues (Bailey & Butler, 2002, 2007; Bailey et al., 2007) further explored the use of academic language in mainstream, upper-elementary

classes by using multiple sources and created an initial framework of academic language for student success.

Drawing from Kern's (2000) theoretical model of academic literacy, Scarcella (2003) provides a conceptual framework for language proficiency from kindergarten to postsecondary level, which consists of five essential elements: phonological, lexical, grammatical, sociolinguistic, and discourse. Scarcella's (2003) examines academic language from linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural/psychological perspectives, highlighting capacities other than linguistic competency that also have influenced language proficiency. In the same line of thought, Snow and Uccelli (2009) offers an inventory of linguistic features that are embodied in the use of social and academic language: "interpersonal stance, information load, organization of information, lexical choices, and representational congruence" (p. 118). Considering contextual factors, Snow and Uccelli (2009) claimed that "communication goals are seen as driving decisions about specifics of expression" (p. 122).

Other than developing conceptual frameworks of academic language, researchers have also disaggregated the construct and examined the corresponding linguistic features. This section aims to identify linguistic characteristics (vocabulary, grammar, and discourse) of academic language that are common across the disciplines. Within the area of discourse, the features that are distinctive in economics are explored.

Vocabulary. First and foremost, vocabulary has been highlighted as an essential component of academic language. Academic vocabulary refers to words students should master in order to learn concepts within the context of a discipline and demonstrate their understandings of these concepts. By analyzing authentic texts, Coxhead (2000) created an academic word list and proposed that specialized vocabulary is an essential feature of academic texts. An investigation of a collection of written academic texts from college disciplines yields a list of 570 word families that are commonly used across subject areas in postsecondary schools or before that level. Some researchers have developed a three-tier hierarchy that describes vocabulary. Initially developed by Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2002) and adapted by Calderón et al. (2005), the framework categorizes vocabulary as nonacademic (e.g., tree, run), general academic (e.g., hence, explain), and domain-specific (e.g., scarcity, diameter).

Grammar. From a functional linguistic perspective, grammar is "a dynamic system of linguistic choices that students learn to use to accomplish a wide variety of social, academic, and political goals in and out of school" (Gebhard, Harman, & Seger, 2007, p. 421). Linguists have identified some

language patterns that are commonly used in academic texts (Schleppegrell, 2009). First, academic texts contain many lengthy and complex sentences made up of clauses and conjunction words (e.g., nonetheless). Second, the complexity of academic genres also lies in the noun phrases embedded with clauses (e.g., societies whose living standards drop experience higher levels of stress; Schleppegrell, 2009). Finally, frequent use of nominalization of a verb or adjective adds to the complexity of academic texts (e.g., rationalization).

Discourse. Discourse is considered as “any extended piece of language beyond the sentence level and to typical verbal and written interactions within academic disciplines” (DiCerbo et al., 2014, p. 454). Each discipline is considered a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991), in which “specialized genre, vocabulary, traditions of communication, and standards of quality and precision” is negotiated (Shanahan et al., 2011, p. 395) to shape knowledge claims and argumentation (Gee, 1992; Lee & Spratley, 2010; Moje, 2008). The goal of academic texts is to be clear, objective, sophisticated, and well-organized (Snow, 1987). However, discourses and practices in disciplinary learning and literacy differ across disciplinary communities. In other words, elements of evidence-based argumentation such as claims, evidence, principles and inquiry process vary across disciplines (Moje, 2008).

Several researchers have suggested discourse structures in economics. For example, Allen and Pholsward (1988) discussed discourse patterns that exhibit the following features: (a) economic concept/theory/argument, (b) explanation with examples, (c) illustration with graphics, and (d) a summary or restatement of the concept/theory or argument.

Economic reasoning is based upon a repertoire of domain-specific concepts, theories, and models mediated through academic language, which involves not only specific vocabulary and grammar, but also discourse patterns and visual communication (charts, diagrams, tables, and graphs) to illustrate statistical data and mathematical models. Data literacy, therefore, is an essential skill as data serves as co-text of prose (Royce, 1999) that contains a wealth of quantitative information that economists heavily rely on. Economists apply models and gather data to find scientific evidence in support of their assumptions, to analyze the current state of the economy, as well as predicting future economic situations and make suggestions.

Yuan (2017) found that economists tend to make comparisons and/or correlations among major economic variables in a series of economic events when they investigate an economic phenomenon. While reading charts to analyze trends in data, economists use caution to make “apple-to-apple” comparisons

and distinguish an increase at a decreasing rate from a decrease. Based upon available data, economic expert readers look for causes and subsequent consequences of an economic phenomenon, and attempt to interpret interconnected events through a causal story.

Despite the scarcity of relevant literature documenting the integration of disciplinary literacy instructions in traditional economics lessons, one study demonstrated the effectiveness of a similar teaching approach at the college level. In an inquiry conducted in a Canadian university, ten international students taking introductory economics had a larger vocabulary, deeper economic understanding and increased language proficiency after participating in discipline-specific language instruction (Nguyen, Williams, & Trimarchi, 2015).

Conclusions and Future Research Directions

Economic concepts and principles are essential in preparing students for economic opportunities and challenges in their future lives. The economic way of thinking provides an economic lens through which students can understand, analyze, and make sense of personal, daily experiences as well as societal, sophisticated events. The reasoning and problem-solving skills in economics are not transferable across disciplines. The economic reasoning is based upon a repertoire of domain-specific concepts, theories, and models mediated through academic language, which involves not only specific vocabulary and grammar, but also discourse patterns and visual communication (e.g., charts, diagrams, tables, and graphs) to illustrate statistical data and mathematical models. Data literacy, therefore, is an essential skill as data serves as co-text of prose that contains a wealth of quantitative information that economists heavily rely on to understand the causes and consequences of an economic event. Given the importance of economic understanding and language, there is limited literature on discipline-specific literacy instruction that promotes student success in learning economics. For instance, there is lack of research on evidenced-based teaching practice on academic language in pre-collegiate economics classes. More empirical studies are needed to investigate the effectiveness of discipline-specific literacy instruction in economics in K-12 grade levels.

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ENGAGING
ALL READERS
THROUGH
LITERACY,
LANGUAGE,
AND CULTURE:
INNOVATIVE
AND SEMINAL
STRATEGIES FOR
TEACHERS AND
TEACHER-LEADERS

“THERE MIGHT BE WORDS ON THE SCREEN, BUT IT’S NOT THE SAME”: ENGAGING TWEENS IN LITERACY THROUGH *MINECRAFT* BOOK GROUPS

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Abstract

Tweens’ figured worlds of literacy and videogames were analyzed within a researcher-led book group of ten tweens who met twice weekly during summer school language arts instructional time. Participants read a book related to the videogame Minecraft as well as another videogame-related novel. The study followed a qualitative case study design, with all book group meetings and focus group meetings audio recorded, transcribed, and coded. Themes that emerged include students’ connections, prior knowledge, in-school/out-of-school literacies, and perceptions of literacy and videogames. These findings provide support that tweens separately categorize what they view as traditional books versus fanfiction and videogaming paratexts. In turn, tweens’ distinct figured worlds related to literacy and gaming problematize the ways in which tweens layer literacies; they do not necessarily explicitly recognize these connections. This outcome holds implications for educators regarding ways to support students as they engage with a variety of texts, including multimodal texts.

Introduction

With the advent of Web 2.0, teachers have continued to focus effort on incorporating technology into their classrooms in ways that transform teaching and learning. In response to these technological advancements, our definition of literacy has also evolved (Alvermann & Hinchman, 2012; Antonacci & O’Callaghan,

2011). Not only do we as literacy educators and researchers focus on written/printed messages, but we also consider digital texts (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996/2006). Within our digital world, students produce and consume a variety of information in the form of smart phone text messages, websites, social media, and online videos. These multimodal representations of ideas can be used to hook students' interest and to facilitate learning (e.g., Abrams, 2015; Alvermann, 2010; Jenkins, 2006; Stufft, 2013).

A key category of the new literacies is videogames and the paratexts (e.g., game walkthroughs and fanfiction) associated with gaming. Videogames are recognized not only as a form of literacy (Gee, 2007), but as one that is engaging and may promote students' interest in and achievement related to literacy (Gerber, 2009; Steinkuehler, 2010). Videogames are not only about the actual game-play; rather, they also include a wide range of practices within the game, such as "modding" (i.e., making a modification to the game), as well as beyond the game (e.g., fanfiction writing; Annetta, 2008). While many researchers and educators recognize the role of videogames in the classroom and the potential of videogames in promoting literacy and learning, still some teachers (pre-service and in-service) and administrators continue to be slow to embrace the potential of videogames in the classroom (Gerber & Price, 2013; Halverson, 2005; Rice, 2007). Researchers recognize videogames as an important form of literacy (e.g., Gee, 2007; Gerber, 2009; Steinkuehler, 2010), and today's youth continue to engage in this medium (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2010), which makes it important to consider the ways in which videogames promote literacy and to examine ways in which videogames may be used within traditional school settings to foster students' literacy practices. This research was guided by the question: In what ways are tweens' figured worlds of literacy and gaming evidenced through book group discussions of a videogame text and a videogame-related text?

Theoretical Framework

The focus of this study is tweens' figured worlds of literacy and gaming, based upon the concept of figured worlds (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998; Gee, 2011). I have positioned the study through the lens of reader response theory (Rosenblatt, 1978), tethered to social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978). Figured worlds refer to the simplified manner in which individuals navigate what is considered customary in their day-to-day lives. Gee (2011) further explains that figured worlds are "(often unconscious) theories and stories that we humans use to understand and deal with the world" (p. 63).

Reader response theory (Rosenblatt, 1978) underscores the role of each reader's unique background knowledge and experiences as part of the meaning-making interaction with a given text. This theory sheds light on the reason why a classroom of students can read the same book yet have diverse reactions to characters, plot events, and passages within the text. Since students each have individualized life experiences, distinct personalities, and different levels of background knowledge, it is no surprise that their reactions to a given story differ from one another through the interpretive lens of reader response theory. A central tenet of the transactional theory of reader response is that an interaction takes place among reader, author, and text (Hancock, 1993; Rosenblatt, 1978). When considering tweens' figured worlds of literacy and gaming, it is vital to acknowledge that students may approach their traditional, school-related literacy activities much differently than they approach their non-academic gaming activities, even if both sets include elements of literacy. Book group discussions can be an ideal context to provide students with the opportunity to share their reactions to the book while also sharing individual connections with videogames.

In addition to figured worlds and reader response theory, this study is also framed by social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978), as it recognizes the importance of social interaction as part of learning. It provides support for the type of learning that takes place through literacy-based book group discussions. Since "literacy as a communicative practice is inherently social" (Wolfe & Flewitt, 2010, p. 387), book groups provide a space for students to discuss their reading and learn through social interactions. It is necessary to acknowledge the role of social interactions within book group discussions that allow tweens to learn from one another as they share both reading and gaming experiences.

Review of Related Literature

When considering tweens who are avid gamers, educators and researchers must attend to the ways in which students' individual background knowledge of and experiences with videogames may be part of the natural layering of literacies they demonstrate within their discussions. The concept of figured worlds provides insight related both to the ways that students layer literacies and also to the ways that they may dichotomize their videogame literacy practices from their academic literacy practices. The fast-paced changes evidenced in the technology sector provide a reminder that the digital tools available for educators have not always kept pace with students' non-academic uses of technology. Nonetheless, our definition of literacy has expanded from the idea of written or printed text to also encompass an array of digital media. Our K-12 students are frequent

users of text messages, websites, social media, and other Web 2.0 affordances. Further, today's teachers can turn to non-print-based texts to engage students in classroom learning (Abrams, 2015; Kajder, 2010; Stufft, 2013). As Abrams (2015) explains, layered literacies involve connections "between out-of-school and in-school literacies . . . rather than compartmentalized" or isolated treatment (p. 7). In relation to videogames, gamers may not consider the many ways that they layer literacies (Abrams, 2015; Stufft, 2016) naturally as part of their literacy practices since activities such as fanfiction writing may be viewed as part of the game, rather than as a facet of literacy.

Although many educators have warmed to the idea of videogame-based writing and discussion within language arts classes, few teachers tend to bring gaming into the classroom (Gerber, Abrams, Onwuegbuzie, & Benge, 2014; Mifsud, Vella, & Camilleri, 2013). Aside from educators' views of the value of videogames, our students dedicate significant amounts of time to playing videogames. Specifically, over 90% of United States youth age 18 or younger play videogames (NPD Group, 2011), with the highest percentages in the teenage population (i.e., 99% of males and 94% of females; Lenhart, et al., 2008). These youths spend on average over 70 minutes daily engaged in videogame-play (Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2010).

Kafai and Fields (2013) note that today's youth "play in the new digital publics" (p. 2) that are composed of virtual spaces such as those offered by online worlds such as *Whyville* or online games such as *Minecraft*. We know that videogames are a part of daily life for the majority of U.S. youth, yet these young gamers may not recognize the literacy activities they participate in as part of their gaming. Additionally, teachers may not recognize or incorporate the literacy practices associated with videogames into the classroom. Further research is needed to investigate tweens' figured worlds related to videogames and literacy in order to gain insight regarding pre-adolescents' conceptualizations of in-school literacy practices and out-of-school literacy practices as a way to increase awareness of tweens' categorizations of different practices associated with literacy.

Methodology

Context

This study's purpose was to investigate tweens' figured worlds of literacy and videogames, including a consideration of their conceptualizations of in-school or academic literacy (e.g., book group participation) and out-of-school literacy (e.g., videogames). As part of their book group participation, students read

two books: *Minecraft Adventures: Herobrine Rises* (Stuart, 2013) and *The Nerdy Dozen* (Miller, 2014); the former is directly based on a videogame, while the latter is videogame-related but not based on a game in existence. *Minecraft* (Mojäng Aktiebolag, 2009) was chosen as the videogame to connect with the book group reading because it is a popular videogame (Parker, 2014; Schlinsog, 2013) which is receiving more attention in educational contexts (e.g., Barack, 2013; Bilton, 2013; Daly, 2012; Gauquier & Schneider, 2013; Jenkins, 2014; Short, 2012; Tromba, 2013). When considering ways to engage tweens in reading, it is imperative to consider a variety of reading material (Miller & Kelley, 2013) and to allow students time to read books of interest to them (Lesesne, 2006; Miller, 2009). Through book group discussions, the tweens engaged not only in discussions of the books but also in discussions of their ongoing videogame-play.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data methods. Data collection took place in a Title I rural public school in Central Texas as part of a summer instructional program; within the school, I used purposive sampling (Johnson & Christensen, 2012) to identify tweens to participate in the book group. This research followed a qualitative case study design (Yin, 2014) focused on 6th grade students who participated in a videogame-related book group. Data collection began with a survey that included questions about the types of videogames students play (e.g., RPG – role-playing games), as well as a specific question focused on whether or not students play *Minecraft*. The survey also included a Likert question asking students to rate their interest in participating in the videogame book group. This question was of particular importance since one of the two titles the students read in the book group was related to *Minecraft*. As such, it was necessary for students to have background knowledge of *Minecraft* in order to provide insight regarding their figured worlds of the videogame text versus the videogame-related text. Students were identified based on whether they had previous experience/familiarity with *Minecraft* and based on their self-reported interest in participating in the book group.

Participants. The ten students who participated in this study were all 6th graders during the data collection period; following completion of the summer program, the students would be classified as rising 7th graders. Seven of the participants were male, and three were female. Six participants were White, three participants were Hispanic, and one participant was Black. Within this group,

eight students were identified as economically disadvantaged. All of the students self-identified as *Minecraft* gamers, and all indicated an eight or higher (out of ten) interest in the book group.

Data collection. I collected data twice per week for a four-week period of time as part of a summer instructional program. Data collection occurred during designated language arts instructional time. I met with the students initially to present a book talk for each of the two books and to have students vote on which book to read first. I returned each time thereafter to meet with students to facilitate book group discussions, each of which lasted approximately 30 minutes. My role was to prompt discussion when there was a lull but to otherwise allow students to lead the dialogue and converse with one another. As part of each book group discussion, students shared their questions and connections, including connections with videogames and pop culture. I met with the book group a total of 7 times, with one additional meeting for focus groups. Each discussion was audio recorded and then transcribed.

Data analysis. I coded the transcripts following Saldaña's (2013) guidelines. Specifically, I used descriptive coding, process coding, and *In Vivo* coding during the first cycle, which resulted in the following themes: videogame connections, prior knowledge, in-school/out-of-school literacies, text-to-self connections, text-to-text connections, text-to-world connections, layered literacies, paratexts, videogame content, videogame communities, interest, and family involvement. I used pattern coding and axial coding for the second cycle, which produced the following: connections, prior knowledge, in-school/out-of-school literacies, and perceptions of literacy and videogames.

Findings

In the course of book group conversation, students juxtaposed instances from the books with their own game-play, moving quickly and smoothly from game-based connections to book-based connections as they naturally layered literacies within the context of discussion. By contrast, when asked if they approached the two books in the same way, the students responded with a resounding no; the *Minecraft* book was part of the game, whereas the videogame-related book was approached with an intentionally analytic perspective. The nuances in these tweens' responses are explored in the following sections according to the themes: Connections, prior knowledge, in-school/out-of-school literacies, and perceptions of literacy and videogames.

Connections

Aside from making connections between the two book group texts, students connected each text separately to other books and also to paratexts. An example of this type of connection is provided below (all names are pseudonyms):

- 01 – Harley:** When I play, like, hard games, I use the FAQ sites and walkthroughs so I know what to do. And, well, I was like, why don't they [the characters in *The Nerdy Dozen*] do that for *Chameleon* [a videogame mentioned in the book]?
- 02 – Brayden:** Yeah, that would've helped! But they didn't have that [a walkthrough] because the game was top-secret.
- 03 – Trey:** But they could've made one.
- 04 – Brayden:** No, because you don't like make a walkthrough for a beta, and you can't do a walkthrough for everything like a simulator because it's not going to be the same for everyone. So they could do like troubleshooting maybe, but the game doesn't let them make a full walkthrough.
- 05 – Devin:** Yeah, like you can't really have a walkthrough for *Minecraft*. 'Cause everyone plays different. It's not the same. Like, I think there are actual walkthroughs online, but they're not walkthroughs for real, they're just like tips and hints and stuff.
- 06 – Harley:** But there's one for *Minecraft: Story Mode*!
- 07 – Brayden:** Well, yeah, but that's different.
- 08 – Researcher:** How so?
- 09 – Brayden:** Well *Story Mode* has like these episodes and stuff. Like, you go through them in order. But in creative mode, I could be like, I'm just gonna go over here and build a wall, and someone else could be like, I'm gonna build a house and put up fence for animals, and both ways are okay. Like, you don't have to do one or the other, so a walkthrough doesn't really matter then.

In 01 above, one student mentions the use of paratexts, including walkthroughs (i.e., step-by-step directions for how to go through each level, quest, mission, etc. of a videogame from the start of the game until completion). The topic initially focuses on the videogame-related text in lines 01-03, then students move between the book to *Minecraft* and *Minecraft: Story Mode*, as well as sharing their

own general knowledge of walkthroughs. Students were able to connect with the book but also to other aspects of their gaming lives. In this sense, their connections show a layered literacies approach to discussing and analyzing text.

Prior Knowledge

In the excerpt included in the previous section, students' prior knowledge of walkthroughs contributed to their discussion of *The Nerdy Dozen* and their connections between the text and *Minecraft*. Students also relied on prior knowledge pertaining to content within the books.

- 01 – Trey:** You know how they [the characters in *The Nerdy Dozen*] play *Chameleon* all the time, and then they like can use that to help them really fly later? Well, it reminded me of *Birds of Steel* [a flight simulator videogame].
- 02 – Morgan:** Oh, I've played that.
- 03 – Trey:** Yeah, me too. But I was thinking, like, just because I played it doesn't mean I can jump in a plane and fly. Like I play *GTA* [*Grand Theft Auto*], and I mean, I kinda know how to drive a car, but I don't know if I could drive like down a highway or something. So anyway, like when we learn about altitude and G-force and stuff in math and science, like you need that knowledge too, not just the sim game. But the sim game is how you can try to like make that stuff make sense I guess.
- 04 – Mariella:** Yeah, but can you imagine? Like, you're going home and some car pulls up and the guy is like "Hey, kid. We need you to come fly a top-secret plane." I mean, like, that's not gonna happen.
- 05 – Brayden:** But that would be so awesome!
- 06 – Mariella:** Sure, but it's not realistic. Like, my brother's in the Marines, and he didn't like just get in because he played *Call of Duty* or whatever. He had to do all kinds of training and learn a lot before he could do anything.

This portion of the conversation begins with a connection in 01 between a fictional videogame mentioned in the videogame-related book and a flight simulator videogame that several students had previously played. In 03, one student makes an explicit connection between prior knowledge from science and math classes with simulation videogames. In lines 04 and 06, another student uses

prior knowledge from her life experiences to question aspects of the book. The above excerpt also provides insight regarding the ways that book group members quickly move back and forth from a book to a videogame to life experiences, drawing on prior knowledge and seamlessly connecting the different sources of information as part of one ongoing discussion.

In-School/Out-of-School Literacies

As evidenced above, students layered literacies as they made fluid connections between books, content from school classes, life experiences, and videogames within the arc of conversation during book group meetings. At the same time, students also indicated perceived differences between literacies associated with school and those not associated with academic tasks.

01 – Carlos: I liked *The Nerdy Dozen* a lot. But I liked *Herobrine Rises* because it was more of like what I would do myself.

02 – Researcher: In what way?

03 – Carlos: Well, it's like, I can just play *Minecraft*. And it's not about trying to like make note of stuff or try to figure out what's going on. Like, I'm just in the game.

04 – Researcher: Is that different from *The Nerdy Dozen*?

05 – Carlos: Yeah. With that [*The Nerdy Dozen*], I was trying to remember which character was which and trying to figure out like whether you could trust all the characters. And it was a little confusing at first when they were on, like, the island and there was that pizza place. I don't know. I just felt like I could relax more with *Herobrine Rises*.

In the above excerpt, Carlos mentions how he focused differently on the videogame-related text (lines 03 and 05) in order to monitor comprehension, whereas the videogame text put him “in the game” (line 03) and allowed him to “relax more” (line 05). While the student indicates that he enjoyed both books (line 01), he also makes a clear distinction between his approach to the videogame-related text, such as feeling the need to “make note of” important information versus being “just in the game” while reading the videogame text. In this sense, Carlos has a figured world for in-school literacies that involves taking notes and intentionally seeking out information to aid comprehension, whereas his figured world for out-of-school literacies allows for a more immersive, natural state of being “in the game” rather than focusing on particular aspects.

Perceptions of Videogames and Literacy

In addition to the student observation in the previous section regarding different approaches to the videogame text versus the videogame-related text, other students also shared perceptions of videogames and literacy. Although in the flow of discussion, students' conversation clearly indicated a layering of literacies as they made connections and reflected critically on videogames and the books, students did not self-report the presence of such a connection. Within the focus groups, I asked students about the ways they approached each book, which book they preferred, and whether they observed connections between literacy and videogames.

- 01 – Noah:** I mean, they're both books, but like this [*The Nerdy Dozen*] made a movie in my head while I read, and I had to really think about the characters and where they were and what it might look like. But this [*Herobrine Rises*] was kind of a movie in my head, too, but not my own movie because I already know what *Minecraft* looks like.
- 02 – Devin:** It's like, books have to be really good to help you have a movie in your head while you read them. And sometimes those books get made into movies for real, and that's cool. But a book would have to be written really, really well to get made into a videogame. Because there's so much more in the game that goes on. And it's like, I can study a book. But I have to just play a videogame to understand it.
- 03 – Morgan:** Well, for me, I can play videogames at home, but usually mainly just on weekends. Sometimes Fridays. But I can read whenever. Like my mom is always asking if I'm supposed to be reading something for school. But she wouldn't let me play [a videogame] for school.
- 04 – Jaime:** Yeah! I can't play videogames until my homework is done, unless I'm at my grandma's house.
- 05 – Jakob:** Well, it's about videogames already giving you a picture to focus on. But I think then you have to think more. Because it's like, okay, I already see what it looks like. So what else am I supposed to do? But I guess with books, you have to make the picture to help you see all the pieces. I don't know. For me, I'd rather play videogames, even though I used to like reading a lot. It's just that now we have to read all this stuff, and it's not always that interesting. With videogames, I can pick what I like.

06 – Brayden: Yeah, I don't really think it's [videogames and literacy] the same thing. I mean, there are lots of games when you've gotta read what's on the screen or read a map or whatever. But it's not like I'm reading, it's just part of the game. But with books, like our Accelerated Reader points, we have to read to pay attention to do good on the quiz after. But then it's over. With games, like there might be words on the screen, but it's not the same.

In the above conversation, one student indicates that, although the videogame text and the videogame-related text are “both books” (line 01), they also are not the same to him, partly because of the multimodal nature of videogames, which involves the presentation of images. In line 02, another student takes this point further to state that, in his opinion, a book has to be well-written to be made into a movie and even more well-written to be made into a videogame because “there's so much more in the game that goes on.” (See Stufft, 2016 for a separate discussion of the ways that layering literacies can involve discussion of literary elements and game elements). In lines 03 and 04, two students share that at-home parental perceptions clearly separate videogames from what is considered school-related content. The importance of student choice/interest in selecting books (Lesesne, 2006) is apparent in the student comment in line 05, with the student indicating that his interests drive his game-play selections but are not given as much value in book selections during the school day. Finally, one student clearly states that he does not consider literacy and videogames in the same category (line 06). Interestingly, this student goes on to mention the presence of literacy practices within a videogame yet dichotomizes literacy separately from videogames through the declaration: “But it's not like I'm reading, it's just part of the game.” In this sense, the student holds a figured world of literacy that does not overlap with his figured world of videogames. The acknowledgment that videogames might involve reading was echoed by other students, but all continued to dismiss this presence of literacy as simply part of the game, providing support that the tweens' figured worlds of literacy and videogames diverge.

Discussion

The data from book group discussions provide insight into tweens' figured worlds of literacy and gaming, including their views of a videogame text compared to a videogame-related text. Through their conversations, students shared ways that they connected with both of the books that we read. In particular, students often

made connections between the books and videogames they had played, indicated by a natural tendency to layer literacies as part of text discussion. Students also shared examples of ways that they relied on prior knowledge, including prior knowledge of/from videogames to support their comprehension of the books. Although students layered literacies in ways that show fluid movement between offline (e.g., the videogame-related book) and online (e.g., videogame walkthroughs) spaces, the students were hesitant to classify videogames as part of school. Furthermore, they considered not only videogames, but also the videogame text, to be separate from their notions of school-based reading, whereas the videogame-related text was approached in a similar manner to books they might be assigned to read.

Even though their discussion provides evidence of the ways that students connect videogames, texts, and background experiences, the students themselves do not acknowledge that the videogames (and videogame text) have a place within their views of literacy. In this sense, the findings problematize the ways that students layer literacies without realizing that they are doing so. Future research should consider the role of teachers and parents in shaping students' figured worlds of literacy and videogames. At the present time, educators are in a position to play an active role in helping students view videogame text and videogames as valid literacy practices and as ones with affordances for learning.

A practical application for teachers is to allow students to make text connections with videogame-play experiences as a way to bridge in-school and out-of-school literacy practices. Another practical application is to allow students to read both videogame and videogame-related texts in the classroom and to write fanfiction during writing workshop. Teachers can incorporate videogame paratexts within the classroom setting as a way to foster tweens' literacy practices (e.g., Stufft, 2016). Educators can use videogame-based book groups to provide tween gamers a space within which to read and discuss books related to their out-of-school activities; this also provides tweens an opportunity to share personal gaming experiences. Educators can scaffold students' discussions to help them more clearly see the ways that they naturally layer literacies and how a variety of print-based and multimodal content can mesh together as part of an ongoing process of making meaning.

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STRANGER THAN NONFICTION: IDENTIFYING AND MODELING TEXT STRUCTURES IN FICTION PICTUREBOOKS

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Abstract

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) have illuminated attention for reading and writing nonfiction texts, which were often less represented in classrooms prior to CCSS. As nonfiction texts grow in importance, fiction texts should still be given high priority in classrooms. The leading research on fiction texts presents text features such as characters, conflict, plot, and setting, rather than text structures. Text features are elements that create details and dimension in a story, while text structures determine how the story evolves. Grounded in dual-coding theory and multimedia learning theory, we analyzed a random sample of 149 children's picturebooks to determine which text structures were present in fiction. We identified the text structures, developed indicators for each, and created diagrams to support teachers and researchers. The present study is a first step at continuing to move forward in developing strategies for reading and writing fiction.

Introduction

"The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go." —Dr. Seuss

Great writers begin as readers. When established authors are asked what advice they would give to young, beginning writers, they often say “read as much as possible” (DiCamillo, 2017). Therefore, it is imperative that children study nonfiction and fiction texts, beginning in elementary school. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) have illuminated attention for reading and writing nonfiction texts, which were often less represented in classrooms prior to the common standards. As nonfiction texts grow in importance, fiction texts should still be given high priority in classrooms (Atwell, 2016). When children engage in make-believe and read fictional stories, they build creativity, imagination, and motivation for literacy, important skills that can translate to their nonfiction studies (Atwell, 2016).

Text structures can be taught to young children, and over time, the instruction can become more complex to show students how these formulas for organization are used in increasingly challenging texts (Ray & Meyer, 2011; Read, Reutzel, & Fawson, 2008; Reutzel, Read, & Fawson, 2009). Educators inspire and encourage children to read widely and comprehend what they read (Allington, McCuiston, & Bilen, 2015; Author, 2015). The purpose of teaching text structures is to better attune students to how text is organized, which can help them locate, recall, and use information (Akhondi, Malayeri, & Samad, 2011). Text structures help children mind map nonfiction texts (Author, 2017; Soalt, 2005). Through concentrated exploration of how complex text is organized, children improve their comprehension, retain more information, and better understand how the ideas are conveyed through writing (Lapp, Grant, Moss, & Johnson, 2013; Moss, 2004). Specifically, when text structure instruction is combined with using effective models of mentor texts, students show significantly higher scores for comprehension and writing than when other instructional practices are used without text structure instruction (Hall, Sabey, & McCellan, 2005; Williams, 2005). Yet, these instructional recommendations come primarily from research related to expository text structures, which do not always transfer well to fiction texts.

While researchers and teachers already acknowledge the value of teaching text structures in nonfiction, text structures for fiction have remained largely unexplored (Reutzel, Jones, Clark, & Kumar, 2016). Commonly, text structures have been limited to nonfiction writing, but fiction follows complex structures that can also be analyzed. We argue that text structures exist in fiction and can help students engage in reading material and create authentic writing. Therefore, in the present study, we analyzed children’s picturebooks to determine the types of text structures present.

Tradition of Narrative & Text Features

Traditionally, researchers have focused on text structures for organizing nonfiction and text features for describing fiction (Clariana, Wolfe, & Kim, 2014). While these two concepts are sometimes used interchangeably, they represent unique components of text that are important to our discussion of text structures. In the following paragraphs, we describe text structures in nonfiction, text features in fiction, and the history of narrative that has created these dichotomies.

When scholars and teachers consider nonfiction text structures, five primary types and their corresponding graphic organizers come to mind: cause and effect, compare and contrast, descriptive, problem and solution, and sequential (Authors; 2017; Soalt, 2005; Williams et al., 2005). While these structures may include a variety of names, they dominate the research literature (Roehling, Herbert, Nelson, & Bohaty, 2017). However, the same level of consensus does not exist when considering fiction text structures.

The leading research on fiction texts presents text features, rather than text structures, such as characters, conflict, plot, and setting (Denton et al., 2015). Text features are elements that create details and dimension in a story, while text structures determine how the story evolves. Text features are important components of fiction that help readers discern one story from another, while allowing writers to create well-rounded narratives. Characters in fictional stories offer readers an opportunity to see themselves reflected in circumstances or to connect through empathy to a particular context (McTigue, Douglass, Wright, Hodges, & Franks, 2015; Emery, 1996). Characterization is the author's craft of bringing characters to life for readers. Development also figures prominently as the reader discerns how the story shapes and reveals growth or change for at least one character across the course of events (Shanahan & Shanahan, 1997).

Emerging evidence from cognitive psychology indicates that literature can provide simulation and training to help readers understand human interactions (Oatley, 2011). For example, fiction readers demonstrate stronger empathy skills than non-fiction readers (Mar, Oatley & Peterson, 2009), and interventions requiring participants to read literature boosts empathy skills (Djikic, Oatley & Moldoveanu, 2013). Teaching students to apply insights from real people to literary characters will deepen their literary comprehension and help them move from surface level comprehensions (i.e., What happened?) to deeper level comprehensions (i.e., Why did that happen?). Additionally, being able to understand literary characters and understand people draws from many of the same skills.

Narrative texts provide a rich backdrop of elements for readers to discover. A beneficial aspect of fictional text is that it typically follows a common narrative

sequence known as the “story arc” (Authors, 2015; Sidekli, 2013). The story arc follows the traditional pattern of exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. Readers encounter stories with predictable plot structures that begin with an exposition which provides necessary background information, introduces main characters, and provides the foundation for making sense of the narrative. Readers await the conflict which reveals issues the main character faces. From this point, authors expand story through the rising action by outlining events that lead toward solving the conflict. The resolution of conflict then leads to a satisfying, if not happy, conclusion of the story (Cunningham & Foster, 1978; Beck & McKeown, 1981).

The archetypal text structure (story arc) and explication of characters outlined above is helpful for telling narrative. We place high value on fictional text as beneficial for bringing readers into the work of writing (Smith, 1987). This tradition of narrative is a crucial aspect of apprenticing young writers. Emerging writers began as readers by becoming enchanted with story. As students enjoy and read increasingly complex texts, they can denote nuances within the story arc and the character development. In short, these nuances are what separate individual stories from each other. When children are provided opportunities to examine those nuances in text structure and text development, they can better understand how to apply those skills to their own writing.

Theoretical Framework

Historically, text structures have been conveyed through graphical representations, most notably seen in the story arc (Dymock & Nicholson, 2010; Sanders & Moudy, 2008). Graphical representations allow the reader or writer to visually represent text and follow the sequence of events (Reutzell, Read, & Fawson, 2009). Given that nonfiction text structures can be modeled through graphic representations, such as t-charts, Venn diagrams, and timelines (Hodges & Matthews, 2017), we also modeled our fiction text structures as graphic representations. While the story arc provides a mapping tool for fiction, most works of children’s literature are more nuanced. Therefore, we used the story arc as our initial framework and adjusted the diagrams to properly display differences in various text structures (see below).

For the present study, we ground our research in two inter-connected theories: dual-coding theory (Paivio, 1986; Sadoski & Paivio, 2001, 2004) and the cognitive theory of multimedia learning (MLT) (Mayer, 2001). Dual-coding theory is the foundation of MLT (McTigue, 2009); therefore, we discuss both theories as a unified framework for how we model text structures for fiction.

Dual-coding theory describes the brain as supporting two cognitive pathways, one for visual input and one for verbal input (Paivio, 1986). However, dual-coding also explains that the two pathways work together to process information, particularly when information is presented both visually and verbally. Therefore, when information is presented in both formats, the brain activates both pathways allowing the learner multiple opportunities to understand the content, simultaneously (Clark & Paivio, 1991; Downs, Boyson, Alley, & Bloom, 2011).

Multimedia learning theory (MLT) posits that students learn content more completely when verbal cues are blended with visual representations of content (Morett, Clegg, Blalock, & Mong, 2009). In this dual-coding framework, the brain better understands new content through mixed media (Cheng, Chou, Wang, & Lin, 2015). MLT also asserts that working memory has a limited capacity to interpret both verbal and visual cues; therefore, both types of information must be of high quality and essential to understanding the new content (Lee, Au, & Law, 2013). A final principle of MLT that is supported by our study relies on quality instruction. Due to the limited capacity of working memory, it is essential that visuals are presented with auditory cues through instruction (Morett et al., 2009). When text structure diagrams that we created are combined with quality instruction, students can better understand text structures in fiction for both reading comprehension and writing.

Within the present study, MLT supports our methodology of blending graphical representations with text-based indicators of fiction text structures. We support the idea that students cognitively interpret verbal and visual information through separate neural pathways that provide a better understanding of complex content. As McTigue (2009) describes, some information that students learn is easily imaged making it concrete, while other content is not easily imaged, making it abstract. Within our study, text structures for fiction are abstract, but through utilizing visual representations, the structures become concrete for students.

Methods

In the present qualitative study, we analyzed a random sample of 149 children's picturebooks to determine which text structures were present. Then, we named the text structures, developed indicators for identifying each text structure, and created diagrams for each structure. Specifically, we addressed two research questions:

1. How do children's picturebooks portray fiction text structures?
2. What features distinguish text structures within fiction picturebooks?

We are both former language arts teachers and current literacy faculty who focus our teaching and research on children's literature, writing, and literacy development. From this interest, we began investigating how text structures could describe fiction texts. We found that the common text structures found in non-fiction (e.g., cause and effect, chronological, compare-and-contrast, descriptive, and problem-and-solution) did not support fiction texts, which are commonly described using the traditional story arc.

We utilized constant comparative coding (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to review 149 children's books. We explored how the field's current theoretical understanding of picturebooks and text structures can be extended. To identify the four text structures outlined in our research questions, we employed constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Our goal was to discover how fiction texts may be organized, how those structures were patterned across texts, and how those structured patterns might be named for use in further investigations. Completing this task required multiple iterations of picturebook coding (Saldana, 2009).

We performed multiple rounds of qualitative coding, beginning with an initial coding protocol in which we discerned attributes of each picturebook that differentiated the text structure. Two researchers reviewed each text and created codes, which resulted in four types of text structures. In our second cycle of coding, we examined the picturebooks in more detail. We applied the new text structures to the texts to determine how the structures created the story. This process allowed us to create and attach descriptors to summarize what we recognized from each author's crafting of the fictional narrative for framing how the fiction texts are organized. We then moved to a third cycle of coding as we determined appropriate categories to name the elemental codes (Saldana, 2009), and then assigned those categories to particular texts based on the descriptive summaries. This final round of coding allowed us to pull "model texts" to explain each structure. We named our four text structures sequential, recursive, circular, and story within a story.

Because the history of text structures has included graphic organizers to model texts, we wanted to honor that tradition and create diagrams to convey the fiction text structures we identified. After completing our three cycles of coding, we created diagrams to detail how the structures appear in children's picturebooks. Using dual-coding theory and MLT, we initially modeled our text structures using the story arc. As this diagram is commonplace in classrooms and familiar to students and teachers, we chose to parallel that structure as much as possible. However, we diverged from this model when the nuance of the new text structures required.

Findings

In the following sections, we present general findings from our multi-round coding process. We also present findings about the types of text structures we identified in fiction with diagrams to support how these text structures are exemplified in literature.

General Findings

While the story arc provides a mapping tool for fiction, most works of children's literature are more intricate than the story arc allows. For these reasons, we analyzed current works of children's fiction, namely picture books, to evaluate how each text was structured. We found four primary text structures were present in the fiction texts: (1) sequential; (2) recursive; (3) circular; and (4) story within a story. In the following sections, we define each text structure and provide examples of what this structure would look like in children's literature (Table 1).

Types of Text Structures in Fiction

In the following sections, we define each and provide examples of what each text structure looks like in children's literature.

Sequential. A sequential story follows the traditional story arc and includes a conflict. However, as previously mentioned, we did not feel that identifying a text as "sequential" provided the distinction necessary to fully describe the story. For example, both *The Day the Crayons Quit* by Drew Daywalt and *The Polar Express* by Chris Vann Allsburg are both considered sequential texts. However, they create the story lines in fundamentally different ways. Particularly, we noted that different sequential texts relied on unique methods for discussing how the conflict of the story was resolved.

We found that sequential stories could be further considered by both macro and micro text organizations (Hodges & Matthews, 2017). The sequential aspect of the story is macro organization and describes how the story escalates from beginning to end. However, the micro text organization describes how the story progresses, namely how the climax is established and how the conflict is resolved (Figure 1). Specifically, the micro text organization could be cause-and-effect, descriptive, or problem-and-solution. When combining the macro and micro text organization, we would describe the text structure as sequential cause-and-effect, sequential descriptive, or sequential problem-and-solution.

TABLE 1
Types of Text Structures, Key Characteristics, and Sample Picturebooks

Text Structure	Description	Key Characteristics	Sample Picturebooks
Sequential	Presents details in time order – from first to last – or sometimes from last to first (follows the traditional story arc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follows the passing of time • Includes story arc elements • Micro text structures present for resolving conflict 	<i>A Letter to Amy</i> by Ezra Jack Keats
Cause-and-Effect	Shows the relationship among events or characters within the traditional story arc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follows a pattern of events and characters influencing future events 	<i>The Day the Crayons Quit</i> by Drew Daywalt
Descriptive	Gives many details about one event or character within the traditional story arc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides extensive details about at least one character or event 	<i>The Polar Express</i> by Chris Vann Allsburg
Problem-and-Solution	Identifies at least one problem that drives the plot and at least one solution that concludes the resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows characters dealing with problems and actively searching for solutions to those problems 	<i>What Do You Do With a Problem?</i> , by Kobi Yamada
Recursive	Follows a repetitive framework to guide the reader to the resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repetitive phrases • Easily identified framework 	<i>Is Your Mama a Llama?</i> by Deborah Guarino
Circular	Begins and ends in the same manner, with characters remaining unchanged after events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often begins and ends with same event or in same location • Characters do not show significant changes from beginning to end • Action does not influence characters or events 	<i>Kitten's First Full Moon</i> by Kevin Henkes
Story Within a Story	Begins as one story but includes an intermission to a secondary story line – both story lines are resolved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes at least one overarching and one secondary story line • Both stories are resolved • Stories may be related or unrelated 	<i>The Three Pigs</i> by David Wiesner

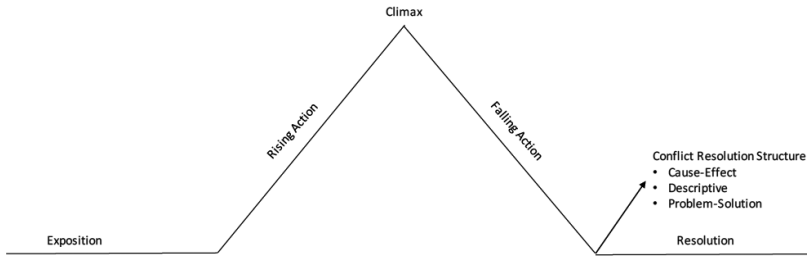


Figure 1. Sequential Fiction Text Structure Diagram

For example, *The Day the Crayons Quit* by Drew Daywalt describes the story of a box of crayons who leave their owner after being abused and neglected. This is an example of a sequential cause-and-effect text structure. The macro organization of the text is sequential and describes how a box of crayons leaves their owner and eventually returns home. The micro organization, however, is cause-and-effect as each crayon writes a letter that details what the owner, Duncan, did to cause the crayon to leave. The cause in each case is Duncan's neglect or mistreatment and the effect is that the crayons leave, which details the primary conflict of the story. The resolution of the story arc comes when the crayons realize they can all be supported by Duncan and return home.

In the example of *The Polar Express*, the story of the train that takes children to the North Pole during the holidays, a sequential descriptive text structure is present. The story follows the typical story arc of a sequential narrative as the reader travels on the Polar Express. The descriptive part of the story explains how the story unfolds, which is primarily through descriptions of people, places, and events relating to the Polar Express and the North Pole.

Finally, in a sequential problem-and-solution, the story is guided by a problem and the conflict is resolved when that problem is solved. One example of this structure is in the book, *What Do You Do With a Problem?*, by Kobi Yamada. In this story, the main character is plagued by a nondescript problem, which he ignores. Ignoring the problem becomes the overarching issue of the story and is only resolved when he faces the problem head on which supports the micro organization. In this story, the macro organization is sequential, in that the story progresses logically from one event to the next.

From these three examples, the nuanced differences of the story structure becomes evident. While the three pieces of fiction share the common thread of telling sequential stories, they unfold in unique ways that should draw attention from the reader. By analyzing the stories at this deeper level, the reader can engage

more deeply with the narrative and better comprehend the work of fiction. We believe this deeper level of comprehension will allow children to better empathize with characters and experiences.

Recursive. In addition to focusing on the story arc, fiction texts can be analyzed as “recursive stories”. A recursive story is one that repeats itself continually. Typically, the same framework is used and repeated by the author. In other words, the story continues to use similar language and structures that can be predicted by the reader until the conclusion (Figure 2). Moreover, in recursive text structures, the repetitive nature of the story is what keeps the plot moving forward. Without the recursive story elements, the story would not progress.

One example of a recursive story, *Is Your Mama a Llama?* by Deborah Guarino, consistently uses the same wording to follow a sequence of events. Within this story, the author uses a recursive structure by repeating the phrase “Is your mama a llama?” and continuing the story by having each friend answer “No, she is not”. Each friend then provides a description of what their mother is like. This familiar language is a cue to the reader that the story will progress in the same format across each meeting with a new friend. Readers can quickly identify this pattern through the repetitive phrases and can begin to predict that the action will continue upon seeing the same wording.

Recursive stories are often found in emerging reader texts because they lessen the cognitive load on young readers. This same ideology can be applied to writing, especially when creating a more complex text. Children can use a simple framework that repeats to help their readers understand a challenging story line. By learning this strategy, children are afforded a method for communicating more rigorous writing in a simplified, yet sophisticated, manner.

Circular. The third type of text structure in fiction is circular text structures. A circular story is one in which the story begins and ends in the same place. While action does occur throughout the story, the action does not heavily influence the characters or cause any additional events to occur. In other words, this type of story begins, some action occurs and the story ends in a similar place

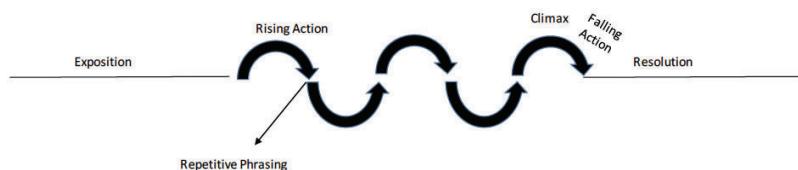


Figure 2 Recursive fiction text structure diagram

where it began (Figure 3). However, the action that occurs does not change or influence the characters, rather, the action simply makes a more engaging and interesting reading experience.

For example, *Kitten's First Full Moon* by Kevin Henkes, follows the story of a young kitten who sees the moon for the first time. Initially, the kitten believes the moon is a bowl of milk, which results in her desire to somehow get the “milk”. During the story, the kitten performs tricks and attempts to get the “milk” in the sky. The story concludes with the kitten being given a bowl of milk that she can reach. While the kitten performs some actions throughout the story, she is no different from the beginning to end of the story and the action did not result in a change to the path of the story. Thus, the story begins and ends in the same place.

Circular text structures can be engaging for students as they create their own stories. Students can challenge their writing by adding humor, adventure, and mystery through recursive story telling. Because circular stories provide little change in the characters, they can be unique ways to emphasize description of settings or quirky character traits. Children can learn to add small details into their writing that set it apart from others, particularly when they have little character development.

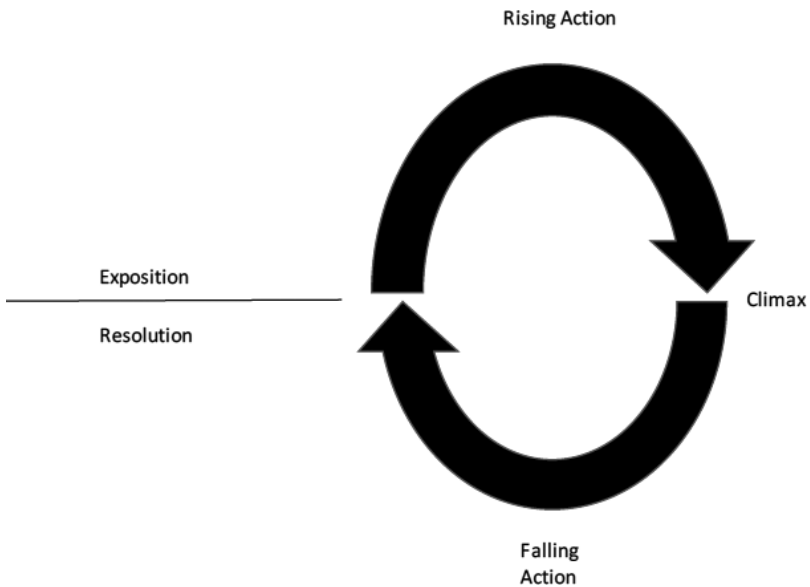


Figure 3 Circular fiction text structure diagram

Story Within a Story. Finally, we found that many fictional texts included a story within a story. In this type of a text, an overarching story occurs, but the reader must be attentive to a secondary story occurring within the text. The overarching story drives the text from beginning to end, but the secondary story adds depth, humor, and interest (Figure 4).

Often, retellings of popular legends, fables, fairy tales, or myths can be structured with a story within a story text structure. For example, *The Three Pigs* by David Wiesner, retells the traditional story of the three little pigs. Part way through the story, the pigs jump into the book and move into fairytale land where they explore different stories. Though the beginning of the text is traditional to the tale that students would be familiar with, the secondary story of the pigs helping characters in fairytale land provides depth and interest.

When students are reading a story within a story, they may become confused by the additional tale. This type of text structure requires more cognitive energy than a simple one-story structure. However, if children learn to look for this type of structure and are aware of the patterns this type of structure can adhere to, they are more likely to understand both stories.

Additionally, children can utilize the story within a story text structure in their own writing. This type of structure can be found in historical texts, for example. Often, a historical fiction narrative will include a broad story that relates to a time-period or major event in history. However, these stories also emphasize specific people or sub-events in history, which are presented as secondary stories. As children learn about the two levels of story within the greater narrative, they can retain more content and develop their own writing more effectively.

Discussion

From the present study, we noted four distinct text structures appropriate to fiction texts. Overall, we found two overarching themes when examining text structures in fiction: (1) our research promotes a more nuanced approach to reading and writing in fiction, and (2) education should move beyond the story

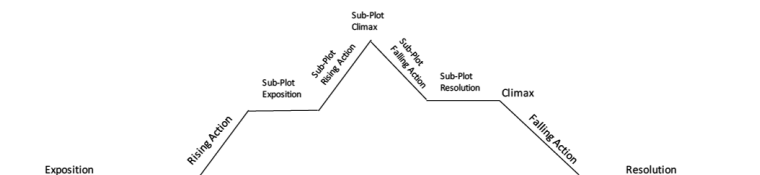


Figure 4 Story within a story fiction text structure diagram

arc. In the following sections, we discuss the implications of these text structures for education research and practice.

Over the years, nonfiction texts have become more nuanced by introducing specific structures that guide how expository writers organize their text. Through teaching students about these text structures, teachers and researchers have found that children are better able to organize information, retain information, and utilize information they read (Allington et al., 2015). Yet, these same principles have not been applied to fiction. Historically, fiction has only been considered by features unique to the genre – characterization, plot, setting, and conflict.

However, our research indicates that fiction texts are as nuanced as nonfiction texts. The story arc provides a baseline for helping children understand how fiction texts progress from the exposition to the resolution, but many stories are far more complex than the single, chronological model of the story arc. Using the story arc as our foundation, we modeled four new text structures with distinct features to help students further understand the different ways in which fiction can be organized.

Researchers and teachers will find these models useful as they instruct students in reading and writing fiction texts. In reading, the new models provide more dimension for students to consider how texts are organized, and show them that not all texts are chronological. In writing, students have more choices for organizing their texts. Often, students resort to writing chronologically because they find it an efficient way to detail their story. However, with these models, we hope that students will be inspired to add more depth and complexity to their writing.

While our fiction diagrams provide more nuance and complexity for student writing, they can also aid in students' reading comprehension. Historically, children have been taught that narrative texts follow the story arc, which has served teachers well as a model for learning how fiction texts progress their characterization, plot, setting, and conflict resolution. However, as picturebooks and fiction texts have become increasingly complex for children, the story arc does not always support narrative texts. Our research is a first step at allowing researchers and teachers to move beyond the story arc to add more strategies for children to enhance their reading comprehension.

Conclusion

Reading a well-crafted piece of fiction has the power to transport readers to places, times, and situations they do not get to experience in their everyday lives. Reading fiction can also help readers learn about topics, people, and places

with which they are unfamiliar. Finally, reading fiction can help readers navigate their own emotions and perspectives, either solidifying their beliefs or opening their mind to new ideas. The goal of understanding text structures is to provide additional tools for students to comprehend what they are reading and create more sophisticated writing (Hodges & Matthews, 2017). In nonfiction texts, text structures allow the reader to organize information and follow the argument of the author (Lapp, Grant, Moss, & Johnson, 2013; Moss, 2004). Fiction texts are not typically as information-dense as nonfiction texts; however, learning to decipher text structures can still provide students with a basis for following the story arc and understanding the narrative.

The present study has implications for researchers and teachers to promote reading comprehension and writing instruction further. For researchers, much of the literature on text structures has emphasized nonfiction texts over narrative texts, while relying solely on the story arc for modeling fiction stories (Soalt, 2005). The present study is a first step at continuing to move forward in developing strategies for reading and writing fiction. For teachers, the fiction text structures we identified and model provide instructional tools to help students consider narrative texts in new ways. These tools will help children add more depth to their writing and more structure to their reading comprehension. Future research should continue to analyze how these text structures can be used in classroom instruction.

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“ES LO QUE HACEMOS”/IT’S WHAT WE DO: TRANSLANGUAGING TO MAKE MEANING DURING READ-ALOUDS

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Abstract

This chapter explores the translanguaging practices of a second-grade teacher in an English-Spanish dual-language classroom. Video and audio recordings, field notes, and semi-structured interviews were collected over the course of eight weeks to examine how a teacher used translanguaging to support emergent bilingual students’ meaning-making during read-alouds of picture books in English and Spanish. This study is grounded in the theory of translanguaging to describe how the teacher moved freely and strategically across languages to enhance students’ abilities as language users and comprehenders of texts. Findings revealed the teacher’s dynamic language use aimed at 1) promoting students’ identities as bilingual meaning-makers; 2) raising students’ metalinguistic knowledge of word meanings in English and Spanish; and 3) fostering students’ collaborative constructions of story problems. By using translanguaging, teachers can create learning environments in which mixing languages, raising questions, and taking risks are characteristics of developing bilingualism and biliteracy.

With his students gathered around him on the floor, a second-grade teacher, Mr. Martínez, began to read a picture book aloud. The children, 60% of whom were native Spanish speakers and 40% of whom were native English speakers, regularly participated in literature-based instruction in English and Spanish. All of the students in this two-way dual-language classroom were learning each other’s native language.

Mr. Martínez held up both the English and Spanish editions of the picture book, *Tomás and the Library Lady* (Mora, 2000), explaining that the books were available to readers in separate languages, but that he would use two to read:

- Teacher: *Uno es en español* and the other in is English . . .
I'm going to be mixing a lot of English and Spanish.
- Maria: Like *Little Roja Riding Hood*.
- Teacher: *Exactamente*. Because we are bilingual. *Es lo que hacemos*.

Mr. Martínez's explicit demonstration and invitation to use two languages communicated to the students that mixing English and Spanish was an acceptable practice for expressing understandings. Immediately, Maria, a native speaker of English, linked his point with a picture book they had already read, recalling that *Little Roja Riding Hood* (Elya, 2014) also used English and Spanish within the same story. Mr. Martínez validated Maria's connection between translanguaging and a bilingual picture book ("*Exactamente*") and called attention to their broader linguistic repertoires ("We are bilingual"), indicating a shared trait of the group, including both the teacher and the students. He expressed that drawing on more than one language when making meaning is something we do—"Es lo que hacemos" (Auer, 1984; Pennycook, 2010).

Mr. Martínez teaches a growing population of children in U.S. public schools who are enrolled in two-way dual-language programs with the goals of becoming bilingual and biliterate in English and Spanish. Often, teachers have been directed by traditional program models of bilingual education to instruct English and Spanish literacy separately (Jacobson & Faltis, 1990; Lindholm-Leary, 2001). These models present a perspective of bilingualism as comprised of two independent language systems—or "monolingualism times two" (García, 2009, p. 71). By contrast, recent scholarship on translanguaging (Alvarez, 2014; García & Kleyn, 2016; Pacheco & Miller, 2015; Sayer, 2013) has illustrated that when teachers step away from policies on language separation and provide opportunities for bilingual children to draw upon their evolving linguistic knowledge and discursive practices to participate and negotiate literacy events, there is potential for deeper exploration and extension of meaning-making. This research has given credence to a shift in pedagogy from traditional forms of bilingual instruction to translanguaging approaches that promote learning through the multiplicity of languages. As Palmer and Martínez (2016) noted, "Classrooms, like other spaces inhabited by diverse and bilingual children, need

to be places that allow—even encourage—code-switching, translating, and other dynamic bilingual practices to thrive” (p. 382).

Rather than view bilingualism as double monolingualism, researchers argue viewing it as one expansive, dynamic repertoire (García, 2009; Martínez, 2018; Pennycook, 2010) and design instruction to help children apply skills, strategies, and knowledge embedded in their everyday language practices to academic tasks. In particular, Mr. Martínez’s fluid movement between English and Spanish, as shown in his picture book introduction, reflects a strategic use of translanguaging that encouraged his students to use their “full linguistic toolkits in order to process information, make meaning, and convey it to others” (Orellana & García, 2014, p. 386). Deliberately inviting students to employ translanguaging and modeling its use for engaging with texts holds great promise for biliteracy learning.

As more research is conducted studying translanguaging approaches to literacy instruction in two-way dual-language classrooms and calls are made to better engage the range of linguistic resources that bilingual children bring into the classroom (Castro, Páez, Dickinson, & Frede, 2011; Gort, 2015; Reyes, 2012), questions still remain about how teachers can support these efforts. That is, there is a need for empirical studies that examine closely how bilingual teachers use translanguaging to support children’s biliteracy development, not their separate literacy development in English or Spanish (García & Godina, 2017). To address this gap, I investigated the ways in which a teacher used translanguaging to initiate, buoy, and sustain the meaning-making of linguistically diverse students during read-alouds and discussions of bilingual picture books in a second-grade dual-language classroom. The following question guided this investigation:

How does the teacher use translanguaging to support emergent bilingual students’ meaning-making during read-alouds?

Theoretical Framework

García (2009) positions translanguaging as an extension of a Welsh educator’s, Cen Williams (cited in Baker, 2001), pedagogical practice of switching languages in the classrooms. García (2009) proposed the term to include all kinds of bilingual language use, defining it as the “multiple discursive practices in which bilinguals engage in to make sense of their bilingual worlds” (p. 45). For García and Kleifgen (2010), translanguaging is a normative practice and expression of bilingualism that includes codeswitching and translation, but also comprises other forms of hybrid practices such as listening to discourse in one language and

speaking in another, and reading in one language and rendering knowledge in writing in another language. This concept of translanguaging implies *all* bilingual students have rich repertoires of language practices based on their participation in family and community life (Gutiérrez & Rogoff 2003; Orellana & Reynolds, 2008) that can potentially serve as meaning-making resources in the classroom.

In efforts to improve the instruction of bilingual learners, researchers have adopted a translanguaging orientation to explore how teachers and students use languages flexibly to build understandings and cultivate classrooms environments that support them (Bauer, Presiado, & Colomer, 2016; García & Sylvan, 2011; Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Zapata & Laman, 2016). In García's (2009) framing of translanguaging pedagogy, she encouraged teachers to purposefully make learning in the classroom inclusive of children's language practices. Specifically, she and her colleagues urged teachers to foreground three key dimensions of translanguaging: "stance," "design," and "shifts" (García, Johnson, & Seltzer, 2016, p. 25). A translanguaging pedagogy (García, Johnson, & Seltzer, 2016) is fueled by teacher's belief in children's linguistic repertoires not as deficits but rather as valuable resources that constantly evolve. It is through this adopted *stance*, that is the "philosophical, ideological, or belief system," that teachers develop their instruction (p. 27). An important role of teachers' stance, according to García, Johnson, and Seltzer (2016) is to oppose language separation, adopting instead a belief in the collaboration of students' varying language practices. Teachers then enact this stance toward bilingualism as an asset by planning their actions for translanguaging in the classroom—what the authors term the *design* (García, Johnson, and Seltzer, 2016). Teachers *design* instruction that offers students opportunities to learn from and build on one another's expertise as language users, cross linguistic borders between English and Spanish, and to engage with bilingual texts. García, Johnson, and Seltzer (2016) also highlight the key element of translanguaging *shifts* in instruction when teachers make unplanned decisions and respond to the "content and language needs and interests" of students (p. 77). Teachers seize unanticipated moments of learning intentionally so as to help students clarify and negotiate understandings. By integrating these three dimensions of translanguaging pedagogy, teachers can effectively scaffold and mediate students' development as bilingual speakers, readers, and writers (García, Johnson, & Seltzer, 2016).

Literature Review

Two-way dual-language programs have become increasingly popular as families wish for their children to develop bilingualism, biliteracy, and cross-cultural understandings with hope they will be better prepared in our expanding global

economy (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). In fact, the popularity of a dual-language model has grown dramatically over the past two decades in U.S. public schools, growing from approximately 260 programs in 1997 (Potowski, 2004) to over 2,000 programs in 2011 (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2011). To achieve these goals of bilingualism and biliteracy, dual-language programs integrate native speakers of English and Spanish in the classroom. Such programs commonly use both languages for content instruction, however the percentages of time with instruction in English or Spanish can vary depending upon on the program implementers (García & Kleifgen, 2010). For instance, the medium of instruction can be mostly in Spanish, as in a 90/10 model (i.e., 90% Spanish, 10% English), or distributed equally across the curriculum, as in a 50/50 model when teachers use both languages (García & Kleifgen, 2010). There is much research that claims two-way dual-language programs have substantial impact on native English and Spanish speaking students' learning. Dual-language programs have been linked to higher standardized tests scores (Oller & Eilers, 2002; Thomas & Collier, 2002), improved reading and writing skills in both languages (Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2006), and more appreciative attitudes toward other languages and cultures (Lindholm-Leary, 2001).

The potential of translanguaging as a tool for literacy teaching and learning in classrooms with students representing a range of proficiencies in Spanish and English has garnered the attention of researchers interested in investigating dual-language programs (Bauer & Gort, 2012). Drawing on translanguaging theory (García, 2009), researchers continue to document how bilingual students draw on their knowledge from two languages to develop their writing and audience (Canagarajah, 2011; Gort, 2012); acquire academic language (Sayer, 2013; Pacheco, Daniel, & Pray, 2017); and negotiate meanings with others (Bauer, Presiado, & Colomer, 2016; Gort, 2008). Researchers have also pointed to students' practices of codeswitching, translation, recasting, and language brokering that have supported reading comprehension and oral language skills in discursive spaces where translanguaging is valued (García & Godina, 2017; Martínez-Roldán & Sayer, 2006). These studies provide a strong base of evidence for the benefits of translanguaging on expression of thinking and expansion of language and literacy practices for bilingual students as do others (Gort & Sembiante, 2015; Orellana, 2016). By focusing on the interplay between languages and on the dialogic processes of learning with others, researchers have substantiated bilingualism as an academic resource rather than interference in learning.

Researchers have also looked at the ways in which bilingual teachers' translanguaging pedagogies support children's literary meaning making. There is evidence that elementary bilingual students respond more positively and fully to

the literature they read, while also experimenting with languages and academic genres, when teachers encourage language-crossing (Fránquiz & de la Luz Reyes, 1998; Medina, 2010). For example, Palmer, Martínez, Mateus, and Henderson (2014) studied two bilingual teachers in two-way dual-language classrooms as they stretched students' thinking and talk in their instruction. By exploring the talk that surrounded their interactions, the researchers proposed three discursive moves that the teachers made to support students' understandings: The teachers (a) modeled dynamic bilingual language practices, (b) positioned students as bilinguals, and (c) celebrated language crossing. The researchers argued that teachers bring metalinguistic knowledge to interactions, and are attuned to bilingual learners' responses that makes literature discussion more engaging for all participants.

Other researchers have pointed toward the teacher's role in supporting the reading experience by valuing and modeling ways that students can draw on their linguistic repertoires to learn together. Worthy, Durán, Hikida, Pruitt, and Peterson (2013) examined the ways in which a fifth-grade teacher and her bilingual students leveraged an array of language practices to co-construct meaning during discussions of a novel read aloud in English. Looking at the strategies that inspired dialogue, Worthy and her colleagues emphasized the discursive work on the part of the teacher to model and call attention to the translanguaging practices students used to extend one another's interpretations and lift the critical issues. Arguing that deciding when and how to apply translanguaging to literacy learning entails opportunity and practice, the authors confirmed the necessity of the teacher's explicit invitation and support for students to use their own linguistic resources during literature discussions.

Together, these scholars, along with others (Jiménez, David, Pacheco, Risko, Pray, Fagan & Gonzales, 2015), build a case for instructional methods that invite bilingual students to learn from the ways in which they and others use languages in support of their meaning construction with texts. Although the scholarship on translanguaging holds promise for practice and models of research within dual-language contexts, the teacher's purposeful uses of translanguaging for engaging thinking about and discussion of texts within dual-language classrooms has been understudied. This study drew from research in translanguaging pedagogies as applied through translanguaging theory (García, 2009) to contribute to the knowledge base of how teachers can support dual-language learners' meaning-making through read-alouds. I also looked to the three dimensions that García, Johnston, and Seltzer (2016) propose as necessary to enact a translanguaging pedagogy.

Method

Setting

This study took place in a second grade classroom within a two-way dual-language program at a public elementary school in an urban school district of Texas. All students at Meadowdale Elementary participated in the dual-language program. Of approximately 350 students enrolled, 60% were Latino, native Spanish-speaking and 40% were white, native English-speaking, and 50% received free or reduced lunch. At the time of data collection, Meadowdale Elementary was in transition from a five-year implementation of “50/50 Content Model” of two-way dual-language education (Gómez & Gómez, 1999) toward the adoption of a “holistic biliteracy” framework (Escamilla, Hopewell, Butvilofsky, Sparrow, Soltero-González, Ruiz-Figueroa & Escamilla, 2013). The school first adopted a dual-language model developed by researchers Richard Gómez and Leo Gómez in 2010 that positioned bilingual education as an enrichment for children’s learning (Palmer, Zuñiga, & Henderson, 2015). This model called for a “50–50 balance of native English speakers and native Spanish speakers” in classrooms and a strict language policy through which teachers used English and Spanish separately in different curricular areas (Gómez, Freeman & Freeman, 2005, p. 145). Within this model, students learned to read and write first in their native language (in kindergarten and first grade), while “adding” the other language in second grade.

In contrast, the framework introduced in the fall of 2015, described as “holistic biliteracy” by its developers (Escamilla et. al, 2013), emphasized the simultaneous learning of two languages. Rather than employing sequential instruction in English and Spanish, this approach encouraged “paired literacy instruction, in which students learn to read and write in both languages at the same time” (p. 6). This framework also differed from the previous model in that teachers were free to use translanguaging—to move between and mix languages—in instruction. The time allocated for English and Spanish biliteracy instruction varied by grade level at Meadowdale Elementary. In the second grade classroom from which I gathered data, the 90-minute instructional block included read aloud, guided reading, independent reading, word work, and writing. The language of texts in which students read and wrote in the block alternated on a weekly basis (i.e., one week in English, one week in Spanish) so as to integrate and accelerate literacy development in both languages (Escamilla et. al, 2013). This curricular transition in the dual-language program was important to understanding the teacher’s language use and instructional practices as he worked with the goals of a flexible model of biliteracy his school now followed.

Participants

Mr. Martínez, was Latino, in his fourth year of teaching and earned certification in bilingual education at a large local university. He described himself as of Mexican heritage, and as a balanced bilingual who developed bilingualism and biliteracy simultaneously, speaking both Spanish and English with his family as he grew up. Mr. Martínez repeatedly expressed in interviews his instructional goal that *all* of his students become competent bilinguals. He expressed his commitment to his students as helping them to become “lifelong learners who are excited about learning languages” (Interview, October 2015). In addition, he believed his students’ languages were valuable resources—necessary to their learning and to the learning of others. As a result, Mr. Martínez aimed to bring languages to the fore consistently in his biliteracy instruction.

All of Mr. Martínez’s students were *emergent bilinguals* (García, 2009), i.e., learners who were at the early stages of bilingual and biliteracy development in English and Spanish. Of his 20 students, 12 were Latino, native speakers of Spanish and 8 were white, native speakers of English. The Latino students had families from the U.S. and Mexico. All students spread across the continuum of bilingualism and biliteracy (Hornberger & Link, 2012) with varying proficiencies in English and Spanish, and participated in the school’s dual-language program since kindergarten.

Data Collection

A case study design was employed to investigate a teacher’s translanguaging practices during read-alouds in a second grade dual-language classroom. This design guided the study’s purpose to address “how” questions and make possible thick descriptions of meaning-making in the real life classroom environments in which they actually occurred (Yin, 2014). The creation of a case defines and bounds a phenomenon as “a single entity, a single unit” in which researchers are able to “fence in” what they are going to study (Merriam, 2009, p. 40). In this research, the case was defined as the dual-language teacher, and the phenomenon was his use of translanguaging. This case was bounded by several systems: by time (weeks of data collection), by place (elementary school and classroom), and by activity (read-alouds).

Read-alouds are an interactive whole-group engagement that encourage students to dialogue and build meaning together as the teacher reads a text orally (Dugan, 1997; Fisher, Flood, Lapp, & Frey, 2004). Typically, the teacher first introduces the text to make the story, characters, and style of language that will be heard more accessible to students (Clay, 1991). Throughout the reading, the

teacher facilitates ongoing discussion by pausing to share the illustrations at page turns and ask questions that “help students notice aspects of the story that they might otherwise overlook, develop an informed perspective on a character, or consider each other’s ideas” (Barrentine, 1996, p. 39).

For approximately eight weeks in the fall of 2015, I engaged in participant observation Mr. Martínez’s classroom to collect the following data. I took field notes (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995) and video recordings three to four times a week to document the teacher’s use of English and Spanish while reading aloud bilingual picture books with his students. In all, I recorded eight picture books read aloud, with each title shared over three-four sessions. Each of these sessions lasted approximately 30 minutes and comprised approximately 14 hours of video recording in total. I also conducted semi-structured interviews with the teacher at the start of the study, at mid-term, and at the end of the study. The purpose of the first interview was to gather details on his perceptions of bilingual education, the dual language program, his teaching style, and his beliefs and practices about language practices during literacy instruction. The second and third interviews included a retrospective component (Martínez, 2010) so as to elicit Mr. Martínez’s interpretations and impressions of the students’ meaning-making and his own supportive translanguaging moves. I asked him to comment on video clips of the read-alouds and explain what he understood and how he made sense of what he noticed in the data.

Data Analysis

A constant comparative analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) of field notes and transcriptions of the video recordings and interviews facilitated the inventory and coding of the data with an eye towards teachers’ translanguaging moves to support students’ meaning-making during read-alouds in English and Spanish. First, I read all data separately and wrote words, phrases, and descriptions in the margins to identify a list of open codes (Strauss & Corbin 1990). Second, I compared the open codes across the data sources to help further define and group them as preliminary categories or axial codes (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Third, I conducted a line-by-line analysis of the data in axial coding and drew on the patterns that emerged to generate themes. As data were analyzed, I also engaged in member checking to be sure that I interpreted the teacher’s thoughts and actions accurately. Reviewing the video and interview transcripts with the teacher gave him opportunities to elaborate on and clarify his points of view. Through this qualitative analysis, I present three themes of translanguaging practices I identified to support meaning-making during read-alouds in a

dual-language classroom: 1) Translanguaging to promote identities as bilinguals meaning-makers; 2) Translanguaging to build metalinguistic knowledge; and 3) Translanguaging to foster co-constructions of story problems.

Limitations

This study had limitations related to design and data collection. First, the amount of time spent in the classroom with a small number of participants restricted the amount of data collected. A longitudinal study could have afforded more opportunities to observe and discuss the teacher's translanguaging moves over time, which might have made his nuanced patterns of support even more clear. Second, the instructional activity chosen for observation (i.e., read-aloud and discussion in a whole group setting) only provided a slice of the translanguaging practices used by the teacher and students. Future studies might investigate translanguaging across contexts, from whole group to small group reading activities, to see similar and different practices. Although the analysis of data from this study did not focus on the individual contributions of students over time, researchers may also look into how emergent bilingual learners' unique responses might affect the meanings they construct together. Third, the choice of bilingual picture books read by the teacher were not the only ones available, and therefore this research presented data that were bounded by the selected narratives. Collecting story discussion with other bilingual texts (e.g., novels, poetry, informational) may add complexity and more in-depth understandings of the linguistic and pedagogic skills of dual-language teachers. Finally, the methodology of this study purposefully did not permit me to plan alongside the teacher. Future studies may benefit from design-based methodologies to investigate what dual-language teachers say they learn from their day-to-day process of building translanguaging into their instruction and reflecting on their practice.

Findings

Mr. Martínez used translanguaging in several ways to support students' meaning-making during read-alouds and story discussion. In what follows, I describe the teacher's approach to selecting picture books and reading stories aloud. These features give insight into his stance toward translanguaging and instruction aimed at engaging uses of translanguaging. Further, I present three themes that illustrate his roles in supporting students' meaning-making in English and Spanish. First, the teacher called attention to the use of both languages to promote students' identities as bilingual meaning-makers. Second, the teacher worked to elevate all students' awareness of the similarities between English and Spanish, inviting

them to articulate their strategic use of linguistic knowledge to uncover the meaning of words. Third, the teacher encouraged the children think and build their understandings of story problems together. Each of these ways is described and documented with a representative example in the sections that follow.

Choosing and Reading Picture Books

Mr. Martínez’s central goal was that all of his students become competent bilinguals. This informed his choice of books for read-alouds. He selected picture books written by notable bilingual authors and illustrators who used translanguaging and would tie closely to developing his students’ competencies in two languages (see Appendix A for complete list). He expressed his valuing of picture books with young protagonists—bilingual children such as they—explaining he hoped the characters’ identities might serve as points of connections for his students and “emphasize that there are many people in the world who are bilingual.” (Interview, October 2015).

Mr. Martínez also understood the importance of providing emergent bilingual learners with the experience of picture books read aloud in two languages. Each of the titles Mr. Martínez chose for read-alouds arrayed English and Spanish differently. For example, English and Spanish translations in Anzaldúa’s (1993) *Friends From the Other Side* are juxtaposed. As another example, *Separate is Never Equal* (Tonatiuh, 2014), moves between English and Spanish in the telling of the story for literary effect. *Tomás and the Library Lady* (Mora, 2000) has separate English and Spanish editions rather than representing both languages in the same book. Drawing on his translanguaging stance to reflect his teaching practices, Mr. Martínez subscribed to flexible language use and codeswitched intersententially (e.g., switching languages between sentences) and/or intrasententially (e.g., switching languages within sentences) on the pages as he read aloud (see example in Table 1). By translanguaging, Mr. Martínez wished to emphasize the relationship between both languages for reading, discussing, and understanding stories.

Translanguaging to Promote Identities as Bilinguals Meaning-Makers

Mr. Martínez introduced each picture book with explicit language about translanguaging as a way to underscore his students’ identities as bilingual meaning-makers. He advocated both that bilingual speakers be free to use two languages as they talked about books, and he demonstrated that same freedom in his own language choices. For example, Mr. Martínez introduced *Friends From the Other Side* (Anzaldúa, 1993), explaining he would read in Spanish and translate some

- Teacher: *Muchas veces las protestas* ((raises clenched fist and stomps feet)) *están en la capital.*
(Many times the protests are in the capital.)
- Alejandro: In the capital.
- Teacher: Let's use our *claves*. ((writes *protesta* on board)).
(Let's use our clues.)
Look at the word. Who can help us figure out the meaning of that word?
- Rachel: Protest.
- Teacher: Yeah. How do you know? *¿Qué claves usas?*
(What clues are you using?)
- Rachel: Cover up the 'a' and it looks like protest.
- Teacher: *Exactamente. Si la cubro* ((covers up "a" with his hand)), *es* protest. *Cognado*. You can always *usar tus claves*.
(Exactly. If I cover it, it is protest. Cognate. You can always use your clues.)

Using Spanish and English, Mr. Martínez maximized the potential of Peter's question by involving the group to negotiate an important concept in the story. Mr. Martínez first contextualized the word in Spanish toward helping his students make a connection to the protests in their own state's capital ("Muchas veces las protestas están en la capital"). He raised his clenched fist in the air and marched in place as he voiced his remonstrance in Spanish. Following his invitation into the meaning-making, Alejandro, a native speaker of Spanish, translated a portion of Mr. Martínez's sentence from Spanish ("están en la capital") to English ("in the capital"), providing language mediation for his peers (Olmedo, 2003). Alejandro's paraphrased translation offered his peers another way to understand. As he continued, Mr. Martínez pointed to "protesta" on the easel nearest the group, prompting the children to use clues in the word to come to their own conclusions about meanings ("Let's use our clues. Look at the word"). He invited other students to add their ideas to the word's meaning ("Who can help us figure out the meaning of that word?").

This approach to vocabulary and language learning encouraged his students to articulate their strategic use of word and linguistic knowledge (Briceño, 2015; Seltzer & Collins, 2016) and communicated that Mr. Martínez

valued sharing strategies rather than authoritative sources of information. Mr. Martínez affirmed Rachel's discovery that "protest" and "protesta" shared etymological roots ("Yeah"), and asked her to explain the strategies she used to understand the word: "How do you know? ¿Qué claves usas?" He validated Rachel's recognition of cognates ("Exactamente"), demonstrated the strategy she used by covering up the letter 'a' in the word ("Si la cubro es protest"), and named her strategy ("Cognado"). He made visible the notion that bilinguals draw from their understandings of the relationships between words in English and Spanish (i.e., identifying cognates) to negotiate the meaning of words. By examining Rachel's contribution positively and publicly, Mr. Martínez encouraged others to try this strategy for themselves during read-alouds ("You can always usan tus claves").

Metalinguistic explorations seemed to make both the connections between languages and the strategies for discerning word meaning more visible for students, supporting their development of cross-language skills (Gort, 2008; Reyes, 2004; Worthy et al., 2013). Mr. Martínez confirmed this pattern in his translanguaging as intentional moves to engage his students in analysis of their own language use toward enhancing their abilities to transfer knowledge and skills across English and Spanish. He stated he hoped the more he named and valued the linguistic strategies students used, the more other children might use them:

I always try to ask them, 'How do you know? Explain? What are you thinking? If they can explain it, then they are better able to use that strategy and use Spanish and English in different situations. When they can explain their thinking, others then listen and learn how to do the same thing to be more successful. (Interview, November 2015)

Translanguaging to Foster Co-Constructions of Story Problems

In support of students' comprehension of the story problems, Mr. Martínez used translanguaging to mediate collaborative discussions during read-alouds. He subscribed to cooperative work using English and Spanish as he monitored his students' understandings with questions such as, "Who can tell us about *los eventos importantes*?" "What is *el escenario*?" Discussion of such questions involved multiple voices and allowed Mr. Martínez to identify the students who may have become confused by complex structures or by the languages in which he read. In the following example, Mr. Martínez invited students to share their interpretations in Spanish and English, asking them to clarify the problem in

Separate is Never Equal (Tonatiuh, 2014) as the point at which Sylvia Mendez and her brothers were refused enrollment at a white public school.

- Teacher: What is *el problema* so far in the story?
(*What is the problem so far in the story?*)
- Sarah: Sylvia’s aunt walked in and she was going to enroll all the children. And the lady said, ‘I’m only enrolling two of them because of their skin color.
- Sofia: She did not give a good reason. She said they had to go the Mexican school.
- Madison: ***Porque le dice dos papeles para los*** (sic) . . . ***los*** (sic) ***niñas que están***
(Because she tells her two papers for the . . . the . . . girls who are . . .)
- Sofia: ***¿Blancas?***
(White?)
- Madison: ***Niñas que están de*** Aunt
(The girls who are)
- Sofia: You can say it in English.
- Madison: ***Niñas que hablan inglés. Porque tienen*** lighter skin.
(*Girls who speak English. Because they have lighter skin.*)
- Teacher: Yeah ((*nods head*)). ***Solamente le dio dos formas.***
(*She only gave her two forms.*)
- Madison: And the other children ***nada.***
(*And the other children nothing.*)

Collaborative dialogues such as this afforded Mr. Martínez’s students opportunities to listen to one another and think aloud about the stories’ problems in Spanish and English. The intrasentential codeswitching in Mr. Martínez’s probing question (“*What is the problem so far in the story?*”) seemed an attempt to encourage students to display their understandings of the dilemma in the way they chose, including using both of their languages. As students identified the story problem, they also seemed to respond to their teacher’s demonstration that language borders can be crossed, specifically, responding in English to a Spanish comment

(and vice versa) and mixing both languages in a single sentence. Mr. Martínez honored his students' powerful attempts at negotiating the characters' dilemma through English and Spanish, and tried to strengthen those efforts by encouraging children to think together. For instance, Sofia, a native speaker of Spanish, seemed to recognize Madison's pauses as an indication of needing language support. Sofia provided support by offering Madison, a native speaker of English, the word in Spanish, "*blancas*," to complete her sentence. Rather than interjecting, Mr. Martínez allowed Sofia to take the role of language modeler—one who helps others develop skills. Further, he took the opportunity to model the ways in which discussants helped one another—or provide language mediation in the form of words or information—toward building bilingual skills and comprehension (Angelova, Gunawardena & Volk, 2006; Olmedo, 2003). Mr. Martínez affirmed Madison's comments ("Yeah"; nods head), recasting her words about the story problem with correct grammar ("Solamente le dio dos formas").

As this example illustrates, Mr. Martínez scaffolded and inspired discussion about the story problems while also encouraging students to use their linguistic resources for illuminating interpretations for themselves and for others (Gort & Sembiante, 2015). In an interview, Mr. Martínez expressed his intention of translanguaging to enhance collaborative conversations around the texts: "I see them [students] taking more risks and speaking in English and Spanish as I read aloud in both languages, which makes me believe even more in getting out of their way sometimes and letting them work together" (Interview, November 2015). To Mr. Martínez, taking up translanguaging meant being a careful listener and active responder to his students' contributions. He was committed to allowing his students to wrestle with their own ideas and interpretations, intending to remain vigilant so that his own voice did not dominate the shared thinking.

Discussion

Palmer and Martínez (2016), ask, "What does it mean for our classrooms, then, if we understand hybridity as a normal expression of bilingualism, that is, as a legitimate and acceptable way of doing being bilingual?" (p. 383). Researchers continue to explore this question, wondering how teachers oriented to students' repertoires of resources might leverage translanguaging for teaching. This study contributes to this body of research by exploring a teacher's translanguaging practices during read-alouds of bilingual literature within a dual-language classroom. Analysis of his instruction revealed Mr. Martínez's translanguaging stance (his positive dispositions toward bilingualism), design (his selection of literature and creation of a translanguaging learning environment), and shifts (his responsiveness to students'

linguistic repertoires) were integral in supporting his students’ meaning-making. Mr. Martínez’s support, attuned to talents and potential of each of his students, created a read-aloud space where translanguaging was accepted and anticipated. His selection of picture books, with deliberate displays of English and Spanish, as well as his translanguaging style of reading aloud provided students access and authority to construct meaning bilingually (García, Johnson, & Seltzer, 2016). Of importance is that Mr. Martínez validated his students’ contributions during read-alouds in whatever languages students chose so as to facilitate their learning. Rather than enforce linguistic boundaries—or police students’ language use (Zentella, 1997)—Mr. Martínez tried to facilitate an “owning” of the many ways of talking and knowing (p. 284). He never requested his students to speak only in English or Spanish, providing them freedom to decide when and how to use their linguistic repertoires for discussing stories. This support of students’ decision-making demonstrated Mr. Martínez’s valuing of children’s bilingual voices and initiatives to question, problem solve, and express themselves in developing languages (Otheguy, García, & Reid, 2015).

Mr. Martínez’s appreciative stance toward translanguaging coupled with the opportunities he offered students for using their developing bilingual repertoires provided the grounds for powerful meaning-making. As García and Kleyn (2016) suggest, Mr. Martínez’s explicit talk about translanguaging during the picture book introductions communicated to the students the equal value of both English and Spanish, emphasizing his stance that bilingualism “is a resource at all times to learn, think imagine, and develop commanding performances in two languages” (p. 21). Simultaneously scaffolding their responses and modeling through uses of translanguaging, Mr. Martínez guided students to draw on a more flexible repertoire when they participated in story discussions, regardless of the text’s written language (Jiménez et al., 2015; Martin-Beltrán, 2010). In addition, his recurring statements about being bilingual, mixing languages, and translation invited his students to invest in their bilingual identities. These discursive moves demonstrated for students the multiple and related language practices learners rely on to make sense of texts. By emphasizing translanguaging as the status quo, Mr. Martínez seemed to raise his students’ awareness of how they become better readers in two languages through using their full linguistic repertoire with others (García, Johnson, & Seltzer, 2016; DeNicolò, 2010).

Evidence from this study suggest that there are compelling reasons for teachers of bilingual students to take an active role in read-alouds and discussions. Mr. Martínez acted as a participant, rather than a spectator, who was mutually involved in making meaning alongside his students. Across the read-alouds, Mr. Martínez engaged with his students in translanguaging to “co-construct

meaning, to include others, and to mediate understandings” (García, 2009, p. 304). His practices of translanguaging opened the dialogue for his students to build theories and offer their own explanations of word meanings and promoted their collaboration around story problems that comprehension of texts in two languages demands (Goodwin & Jiménez, 2016). Mr. Martínez not only helped to stretch students’ thinking through translanguaging, but encouraged students to support one another’s inquiries and understandings of linguistic interconnectedness by asking them to share their ideas and strategies (Martínez-Roldán, 2005). These moment-by-moment decisions of when and how to intervene and step back—or *shifts*—in Mr. Martínez’s teaching seemed to help students to recognize their own potential and to take the driver’s seat of their meaning-making (García, Johnson, & Seltzer, 2016).

Conclusion

Now more than ever, understanding the affordances of translanguaging pedagogies for bilingual children is important. Teachers in today’s era of high-stakes testing and Common Core Standards face pressures to ready students quickly toward English fluency, often at the expense of maintaining and growing their bilingualism (Escamilla & Hopewell, 2011). Teachers also find the work of supporting children as bilingual meaning-makers of texts challenging, as they work within models of language separation, traditionally implemented in dual-language programs (Henderson & Palmer, 2015; Weise, 2004). Bilingual students in dual-language programs too often are limited to separate literacy practices in Spanish and English (Gort & Pontier, 2013; Pérez, 2004) that delimit possibilities for using strategies in both languages while participating in literature discussions. Despite these structural constraints, it is possible for teachers to design instruction that responds to the variation in students’ linguistic repertoires while also building on what students know and can do across languages. As the research presented here has shown, Mr. Martínez’s instruction positioned his students to embrace bilingualism as a resource for their biliteracy learning.

While this research is limited by a small number of participants over the course of eight weeks, the results do have implications for practitioners. A read-aloud space that focuses on developing bilingual and biliteracy skills is not just for students and teachers in dual-language programs. Linguistically diverse literature in conjunction with strategic teacher facilitation can support the meaning-making of all students, even in English-dominant settings. Instruction supported by translanguaging can open pathways for students of diverse backgrounds to access linguistic resources from their teacher, their peers, and their own repertoires, and

engage with others’ perspectives to think deeply about texts. It is my hope that this case study illuminates for teachers the possibilities of expanding their read-alouds to include both well-chosen literature as models of translanguaging as well as opportunities to speak back to that literature through translanguaging. In the presence of these mediators, children may become more adept at surfacing and drawing from their repertoires of practice in the literacy classroom.

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APPENDIX A

Children's Literature Read Aloud

- Anzaldúa, G. (1993). *Friends from the other side/Amigos del otro lado*. San Francisco, CA: Children's Book Press.
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TABLE 1
Mr. Martínez's Translanguaging Style

<u>Tomás and the Library Lady</u> (English edition)	<u>Tomás and the Library Lady</u> (Mr. Ortega's oral reading of English edition)
"It was midnight. The light of the full moon followed the tired old car. Tomás was tired, too. Hot and tired. He missed his own bed in his own house in Texas" (1st opening).	"It was midnight. The light of <i>la luna llena</i> followed the tired old <i>carro</i> . (intrasentential code-switching) Tomás was <i>cansado</i> , too (intrasentential code-switching) Caliente y cansado . (intersentential code-switching) He missed his own <i>cama</i> in his own <i>casa en Tejas</i> " (intrasentential code-switching) (1st opening).

RESEARCH ON READERS THEATER

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Abstract

Readers theater is an instructional activity that requires students to dramatically perform a text. It requires readers (of all levels) to read with expression and fluency in order to convey meaning to an audience, using minimal prompts, costumes, or memorization. In this review of research, we demonstrate how readers theater benefits its participants in the areas of motivation, fluency, vocabulary, reading, writing and speaking. The purpose of this article is to highlight the theories, pedagogies, and research behind the implementation and justification for the use of Readers Theater.

Introduction

Mraz and colleagues (2013) suggest “in order for students to learn to construct meaning from text, it is necessary for teachers to apply instructional strategies that will help readers transition from simple decoding of words to fluent word identification” (p. 165). Likewise, Worthy and Prater (2002) stress the need for students to understand “the goal of all reading is constructing meaning, and it is important that instructional activities have a clear purpose that matches students’ needs and interests” (p. 295). While there are countless instructional strategies and activities that follow some combination of these descriptors, they may not all possess the collective attributes of Readers Theater.

Readers Theater is an imaginative instructional technique available for students (Ratliff, 2006). By most accounts, it is a dramatic oral reading, typically based on an established piece of literature (e.g. *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*), but nearly any text can be scripted and performed (Young & Rasinski, 2011). Readers Theater requires readers (of all levels) to read with expression and fluency in order to convey meaning to an audience, using minimal prompts,

costumes, or memorization. The performance aspect of readers theater adds to the lure and excitement of the activity. Bidwell (1991) draws parallels between good reading instruction and drama, including schema, metacognition, interactive theory, whole language, strategic reading, and a renewed focus on literature. She states the “arts can increase self-discipline and motivation, contribute to a positive self-image, provide an acceptable outlet for emotions, and help to develop creative and intuitive thinking processes” (p. 38). Likewise, using readers theater as the instructional platform, students are asked to portray characters through their understanding of that character’s back story and their analysis of the character, both of which stem from schema and metacognition (Bidwell, 1991). Additionally, she highlights how students and teachers provide feedback to one another (interactive theory), use reading and writing to improvise and extend speaking and listening (whole language), gather information about their characters from different sources (strategic reading), and make literature “come alive” when they act (renewed focus on literature) (Bidwell, 2011).

Bidwell (1991) adds that the incorporation of drama in a reading activity reinforces reading skills and provides the opportunity to *do* literature and many researchers would agree. Larkin (2001), for example, states “[readers theater] is an authentic way of motivating children, developing fluency, and building comprehension through repeated reading” (p. 481). Similarly, Lin (2015) advocates that “because of rich narration and expression readers theater enables students to be more involved in reading activities with interest” (p. 43)

Beyond the name and quasi-theatrical elements of readers theater, the focus is on the act of reading. Research indicates that throughout the process of readers theater, multiple and diverse components of reading are developed (see Griffith & Rasinski, 2004; Keehn, Harmon, & Shoho, 2008; Young & Rasinski, 2009, 2018). Moran (2006) concludes, “as long as the text maintains a prominent and visual role in design, rehearsal, and performance, the most important elements of readers theater are present” (p. 318). Indeed, reading persists throughout all parts of the readers theater process. Using a systematic and effective approach to readers theater (see Young & Rasinski, 2016; Young, Stokes, & Rasinski, 2017) requires roughly 5-15 minutes a day dedicated to authentic reading, rehearsing (repeated reading) and performing a script. Researchers often frame the activity within a weekly format (Young, 2013), and each day often focuses on different aspects of reading, such as accuracy, automaticity, or prosody. During the week, students have an opportunity to listen to modeled readings, gain a deeper understanding of read vocabulary, and receive productive feedback on their progress (i.e. voice, rate, and expression) from teachers (Pany & McCoy, 1998). In addition, students collaborate with their colleagues, develop their voice and character’s identity, and

master the texts. Further, students have the opportunity to read a variety of texts, which often deviate from their “reading level”; thus exposing students to new literature (Hoffman, 1979, 2017).

Given the textual undercurrent, readers theater, then, becomes a platform for a host of literary development and skill-sets. A review of research demonstrates that readers theater benefits its participants in several key areas of literacy, including motivation, fluency, vocabulary, reading, and speaking (Chou, 2013; Rasinski, 1989; Rinehart, 1999, Worthy & Prater, 2002; Young & Rasinski, 2018). The following sections in this review of the literature explore the relationship between readers theater and fluency, the empirical and qualitative research on readers theater, as well as the potential readers theater provides for reading and writing connections.

Fluency and Readers Theater

The complexities of fluency make it difficult to instruct, monitor, and assess. According to Rasinski (2010) reading fluency comprises word recognition accuracy, automaticity, and reading prosody. Collectively, they measure the accuracy with which a reader decodes words, how quickly the word is read with minimal cognitive effort, and the volume, intonation, and pace one assigns to the words read. LaBerge and Samuels (1974) summarizes this action of cognitive processes in their Automatic Information-Processing Model, which suggests that with time and frequency, letter perception becomes increasingly automatic and attention to early visual coding processes decreases. This applicability to reading amounts to a fluent reader. As a result, fluent readers focus less on word recognition and allocate more attention to higher-order thinking, such as comprehension (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974). Young and Rasinski (2017) insists “it is imperative that readers become more automatic and demonstrate swift, smooth and accurate reading” (p. 9).

The National Reading Panel (2000) recommends an effective approach to teaching fluency is through repeated oral reading. As mentioned before, “one of the key features of Readers Theater is repetitive oral reading exercises, which allows students to become familiar with reading content and progressively improve their reading skills” (Chou, 2013, p. 78). Worthy and Prater (2002) concludes, Readers Theater “is an inherently meaningful, purposeful vehicle for repeated reading” (p. 295). A vast amount of research exists that claims repeated readings or versions of repeated reading is a powerful method for increasing fluency (Anderson, 1981; Allington, 1983; Chomsky, 1976, 1978; Carbo, 1981; Dowhower, 1987; Keehn, 2003; Kuhn & Stahl, 2003; Rasinski, Padak, Linek

& Sturtevant, 1994; Stahl, Heubach, & Cramond, 1997). Readers Theater also specifically targets the somewhat neglected component of fluency - prosody.

Young and Rasinski (2009) refer to prosody as “the ability of readers to render a text with appropriate expression and phrasing to reflect the semantic and syntactic content of the passage” (p. 4). “A high correlation exists claiming that students who read with expression are more likely to comprehend grade level texts” (Young, Stokes, & Rasinski, 2017, p. 2). The platform of Readers Theater allows students to continuously “practice correct pronunciation, intonation, and emotional delivery . . . to express the intent of the script to the audience” (Chou, 2013, p. 81).

Recently, Paige et al (2017) described prosody’s important role in students’ reading comprehension. Results of their quantitative analysis indicated that prosody is a mediating factor between automaticity and reading comprehension. In other words, students might use prosodic renderings to support their understanding of texts. Their notion is supported by early research by Goodman (1964) who found that students who read aloud with expression that appropriately matched the meaning, tended to be better comprehenders of text. Since then, other researchers have also emphasized the importance of reading prosody. Miller and Schwanenflugel (2008) found that students who read prosodically in first and second grades demonstrated higher reading comprehension by third grade.

In 1991, Dowhower considered prosody as reading fluency’s “unattended bedfellow.” Indeed, prosody was often neglected in terms of fluent reading, but that trend is still common today. Research on reading fluency find that general classroom fluency instruction does not target reading prosody specifically (Young, Valadez, & Gandara, 2016). Thus, it imperative that teachers have access to strategy and instructional activities that develop all the components of reading, including prosody. Fortunately, implementing readers theater can have very large effects on students’ reading prosody ($d = 1.15$). Of course, readers theater also benefits other components of reading fluency.

Empirical Research on Readers Theater

Several studies relay the quantitative findings of Readers Theater, including changes in the rate of reading, reading level, and other quantifiable reading skills. Martinez, Roser, & Strecker (1998/1999) implemented readers theater for 10 weeks with 52 second graders at an inner-city school. At the beginning of the study, 76% of the students were not meeting the grade level expectations. In the treatment, after 10 weeks of readers theater, 75% of the students met

the expectations. For the words read correctly per minute (WCPM) measure, the control group experienced a mean increase of 6.9, whereas the treatment group mean increased by 17 WCPM. Moreover, in addition to oral reading rate, research published that same year involving 28 second graders revealed that readers theater also significantly increased students reading comprehension and overall reading ability (Millin & Reinhart, 1999).

A decade later, Young and Rasinski (2009) studied 29 second graders who participated in readers theater for an entire school year. The researchers saw an increase of 63 WCPM and a 20% increase in reading prosody. It is clear that second graders benefit greatly from readers theater.

Keehn (2003) used a variety of measures, including, the Qualitative Reading Inventory, Gray Oral Reading Test, NAEP Oral Reading Scale, and the Diagnostic Fluency Scale. The treatment and comparison groups were comprised of 66 second graders. The treatment group received readers theater with explicit fluency instruction, while the comparison engaged in only readers theater. Generally, Keehn found that students in both groups and at all levels of ability made statistically significant gains, and there was no significance between students who received readers theater plus explicit instruction in aspects of fluency and students who received only the readers theater intervention. Moreover, low achievement students made more significant gains in rate, retelling, and expressiveness when compared with students at average and high achievement levels. High achievement readers made significant gains in measures of reading ability when compared with low-ability readers.

In 2004, Griffith and Rasinski also studied the impact of readers theater on low-ability readers; more specifically, 15 at-risk fourth graders. After nine months of readers theater, the students' silent reading comprehension mean score grew by 2.87 years. In addition to the remarkable growth in comprehension, students' WCPM mean increased by 47.4. These results certainly confirmed the previous quantitative research on readers theater.

Corcoran & Davis (2005) studied 12 2nd and 3rd grade students in a Learning Disabled and Emotionally Handicapped Classroom for eight weeks. Students' WCPM mean increased 17 words per minute. In addition, 97% of students indicated they were very excited about readers theater. Therefore, the strategy also might be a viable option for diverse school contexts.

In yet another context, Garrett & O'Conner (2010) studied 46 K-5 students in 4 different special education classes for nine months. Using District Benchmarks, a Retell Rubric (1 to 4), and a Fluency Rubric (1 to 4), the researchers observed substantial gains. The students' reading level mean increased by .8 years, comprehension gain by .95 years, and demonstrated a fluency gain of .9 years.

In another quantitative study, Keehn, Harmon, & Shoho (2008) studied the effects of readers theater on 36 eighth graders on a Title I campus. According to the results the treatment significantly outperformed the control group in reading level with a moderate effect ($\eta^2 = .239$); The treatment also outperformed control in fluidity with a small effect ($\eta^2 = .136$) and a moderate effect in expression ($\eta^2 = .274$). The treatment did significantly better than the comparison group on vocabulary learning producing a moderate effect ($\eta^2 = .269$). Thus, it appeared that readers theater was also an effective activity for older learners as well.

Finally, in a technological adaptation of readers theater, Vasinda & McLeod (2011) studied 35 struggling second and third graders that participated in podcasting readers theater. That is, the students rehearsed and then audio-recorded their performance to be shared on the Internet. The students engaged in this type of readers theater for ten weeks, and the mean reading level grew a remarkable 1.13 years, as measured by the Developmental Reading Assessment and Critical Reading Inventory. This adaption proved to be quite promising.

These aforementioned studies demonstrate the versatility of readers theater as an instructional practice, adaptability toward different student populations, and effectiveness across all areas of literacy.

Qualitative Research on Readers Theater

Writing about the challenges in reading and motivation, Worthy and Prater (2002) find that readers theater is the “one instructional activity that not only combines several effective research-based practices, but also leads to increased engagement with literacy even in very resistant readers” (p. 294). Chou (2013) states, “[readers theater] provides enjoyment, interaction, cooperation . . . and emotional support” (p. 81) for its participants. Likewise, Martinez, Roser, and Strecker (1999) note a similar context in their study of inner-city second-grade students, who engaged in readers theater for 10 weeks for 30 minutes per day. In their findings, they mention how the preparation for the weekly performance proved to be a motivational method (Martinez, Roser, & Strecker, 1999). The preparation, in essence, is more of a rehearsal. Students engage in the process of repeated readings, a well-researched method for increasing automaticity, but the students are provided with purpose—to perform. The pending performance likely motivates students to practice, as well.

There are several factors that contribute to this increase in motivation and enjoyment for students of all ages and abilities. Readers theater offers students an outlet to perform and express themselves through listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Liu, 2015). It, also, provides an opportunity to interact with a piece

of literature in a non-traditional format. Additional breaks come when students are offered a challenging, speaking part, which gives them a chance to display talents, which might otherwise go unnoticed in a traditional classroom setting (Clark, Morrison, & Wilcox, 2009). Other enjoyable benefits include differentiated groupings, along with supports and assists for struggling readers (Clark, Morrison, & Wilcox, 2009; Liu, 2015; Worthy & Prater, 2002).

Worthy and Prater (2002) asserts that readers theater uses readers that may not regularly be called on to read in the classroom, such as students identified as “struggling readers” or those with an identified learning disability. Ivey (1999) asserts that struggling adolescent readers need instruction that improves their reading development and their motivation to read. In their studies of long-term reading motivation and engagement, Guthrie and Cox (2001) suggests teachers create several contexts within their classroom, including the assurance of social collaboration for learning. Similarly, Liu (2000) (as cited in Liu, 2015) notes that while writing scripts, preparing repeated rehearsals, and performing readers theater on the stage, students in groups do not feel isolated and alone when they are not able to cope with difficulties (p. 43). Readers Theater is a group activity, where all members have to work together (e.g. rehearse, perform, and reflect) in an effort to produce an outstanding performance. This provides another layer of (intrinsic) motivation for the student to flawlessly deliver their parts within the performance. Intrinsic motivation refers to the activities in which pleasure is inherent in the activity itself (Gottfried, 1985). Guthrie and Cox (2001) view intrinsically motivated readers as being synonymous to “engaged readers” (p. 284), or those who read for the knowledge and enjoyment it provides. Engagement theory, further, differentiates “engaged” from “disengaged” readers as those that are mentally active, using metacognitive strategies to build their understanding, frequently active and social; discussing what they are learning and reading (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Tracey & Morrow, 2012). Mraz et. al (2013) asserts, “when successful readers read aloud, not only do they read fluently and with adequate speed, they also use appropriate phrasing, intonation; their oral reading mirrors their spoken language” (p. 164). Wigfield, Guthrie, Tonks, and Perencevich (2004) believes children’s motivation for reading will peak, when they are intrinsically motivated to read and confident or efficacious at reading.

Self-efficacy refers to one’s belief in their ability to complete a task. Children’s beliefs in their efficacy affect their academic motivation, interest, and scholastic achievement (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996). This belief can be influenced by various factors, including reflection, feedback, encouragement, and prior success (Bandura, 1997; Wigfield et al., 2004), along with social and emotional influences that either support or detract from

educational development (Bandura et al., 1996). Patterns of survey responses from the 16 participants that engaged in readers theater in a 2008 study conducted by Keehn, Harmon, and Shoho, revealed that students grew in confidence as they learned that they could perform successfully. Further, they attest that the “positive accolades that followed each public performance provided many students with an awareness that they *could* read well, when prepared” (p. 355), despite the readability of the scripts being above the students’ reading level.

Reading-Writing Connections in Readers Theater

Readers Theater inspires children to explore text comprehension through the development of the scripts. In their writings about ways to extend and share comprehension instruction, Shanklin and Rhodes (1989) recommends developing readers theater scripts from a text, which “encourages children’s divergent and elaborative responses to text, their decisions as to what is important to portray, and their organization of that meaning” (p. 499). The writing process and script revisions furthers children’s discussion into character development, inferential meaning, and social interaction, including divergent and multiple, interpretive meanings (Shanklin & Rhodes, 1989). This results in a “think tank” of ideas and discussions surrounding text meaning.

Wolf (1993) writes about how her students, similarly engaged in readers theater, were guided to construct their own critical frames for interpretation of their characters. As the students internalize their characters, they “began to see themselves as experts in the multiple decisions necessary for text interpretation and performance” (p. 542). Heath, Branscombe, and Thomas (1986) suggests that in extended conversations about text, the book becomes a “narrative prop [in] which children learn to create narratives of various genres on both information in books and knowledge beyond books” (p. 32).

Young and Rasinski (2011), also, harnesses the power of readers theater scripts by providing students the opportunity to explore voice in their writing. In *Enhancing Author’s Voice Through Scripting*, they make the case for an authentic writing experience and model a strategy for scaffolding students through this writing process. The authors maintain that “voice in writing adds to the meaningfulness and engagement quality of the reading experience” (p. 24). Given this premise, they reason that scripts are the perfect vehicle for re-creation, as students have become familiar with the text through rehearsals, therefore, the text is, then, easily manipulated, transposed, and reconfigured through the student’s own voice. The use of the scripts preserves the reciprocity of reading and writing, along with the relationship between voice in writing and prosody in reading.

Conclusion

Readers theater is sometimes considered as “the closest thing to a silver bullet” to meet the Common Core State Standards in reading (Rasinski & Young, 2017). This is a powerful claim, but research does provide a plethora of support for implementing readers theater in the classroom. Qualitative research reveals that the activity can be motivating and build confidence, especially for those students who find reading difficult. Moreover, quantitative research provides evidence that systematic implementation of readers theater can help students read more automatically and with greater expression, which can lead to increased overall reading achievement.

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WHAT DO THEY DO ALL DAY?: FIELD EXPERIENCES IN LITERACY COACHING

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Abstract

This study describes the varied literacy coaching field experiences of online graduate students, including analysis of the levels of leadership experiences they had. Candidates' experiences were analyzed in relation to the International Literacy Association (ILA)'s previous (2010) Standards for Reading Professionals as well as Vogt and Shearer's (2011) Literacy Coaching Models for Reading Professionals. Data indicate that candidates participated in a large number of field experiences related to assessment (Standard 3) and professional learning and leadership (Standard 6), aligning predominantly with Informal and Mixed Models of Coaching. Findings suggest that the ILA's Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals 2017 (ILA, 2018) will serve as an important opportunity to include more district-wide leadership experiences as well as call for greater attention to issues of K-12 student diversity in program redesign and development.

Purpose of the Study

National participation in online post-baccalaureate education continues to grow (USDOE, 2017). When graduate reading or literacy master's programs move to online environments, teacher educators are tasked with creating meaningful ways for candidates to not only interact with course material but also to apply and develop their professional knowledge through field experiences. The purpose of this research was to describe how graduate students enrolled in online literacy coaching courses engaged in field experiences to apply and develop their leadership and coaching skills. This research addressed the need for innovative, online preparation programs that are responsive to the contextual realities of our candidates, as well as to changes in professional standards of practice.

Perspectives

Literacy coaching is a form of professional development framed within a situated learning perspective (Rogoff, 1997) in which training is embedded within a school context; therefore, it is critical for literacy coach preparation programs to provide opportunities for candidates to learn in authentic contexts with the support of school administrators, teachers, and university faculty. Authentic experiences providing candidates opportunities to learn and develop their leadership and coaching roles can also empower candidates to perceive themselves as effective in those roles (Mongillo, Lawrence, & Hong, 2012).

An essential cornerstone of coaching preparation programs includes participating in a coaching cycle (Puig & Froelich, 2011): a coaching cycle typically consists of leading a pre-observation conference with a teacher, conducting an observation of teaching, and leading a post-observation conference to support a teacher in reflection and instructional improvement. Ippolito (2010) suggested that these learning experiences should also prepare literacy coaches for complex role and relationship negotiations by incorporating activities to observe and rehearse the subtle shifting a coach does in conferences between responsive questioning and directive suggesting. In graduate training programs containing online coursework, the International Literacy Association (2015) recommends that candidates pursue these complex learning outcomes through engagement with online simulations, extensive video capture of teaching and coaching interactions, and reflection with instructors and peers.

Literacy Coaching Models

Based on existing literacy coach research, Vogt and Shearer (2011) outlined six literacy coaching models for reading professionals according to enacted roles

and responsibilities in schools: Informal Coaching Model, Mixed Model with elements of informal and formal coaching, Formal Literacy Coaching Model, Peer Coaching and Mentoring Model, Cognitive Coaching Model, and Clinical Supervision Model. Amongst these six models, a key distinction is the type and location of support offered to teachers. For the Informal and Mixed Coaching Models, support for teachers primarily occurs outside of the classroom through preparation of resources and professional development. Formal and Peer Coaching Models focus on support within the classroom through modeling lessons and co-teaching. Cognitive and Clinical Supervision Models both rely on classroom observation and feedback delivered for different purposes: collaboration around teachers' reflective thinking (Cognitive Model) and evaluation (Clinical Supervision Model).

The distinction of coaching models is essential to the success of coaching in achieving the desired literacy-based reform or professional learning efforts of the coaching context. By intentionally making use of the various coaching models, teacher preparation programs can work to prepare Specialized Literacy Professionals to determine how best to address the broader goals of their particular coaching situation.

Shifting Standards

As the International Literacy Association moves from the *Standards for Reading Professionals, Revised* (2010) to the *Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals 2017* (ILA, 2018), one of the key shifts is the change from a singular Reading Specialist/Coach role to three types of Specialized Literacy Professionals: Reading/Literacy Specialist, Literacy Coach, and Literacy Coordinator/Supervisor (Bean & Kern, 2018; Kern et al., 2018). The preparation of all three roles includes increased emphasis on literacy leadership and practical experiences. Specifically, Standard 6 addresses demonstrating leadership through sharing professional knowledge and Standard 7 indicates the need for candidates in traditional, hybrid, and online programs to have ongoing, supervised practicum/clinical experiences to develop and apply the necessary skills for their desired role (Kern et al., 2018).

Coaching in Context

In their aptly titled column, "What am I supposed to do all day?" Dole and Donaldson (2006) addressed the ambiguity and challenges that new literacy coaches face in prioritizing their time. Since then, researchers have studied coaching activities through surveys (e.g., Bean et al., 2015; Blamey, Meyer, & Walpole, 2008; Calo, Sturtevant, & Kopfman, 2015; Hathaway, Martin, & Mraz, 2016)

and coaching logs (e.g. Scott, Cortina, & Carlisle, 2012) with the overwhelming result that since roles vary widely, the ways in which coaches spend their time also vary. Universities, as educational preparation providers, are tasked with providing candidates with quality preparation to cultivate the content knowledge and pedagogy necessary for the varying and context-specific coaching they will do (International Literacy Association, 2015).

The results of a recent nationwide survey indicate a continuing need for university graduate preparation programs to include experiences designed to prepare candidates for coaching roles in their authentic situations (Bean et al., 2015). In particular, the results suggest the need for prospective literacy coaches to receive additional knowledge and training related to one-on-one coaching, effectively using coaching language in coach-teacher relationships, and both formal and informal leadership preparation (Bean et al., 2015; Calo, Sturtevant, & Kopfman, 2015). These needs, coupled with additional focus in the standards suggest that universities are now being tasked with preparing candidates to serve a wider range of literacy leadership roles.

Methods

The work reported here is part of a larger, multi-institutional study of coaching development and innovation in coaching preparation programs. The aims of the project are to better understand the ways in which teachers develop coaching knowledge and practices, and the learning experiences that inform their development. By looking within and across institutions we are able to identify and respond to the varying contextual demands placed on novice coaches. This article reports on findings from a primarily qualitative content analysis of field experiences during one semester of practicum at one institution.

Participants & Context

Participants included 20 graduate students enrolled in an online section of a literacy coaching course. At this point in the program, candidates had already completed the required coursework to earn a K-12 state reading endorsement. The majority of participants worked full-time in K-3 settings: 15 as classroom teachers and 2 as Title 1 Reading teachers. Two worked in middle school settings and one in a high school setting.

The course, *Literacy Coaching Internship*, serves as a capstone for the Master's of Education in Reading program. A central requirement of the course was to spend 10 hours a week fulfilling leadership and coaching roles at their

current teaching placement. Each candidate was responsible for arranging the details for this field-based requirement.

Procedure

Through the application of coaching models shared in class, candidates learned to identify and enact facilitating, consulting, and collaborating coaching stances (L'Allier & Elish-Piper, 2011; 2012). Course assignments required participants to engage in district-wide data analysis, plan community literacy events, craft grants to supplement needed school materials, and complete a coaching cycle (Puig & Froelich, 2011) with at least one other teacher, typically a classmate. In a shift from previous semesters in which candidates were permitted to include planning for and teaching small group interventions in their field hours, candidates' time in the field needed to be in leadership roles. Building supervisors observed candidates and provided evaluations to course instructors. Candidates documented their leadership and coaching experiences through coaching logs and reflections.

Data Collection

The primary data source was internship logs (Appendix) that candidates completed weekly to document how they spent the required time. Site-based supervisors reviewed and signed these forms each week to verify how the candidates spent the required ten field hours each week. Depending on the schedules of their placements, candidates submitted nine or ten of these logs. Within the log, candidates were asked to document their work as two major tasks, categorizing each by the 2010 ILA Standard that they felt it demonstrated, and finally, dividing their time into whether they were "observing" or "participating." Candidates were provided with a model and written directions for completing this form but received minimal feedback about the manner in which they completed it. Additional course artifacts such as assignment descriptions were reviewed to contextualize the field work.

Data Analysis

We conducted three levels of content analysis to better understand what our students were doing in their field placements. First, we examined how candidates described and categorized their own work, tallying the Standards and type of work (observing vs. participating) that they indicated. Second, we compared the experiences they described to Vogt and Shearer's (2011) models, coding each

experience as it fit within one (or none) of the 6 models of coaching. Third, we used an analysis of the proposed ILA 2017 Standards document to categorize the self-described experiences as addressing the goals of “coaching” or “leadership,” as defined by the listed activities in the proposed (ILA, 2017, June) new standards. For example, candidates’ assessment activities were coded as “coaching” when they worked with a teacher to implement an assessment, and “leadership,” when they analyzed school or district-wide assessment data. At the time of analysis, the June 2017 draft of the ILA Standards was the most current document available. Since publication of the finalized Standards, we have compared the two versions and found no substantive changes to our analysis categories.

Findings

Use of Time

Novice coaches’ field experiences reflected a wide range of activities that they classified as participation or observation. Activities that they noted participating included many that might be expected within the scope of their regular job descriptions such as grade level team meetings and faculty development workshops. Observation was more commonly linked with purposes of learning something new about students, the content, or the grade level observed.

Across the candidates, the proportion of time they allocated to participating increased throughout the field experience (see Table 1). In the first three weeks of their experiences, candidates spent 70% of their time in activities they classified as participating and 30% of their time in activities they classified as observation. During weeks four through six, candidates spent 73% of their time participating and 27% of their time observing. In weeks seven through nine, candidates spent 76% of their required time participating and 24% observing.

TABLE 1
Time Spent in Field Experiences

Period	Hours of Observation			Hours of Participation		
	Total (%)	Mean	Range	Total (%)	Mean	Range
Weeks 1-3	212 (30)	10.6	1 – 20.5	489.5 (70)	24.5	15 – 39
Weeks 4-6	164.5 (27)	8.2	0 – 15	437.5 (73)	21.9	14.5 – 33.5
Weeks 7-9	150 (24)	7.5	0 – 18.5	463 (76)	23.15	17 – 30
All Weeks	530.5 (28)	26.5	4 – 51	1390 (72)	69.5	52 – 94

Though we expected to see an increase in participation across the experience, we were impressed to see candidates participating to such a high degree from the beginning. In some cases, however, candidates' participation did not extend far beyond the roles their job placements would have normally required (i.e. participating in a grade level team meeting rather than running a team meeting). For some candidates, time spent observing exposed them to more novel environments and roles beyond their own classroom.

Classification of tasks by 2010 Standards

Candidates were asked to report two major tasks each week and categorize each by which of the ILA Standards (2010) they felt the task addressed. Though the model they were provided showed one standard chosen per task, candidates often selected two or three standards per task. Classification of tasks by standards was self-reported by candidates and is reported here in aggregate by percentage of the 376 total tasks reported (see Figure 1). We recognize that the course assignments played some role in directing the type of work that candidates did; however, the variety observed in their categorization suggested that individual candidates interpreted similar tasks in different ways, reflecting how they understood the standards.

Candidates classified nearly one-third (30%) of the tasks that they reported as relating to Standard 6: Professional Learning & Leadership. This represented the most commonly selected standard, which led to further analysis of what they determined constituted professional learning and leadership activities. At times when they classified their activities as "observing," they selected standard 6, suggesting they may have interpreted this standard to include their own professional learning, as well as supporting the professional learning of others.

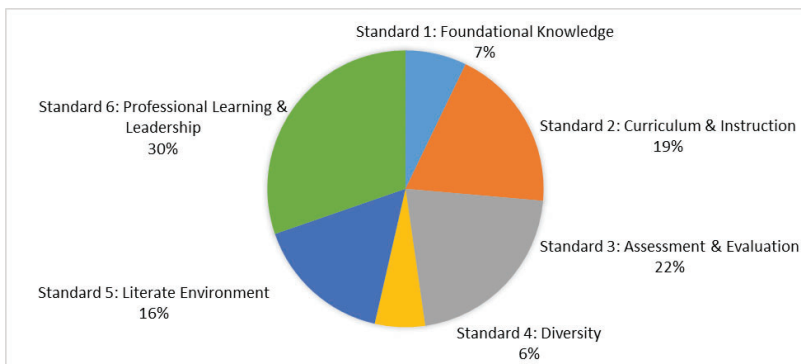


Figure 1. Candidates' classification of tasks according to 2010 ILA standards.

The second most commonly selected standard was Standard 3: Assessment & Evaluation, representing 22% of the tasks reported. As this internship experience occurred during the spring semester, candidates were often asked to support their schools through assisting with end-of-year testing procedures; specifically, many administered assessments and reported data linked to a state third grade retention initiative. These tasks provided a valuable way for candidates to contribute to the functioning of their school districts, as well as opportunities for candidates to analyze and discuss assessment data with a variety of stakeholders: administrators, parents, and other teachers. While these experiences were mutually beneficial to candidates and their schools, we had some concerns about how much of their time was spent on familiar assessment tasks rather than giving candidates opportunities to practice new skills.

Candidates' work with Standard 2: Curriculum & Instruction represented 19% of their overall tasks. Many of these tasks included developing instructional resources for their colleagues. Some candidates also had opportunities to review curricular materials either to evaluate them for possible adoption or to develop an implementation plan for newly adopted materials.

Candidates' work with Standard 5: The Literate Environment represented 16% of the tasks. These tasks were predominantly focused on completing a course assignment that required them to identify resources for enhancing the literate environment of their classroom, grade, or school. Through this project, candidates explored their ideas of ideal environments for literacy learning and wrote grant proposals to request funds for these resources.

One of the least commonly selected standards, Standard 1: Foundational Knowledge, represented 7% of the selected tasks. We found such a small portion to be puzzling, prompting further questions about how we have structured the course to help candidates recognize the value of their expertise. The small number of tasks categorized with standard 1 led us to question how well candidates recognized when they were using their foundational knowledge. Within our group of 20 candidates, 7 candidates never marked this standard and 3 candidates were responsible for half of the tasks marked with this standard. We speculate that some candidates may not yet have the confidence in their own expertise to feel like they are able to demonstrate this foundational knowledge. Instead, they might view these experiences as an extension of their professional learning (Standard 6).

Of greater concern was the very small portion of tasks (6%) that candidates felt related to supporting diverse students. Half of the candidates (10) never marked Standard 4: Diversity. Though many candidates worked with student populations that were largely racially homogenous, these data suggest that many

candidates do not look beyond this to see the other factors that create diversity in the classroom. This finding was particularly surprising considering one assignment that asked them to analyze district data in terms of different student populations and another that asked them to create a plan identifying resources to address the needs of diverse learners.

Coaching Models

We found only three of Vogt and Shearer's (2011) coaching models represented in the candidates' experiences: the Informal Model, the Mixed Model, and the Peer Coaching/Mentoring Model. While some elements of the Formal, Cognitive, and Clinical Supervision Coaching Models were evident, these appeared as isolated tasks rather than cohesive experiences for the novice coaches.

More than half of the candidates (12) completed tasks that we categorized as fitting into the Informal Model. This work allowed candidates to support their colleagues through sharing resources and engaging in professional development without stepping out of their established teaching roles. Candidates spent significant time identifying, creating, or compiling resources to make materials accessible for other teachers, often through technology. Candidates also worked with teachers to determine professional development needs, suggest relevant materials, and facilitate professional book studies. Beyond their work with individual teachers, candidates supported their peers through analyzing and presenting data at the grade and building levels, and selecting or creating curricula to address identified needs.

A smaller number of candidates (6) completed tasks that consistently blended the Informal and Formal Models in what Vogt and Shearer (2011) termed the Mixed Model of Coaching. In addition to some of the tasks described in the Informal Model (above), candidates whose experiences were categorized in this manner supplemented their out-of-class support with some classroom observation. Some of the tasks that integrated this more formal in-class support included; assisting teachers with using assessment data to reorganize groups of students for intervention, modeling lessons, and observing lessons to provide feedback.

Just two candidates' experiences most closely matched the Peer Coaching/Mentoring Model. These individuals had the opportunity to work with novice educators (a university student teacher and a new instructional assistant). One candidate worked with her university mentee to co-plan lessons, gather instructional resources, observe lessons, and consult with the student teacher to support her development of instructional strategies. The other candidate provided one-on-one mentoring for a new instructional assistant hired to work with the

school's English Learners. These candidates were able to assume a collaborative role, modeling widely useful strategies such as guided reading, to support teachers with less experience.

Coaching Vs. Leadership

Up to this point, our analysis has focused on the 2010 Standards, currently in place during this course. To further understand how candidates' field experiences would prepare them for their roles as future literacy leaders, we also examined these experiences in light of ILA's *Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals 2017*. Our review of these standards suggested distinct coaching or leadership-focused actions of Specialized Literacy Professionals across each of the three defined professional roles (Specialist, Coach, and Supervisor). The main distinction between "leadership-focused" actions and "coaching-focused" actions was the scope of the work; coaches are expected to work with individual teachers and grade level teams within a building, whereas leaders are responsible for more whole-school, district-wide, or community-level work.

Overall, candidates appeared to have significantly more opportunities for engaging in coaching work than in the higher-level leadership of their current teaching placement. Of the 376 tasks identified across the course, 70% would be considered coaching responsibilities and only 30% leadership, as defined by the new ILA standards. Surprisingly, more than one-quarter of the candidates (6) reported two or fewer opportunities to take leadership roles. Half of the candidates (10) reported three to five opportunities to engage in leadership. Only one candidate reported more leadership (7) than coaching tasks (6). A second candidate reported a similar balance of 6 leadership tasks to 7 coaching tasks. One trend across the candidates was an increase in leadership-related tasks in the final weeks of the field experience. While this shift may have reflected an organic growth in skills and confidence that allowed candidates to assume more responsibility in their schools, we also recognize that this may have aligned with the timeframe that many candidates were completing the course assignment requiring a school-wide literacy project.

Discussion

Throughout their field placements, we found that novice coaches' experiences varied, but that overall, these experiences provided the necessary opportunities to develop leadership and coaching skills. Here we will further discuss what these opportunities mean in light of other research and the revision of professional standards.

Carefully designed field experiences during teacher preparation programs play a role in beginning reading teachers' success (e.g., Zeichner & Bier, 2015) and we suspect the same is true for practicing teachers who are trying on new roles as literacy coaches. One consideration in structuring field experiences relates to how the candidates spend their time. Specifically, we questioned the value of candidates spending large amounts of time on tasks that rehearse skills that they have already developed (such as administering and interpreting individual student assessment data) rather than tasks that challenge them to stretch their existing skills and develop new ones that will be needed for a literacy leadership position (such as interpreting district-wide data for the development of a comprehensive literacy plan). While spending time on student intervention plans is beneficial for candidates' students and their schools, the benefits for the candidates' own learning may be limited if they are not given the opportunity to attempt new things under the guidance of a supervisor.

Another consideration in designing field experiences is the contextual dependency of the opportunities for learning when fieldwork happens at their current job-site. Overwhelmingly, our candidates maintained a professional distance from their colleagues' classrooms as they worked to support them through activities that fit within the Informal Coaching Model. We recognize that more direct Peer and Formal Coaching Models that require classroom observations make more demands on the time and relationships of candidates' school colleagues; however, we also recognize that direct work with teachers is often considered one of the most valued parts of the coach's job (Hathaway et al., 2016). A vast majority of the practicing literacy leaders surveyed (94%) reported using coaching and mentoring strategies to lead teachers (Calo et al., 2015).

In addition to the field experiences themselves, we are also interested in how the candidates are interpreting these experiences as they develop understandings of what it means to be literacy coaches. Our finding, that candidates categorized only 6% of their tasks to be supporting diverse students, suggests that candidates either do not recognize how to support the needs of all students or do not recognize this as something inherent to their roles as literacy coaches. Findings of Hathaway, Martin, and Mraz's (2016) survey of practicing coaches, suggested that there may be a limited understanding of the role that Standard 4 plays in coaching work. Specifically, they found coaches' quantitative responses about the extent to which work related to diversity was and should be part of their roles were the lowest of any of the standards (Hathaway et al., 2016). Open-ended responses similarly did not address culturally responsive teaching or diversity in a significant way (Hathaway et al., 2016). Despite working in a

large urban district, Hathaway et al.'s (2016) coaches needed professional development in this area. We feel our candidates, many of whom do not regularly interact with students they view as "diverse," need professional development in this area as well.

ILA's 2010 Standards suggested that candidates should be prepared to look at "elements such as race, ethnicity, class, gender, religion, and language" and "demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which diversity influences the reading and writing development of *all* students." The nominal shift in the revision of Standard 4 from "Diversity" (2010) to "Diversity and Equity" (2018) is indicative that a deeper, more active knowledge of these issues will be imperative for future literacy leaders to support all students through inclusive, equitable school experiences (Kern et al., 2018). In addition to pressing for a richer knowledge of diversity and equity issues, the 2017 Standards indicate the expectation that specialized literacy professionals will not only hold this theoretical knowledge but also demonstrate "the ability to teach in ways that respect what students bring to the classroom and facilitate teacher efforts to do likewise" (Bean & Kern, 2018, p. 620). Literacy professionals are also challenged to work with a variety of stakeholders to advocate "for equity for diverse students to eliminate school-based practices and institutional structures that are inherently biased . . . and to teach reading/literacy specialists how to create a more culturally responsive literacy curriculum, and to interact in more socially just, culturally competent ways with families from varied communities" (Kern et al., 2018, p. 219). In light of the findings of this study, we recognize the need for a clearer emphasis on the coach's role in creating inclusive, equitable experiences for all learners.

Limitations of the Study

Despite our efforts to understand candidates' field experiences through multiple means of analysis, the present study only reflects one data set. Informal review of similar data sets from previous semesters suggested similarities in candidates' field experiences. The main data source, candidates' coaching logs, were reliant on self-reported data. The log itself (see Appendix) includes a reminder that falsifying information constitutes a violation of the university's academic honesty policy. Though the course instructor was not personally able to confirm the veracity of these activity logs, candidates were required to meet with an on-site supervisor who signed off on the logs weekly. Moving forward, we have incorporated additional means to ascertain and confirm information about candidates' field experiences (described below).

Implications for Program (Re)Development

Considering the findings of this study, particularly in the context of ILA's *Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals 2017* (ILA, 2018), suggests changes for both literacy coaching courses and reading master's programs in order to better support novice coaches' development.

Currently, this course is a single, capstone experience meant to prepare program graduates to be literacy leaders in their schools, regardless of their professional positions. Following this analysis of candidates' field experience logs, some immediate course revisions have been made to improve the utility of this protocol. To begin with, the seven categories of the new standards were provided to candidates to categorize their work. Then, additional direction was provided to indicate the expectations for candidates to explain their knowledge and understanding of the coaching models, roles, and responsibilities, citing course readings as appropriate. Finally, candidates were expected to use these tools to reflect on how their observation and participation connects with future action. While asking for more detailed description of activities and more thoughtful alignment with standards, course instructors have committed to providing directed written feedback on a weekly basis to guide candidates' continued work.

This study suggests the need for more guidance in the actual field experiences that our candidates have. We are working to provide more detailed guidance to the field-based supervisors to ensure that they understand the breadth and depth of experiences that we wish our candidates to have. In cases where an individual supervisor may not have the capacity to provide candidates with specific experiences, we recommend that multiple supervisors might be appropriate to mentor candidates through the many facets of the literacy coach's role. For example, if a practicing reading specialist is serving as the candidate's supervisor, it may be useful for the candidate to also collaborate with a curriculum coordinator so as to gain district-level leadership experiences.

Further revisions at the course level include adjusting assignments to help focus candidates' attention on areas that may have been misunderstood or underdeveloped in the past. For example, in the past, candidates have completed a data analysis assignment using state-generated data reports based on required standardized testing. Moving forward, candidates will be tasked with doing similar cross-grade analysis using data sets they select from assessments deemed valuable in their own schools. While both versions of this assignment offer an opportunity for building-level leadership, we anticipate allowing candidates to select data that is more contextually meaningful will help them develop more insight into the

varied strengths and needs of student groups in their buildings. A second example is revision to the assignment requiring the organization of a community literacy event. To bolster candidates' experiences with leadership at this level, a new component of the assignment will have candidates survey community stakeholders in advance to ensure a diversity of voices are represented in the planned event.

In our current program, we have recognized that having a single course for both literacy leadership and coaching may muddy the distinctions between these roles and may not give candidates enough opportunity to develop both skill sets. Our findings indicate that candidates' field experiences have predominantly offered them opportunities to work with peers at their grade level; however, the updated ILA standards ask that we prepare candidates to elevate leadership activities to school, district, and community level as well. Specifically, the new Standard 7: Practicum/Clinical Experiences indicates "Candidates complete supervised, integrated, and extended practica/clinical experiences that include both collaborative and coaching roles with teacher(s) and schoolwide collaboration and leadership for instructional practices, curriculum design, professional development, or family/community-school partnerships; practicum experiences are ongoing in school-based setting(s); supervision includes observation and ongoing feedback by qualified supervisors" (ILA, 2018, p. 52). Thorough program review will examine where existing field activities may provide the needed coaching and leadership experiences as well as reveal where new opportunities may be needed. In addition to how revising existing courses or creating new courses will address this standard, programs will also need to consider how this places increased demands on candidates' existing jobs in terms of both time and professional relationships. Programs must consider how we can support our candidates in both their formal course learning and their negotiation of professional development opportunities within their own school contexts.

In addition to field experiences, our program must enhance coursework in order to rise to the challenge of preparing literacy leaders to become advocates for educational equity through developing a stronger theoretical foundation for their practice. Instead of an addition at the end of the program, this foundation must be secured early on and revisited often. Revisions to introductory courses will ensure that candidates have a deeper understanding of theories relevant to diversity and equity in education that inform our understanding of student learning and development (Standard 4). Through intentional exploration of these ideas through candidates' reflections on their own identity and experiences, we wish to foster consciousness of a broader definition of diversity (Kern et al., 2018), and literacy, than our candidates may currently hold. From this starting point, we anticipate candidates will be better prepared to recognize more of the diversity that surrounds them in each of their professional contexts, and take more personal responsibility for the roles they play in enacting and advocating for equitable practices.

While course and program revisions will enhance candidates' learning in field contexts, ultimately, we strive for developing more meaningful partnerships with candidates' school districts. Though logistically more challenging due to the geographic reach of students in online courses, we recognize the importance of these "home" contexts for shaping candidates' experiences and learning and want to develop relationships that will support their growth. As university educator preparation programs, our energies are often focused on how we can engage with partner schools to host our undergraduate candidates as student teachers. There is a need to consider what we can offer to support school partners who employ our part-time, online graduate students as full-time, practicing teachers. Developing these connections will make learning more contextual and therefore meaningful for our candidates as well as provide better prepared literacy leaders for their schools. Engaging in learning that is grounded in authentic contexts will allow candidates to begin negotiating the careful balance between directive and responsive coaching moves (Ippolito, 2010) that they will ultimately face.

As more programs for preparing reading and literacy specialists move to hybrid and online environments, teacher educators will need to continue developing innovative field experiences for these candidates. In particular, when field experiences depend on collaboration, as in the case of literacy coaching and leadership, it is essential that educators consider the context of these field experiences and how they might be structured to maximize candidates' learning. This study suggests that candidates are able to negotiate varied field experiences that meet course requirements and address professional standards through their current job placements. However, changes in those standards, coupled with traditionally diverse demands of literacy coaching jobs increase the need for all candidates to have both coaching and leadership opportunities. Program revision along with future research will be needed to investigate how best to partner with candidates' school districts to provide experiences that allow candidates to develop the breadth and depth of professional skills needed to be effective literacy coaches and leaders.

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APPENDIX

Weekly Coaching Internship Log

Falsification of information on this report constitutes plagiarism

Name:		Location of Activity:		
Supervisor:		Supervisor E-mail:		
Reporting Week:	<input type="checkbox"/> Week 1 (Jan. 23 – 27)	<input type="checkbox"/> Week 5 (Feb. 20 – 24)	<input type="checkbox"/> Week 9 (Mar. 20 – 24)	<input type="checkbox"/> Week 13 (Apr 17 – 21)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Week 2 (Jan. 30 – Feb. 3)	<input type="checkbox"/> Week 6 (Feb 27 – Mar. 4)	<input type="checkbox"/> Week 10 (Mar. 27 – 31)	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Week 3 (Feb. 6 – 10)	<input type="checkbox"/> Week 7 (Mar. 6 – 10)	<input type="checkbox"/> Week 11 (Apr. 3 – 7)	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Week 4 (Feb. 13 – 17)	<input type="checkbox"/> Week 8 (Mar. 13 – 17)	<input type="checkbox"/> Week 12 (Apr. 10 – 14)	
Category of Major Task 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Foundational Knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/> Assessment & Evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/> Literate Environment	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum & Instruction	<input type="checkbox"/> Diversity	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional Learning & Leadership	
Description:				

162 ENGAGING ALL READERS THROUGH EXPLORATIONS

Category of Major Task 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Foundational Knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/> Assessment & Evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/> Literate Environment
	<input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum & Instruction	<input type="checkbox"/> Diversity	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional Learning & Leadership
Description:			
Summary of Hours for the Week	Brief description	Hours	
Hours of Observation (Examples: Observing Supervisor, Faculty, Students)			
Hours of Participation (Examples: Engaged in assisting, consulting, collaborating)			
TOTAL HOURS	Comments:		

Student Signature

Supervisor Signature

Date

Student Printed Name

Supervisor Printed Name

Bowling Green State University Graduate Reading Program
Cindy Hendricks, PhD
December 2014

THE ENGAGED LEARNING MODEL: THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL LITERACY AND PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING ON FOURTH GRADERS' VOCABULARY AND GENERAL READING OUTCOMES

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Abstract

This quantitative study reviewed two cohorts ($N = 65$) of fourth graders' general reading growth capability (i.e., Developmental Reading Assessment 2™ Running Records grade levels) and vocabulary learning (i.e., Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test Fourth Edition™ standard scores) in a language arts classroom at an urban Title I school in North Texas between 2015 and 2017. Participants experienced an intervention using digital learning expression technology/tools (DLET). DLET coupled with problem-based learning (PBL) or the engaged learning model (ELM) experiences formed the ELM-PBL-DLET intervention. The significant differences discovered support the use of the ELM-PBL-DLET intervention as a means to improve fourth grade students' vocabulary learning instructional experiences and general reading growth capabilities. Title I elementary schools have the ability to improve reading and vocabulary learning experiences for all students. This is especially true for students receiving special services using similar ELM-PBL-DLET type interventions.

Introduction

Digital literacy is here to stay, and teachers are intermingling current teaching practices, learning styles, and the expression of learning experiences with digital literacy technology (Duncan, 2011). Students retell stories using multimedia in the form of moving pictures or movies. 21st century students combine art, music, and literacy to express learning of various contents and the manifestation of opinions regarding something read or viewed. The amalgam of best research-based instructional literacy practices and digital literacy technology tools provides educators a myriad of possibilities for literacy instruction (Kimbell-Lopez, Cummins, & Manning, 2016). Research in digital literacy has moved away from the tools as the focus, to their utilization with engaged instruction and learning practices (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Questions have emerged. Is digital literacy suited for classrooms using problem-based learning (PBL) experiences or engaged learning model (ELM) experiences? Can digital literacy experiences improve students' reading capabilities or vocabulary learning? Do digital literacy technology or tools serve as a novelty in the literacy classroom with little impact on students' reading capabilities and vocabulary learning? From digital storytelling to digital vocabulary learning representations, students have opportunities to express themselves beyond paper and pen or a single software application or program.

Today, the choices are limitless and center around the learning goals as recommended by the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) (2008) with their teacher instructional standards. Research-based literacy instruction continues to be best if engaged and collaborative in nature (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). Digital learning expression technology/tools (DLET) add to these individualized yet collaborative experiences by providing multimedia expressive outlets, allowing for creative diversity among students' literacy expression representations. This study seeks to determine the impact of pairing research-based learning models of ELM-PBL with DLET on fourth graders' reading capabilities and vocabulary knowledge.

Literature Review

Student Engagement

Under the broader umbrella of educational theory and philosophy, curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment are three key elements directly affecting classroom instruction and learning outcomes. Classroom teachers, while having some influence on curriculum, generally have direct control over the practice of teaching

and how their students' learning is assessed (Dewey, 1916; Tyler, 1949). Ornstein, Pajak, and Ornstein (2011) stated, "Philosophy becomes the criterion for determining the aims, means, and ends of curriculum" (p. 6). Where the aims are the beliefs, the means are the processes, and the ends are the concepts learned.

McLeod (2013) stated, "Educators should ensure that activities are designed and carried out in ways that offer each learner the chance to engage in the manner that suits them best." Students ultimately demonstrate their knowledge through gaining an understanding of a concept, then doing something with it through a transformational experience (Kolb, 2015). Teachers affect student engagement in learning through how they practice teaching and how they assess student learning in an active learning environment by providing experiential opportunities and choices for their students to demonstrate their learning. Eric Jensen (2009) stated, "One of the most powerful ways to engage students is to let them take charge of their own learning" (p. 139). This idea is not to be mistaken for turning a classroom over to the students to do as they wish, but leans more toward students being responsible for the learning that they are accomplishing. Students can be entrusted and empowered to take on roles that help guide the direction of differentiated instruction in the classroom. Given choice in their learning outcomes, students express the knowledge gained through a medium that fits their interests and even to some degree, their own personal learning goals (Gambrell & Morrow, 2015).

Student engagement in learning has long been a goal of educators throughout the centuries and across the ever-shifting paradigms of educational pedagogy and practice. Many educational theorists have differing ideas as to what leads to the type of student engagement that actually increases the understanding and comprehension of ideas and the ability of students to solve problems related to the subject matter taught (Dewey, 1929; Montessori, 1912; Kolb, 2015).

Differentiation in Instruction and Assessment

Differentiation goes hand-in-hand with problem/project-based learning (PBL), as PBL directly relates to providing utility to the knowledge acquired. Giving students realistic scenarios in which to apply the knowledge gained and options (including the use of technology) of how to demonstrate or display solutions or learning outcomes, either in groups or individually, provides the learner with a much deeper understanding than the traditional methods of instruction/testing in the classroom (Galvan & Coronado, 2014). In group work, this varied approach also allows students to collaborate using the synergism of individual strengths and multiple intelligences to produce a product that exceeds that of

any one student. Thus, students not only learn from the teacher, as in traditional instruction, but also from one another (Bell, 2010).

Recent research into the diversity of student learners indicates that differentiation in instruction and in students' demonstration of their comprehension is a necessary component in engaging each learner in the classroom and preparing them to be a 21st century learner (Darling-Hammond & McCloskey, 2008). This is especially true in Title I (or low socioeconomic) schools with higher at-risk populations (Watts-Taffe et al., 2012). There is an indication that the use of dynamic assessment measures (assessment with intervention) also allows teachers to better identify individual differences in young students' abilities to comprehend what they have read rather than the use of static testing measures (Elleman, Compton, D. Fuchs, L. Fuchs, & Bouton, 2011).

Challenges in Title One Schools

Title I, Part A, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) provides financial assistance to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) with a high number (40% or higher) of students from socio-economically disadvantaged families. These schools typically have higher numbers of at-risk students who fail to meet the grade-level academic standards as set forth by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) (United States Department of Education, 2015; 2016). The funds from Title I monies may be used for school-wide or targeted assistance programs in the schools for which they are provided (TEA, 2017b).

Most of the challenges facing Title I schools in Texas are linked to the demographics that make up the schools. As of 2015, the overall population of students in the state consisted of students with the following at-risk factors: 60.2% economically disadvantaged, 17.5% limited English proficient, 51.8% Hispanic, 12.7% African-American, and 8.5% students with special needs (TEA, 2015).

The Response to Intervention (RTI) programs implemented in Texas schools, while helpful, are not effective at preparing large numbers of at-risk students for college programs. RTI must be coupled with teacher training that encourages the use of research-based strategies, a common language of instruction and unified pedagogy across all campus curricular lines, and an effective variety of formative assessment. The shift for these students must occur in teacher practice from traditional teacher-centered lecture methods in basic knowledge to student-centered learning using a complex application of the knowledge gained (Marzano & Toth, 2014).

Digital Literacy Paired with Research-Based Literacy Instruction and Struggling Readers

Ever since computers have been used in educational settings, educators have sought to learn and implement better digital learning experiences related to their curricular content and skill goals (Gordon, 2003). Technology use in schools has occurred both naturally and due to technology grants and initiatives. Today, schools seek technological tools to implement with students in literacy and other content-related areas. Educators have also questioned the role or value of “going digital” for young elementary students (Suggate & Reese, 2012). The discussion has moved from technology accessibility to digital technology use in coordination with research-based practices. Digital literacy has reshaped literacy instruction experiences in today’s classroom (Ryan, 2012). Students are able to express learning, comprehension, vocabulary, and other literacy capabilities through multimedia and digital literacy experiences. The discussion has moved from technology tools to best practices enhanced with technology.

As education moves into the computer age, educators have sought to match technology tools to appropriate literacy best practices that have the most impact on learning and comprehension (Hinchman & Sheridan-Thomas, 2008; Mills, 2010). Digital literacy expression technology and tools (DLET) are numerous as technology continues to emerge and develop, and DLET’s ability to assist struggling readers remains a global discussion among educators as technology accessibility continues to grow in popularity in many cultures and societies (Bhatt, Roock, & Adams, 2015; Chen, 2010). DLET have been effective intervention tools, scaffolding struggling readers’ ability to retell content learning or share stories read via movies and pictures (Davis, 2016; Gunter & Kenny, 2008). Digital learning expression is digital literacy, and technology tools paired with best instructional practices that assist struggling readers must be explored and evaluated. The literacy classroom has been reshaped and educators are exploring all the research-based instructional possibilities in the ever-changing world of digital literacy.

Methodology

This study used quantitative methods for data analysis. A quantitative design was positioned as a starting point to discover the applicability of the ELM-PBL-DLET intervention with fourth graders in reading instruction from an urban Title I school in North Texas. Students worked in social cooperative learning ELM-PBL workshop groups to retell respective stories read and express content

related vocabulary. This was an independent study and was not funded by the school or any other for-profit or non-profit company. School-wide curricular changes were not made based upon the study's inception. The school administrator stated, "We want to see the numbers first. We need to explore how this works with one of our committed people before making curricular decisions for other fourth grade reading focused classrooms" (School official's name omitted, personal communication, August 14, 2015).

Purpose of this Study

Researchers sought to determine if the Engaged Learning Model (ELM) paired with research instruction PBL practices (ELM-PBL) and digital learning expression technology (DLET) improved vocabulary knowledge and reading capabilities of two fourth grade cohorts in an urban Title I school over a two-year period, 2015-2016 to 2016-2017. Two questions guided the study:

1. What was the impact of the ELM-PBL-DLET active learning intervention on fourth graders as measured by vocabulary PVVT-4 standard scores from pre to post assessments?
2. What was the impact of the ELM-PBL-DLET active learning intervention on fourth graders as measured by the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA2)[™] Running Records grade level placements from pre- to post- assessments?

Selecting the Setting and the Study's Participants

Purposive sampling was utilized in the study (Creswell, 2016; Gay, Airasian, & Mills, 2012). Researchers sought a classroom with fourth graders within an urban school setting. The school and fourth grade classroom selected required involvement in problem-based learning techniques, inclusion, and response to intervention practices. Also, the school needed to be a Title I school. Title I schools represent schools serving lower socioeconomic populations (NCES, 2015). Fourth graders with fewer economic resources were of interest due to the challenges cited in the literature regarding their reading capabilities as they move to upper elementary environments with more complex literacy demands (Chall & Jacobs, 2003; Chall, Jacobs, & Baldwin, 1990; Connor, Phillips, Kaschak, Apel, Kim, Otaiba et al., 2014; Goodwin, 2011).

One North Texas school fitting the study's setting and participant selection criteria expressed an interest from our request. This elementary school served

476 students between kindergarten through fourth grade. White (50.4%) and Hispanic (38.7%) groups constituted the larger school population while Asian (2.9%), Black (2.1%), Native American (0.6%), Pacific Islander (0.4%), and biracial (4.8%), respectively, represented the remaining school population. The school reported to have a 13:1 student-to-teacher ratio, which is lower than the state average for elementary schools. Chronic absenteeism was one percentage below the state average of 8% (TEA, 2017a). The school's 2015-2016 State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) passing rate for English/Language Arts (69%) was below the average state passing rate of 76.3% (Startclass by Graph IQ, 2017; TEA, 2017a). This elementary school reported a high percentage of students with disabilities (20%), which was much higher than the median (10%) across elementary schools in Texas. The majority of students at this elementary school received free or reduced lunch (53.8%) (Startclass by Graph IQ, 2017). Therefore, like many Title I schools, this elementary school had numerous challenges and opportunities for teachers working to improve the education experiences of the students they served daily.

The fourth-grade literacy classes represented in this study served 72 students between 2015 and 2017. Of the 72 students, 65 were included in the study. Two students during the 2015-2016 school year were not allowed to participate in the study while three were excluded that same year due to incomplete data and attendance issues. Two were excluded due to lack of attendance during the 2016-2017 school year. The school had three main classifications or designations for students: (a) regular education, (b) Response to Intervention (RTI) students in tiers two or three, and (c) special services. Regular education students did not receive programmatic, individualized services or organized supports. RTI tier two and three students received small group to individualized educational instructional support services in the regular classroom. Students receiving special services included students the school deemed at-risk for failure. Special services included students who were served by English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers with appropriate ESL strategies in and outside the regular classroom. Students served by special education teachers, dyslexia intervention specialist, and/or other specialists (e.g., speech teachers) were also considered as receiving special services. Of the 65 remaining students, 23 (35.4%) participated in the regular education program, 21 (32.3%) participated in RTI tiers 2 or 3, and 21 (32.3%) received special services. The students rotated classes between two content area teachers. The participating teacher in the study taught reading, writing, and social studies content while the other teacher in the daily schedule rotation taught the sciences and math content.

The Interventions

Students viewed and discussed peers' creations and were expected to assist each other throughout the process. The teacher explained, "I am working to create a community here. Communities help each other as good neighbors should. We are not great at everything, but we are great together." (Teacher's name omitted, personal communication, October 21, 2016). This philosophy fit the interventions described in this study. The students worked on individual projects while assisting and viewing peers' creations. It is important to note that all students' creations were shared with peers in class, once completed.

A password-protected website was developed by the teacher for students to visit and learn from YouTube™ videos and other media. Videos, pictures, and text concerning the use of the digital tools and techniques used in the study (e.g., iMovie, green screen, or Apple's professional laptop) were developed by the researchers and teacher. The teacher identified a student, Sarah (pseudonym), who was grasping the ELM-PBL-DLET concepts well. Peers sought help from Sarah, and Sarah helped peers with the study's technology tools and other related project inquires. Sarah created several videos explaining choices and the various digital technology tools. Students accessed them, and wore headphones to hear Sarah's explanations. The website was updated as new techniques were learned, and Sarah shared discovered shortcuts related to iMovie, the video camera, and others' classroom literacy learning expectations related to the retelling or vocabulary projects. Several students added ideas and new learning for the teacher and researchers to add to the website as a repository of videos with textual explanations concerning the technology tools and ELM-PBL-DLET intervention expectations.

ELM's Problem-based Interactive Learning Curriculum Intervention

Engage2Learn Framework (e2L) and the Engage! Learning Model (ELM). A recent development in the area of increased student engagement has been achieved through strategically designed, standards-based campus educational plans that rely on input from all local school community members. This curriculum was utilized by the teacher in this study. ELM is accomplished through a coaching process using proven best practices and problem-solving strategies developed by professional educators. One of these models was developed by Engage2Learn Corporation based in Texas.

The Engage2Learn framework is a campus-customizable, five-step process designed to help teachers shift the classroom culture, giving students the

responsibility for their learning through the use of critical thinking. Students set goals to make personalized choices for their learning while using reflective practices and formative feedback from teachers to create new goals. The framework is created at the campus level, where teachers are coached on best practices in engaging students' learning and facilitating student achievement for use in their classrooms (Buerk, 2017).

The Engage Learning Model (ELM) does not use conventional whole group teaching methodology in curriculum delivery and requires a highly qualified, knowledgeable teacher to carry out the many aspects of learning experience design, protocol reinforcement, modeling behavior and critical thinking, student questioning and guiding, small-group workshop development, and critiquing and assessing student projects. The teacher is a critical part to the model, providing the leadership and creating both the systems and environment supportive of the students' learning, and teaching content in context of the students' learning (engage2Learn, 2016). Although formally structured collaborative group problem solving and project-based learning is used in this model, pre, formative, and summative assessment is individually administered based on standard mastery for each learner in the classroom (Buerk, 2015). ELM in essence is a problem-based learning curriculum (ELM-PBL) and is designed to invite cooperative learning experiences.

Digital Literacy Expression Technology & Tools (DLET) within ELM Groups Intervention

Digital Retelling of Stories. Using ELM, the teacher worked with students to create small groups to retell their respective stories using green screens and iMovie™ digital film creation software from Apple®. Before creating the respective stories, students generated and expressed their ideas on storyboards for peer feedback and ideas. Because the students must accurately retell the story, students completed story maps and various story graphic organizers to organize any future filming. Planning sheets were required before digital movie creation ideas were approved by his/her small learning group and the teacher. Each student's retelling and ideas were used to create a unique digital story retelling. Peers, working in the small workshop groups (i.e., ELM Cooperative Learning workshop groups), created their respective digital stories involving sets, costumes, and multimedia to accurately display the meaning of the stories retold. The small ELM workshop groups served as peer support groups for brainstorming ideas, technical support for using the digital movie making tools, and as a means to accomplish complex tasks with peer assistance.

Digital Vocabulary Learning Expression. Again, in ELM workshop groups, students created digital learning representations of critical, developmentally appropriate vocabulary for fourth graders and the concepts taught in fourth grade. The ELM workshop groups provided the same functions as they did with the digital retelling of stories. Students were required to inscribe vocabulary learning expressions on planning sheets to allow peer and teacher feedback. Once feedback was obtained, students worked to complete vocabulary-learning expressions. The teacher required all vocabulary learning expressions to be relatable to the full meaning of the word as used in the class content. Like the retelling of stories, students had several options. Some acted out vocabulary meanings with a video green screen and multimedia additions while others created a video to describe the work in a story, song, or other choice. All students used iMovie from Apple as the primary tool to create and edit digital expressions of vocabulary learning.

Instruments Utilized as Measures for Vocabulary and General Reading Growth Reading Capability Assessment Tools

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test Fourth Edition (PPVT-4)[™]. The PPVT-4 allows researchers the ability to determine a student's receptive vocabulary growth. The PPVT-4 has two forms, A and B. The publisher ensures score comparisons between forms A and B are equivalent. Once a student's vocabulary floor or baseline has been established, the student is shown four pictures per vocabulary word and is orally asked to identify the vocabulary word by pointing to the correct picture. This process continues until each student reaches his/her ceiling (i.e., eight or more errors in a set of vocabulary words). Since this is a normed-referenced assessment, researchers may compare student progress by raw scores, age- and grade-equivalent scores, percentile ranks, stanine scores, and standard scores. However, Sullivan, Winter, Sass, and Svenkerud (2014) found age-equivalents and grade-equivalent scores misleading and discouraged their use in reporting receptive vocabulary progress. The researchers chose to use standard scores for comparison since this allowed for interval scale comparisons and had less controversy from the PPVT-4 literature review concerning vocabulary growth assessments (Sullivan, Winter, Sass, & Svenkerud, 2014). Standard scores were reported since these scores were used by the teachers and the school district in the study and were often discussed in meetings concerning assessments.

The PPVT-4 is an untimed test of a student's vocabulary knowledge. The testing instructions recommend test administrators ask for a response after

10 seconds if no response is issued by the student. The PVVT-4 poses some challenges for teachers in the field since it may take up to 20 minutes to complete one student testing. The PVVT-4 manual offers differentiation options for testing students with special learning needs (Dunn & Dunn, 2007).

Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA2)[™] Running Records (DRARR).

Originally developed in 1986 with revisions in 2003, the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA2)[™] is an assessment used to gauge k-8th grade students reading capabilities, yielding accurate and useful results to inform reading instruction (McCarthy & Christ, 2010). DRA2 assessments provide a students' reading level, word recognition accuracy, fluency, and comprehension with the use of implicit and explicit questions. This tool was approved by this school district, as results were utilized to determine students' reading progress and capabilities. The DRA2 assists teachers with the matching of students to text they can read successfully (Colorado Department of Education, 2013). The DRA2 allows teachers to find students' frustrational, instructional, and independent reading levels for narrative and expository text over time using various assessment types; the various assessments together form a student's running record (DRARR). The teacher in this study used the results to determine students' needs. For this school district, one DRARR measure for general reading growth capability progress is determined by reading grade level increases or decreases. The fourth-grade reading teacher in this study received training with the various assessments in the DRA2.

The curricular DRA2 reading progress evaluation policies are strict. Teachers were not allowed to move a student up one DRARR grade level based on any single DRA2 measure. In this reading classroom, students must have an increased DRARR median grade level movement in fluency, reading comprehension (i.e., oral, silent, and listening) questions, and oral reading miscue analysis before receiving any overall DRARR grade level increase. Therefore, this class may have had fewer grade level DRARR increases, but the increases were more comprehensive due to the strict evaluation procedures used before allowing DRARR grade level increases. For example, a student who experiences at least one grade level increase in general reading growth capability has progressed positively according the school district's DRA2 strict adherence policies for the posting of reading progress with the DRARR's general growth reading capability measure. This stringent policy by the participating school district allows researchers to trust the DRARR score as a holistically accurate representation of reading progress capability. Because grade level increases or decreases by students using the DRARR system represented fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, researchers were confident in this reading progress measure.

Data Analysis

Fourth grade participants ($n = 65$) before (pre-) and after (post-) ELM-PBL-DLET experiences were compared using parametric and non-parametric statistical procedures. Descriptive statistics were reported overall and by school designations. The school designations were regular education, RTI tiers 2 or 3, and special services. Pre- and post-intervention (i.e., ELM-PBL-DLET) PVVT-4 standard scores and DRA grade levels were provided for comparison, respectively. Two types of statistical procedures were utilized: paired t -test with standard score interval scale data and the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test with ordinal DRA grade levels.

A paired samples t -test was performed to ascertain if PVVT-4 standard scores significantly increased after the ELM-PBL-DLET intervention with fourth graders. Cohen's d was calculated as an effect size measure. Normality was checked using the Shapiro-Wilk's test ($N < 50$). A 95% confidence interval was obtained for PVVT-4 standard scores differences.

A Wilcoxon signed-rank test was used to determine if statistically significant increases occurred between the fourth graders DRA running records (DRARR) ordinal grade rankings from the pre- to post- ELM-PBL-DLET intervention (Sheskin, 2011).

Findings

Overall, students' results from the vocabulary (PVVT-4) and general reading (DRA2) measures demonstrate that students benefited from the intervention. The following section will review the results related specifically to vocabulary and general reading accordingly.

Vocabulary: PVVT-4 (i.e., Vocabulary Growth Assessment). The means representing pre- and post-PVVT-4 standard scores for the included fourth graders were 100.50 ($SD = 12.24$) and 104.33 ($SD = 13.09$), respectively. The assumption of normality was not violated, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk's test ($p = .385$). Fourth grade participants earned higher PVVT-4 standard scores (i.e., vocabulary growth scores) after their respective ELM-PBL-DLET experiences with a significant mean increase of 3.831, 95% CI [2.127, 5.535], $t(64) = 4.491$, $p = .001$, $d = .557$. The effect size ($d = .557$) is large, providing a measure of practical significance (Cumming & Calin-Jageman, 2017) (See Table 1).

Of the 65 fourth graders, excluding students with no gains, 75% ($n = 49$; $M = 6.57$) produced higher vocabulary gain mean differences between pre- and post-assessments, as measured using PVVT-4 standard scores. As a whole,

TABLE 1

Descriptive Statistics and Paired t-test Results (N = 65) for Fourth Graders' Vocabulary Growth using the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test Fourth Edition (PVVT-4)TM Standard Mean Scores Comparisons Before and After the ELM-PBL-DLET Intervention

Assessment	Before		After		95% CI for Mean Difference	t	df	d
	M	SD	M	SD				
PVVT-4	100.50	12.24	104.33	13.09	2.127, 5.535	4.491**	64	.557

** p < .001.

Note. N = 65, M=mean, SD=standard deviation, t=t-test statistic, df=degrees of freedom, d=Cohen's d effect size.

participants' (N = 65) PVVT-4 standard score gain differences ranged from -13 to 19 with an overall mean gain difference of M=3.83. Regular education students (n = 23; M = 4.08; SD = 7.11), students receiving special services (n = 21; M = 4.04; SD = 4.59), and students receiving RTI tier 2 and 3 supports (n = 21; M = 3.33; SD = 8.61) produced positive average vocabulary standard score difference gains, respectively. Regular education students and students receiving special services produced higher average PVVT-4 standard scores compared to students receiving RTI tier 2 and 3 supports.

General Reading Growth: DRA2 Running Records (DRARR) Grade Levels. A Wilcoxon signed-rank test determined that a statistically significant increase occurred between fourth graders' pre- (Mdn = 2.6) and post- (Mdn = 4) DRARR grade level growth measures, respectively, Z = 6.970, p = <.001. The DRARR grade levels difference scores (e.g., grade level gains) median from pre- to post- increased by one grade level. Most of the participating fourth graders produced gains in reading capability; overall, students' DRARR grade level gains (87.6%, n =57) ranged from .6 to 2 level increases. Of the 21 students receiving RTI Tiers 2 or 3 services, 16 students increased their grade level gains by at least one year (76.1%). Of the 21 fourth graders receiving special education services, 85.7% (n = 18) gained at least one DRARR grade level. All 23 (100%) of the regular education students gained at least one DRARR grade level. The pre- to post-median gains by school designation revealed increased DRARR grade levels for regular education (Mdn = 3 to Mdn = 4), special services (Mdn = 2 to Mdn = 3), and RTI Tiers 2 and 3 (Mdn = 2 to Mdn = 3) students, respectively.

Discussion

Fourth graders at this title one school benefited from the ELM-PBL-DLET intervention. The significant differences discovered support the use of the ELM-PBL-DLET intervention as a means to improve fourth grade students general reading growth capabilities and vocabulary learning instructional experiences. Regular education students and students who received special services at the school generated a higher percentage of participants with increased vocabulary learning and reading capability, while students receiving RTI tiers 2 or 3 support had fewer participants with increased reading capability and vocabulary learning gains. Perhaps, the school may review the individualized supports offered to students receiving special services as possible interventions to try with students receiving RTI tiers 2 or 3 supports. Title I elementary schools have the ability to improve reading and vocabulary learning experiences for all students. This is especially true for students receiving special services using similar ELM-PBL-DLET type interventions.

This was one grade level in one urban Title I elementary school. Results cannot be generalized to all fourth grade reading focused classrooms in urban Title I school settings. However, this quantitative analysis allowed insight into the work and possibilities for reading growth in overall reading capability and vocabulary learning for similar school settings interested in ELM-PBL reading curriculum paired with digital learning expression tools. School districts do not always allow for teachers to choose their instructional procedures. However, the teacher involved chose to participate in this new curricular procedure as a means to improve instruction in reading capability and vocabulary learning.

Researchers are seeking to work with other fourth grade teachers who are willing to try ELM-PBL-DLET interventions. Having permission to view and use state literacy testing results for reading and writing assessments may improve future data comparisons. The researchers' next project will employ qualitative research methods designed to explore this ELM-PBL-DLET intervention for general reading growth capability and vocabulary learning.

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TEACHER LEADERS IMPLEMENTING COACHING MINDSETS: A PATH TO LITERACY LEADERSHIP

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Abstract

This collective case study examined how two teacher leaders assumed literacy leadership roles with their professional colleagues. The findings suggest that both teachers implemented all four of the literacy leaders coaching mindsets (Bean & Ippolito, 2016) while working with their peers in different professional learning situations. Further, the implementation of these mindsets varied across the participants. Two stages of analysis were used in this study to demonstrate the breadth and depth of the coaching mindsets that each teacher implemented when interacting with her colleagues. The frequency at which both literacy leaders implemented the four coaching mindsets, and the specific characteristics of each mindset, varied. Understanding how both of these teachers applied coaching mindsets demonstrates that coaching for literacy learning is not prescriptive in nature and cannot be delivered in a “one-size fits all” package.

Teacher leadership is an important aspect of literacy educators' professional lives. Many teachers take on leadership roles in their schools in a variety of formal and informal ways, including coaching and mentoring responsibilities. Teachers often gravitate towards leadership roles where they have experience and interest in a particular topic, such as literacy. Stakeholders in education often look to teacher leaders when pedagogical decisions are made about student assessment data, curriculum, instruction, and educational resources. The different lenses, or mindsets, that teacher leaders assume to consider these topics are important to explore.

In addition, Dweck's (2006) work on fixed and growth mindsets is important information for literacy leaders to understand. Dweck states that a fixed mindset positions a person to have a bounded amount of ability in a particular area and may lead to an unwillingness to expand his/her experiences in order to avoid failure. On the other hand, Dweck describes a growth mindset as one where the person is willing to take on challenges because failure is not a primary concern. Instead, the person is focused on learning through the process; thus, he/she believes in learning potential that involves effort and perseverance.

Literacy leaders assume a growth mindset when working with colleagues. Bean and Ippolito (2016) expand the idea of a growth mindset through four lenses they call coaching mindsets. The four coaching mindsets are leader, facilitator, designer, and advocate. These four mindsets can influence teacher engagement and learning and guide teacher leaders' decision-making processes.

The professional learning that takes place in schools is complex and multifaceted. Teacher leaders in schools may centralize professional learning opportunities and engage teachers at the local level to impact instruction and student learning. Because of our continued work with preservice teachers, inservice teachers, and Reading Specialist candidates, we were interested in developing a deeper understanding of how teacher leaders used the four coaching mindsets when working in small groups and in one-on-one settings with colleagues. In particular, we examined how teacher leaders applied the four mindsets while focusing on the specific literacy topic of word study instruction. Specifically, we studied how teacher leaders engaged in discussions with colleagues about student word study assessment data, and their use of the four mindsets within a professional learning community (PLC). We wondered how teacher leaders used the coaching mindsets to become literacy leaders with their colleagues. The following research questions guided this work:

1. What mindsets do teacher leaders assume when engaging in small group PLC meetings and one-on-one conversations with colleagues about word study instruction?

2. How do elementary teacher leaders move among the mindsets while working with colleagues to learn about and implement individualized word study instruction?

Theoretical Framework

Distributed Leadership

This study is grounded in the perspective of distributed leadership (Spillane, 2005). Leadership practices are viewed as a product of interactions. Spillane (2005) presents distributed leadership as “leadership practice that is viewed as the product of the interactions of school leaders, followers, and their situation” (p. 144). It is the interactions that are key in understanding leadership practice. In this perspective, change occurs because of these designated interactions. The concept of distributed leadership reflects what various individuals know and do together. Depending on the individuals involved, leadership can be disseminated across individuals or situations (Spillane et al., 2001). What is critical and matters for instructional improvement and student achievement is not that the leadership is distributed, but how it is distributed (Spillane, 2005).

Literature Review

Teacher Leadership in Schools

The literature on teacher leadership in literacy showcases a variety of roles and responsibilities that teacher leaders take on (Swan Dagen, Morewood, & Loomis, 2016; Teacher Leadership Learning Consortium, 2011). Swan Dagen and Nichols’ (2012) synthesis of research defines teacher leadership as teachers learning from one another through collaborative and distributed responsibilities. Leadership is presented as the ability to work with others to accomplish an end goal. Swan Dagen and Nichols situate leadership as much more than stationary traits or a held position; instead, it is a set of actions. Educators who willingly assume the role of a teacher leader often feel professionally fulfilled, which can generate interest in professional learning among all teachers with whom the teacher leaders works (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). Because of this generated interest among colleagues, teacher leaders may enhance the collective capacity of the organization to progress towards common effective literacy instructional practices in order to support student learning. Further, teacher leaders can have a powerful influence on school improvement or instructional reform (Swan Dagen & Nichols, 2012; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Schools and administrators that support these teacher leader actions take on what is referred to as a distributed

leadership model (Spillane, 2005). Coaching is one way that teacher leaders collaborate, communicate, and learn with colleagues through a variety of professional experiences.

Fixed and Growth Mindsets

Mindsets impact learning and professional growth. Dweck's (2006) work on fixed and growth mindsets guide teacher leaders as they facilitate different learning opportunities for their colleagues. Further, understanding these two psychological pathways to learning enables teacher leaders to provide appropriate supports so that learning can occur. Dweck posits that when people enter into a learning opportunity with a fixed mindset they believe that, regardless of the supports that are provided, their performance will not be impacted. On the other hand, those who enter a learning opportunity with a growth mindset believe that through dedicated practice, their learning and performance will be impacted; they believe that their understanding of the topic will be expanded. Those with a growth mindset view learning through a perspective of supported opportunities to succeed, but even if they fail, they will learn and further develop their skills.

Coaching Mindsets of Literacy Leaders

Coaching is a process of facilitated inquiry that enables teachers to make decisions, solve problems, and set and achieve organizational goals. The coaching role aligns well with Dweck's (2006) growth mindset. Through the coaching role, literacy leaders are positioned to support the work of their colleagues through both successful opportunities and those that need additional scaffolding to be effective. Bean and Ippolito (2016) position the four literacy leadership mindsets in their framework within the growth mindset. The four literacy leadership mindsets that Bean and Ippolito describe are leader, facilitator, designer, and advocate. When these four mindsets are consistently applied over time by dedicated coaches and literacy leaders, the longest-lasting effect and biggest changes in teaching and learning may result (Bean & Ippolito).

Evans (2007) defines authentic leadership as someone who is "a credible resource who inspires trust and confidence, someone worth following into the uncertainties of change" (p. 136). Bean and Ippolito (2016) use this understanding of authentic leadership to define the *leader* mindset as one who understands leading versus managing and one who understands adult learning and development. The *facilitator* mindset is defined as the way in which individuals respond to their peers. Bean and Ippolito state that the three ways for a coach to respond to his/her peers is through a responsive, directive, or balanced approach.

Facilitators use these approaches at different times for various reasons to achieve desired outcomes. The *designer* mindset involves the use of teaching dilemmas as teachable moments (Bean & Ippolito). This mindset allows the coach-as-teacher to work with the adult learner to determine what is not working so that revisions can be made. The final mindset described in this framework is that of *advocate*. In this role, the coach-as-teacher stands for something. According to Bean and Ippolito, four areas of advocacy include students, teachers, community partnerships, and particular practices, models, and programs.

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to explore teacher leaders' use of coaching mindsets when working with literacy content and pedagogy; thus, taking on a literacy leadership role. A collective case study approach (Yin, 2009) was utilized to gain a descriptive understanding of what coaching mindsets were used and how each teacher employed each of the mindsets.

Context

This study took place in a suburban elementary school serving students in grades PK- 5. The school's population was diverse with over 30 different languages spoken by students who attended the school. The school was a Title I school with 67% of the students identified as White, 9% Black, 5% Hispanic, and 15% Asian. At the time of the study, the school was designated a Professional Development Schools (PDS), and was involved in a partnership with the local university.

The literacy leaders profiled in this paper participated in a professional learning opportunity focused on word study instruction and teacher leadership. During this year-long learning opportunity, the teachers engaged in monthly professional learning community (PLC) meetings with teacher leaders from another elementary school to discuss student-centered, developmentally appropriate word study instruction. The lead author was also a member of the PLC and facilitated each monthly meeting. There were four teachers in this PLC, from two different elementary schools, both involved with the PDS network of the local university. In addition to the monthly PLC meetings, each word study literacy leader (WSLL) agreed to work with a self-selected partner teacher at her elementary school to provide additional learning opportunities focused on word study instruction. The WSLL met with their partner teachers three times (fall, winter, spring) throughout the school year to discuss the student data. In addition, they agreed to meet once a month with their partner teacher to discuss their classroom word study instruction. This provided authentic leadership

opportunities for the WSLL since the partner teachers did not participate in the monthly PLC meetings.

The participants in the overall study included four WSLs and three partner teachers. The role of each WSL was two-fold: to deepen her understanding of individualized word study instruction through implementation, and to coach a partner teacher through implementation of individualized word study instruction. The WSLs engaged in a book study of the *Words Their Way* (Bear, Ivernizzi, Templeton, & Johnston, 2012) text, during the monthly PLC meetings. Each PLC meeting was approximately 1 hour long and took place at a location outside of both elementary schools. Partner teachers were required to meet with the WSLs to discuss student assessment data and instructional practices. The student data meetings were one-on-one conversations between the WSL and the partner teacher; typically, these conversations occurred after-school.

The data from two of the four WSL is described in this paper: Lola (pseudonym) and Stephanie (pseudonym). Due to their similarities and differences in their professional roles at the school, these teachers were selected for this cross-case analysis. Both teachers had leadership responsibilities within the PDS network. Further, both teachers had more than five years experience teaching elementary students, graduate degrees, and both were National Board Certified Teachers. The contexts within which they taught were different. Lola taught in a self-contained classroom and Stephanie taught in a co-taught, looping classroom. Table 1 provides demographic data fore each teacher.

TABLE 1
Case study demographic information

Teacher	Lola	Stephanie
Grade	K	4th
Teaching Experience	25	8
Leadership Roles	PDS Teacher Education Coordinator	PDS Professional Development Coordinator
Classroom Structure	Self-contained	Co-Taught
Partner Teacher	1st grade	Learning Support
Partner's Experience with WTW	Experienced	Novice

Lola was a kindergarten teacher with 25 years of teaching experience. Lola was the school's PDS Teacher Education Coordinator and was responsible for regularly collaborating with the university regarding the pre-service teacher education candidates' placements within the elementary school. She also frequently taught undergraduate courses as an adjunct at the local university. Lola's partner teacher was a first grade teacher. Her partner teacher had previously worked with the *Words Their Way* (Bear et al., 2012) in a school prior to working in Lola's school. This partner teacher was comfortable with giving the inventory, using the data to group individual students according to their learning needs, and provide student-centered instruction around different word study skills.

Stephanie held 8 years of teaching experience and was the PDS Professional Development Coordinator. In this role, she was responsible for planning and implementing professional development for the teachers and pre-service teachers at her school that aligned with the PDS network mission. Stephanie's 4th grade classroom was a co-taught classroom; the learning support teacher was her co-teacher. Stephanie's classroom was also a looping classroom; she and her co-teacher taught the same students for two consecutive years. This partner teacher had never used the *Words Their Way* (Bear et al., 2012) spelling inventories to assess individual student word pattern knowledge or provided individualized word study instruction to her students prior to this project.

Data Sources and Analysis

The overall study included multiple sources of data such as, pre and post interviews, pre and post philosophical belief statements, videotaped lessons, transcription of the monthly PLC meetings and transcription of partner teacher student data meetings. The data sources that provided information on the most insights into the WSLLs coaching mindsets, thus analyzed for this paper, were the PLC meetings (when they were engaging with other WSLLs outside of their school) and the student data meetings with their partner teachers. These two data sources were analyzed to answer to this study's research questions because both of the data sources involved the WSLL engaging in conversations with professional colleagues about individualized word study practices.

The analysis framework used for this study was based on Creswell's (2013) data analysis spiral of managing data, reading and memoing, classifying and interpreting, and representing and visualizing. Coding of the transcripts allowed the data to be classified and interpreted. A priori codes from Bean & Ippolito's (2016) coaching mindsets were used for analysis; see Table 2 for stage 1 codes and

definitions. As the researchers used the four initial a priori codes, stage 1 codes, more information was needed to unpack how the teachers used each of these mindsets. The team then applied stage 2 codes (see Table 3) to each data source. The stage 2 codes emerged and were defined from the definitions of the stage 1 codes.

The data was coded using a turn-taking stance per teacher. In some instances, this allowed researchers to capture more than one code per participant's turn. Frequency counts were used at all stages of this cross-case analysis. In order to better understand what coaching mindsets the WSLs employed and how these mindsets were used in different contexts, categorical aggregation was used and allowed the researchers to seek a collection of instances from the data (Stake, 1995). This collection of instances guided the interpretation of the data set.

To ensure reliability, two raters (i.e., first and second authors on this manuscript) read and coded all PLC meeting and student data meeting transcripts. First, one randomly selected PLC conversation and partner teacher student data meeting were coded together. During this process, the two raters clarified and refined coding definitions. Next, the remaining data sources were each coded independently by both raters. After the independent coding took place, the two researchers discussed all codes applied to the data sources that were coded independently. All discrepancies were discussed and final codes were then agreed upon.

TABLE 2
Four coaching mindsets and definitions (Bean & Ippolito, 2016)

Leader	One who provides authentic leadership and recognizes leading versus managing and understands adult learning and development.
Facilitator	One who responds to peers using a variety of approaches (responsive, directive, and/or balanced) to achieve a desired outcome.
Designer	One that uses teaching dilemmas, as teachable moments.
Advocate	One that stands for something in one of the four areas: students, teachers, community partnerships and specific practices, models, and programs.

TABLE 3
Stages of analysis, code definitions, and examples.

Stage 1 Codes	Stage 2 Codes and definitions	Examples of Stage 2 Codes
Leader	<p>Adult Learning - An understanding of traits and characteristics of adult learners.</p> <p>Development - An understanding of theories and best practices based on the learning styles and development of adult learners.</p>	<p>Lola: But the problem is, with some of the people who need it [professional development] the most – you can't always do that because the people who need it most, won't choose to do it. You know at some point you have to provide some type of learning community or some type of special development to everybody but if you made them all voluntary, then there would be a third segment of people who would never invest in any of it (Personal Communication, 2014).</p> <p>Lola: No, I do a lot of - I mean I've done a lot more since we started with you [Aimee] initially. I mean I feel like vocabulary is something I've really improved on since you started with us, I mean through our research-intensive grant especially (Personal Communication, 2014).</p>
Facilitator	<p>Responsive - An approach to facilitation that is centered around the learner in which the leader allows the learner to guide the work.</p> <p>Directive - An approach to facilitation that is driven by specific outcomes or goals prescribed by the leader and/or institution.</p> <p>Balanced - The blending of both approaches, responsive and directive.</p>	<p>Lola: Well especially when you're in a collaborative classroom. You do stick to a schedule because there's time kids are pulled, there's time for RTI, there's TAG time. It's different for 4th grade. And it's not- you don't want to do a good direct instruction piece when you've got different kids out of the room (Personal Communication, 2014).</p> <p>Stephanie during a data conversation with her partner teacher: Okay, so he's one we're going to want to look at (Personal Communication, 2014).</p> <p>Stephanie during a data conversation with her partner teacher: Student 1 went up, Student 2 went up, Student 3 stayed the same. What do we want to put, an "S" for "same?" (Personal Communication, 2014).</p>
Designer	n/a	

	Practice - A particular practice, model, and/or program used for learning.	Lola: I really like, and not that I didn't know it, but I liked the visual that had like visuals of the reading overlaying with the writing. The levels sort of parallel, I liked the visual of that. I even wrote, "use this for conversations with parents" on page 19 (Personal Communication, 2014).
	Student(s) - A learner or group of learners in a classroom and/or school setting.	Lola: I still feel like my frustration is that I still don't know how to get to those kids who need more, and I don't feel like I'm giving that to them, my high kids. I feel like 100% I'm meeting the needs of my below level and on level kids who are in these stages and my kids who have progressed past these stages, I still don't feel like I'm meeting their needs (Personal Communication, 2014).
Advocate	Teacher(s) - An educator responsible for providing instruction in a school setting.	Lola: Because you walk into Stephanie's room and the stations look just like anybody else's stations. I don't think unless you understand how well she and her partner teacher do a co-teach model, then you don't get how thought out those stations are. You're exactly right, they just look like here's a station on newspapers, here's a station on novels, and here's a station on whatever, but unless you know what the two have done to make all their kids successful, you don't get why her [stations] work and yours doesn't (Personal Communication, 2014).
	Parent(s) - A caregiver, guardian or parent who takes part in student learning.	Stephanie: I think on a class level though, I mean if we do a garden as a class I'll have 10 sets of parents come in but I know they didn't go out and volunteer necessarily over the summer (Personal Communication, 2014).

Limitations

As with any research, there were limitations to this study. This research was conducted using a case study approach. In order to gain a rich understanding of how the coaching mindsets were applied by teacher leaders in various contexts, a case study approach was most appropriate. Since the data was context and participant specific, it is not generalizable to populations outside of similar environments. Further, the lead author on this manuscript was the researcher involved with the monthly PLC meetings, which may have created subjectivity during the data analysis. Inter-rater reliability was used during the data analysis stage of the research to mediate any subjectivity.

Findings

The following is a description of the results for the stage 1 and 2 coding schemes. The conversations and the one-on-one student data meetings were transcribed, analyzed and are represented in these findings. The data is first presented as an overview that compares the two WSLLs' mindsets in the PLC conversations and student data conversations. Then, more specifics about each teacher leader are provided and represented through stage 1 and 2 codes. The findings represented in stage 1 and 2 codes address both research questions for this study.

The first research question focused on which mindsets the WSLLs use when engaging in small group PLC meetings and one-on-one conversations with their partner teacher about student data. Stage 1 codes revealed that both WSLLs engaged in the conversations with colleagues from different schools during the PLC meetings and used all four coaching mindsets; however, the range of frequencies varied widely across the two WSLLs (Figure 1). Lola's engagement through each of the four mindsets more than doubled that of Stephanie's mindset application in these conversations. Lola's transcripts were marked by a wide range of frequency codes; with six coded as designer and 29 as advocate. Lola also assumed the mindset of leader and facilitator during these discussions. All four of the coaching mindsets were coded for Stephanie as well, however, we found

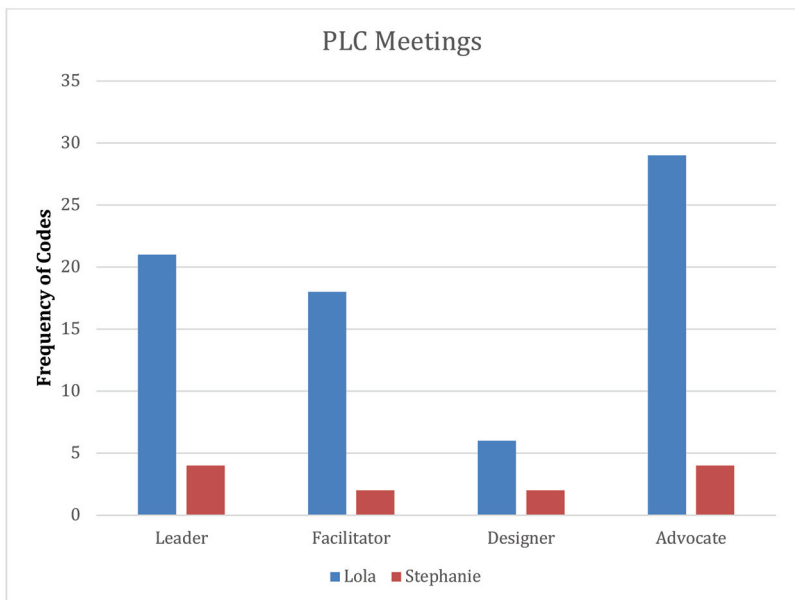


Figure 1. Professional learning community meetings

she utilized them less frequently and without as much variation across the PLC meetings. For example, Stephanie had a smaller frequency range with facilitator and designer both being coded twice and leader and advocate coded four times each in this data source.

The second data source that we analyzed was the student data conversations (Figure 2). Again, these one-on-one conversations occurred between each WSL and her partner teacher. This data source also had a range of frequency codes for each WSL. However, there was a difference between the PLC Meeting data and the student data conversations. This data source revealed that Stephanie had a much greater range of applied mindsets than Lola. Here, Stephanie's codes ranged from zero for both advocate and leader to 31 for facilitator whereas, Lola had one frequency code for leader and four for facilitator.

This data source also revealed that Stephanie's partner teacher was highly involved in the student data conversations. This analysis demonstrated that in the majority of the discussion, Stephanie assumed the coaching mindsets of facilitator and designer. For example, she and her partner teacher frequently discussed student data and student placement/grouping because of the data.

Stephanie's Partner Teacher: I have this one (referring to student assessment data), I would have put her in the affixes group because she missed two there, but those are the only two errors that she made on the whole entire thing (spelling inventory).

Stephanie: Right. Well then, that's where her error would be. That would be the skill [affixes] that we'd have to work on. So that would make sense. So, give her lists based on that. (Personal Communication, January 2014)

Lola's student data conversations were coded less frequently for the mindsets although each mindset was present in her conversations with her partner teacher. Lola and her partner teacher focused most of their discussion during these student data conversations on instructional practices. In the following example, Lola is speaking with her partner teacher about how she could incorporate the Smart Board with her word sorting. She states that she has worked with two specific digraphs using word sorts, and then seeks clarification about how her partner teacher incorporates the use of oddball words with her students' word sorts.

I could make a PowerPoint, and then the pictures-if you did it in edit mode-you know how you can still drag them around with your mouse,

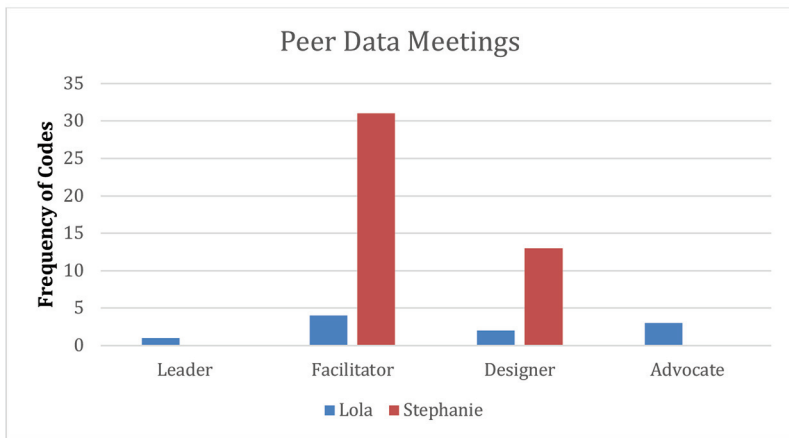


Figure 2. Student data discussions with partner teacher

you could slide them around with your finger [on a SMART Board]. We did /sh/, and /ch/ and then the oddball. I try to do this [add the oddball], you guys always put oddball on the right, correct? (Personal Communication, January 2014).

After initially coding for the four coaching mindsets, a second stage of analysis was conducted and focused on the second research question of this study: how do elementary teacher leaders move among the mindsets while working with colleagues to learn about and implement individualized word study instruction? In order to better understand the intricacies of each literacy leader mindset, the second stage of coding focused on the leader, facilitator and advocate mindsets. These three were coded using explicit characteristics of each mindset; no further characteristics emerged in the designer mindset. Stage 2 codes were collapsed for the PLC meetings and the student data meetings and are presented below for both Lola (Figure 3) and Stephanie (Figure 4).

Overall, the majority of the characteristics within each of the three mindsets that had stage 2 codes were represented in Lola's data. Interestingly both of these characteristics were embedded in the advocate mindset; the range was zero codes for parent advocate to 16 codes advocating for a particular practice, model and/or program (PPMP) (See Figure 3). In the leader mindset, Lola predominately focused on the constructs presented within the overall leader

mindset, while adding a few codes focusing on adult learning and continued development. As facilitator, Lola mostly took a directive approach, but also used responsive and balanced approaches during the PLC meetings and student data conversations. Finally, Lola used the advocate mindset to support students and teachers. She also used this mindset to demonstrate how she has grown professionally and to advocate for particular practices, models, and programs. Lola's advocacy of, the *Words Their Way Spelling Inventory* (Bear et al., 2012), is demonstrated below.

When I did it last year [Words Their Way Spelling Inventory, (Bear et al., 2012)], I probably could have hit it close. But I thought it was good – using that assessment is a piece I will always use. I think it defines for me grouping that I probably couldn't – I mean I probably could have come close but I probably couldn't have articulated it as accurately as that did, especially for my above level and way above level kids (Personal Communication, January 2014).

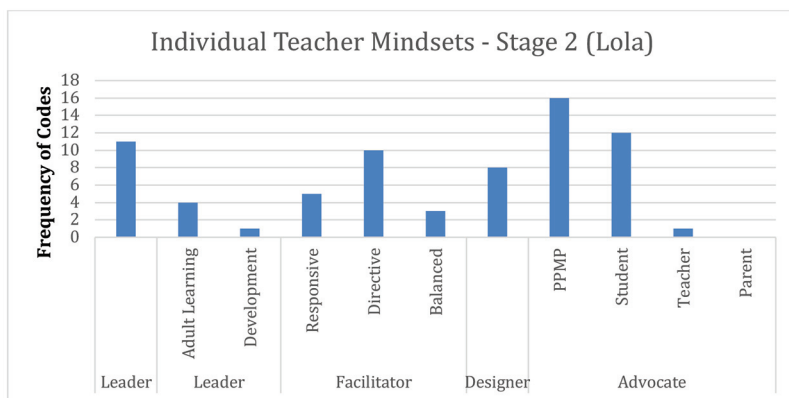


Figure 3. Lola's Stage 2 coding

Stephanie primarily applied the facilitator and designer mindsets in the PLC conversations and student data conversations with her partner teacher; therefore, most of her stage 2 characteristics were localized to the facilitator mindset (Figure 4) since the designer mindset was not coded for stage 2 characteristics. Stephanie's stage 2 coding frequency ranged from zero student advocacy (advocate mindset) to 15 directive (facilitator mindset) (See Figure 4). Stephanie's

categories of responsive and balanced characteristics for the facilitator mindset had a similar number of codes (respectively eight codes for the responsive characteristic and 10 codes for the balanced characteristic). Since Stephanie and her partner teacher communicated openly and collaborated well during the student data meetings, Stephanie had opportunities to take on the different characteristics of the facilitator mindset. For example, Stephanie took on the balanced characteristic of the facilitator mindset when she and her partner teacher discussed how to manage differentiated word lists for each small group in her classroom.

Even if we knew this [developmental word levels for each student], I don't think we could have done that [individualized word lists for each student]. I think we needed everyone to have five things [spelling words] the same when we did this, I think we needed that [had individual word lists that aligned with each student's needs]. So we're picking these words [words based on individual needs]. So when we do spelling lists from now on, we pull them with the right group (Personal Communication, January 2014).

In this part of the conversation, Stephanie was demonstrating a balanced response because she is being responsive to her students' needs while directing the next steps with her partner teacher.

Stephanie demonstrated additional characteristics in the leader mindset, specifically in adult learning. Also, the advocacy mindset was coded in the areas of particular practices, models, and programs, as well as, teachers and parents.

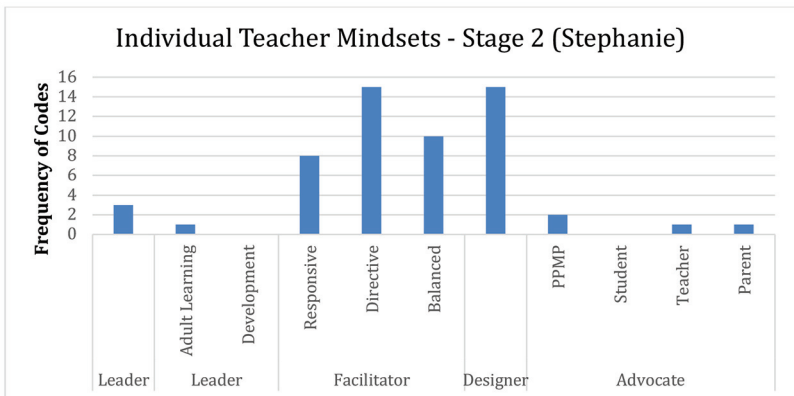


Figure 4. Stephanie's Stage 2 coding

Conclusions

Our study produced rich examples of how two teacher leaders applied a growth mindset (Dweck, 2006) in their role of literacy leadership, and shifted among the four coaching mindsets (Bean & Ippolito, 2016). Specific examples demonstrated how a distributed leadership model (Spillane, 2001) allowed each of these teachers to take on each of the mindsets to lead, facilitate, design and advocate for effective literacy instruction with their colleagues at the county and school levels. These findings further suggest that literacy leaders who implement the different coaching mindsets may also participate in distributed leadership in different ways. Our stages of coding allowed us to deeply analyze how two teacher leaders implemented the different coaching mindsets to become literacy leaders.

Our first research question was, “what mindsets do teacher leaders assume when engaging in small group PLC meetings and one-on-one conversations with colleagues about word study instruction?” We concluded from the findings that, “it depends.” This conclusion aligns with the educational research that states that teacher leaders take on a variety of roles and responsibilities when working with colleagues (Swan Dagen, Morewood, & Loomis, 2016; Teacher Leadership Learning Consortium, 2011). As is so often the case in educational research, we found that the answer to our first question varied between the two teacher cases. Both teacher leaders involved in the study assumed all four coaching mindsets during the PLC meetings. One participant, Lola, transitioned fluidly between all four coaching mindsets during the student data conversation meetings with her partner teacher, while Stephanie primarily focused on two of the four (i.e., facilitator and designer) coaching mindsets.

As we explored the second question, “how do elementary teacher leaders move among the mindsets while working with colleagues to learn about and implement individualized word study instruction?” we again found similarities and variation between the two cases. When we looked more closely at the teachers’ interactions with colleagues, they each applied two of the four mindsets. Interestingly, Lola used the mindsets leader and advocate more and Stephanie used facilitator and designer more frequently. When taking on the leader mindset, Lola’s transcripts were coded most frequently in the areas of adult learning and development. In the advocacy mindset, Lola interactions were coded as advocating for particular practices, models, and programs. Stephanie frequently used the designer mindset throughout this project. In addition, when Stephanie took on the facilitator mindset, she used all three types of responses with her colleagues (i.e., responsive, directive, and balanced). Stephanie was coded as using

the directive response in the facilitator mindset and the designer mindset the most throughout this data set. As a result, we concluded that, while both teachers used all four mindsets across the data set, each had her own strengths within the specific characteristics of each of the mindsets.

As we made these conclusions, we considered possible reasons for why the WSSLs had these different experiences when participating in the same types of professional conversations with colleagues. One possible reason for these differences between the WSSLs use of mindsets may have been the years of experience each teacher had when participating in this project. Lola had more years of classroom experience than Stephanie (e.g., 25 years versus 8 years of experience). Another possible reason for the differences in how these two teachers used the mindsets differently with their partner teachers may have been due to the context within which each was working. For example, Stephanie was much more familiar with her partner teacher's pedagogical style, because they were co-teachers and worked in a looping classroom. Outside of this project, Stephanie and her teacher were highly collaborative in their daily instruction. On the other hand, Lola worked in a self-contained kindergarten room and her partner teacher was a first grade teacher. Lola and her partner teacher did not have opportunities to collaborate on word study instruction or any other topic throughout the school day. The WSSLs opportunities to collaborate were different for each literacy leader, and therefore how they engaged with their partner teacher may have been impacted.

Our close-up examination of these two teachers revealed that coaching mindsets appeared to be implemented naturally by both teachers. These two types of conversations (small group PLC meetings and one-on-one student data conversations with partner teachers) served as pathways to literacy leadership. The teacher leaders became literacy leaders as they deepened and broadened their knowledge of word study instruction in both professional learning settings. Further, as Katzenmeyer and Moller's (2009) work suggests, as the literacy leaders engaged in these mindsets while working with their colleagues, they generated interest in professional learning in the area of word study because they were able to work collaboratively with these colleagues both in and out of their schools. These conversations helped all of the teachers involved to focus and tailor their instruction using a student-centered approach to instruction. This indicated to us that coaching is not a prescriptive program that can be planned and implemented with a one-size-fits-all method. Being able to build content, pedagogical, and curricular knowledge while participating in a PLC and reviewing student data with colleagues, allowed the educators who were involved in this project to take on different leadership roles and improve literacy learning opportunities for all students (Swan Dagen & Nichols, 2012; Shulman, 1986; York-Barr & Duke,

2004). It seems clear from this research, that since literacy leaders are involved with colleagues in a variety of ways, a deep understanding of the different literacy leader mindsets is necessary to support them in their work. This will help to position the literacy leaders as professional resources within their schools and county contexts as changes are implemented to provide more effective literacy instruction for all students.

Implications

The first implication from this study, demonstrates that the collegial relationships that teachers have with others in their schools affect how literacy leaders employ the different coaching mindsets (Bean & Ippolito, 2016). The findings in this study suggest that the collegial relationships that teacher leaders share impacts how they engage with the literacy coaching mindsets; thus, reiterating the necessity of time and opportunities for teachers to work with and learn from one another (Swan Dagen, Morewood, & Loomis, 2016). For example, Stephanie and her partner teacher consistently worked together because of the co-teaching and looping model that was in place. This situated their relationship differently than that of Lola and her partner teacher who taught in self-contained classrooms at different grade levels. Previous content knowledge of a literacy topic (i.e., word study instruction for this study) is another example of how collegial relationships may impact how literacy leaders interact with colleagues. Lola's partner teacher had used *Words Their Way* (Bear et al., 2012) during a previous teaching assignment in a different state. The partner teacher's previous knowledge could have impacted how Lola initiated and responded in conversations with her partner teacher. Further research is needed to explore how the collegial relationships and collaboration opportunities influence when and how the literacy coaching mindsets are implemented and how teacher leaders transition to literacy leaders within school settings.

The second implication from this research is that there is a clear need for a shift to provide more teachers opportunities to engage in distributed leadership (Spillane, 2005). The teacher leaders in this collective case study demonstrated that they were able to use all four coaching mindsets and various characteristics of the mindsets when working with their colleagues. In this study, they were able to take on the role of a literacy leader in their school communities because distributed leadership was a part of the school culture. The distributed leadership model is needed in school communities, to support a flexible approach to coaching, teacher learning, and school change. More

research is needed regarding how distributed leadership is implemented in schools so that current and future classroom teachers have the opportunity to take on leadership roles and feel supported in these roles (Swan Dagen, Morewood, & Loomis, 2016). This will help teacher leaders transition to literacy leaders so that deep and wide understanding of effective literacy practices is a part of all school cultures.

Since it is evident that coaching does not follow a prescriptive plan all stakeholders in the school community (e.g., Professional Development School partners, teacher educators, Reading Specialist program providers, and professional learning opportunity providers) should recognize, understand and reflect on their own coaching mindsets. It is imperative that these are included in all education preparation programs and professional learning opportunities, so that teacher candidates, current teachers, schools, and communities can benefit from the professional development opportunities afforded through coaching.

Finally, it is also important to consider the specific characteristics related to each coaching mindset. Our research demonstrated that the characteristics that were used the least by the WSLs were adult learning and development in the leader mindset and teacher and parent advocacy in the advocate mindset. Literacy leaders must understand all characteristics associated with the different mindsets, so that they are able to meet the needs of the colleagues and educational stakeholders with whom they collaborate. More research is needed in the area of literacy leaders' knowledge and use of the different characteristics associated with all of the mindsets. Adding to the research base on literacy leadership will help to personalize teachers' professional learning opportunities and support their literacy pedagogy.

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ENGAGING
ALL READERS
THROUGH
LITERACY,
LANGUAGE,
AND CULTURE:
TRENDS IN
LITERACY TEACHER
EDUCATION
PROGRAMS

HIGH STAKES TESTING IN TEACHER EDUCATION: RESPONSES AND IMPLICATIONS

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Abstract

High-stakes testing is no longer limited to K-12 programs. It is a reality for higher education teacher preparation programs as well. This article describes one state's requirements for candidates' recommendation for the teaching license in elementary education. It also highlights subsequent changes made at the college, department, and course levels in response to assessment mandates. Finally, it discusses concerns about instructional integrity as a result of high-stakes assessment policies and offers suggestions for addressing the challenges posed to teacher candidates, faculty, degree programs, and to the teacher education profession.

Introduction

High-stakes assessments in literacy have been a part of K-12 instruction and accountability for over two decades. These assessments intend to provide a standardized measure of performance in an effort to promote high levels of achievement. Despite the intended uses of such assessments, concerns about the unintended outcomes of high-stakes testing continue to abound. Critics contend that all too often important decisions about teaching and learning are based only on a single assessment tool (Hoffman et al., 1999). Furthermore, high-stakes

tests narrow the curriculum and increase the amount of instructional time spent on preparing teacher candidates to pass assessments on which promotion and retention decisions are based. Many educators agree that “teaching to the test” is not ideal, but most would agree that it is a reality for them. In response to test pressures, especially in an era when states threaten to take over underperforming schools, educators tend to focus a disproportionate amount of their instructional attention and resources on low performing students whose scores are close to passing, while limiting time and resources for those students who are far above or below required test scores (International Reading Association, 1999; International Literacy Association, 2016).

Moreover, high-stakes testing is no longer limited to K-12 programs. It is a reality for teacher preparation programs at institutions of higher education. Teacher education programs are being held more accountable than ever before for the success of their candidates, and this often includes the future K-12 students being taught by current candidates. For instance, in our state, K-12 students’ test scores are being tracked back to the institutions licensing their teachers, and these institutions are being held accountable for low test scores in the classrooms of recent graduates. As this focus on “teacher quality” has increased, researchers have attempted to draw conclusions about the influence and impact of teachers and teacher preparation programs on student achievement and educational outcomes (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2012; Henry, Kershaw, Zulli, & Smith, 2012). The preparation of teachers is of critical importance, as the quality of teachers has a significant influence on students’ learning and achievement (Hill, Rowan, & Ball, 2005; Nye, Konstantopoulos, & Hodges, 2004). However, to narrow the definition of teacher quality to students’ high-stakes performance severely reifies the notion of teacher quality.

To evaluate the preparedness of teacher candidates in North Carolina (NC), passing scores on high-stakes standardized assessments, such as Educative Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA) and the NC Foundations of Reading/General Curriculum, are required by the state for initial teacher licensure. All teacher education programs are expected to be evaluated with edTPA, while the elementary education licensure programs add on requirements to pass the NC Foundations tests. These include tests of general knowledge, mathematics, and teaching reading. The high-stakes nature of these assessments has compelled teacher preparation programs to reflect on and revise components of their teacher preparation programs in order to increase the pass rates of their teacher candidates. Pass rates are compared across public and private institutions of higher education, with sanctions threatened for the institutions not reaching the benchmarks or producing the lowest sets of scores.

Previously “well qualified” teacher candidates are suddenly unable to accept contracts until they pass all of these Foundations tests, which are required to be recommended for licensure. For some students, this has resulted in both a financial burden as they pay for multiple test administrations and an emotional burden as they prepare for the tests and worry over the consequences of failure. EdTPA presents a double financial whammy for many students whose campus administrations do not cover assessment fees. For example, outside scoring of the edTPA by Pearson costs \$300. The Foundations testing costs between \$278 and \$329. If teacher candidates do not meet the state cutoff scores, they must retake the tests they did not pass, with additional expenses. Additionally, the timing of these costs also aligns closely for most to student teaching, when many students must give up jobs.

Literacy professors are not immune from the stress of high stakes testing. As teacher education programs are compared and judged at the state level, the pressure to effectively prepare teacher candidates for the Foundations of Reading test often lies solely on literacy faculty. In this article, we will describe our state’s high-stakes assessment requirements in teacher education. We will also outline subsequent modifications we have made to our initial licensure teacher preparation courses and programs in response to assessment mandates, and finally we will discuss policy and instructional implications of high-stakes assessment in teacher education.

North Carolina Policy Mandates

Given the “attention to teacher preparation/certification and the policies and accountability systems that govern them and measure their effectiveness” (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2015, p. 10), it is important to introduce and consider some of the features of teacher education programs noted as contributing to the development of quality teachers. These include: (a) a vision of effective teaching, grounded in theories of effective pedagogy and integrated throughout all aspects of a program (Helfeldt, Capraro, & Capraro, 2010); (b) a strong curriculum implemented in systematic, coordinated experiences (Darling-Hammond, 2006); (c) opportunities to engage in extended clinical experiences in authentic contexts (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, & Bransford, 2005); and (d) strong coherence between practices observed in clinical experiences and information presented in coursework (Allsop, DeMarie, Alvarez-McHatton, & Doone, 2006). Yet, enacting a curriculum that is built upon and incorporates these characteristics has proven challenging due to a variety of factors within and external to the teacher education program’s control.

Research has shown teacher quality to have a significant influence on students' academic achievement (Nye et al., 2004; RAND Corporation, 2012). Traits that impact quality include teachers' knowledge of the content they will teach (Hill, Ball, & Schilling, 2008), their pedagogical content knowledge (Carpenter, Fennema, Peterson, & Carey, 1988), and their beliefs about teaching (Love & Kruger, 2005; Polly, et al., 2013). Consequently, teacher education programs that are tasked with the development of teacher quality are being more heavily scrutinized as a "possible weak link in the chain leading to student achievement" (Grisham et al. 2014, p. 169).

Given this increased focus on children's school achievement, particularly reading achievement, teacher education programs in North Carolina are being publicly evaluated by a variety of criteria. For example, the National Council on Teacher Quality (2014) ranks teacher education programs based on syllabi and textbooks used. Also, the University of North Carolina General Administration (2015) published a report indicating the adjusted average value-added effectiveness of teachers from each UNC system institution who teaches reading and math, and will soon publish licensure exam results as well.

One mechanism for measuring teacher quality now in place in North Carolina is edTPA, an assessment developed at the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning and Equity (SCALE). EdTPA is used to examine the performance of teacher candidates at or near the end of the course of study relative to instruction in literacy and mathematics. It is a rigorous, valid, and reliable assessment that consists of multiple tasks that emphasize skills necessary for successful entry into the field of education (American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education [AACTE], 2014). Task 1, *Planning for Instruction and Assessment*, requires teacher candidates to identify a learning segment that they will plan, teach, and assess student learning. This task consists of the development of three to five daily lesson plans, all instructional materials and assessments that comprise the learning segment, and a written commentary that provides rationale for instructional decision making. Task 2, *Instructing and Engaging Students in Learning*, examines a candidate's teaching practice. Candidates submit videos that are 3 to 20 minutes in length with a written commentary that analyzes their teaching practice and instructional decisions. Task 3, *Assessing Student Learning*, has teacher candidates select three student works samples and provide feedback for each. Teacher candidates must submit these three student work samples, along with a written commentary discussing strengths and weaknesses of the student samples, the whole class, and the teacher candidate's plans to support their students in future instruction. In elementary education programs, Tasks 1-3 can focus solely on literacy; however, there is the option of completing a fourth task on the assessment

of mathematics learning, as well as an option of completing Tasks 1-3 for math. Importantly, edTPA will become consequential for licensure recommendations in North Carolina in AY 2019-2020.

Teacher candidates seeking elementary education licensure must also pass foundational tests in knowledge of mathematics, general curriculum, and in the teaching of reading. In 2012, the State Board of Education adopted the NC Foundations of Reading Test, published by the Evaluation Systems group of Pearson, as a required licensing exam beginning October 2014. This test is based on a similar assessment—the Massachusetts Test for Educator Licensure—developed to certify that candidates are competent to teach. The test includes 100 multiple-choice questions and two essay questions worth 20% of the total score. Approximately 44% of the questions focus on word level knowledge, specifically phonemic awareness and phonics, 34% on text level knowledge, primarily comprehension and vocabulary, and 22% on assessment. This exam is often described as rigorous (Spear-Swerling & Coyne, 2010), as it requires teacher candidates to apply their knowledge of literacy instruction, and it uses highly specific terminology when referring to instructional concepts.

Addressing Policy Mandates: edTPA

North Carolina is one of 12 states that has adopted policies requiring candidates to earn a specific score in order to earn a teaching license. While teacher preparation programs across the state have revised their programs in order to support their candidates' performance on edTPA, including those in our department, the question that has guided this work was how to best incorporate edTPA while maintaining a holistic approach toward supporting the development of candidates' capacity to teach literacy. The knowledge required for teacher candidates to design effective literacy instruction can be described as knowledge-for-practice as well as knowledge-in-practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999) as teachers need to understand the content and standards they are expected to teach as well as the pedagogy related to that content, and possess the skills to create an effective instructional plan. To this end, there is a need for programs to provide candidates with experiences that develop their knowledge of content, pedagogy, and other related aspects of teaching to ensure they are able to apply this knowledge in authentic settings.

Faculty in the Department of Reading and Elementary Education at UNC Charlotte believe that edTPA can facilitate the development of candidates' knowledge and skills pertinent to each of these areas, especially when supports are created and threaded throughout coursework. To achieve this, edTPA

practice components have been incorporated into the department’s undergraduate courses since the 2013–2014 academic year, with the requirement that candidates complete the formal assessment as part of their Year-Long Internship field experience during student teaching, starting in 2014–2015. There has been a purposeful scaffolding and development of the knowledge necessary for the completion of the three literacy tasks required by edTPA (see Table 1).

For example, during candidates’ first semester in the program, they enroll in coursework focused on instructional design principles that introduces edTPA concepts such as academic language, essential strategy, language demands, and learning task within the context of developing literacy lessons. Candidates also learn how to align instructional objectives, tasks, and assessments, while differentiating among forms of assessment that are appropriate for measuring instructional objectives. Information pertinent to edTPA is extended in the second semester of the program as the teacher candidates explore and experiencing research-based pedagogies, developing sound instructional plans, and reflecting on lessons that they teach within field experiences. Focus is on applied literacy practices across a sequence of lessons with a central focus, and with a clearly defined beginning and

TABLE 1
EdTPA tasks completed during year-long internship

edTPA Task	Overview	Practice Task
Task 1: Planning Literacy	Candidates plan a 3 to 5 lesson learning segment focused on reading comprehension or writing. Candidates provide evidence that the learning segment addresses students’ individual needs.	Candidates complete the entire task for practice.
Task 2: Teaching Literacy	Candidates teach their 3 to 5 lesson learning segment focused on reading comprehension or writing. Candidates provide evidence that their instruction met the needs of their students.	Candidates teach one lesson and complete the entire commentary for practice.
Task 3: Assessing Literacy	Candidates collect student work samples from the last lesson in their learning segment and examine students’ performances. Candidates also focus on 3 students and identify their specific academic needs for future instruction.	Candidates collect student work for the lesson that they taught as part of task 2. They complete the entire commentary for practice.

end. Candidates also examine research, theory, and instructional practice related to integrating effective literacy practices across the content areas with a focus on vocabulary, comprehension, and authentic assessment-based instruction.

The most explicit connections to the edTPA project are in the semester that precedes student teaching, referred to as the year-long internship. Table 1 provides an overview of the tasks completed during this semester. Candidates are assessed using the actual edTPA rubrics by faculty and course instructors providing opportunities for candidates to analyze, self-assess their own work, and review the work of other candidates. Formal assessment of edTPA occurs during student teaching as candidates submit their portfolios to Pearson, Inc. for scoring. Acknowledging that edTPA becomes consequential for licensure in just a few years, the faculty in the department engage in twice per year examinations of the data to enact programmatic changes in response to noted areas of strength or weakness. We have seen a steady rate of growth on the passing scores within the undergraduate program over the past two years, from slightly over 85% passing to about 91%. Our candidates perform above the state average on all three tasks, but below the national average on Task 1 (Planning) and Task 3 (Assessment).

Further analysis revealed our candidates' performance was lowest on Rubric 5 (Planning Assessments to Monitor and Support Student Learning), Rubric 10 (Analyzing Teaching Effectiveness), and Rubric 14 (Analyzing Students' Language Use and Literacy Learning). Given the interconnectedness of these three rubrics, faculty have engaged in discussions to more effectively thread instructional topics pertinent to assessment and the analysis of data within the program. These program changes will be enacted in the future, thus the implications cannot be ascertained at this time, but given the mandated inclusion of edTPA within the licensure requirements, there will be opportunities to continue to examine this data for the foreseeable future.

Addressing Policy Mandates: Reading Foundations

In addition to the edTPA, NC teacher education programs must also contend with the NC Foundations of Reading Test. Published by the Evaluation Systems group of Pearson, this test is based on a similar assessment, the *Massachusetts Test for Educator Licensure*, developed to certify that candidates are competent to teach reading. The test includes 100 multiple-choice questions and two essay questions worth 20% of the total score. Approximately 44% of the questions focus on word level knowledge (specifically phonemic awareness and phonics), 34% on text level knowledge (primarily comprehension and vocabulary), and 22% on assessment. This exam is often described as rigorous (Spear-Swerling, & Coyne, 2010).

In order to ascertain the readiness of current teacher candidates to pass the NC Foundations of Reading Test, the Elementary Education program faculty administered the practice exam, also published by Evaluation Systems, to preservice teachers in their last semester of course work before student teaching. On average, preservice teachers answered 61% of the practice exam questions correctly. The average score on each section was 61% on word level knowledge, 66% on text level knowledge, and 53% on reading assessments. These scores indicate that many of our preservice teachers were not ready to successfully pass their licensure exam and that reading assessment was a particularly challenging concept for them.

Currently our preservice teachers are required to take two literacy methods classes. The results of the practice test, as well as other factors, prompted faculty to revise the two required literacy classes during the summer of 2016. Specifically, faculty (a) revised the content and alignment of the two literacy courses, with an emphasis on administering and interpreting assessment data within the content of the two courses; (b) created a curriculum library of effective literacy practices, housed in our university learning system, that included activities, resources, and videos all faculty could use when teaching these courses to best prepare our candidates, and (c) created and implemented a final exam aligned to the Foundations of Reading test for each of the reading classes that would be used across all sections of the classes. With the completion of these revisions faculty expected to increase our preservice teachers' scores on the practice exam as well as the Foundations test.

After implementation of the aforementioned revisions, teacher candidates' performance on the NC Foundations of Reading test were examined prior to the revisions of the program and after. Specifically, responses of the Cohort 2015 and the Cohort 2017 were compared. Cohort 2015 consisted of 106 students in their last semester of coursework or who were student teaching. All students had completed both literacy classes. Cohort 2017 was made up of 78 students who had just completed both literacy classes and were slated to begin their final semester of course work. The demographics of both cohorts mirrored the teaching force, with the majority of the students being White females.

We found that the mean test score of Cohort 2015 was 60% of questions answered correctly, while the mean test score of Cohort 2017 was almost 85%. This increase in Cohort 2017's test scores indicated to us that our course revisions had positive effects on preservice teachers' scores on the practice reading exam. Simply having faculty look through each question of the exam to ensure the corresponding concept was addressed in course instruction seemed to increase preservice teachers' scores. Literacy content had previously been divided into K-2 and grades 3-5 topics across the two courses. As we revised the courses, we

divided the content into early literacy skills (concepts about print, phonological awareness, phonics, and fluency) and assessments in the first class and comprehension, vocabulary, and instructional approaches for the second class. This division seemed to allow students to focus on coherence of the content better than the traditional K-2 and 3-5 split. Furthermore, having a common final exam for each reading course also seemed to give all faculty a clearer instructional target. Finally, providing a bank of instructional resources for faculty teaching the courses allowed faculty to be on the “same page” while still allowing for instructional freedom.

Addressing Mandates for Individual Students

While revising the two required literacy methods courses seemed to make a difference for the candidates, there were still those who still struggled to pass the practice tests embedded into the final exams. With the pass rates among teacher education programs being compared, pressure was on department chairs and deans to improve their rankings relative to passing score rates from other institutions. We realized that these pass rate comparisons were a problem for all teacher education programs, both public and private, across the state. So a Foundations Testing Summit was organized by several faculty from different institutions to allow teacher education programs to send representatives to an all-day meeting to compare challenges and to talk about what different programs were doing to try to improve pass rates.

The summit began with a panel of three teacher candidates who had just successfully passed student teaching in elementary education, but who had not yet passed all of the Foundations tests. This meant that, while they were eligible to graduate with a bachelor’s degree, they could not be recommended for licensure. One panel member said that the school in which she student taught offered her a contract, but that she could not accept it without being fully licensed. She expressed a general frustration heard from many of the participants—students with degrees in field, who completed successful internships, who were offered contracts—but who were stymied by a set of tests they could not pass and subsequently could not secure their initial teaching license from the state.

The summit participants then convened to different groups focused on the reading test, the math test, and the general curriculum test to discuss ongoing efforts at different institutions. Since the testing mandate was still fairly new, there were no consistent efforts, with each program trying different things, from a non-credit required one-credit course for those who did not pass the test to modules being developed and shared with students in formal courses, or as a non-course specific option to prepare for testing. One participant mentioned that she had students who successfully completed the program, including student

teaching, but had taken the tests and failed multiple times, spending thousands of dollars in preparation and testing fees with still no teaching license in hand. She concluded with the statement “I wonder if the state legislators are aware of the hardships they are placing on some of our students.”

To help these struggling teacher candidates pass the tests, our dean decided to give release time to a faculty member in reading to prepare study modules for students, hold group study sessions, and provide individualized tutoring. A second faculty member was hired to tutor students in math. The students attending these sessions ranged from those who had not yet taken the test to some who had failed one or more of the tests 7-8 times and were trying to prepare to take it again. In addition, faculty teaching the reading courses continued to embed test-aligned work in their courses. One element that was consistently challenging to many of the students who struggled to pass the test was the open response section. This typically involved a classroom scenario or data from a running record, and students had to discuss strengths and needs based on the data presented. The course instructors began to use open response type practice items in class, with the hope that students would become familiar with that testing format.

One thing that surprised both faculty members tutoring in both reading and math was that some students who successfully navigated program degree requirements did not possess strong study skills. For instance, one student came in for reading tutoring who had already failed that test 7 times. When asked how she prepared for the testing attempts she stated that for the first three attempts she memorized the practice test. Finally, she realized that this was not a helpful strategy. With tutoring and organized study preparation, this student was able to pass the test on the next attempt. The faculty member who served as the math tutor confirmed that this was a common response in his experiences as well: to memorize the practice test. It is too early to tell if these efforts have been successful in moving our program to be better positioned in the comparisons across institutions. Since faculty trying to make efforts to improve, the rankings became moving targets, with a few institutions who did improve relative to the state averages reticent to share how they increased passing rates, because successful strategies would just raise the bar but not the relative standings among programs.

Discussion

Teachers are pivotal to teaching all students, particularly struggling readers, to read (International Reading Association, 2007), and the knowledge and expertise

required to effectively teach reading is often underestimated (Snow, Griffin, & Burns, 2006). Fortunately, effective teacher preparation programs can shape candidates' knowledge and skills (McCombes-Tolis & Spear-Swerling, 2011). Teacher preparation programs strive to develop their candidates' pedagogical content knowledge and dispositions in ways that cannot be measured by a single assessment tool. After all, program completion should prepare teacher candidates to be effective educators, not simply to complete required assignments. In an era when high-stakes testing is at the doorstep of higher education (like it or not), we also prepare them to succeed on assessments that are mandated for their entry into the teaching profession.

As professors, this requires a unique level of collaboration. We work with colleagues to develop comprehensive, effective literacy education programs. At times, we also relinquish a certain level of traditional academic freedom so that programmatic consistency can be maintained for the good of our candidates. The adjustments we have made to our own teacher education programs show promise. Additional adjustments may also serve to strengthen our program. Preliminary data collected by our department suggests that there is a need to inform our clinical partners and cooperating teachers about the edTPA requirements. During our pilot of edTPA, clinical partners and cooperating teachers reported confusion about some of the edTPA components and were unclear how to support candidates seeking to complete edTPA tasks. edTPA is a large and complex tool, and they were not familiar with the intricacies inherent in it. Moving forward, in addition to continuously improving coursework experiences, we plan to be more deliberate in our efforts to engage and inform our school partners about the various facets of edTPA and the related requirements for candidates.

In terms of future research, as more systematic studies are needed to examine the specific relationships between high stakes assessments, candidate performance and teaching quality, we need to continue to research our candidates' performance on the edTPA assessment, as well as on standardized assessments such as the NC Foundations of Reading Test. The issues of high stakes testing in higher education are not unique to a single state or region. To paraphrase one Association of Literacy Educators and Researchers conference attendee, "You all seem to think you're alone in this. You are not alone."

State by state, many teacher educators are grappling with similar issues and are seeking effective solutions. As teacher educators, we need to continue conversations and collaborative efforts, across institutions and across state lines, which will enable us to address the policy changes that impact our profession.

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THE LASTING IMPACT OF A UNIVERSITY COMMON READING PROGRAM

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Abstract

Students in a small university in Ontario, Canada were surveyed about the lasting impact of the common book program from three years previous. Results indicate that the common book had a small impact on critical thinking and essay writing skills. The book program, however, had little to no lasting impact on them as readers, listeners, or speakers, and most recommended that the program be discontinued. Moreover, many students expressed a dislike for reading, feeling they should not have to read books in university. We make recommendations for researchers and suggestions for institutions to help make common book programs more impactful.

Introduction

Teens and young adults are voluntarily reading less than ever before (NEA, 2007). The National Endowment for the Arts' (2007) report, *To Read or Not to Read*, stated that the percentage of seventeen year olds who read nothing for pleasure has doubled in the past 20 years. They also reported that there is a 18% decrease between 1982 and 2002 among college students who read; at the time of the NEA's (2007) study, 66% of freshmen reported reading for pleasure only one hour a week or less. By the time students are seniors in college, one third of students did not read for pleasure at all (NEA, 2007). More recent research corroborates the NEA's findings. For example, Applegate et al.'s (2014) study

of 1,000 college sophomores found that only 46.6% of students are enthusiastic readers, with only 5.7% being classified as active and avid readers. Other research is discerning but not quite as bleak. For instance, Mokhtari, Reichard, and Gardner (2009) reported that college students spend 1.14 hours per day doing recreational reading.

In 2007, the NEA found that reading for pleasure competed with other media, and young people used other technological forms of communication at the same time as reading (e-mails, video games, instant messaging, web surfing). With the boom of social media and streamed video in the past decade, reading for pleasure is continuing to compete with the instant gratification of technology. Mokhtari, Reichard, and Gardner (2009) reported that college students spend more time daily watching television and on the Internet than they do engaged in recreational reading. While 60% of college students felt that reading outside of schoolwork is extremely important, college students stated that they enjoyed using the Internet more than recreational and academic reading and more than watching television (Mokhtari, Reichard, & Gardner, 2009). Huang, Capps, Blacklock, and Garza's (2014) study of over 12,000 American college students found that most of college students' reading was internet-based; the qualitative portion of the study suggests "that students were spending more time socializing with others through some social networking websites (e.g., blogs, Facebook, MySpace, Skype, and Twitter) than in academic and extracurricular reading activities" (p. 457).

Further distressing findings out of the NEA's (2007) report is that college students' reading proficiency has declined significantly (20-23%) since 1992. The link between voluntary reading and achievement is also evident in the literature, as voluntary reading is highly correlated to proficiency in reading and writing (NEA, 2007). In addition, Burgess and Jones' (2010) found that college students who had taken a college remedial reading course were more likely to spend time playing video games, while the non-remedial students reported reading more.

Common Book Programs

As the research on college students' reading habits reveals, colleges and universities have a vested interest in getting students to read more. Ferguson (2006) notes that while there has been a decline in reading in general, common book programs have grown. Simply put, a common book program (hereafter referred to as CBP) has a group of people all read the same book, usually at the same time, to create a shared experience. This type of mass reading program has been implemented

by libraries (Dempsey, 2009), communities, local elementary schools (Mayo, 2015), and middle and high schools (Evans, 2013; Rominiemi & Donoghue, 2015). But perhaps most enthusiastically, CBPs have been adopted by colleges and universities.

Also known as a one book program, freshman reading, summer reading, or common reading, a quick web search will provide results for hundreds of postsecondary institutions' CBPs. In July of 2017, the *New York Times* reported that 40% of US colleges had a common reading assignment during orientation (Goldstein). Moser (2010) explains, "While the content and specific academic objectives of common reading programs are shaped by the particular cultures of their colleges, all participating institutions share a general interest in the gains in social cohesion and academic accomplishment generated by engaging incoming students in the reading of a single text" (p. 90).

The most popular CBP model in colleges and universities has incoming first-year students read a common book before the start of the academic year and then participate in events during orientation week (Ferguson, 2006; Grenier, 2007). CBP events often include author lectures, panel discussions, film viewings, and essay or creative work contests (Moser, 2010). Other postsecondary programs integrate the common book into first-year classes, with course integration usually being optional for teaching faculty (Ferguson, 2006; Maloy, Counihan, Dupre, Madera, & Beckford, 2017; Moser, 2010).

There has been a significant amount of research published that describes CBPs, how they were developed, and how they are implemented at their respective postsecondary institutions (e.g. Brown, 2014; Straus & Daly, 2002). In addition, most research is limited by fixed-point data collection, representing a snapshot in time, usually a student survey just after the completion of a CBP (e.g. Fuller, Walker, & Hakel, 2002; Price, 2005; Stone, Higginson, & Liljequist, 2004). For instance, Goldfine, Mixson-Brookshire, Hoerner, and Morrisey (2011) found that a CBP at a southeastern university in the US created a greater appreciation of books and enhanced students' critical thinking. More recently, Maloy, Counihan, Dupre, Madera, & Beckford (2017) reported that Queensborough Community College's CBP was very well received by students, helped foster a sense of community, engaged students in wanting to learn more about a topic, and helped students make connections across disciplines.

We, too, have been researching various aspects of the CBP at our institution. Like other researchers, we have used a one-time data collection immediately after the CBP has been completed for the year. For instance, we surveyed students and interviewed professors, and found that Nipissing's CBP had a small to moderate impact on improving university level-skills and literacy skills for first-year

students (Ferguson, Brown, & Piper, 2014). In a more recent study, however, we found that the CBP did not appear to create a sense of community among students (Ferguson, Brown, & Piper, 2015).

Little research has been conducted longitudinally or retrospectively (after a significant amount of time has passed) about whether CBPs have impacted students as readers and learners. Liljequist and Stone (2009) conducted a longitudinal study; they surveyed students about their perceptions of the CBPs at Murray State University for five consecutive years (five separate groups of freshmen). Liljequist and Stone (2009) were able to compare student perceptions over five years of the program (using the book in class, discussing the book with others, general satisfaction with the program, etc.) but were not able to measure the lasting impact of the program. We know of no other research that has collected student perception data about the impact of CBPs retrospectively. We simply do not know, as Kean (2007) also questions, if the topics of CBPs or the experience of participating in the program, “sticks” with students or impacts them as literate learners years later.

Common Book Program at Nipissing University

In 2010, the Faculty of Applied and Professional Studies (consisting of Business, Criminal Justice, Nursing, and Social Welfare) at Nipissing University introduced a CBP with the goals of enhancing a sense of community and improving literacy and critical thinking skills. Unlike a number of other CBPs that take place solely during first-year orientation activities (Ferguson, 2006; Grenier, 2007), Nipissing University’s CBP is integrated into first-year classes. While professors are provided with resources and support to integrate the common book into courses, it is ultimately a voluntary program for professors. Professors decide how to integrate the book in their courses, if at all.

In the inaugural year of the program, the book selected was *Three Day Road* by Joseph Boyden and in 2011, it was *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot. In 2012, the book selected for the program was M.T. Anderson’s science fiction novel *Feed*. There were a number of events for the CBP in 2012, with the highlight being a Skype lecture by the author, M.T. Anderson. For more about the book selection process at Nipissing, see Ferguson, Brown, and Piper (2016).

Research Questions

The extant literature does not address the lasting impact of CBPs. We feel, as do others, (Kean, 2007; Goldfine, Mixson-Brookshire, Hoerrner, & Morrissey, 2011; Gerlich, Drumheller, & Mallard, 2012), that studies are needed to explore

whether CBPs have a sustained impact on students. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore students' retrospective opinions about the CBP at Nipissing University. The research questions guiding our study are: Does the common book project have a lasting impact on students? If so, what is the impact?

Our research is unique because it is the first CBP research that we know of that asks students about their perceptions and impact of the program years later. In addition, we surveyed this same population of students (who read *Feed* as their common book), just after the program was complete about their perceptions of the program and its impact on sense of community for the students (Ferguson, Brown, & Piper, 2014). Revisiting this population three years later gives us some comparative data about the impact of the program years later.

Theoretical Framework

Maloy, Counihan, Dupre, Madera, and Beckford (2017) argue that CBPs can be a way to promote transactional reading on campus. Drawing on the work of Armstrong and Newman (2011), Smith (2012), and Rosenblatt (1994), Maloy and colleagues (2017) propose that college students need to move from a *transmission* approach to reading (wherein there is one correct way to interpret and understand a text) to a *transactional* approach. In a transactional approach, meaning occurs between the text and the reader (Rosenblatt, 1994); readers critically engage with text, leading to multiple interpretations. Like Maloy et al. (2017), we feel that Rosenblatt's (1994) theory of *effluent* and *aesthetic* reading is an important theoretical underpinning that may be applied to CBPs. Effluent reading is reading for information that is of use after the reading (Rosenblatt, 1994). It is likely that most textbook reading done by college students is effluent reading. Aesthetic reading is reading for the senses; it evokes emotion during the reading itself (Rosenblatt, 1994). College students may engage in little aesthetic reading; as the NEA (2007) reports, most freshmen only read for pleasure for one hour or less per week. A common book, which is usually a work of fiction or a biography, may provide an opportunity to engage in effluent and aesthetic reading at the same time. This dual stance towards reading is significant, as Rosenblatt (1994) viewed the effluent and aesthetic stances of reading on a continuum, rather than in conflict with one another. In a CBP, a student may find enjoyment and an emotional response while reading a book. But having a professor make connections from course content to the book may lead the student to reread or revisit the book as effluent reading. Conversely, the otherwise unemotional content of a course may become an affective aesthetic experience through the use of literature. By doing

this in multiple courses, students learn about themes from different viewpoints and they may read, reread, and revisit the text, possibly having different transactions with the text each time.

Methods

In order to gain insight into the lasting impact of the CBP at Nipissing University, we felt a survey would be the most appropriate method. Surveys are a practical way to gain information about a large population's attitudes and perspectives, and allow us as researchers to explore the relationships between survey items (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Using survey data, we can also compare the results of different groups of respondents, such as teasing out the lasting impact between those who actually read the book and those who did not.

Instrument

We developed a survey based on our previous knowledge and research about CBPs. The survey was a mixture of closed and open-ended questions. Students' responses for whether or not they read *Feed* was a proxy for program participation. We then asked students whether they thought the CBP was a good way of introducing university level skills (a stated goal of the program). We used this item to measure perceptions of program quality. To gain insight about literacy impact, we asked whether the program impacted their attitude towards literacy and in terms of dimensions of literacy (i.e. as a reader, writer, listener, speaker, critical thinker). Questions about if the CBP facilitated understanding course content, made connections between courses, and garnered an appreciation of science/technology (the main theme in *Feed*) measured other perceived benefits of the program. We also posed direct questions about the lasting impact of the CBP and whether or not the program should be continued.

Data Collection

Data from this study are from anonymous and voluntary surveys completed in 2015 by students in mandatory fourth year courses (who read *Feed* three years previously). In order to optimize the return rate, we used pencil and paper surveys instead of an online survey. To avoid a power imbalance between students and teaching faculty, a research assistant or a faculty member who did not teach the fourth year students distributed and collected the student surveys. Eighty-seven of the 132 students enrolled in these courses completed the survey, resulting in a response rate of 65.9%.

Sample

The majority of students in our sample were female (59%), 21-24 years of age (71.3%), and in their fourth year of study (65.5%). The majority of students were in Criminal Justice (42.5%) and Business (40.2%), with the remainder in Nursing, Social Welfare or Other. Most students indicated that they had not read *Feed*, with only 36.8% of the sample remembering doing so. Of those who read *Feed*, 88.2% did so in their first year of study. Demographic data is presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1
Summary of Demographic Data N = 87

	Participants	Percentage of Participants (%)
Gender		
Female	51	58.6
Male	30	34.5
No response	6	6.9
Age		
17-20 years old	7	8.0
21-24 years old	62	71.3
25 years and older	12	13.8
No response	6	6.9
Current Year of Program		
3rd year	24	27.6
4th year	57	65.5
No response	6	6.9
Program of Study		
Business	35	40.2
Criminal Justice	37	42.5
Nursing	2	2.3
Soc. Dev. &	5	5.7
Family Studies		
Other	2	2.3
No response	6	6.9
Did you read <i>Feed</i> ?		
Yes	32	36.8
No	54	62.1
No response	1	1.1

Data Analysis

We manually entered the quantitative data from the surveys into SPSS 24. Descriptive data is presented in Table 2. We conducted cross-tabulation analysis and Chi-squared tests to determine if there were associations between perceptions of the CBP across various groups (see Tables 3 and 4). We used a binomial logistic regression to determine how well program participation, selected program benefits, gender, and program of study predicted perceptions of a lasting impact.

Using the qualitative data analysis procedures outlined by Bogden & Biklen (2007), we individually read and reread all qualitative data and made codes inductively, based on themes in the data. We then met as a group, compared codes, and agreed on a final set of codes tied to themes.

TABLE 2
Descriptive Statistics, N = 87

Item	Yes (%)	No (%)
Do you believe the Common Book Program (CBP) was a good way of introducing university-level skills?	24 (27.6)	41 (47.1)
Did participating in the CBP impact you as a		
• Reader?	18 (20.7)	66 (75.9)
• Writer?	5 (5.7)	81 (93.1)
• Listener?	8 (9.2)	78 (89.7)
• Speaker?	2 (2.3)	84 (96.6)
• Critical Thinker?	17 (19.5)	69 (79.3)
Did participating in the CBP impact your reading habits or your attitude towards reading?	2 (2.3)	61 (70.1)
Benefits gained from the CBP		
• Understanding course content	6 (6.9)	75 (86.2)
• Making connections between courses	12 (13.8)	74 (85.1)
• Enjoying reading	8 (9.2)	78 (89.7)
• Appreciation for Science and Technology	4 (4.6)	82 (94.3)
Did the CBP inspire you to learn more about the topics in the book?	10 (11.5)	50 (57.5)
Do you believe the CBP has a lasting impact on students?	13 (14.9)	51 (58.6)
Would you recommend that the CBP be continued?	27 (31.0)	37 (42.5)

TABLE 3
Cross Tabulation – Reading Feed and CBP Literacy Benefits

Benefits		Did you read <i>Feed</i> by M.T. Anderson?		Total
		Yes (%)	No (%)	
Did participating in the CBP impact you as a reader?	Yes	9 (28.1)	8 (15.1)	17
	No	23 (71.9)	43 (84.3)	66
	Total	32 (100.0)	51 (100.0)	83
Did participating in the CBP impact you as a critical thinker?	Yes	10 (31.3)	7 (13.2)	17
	No	22 (68.8)	46 (86.8)	68
	Total	32 (100.0)	53 (100.0)	85

TABLE 4
Cross Tabulation – Reading Feed, Lasting Impact and Program Recommendation

Benefits		Did you read <i>Feed</i> by M.T. Anderson?		Total
		Yes (%)	No (%)	
Do you believe the CBP has a lasting impact on students?	Yes	6 (21.9)	7 (19.4)	13
	No	25 (78.1)	25 (80.6)	50
	Total	31 (100.0)	32 (100.0)	63
Would you recommend that the CBP be continued?	Yes	11 (39.3)	15 (42.9)	26
	No	17 (60.7)	20 (57.1)	37
	Total	35 (100.0)	28 (100.0)	63

Results

Only 20.7% of students indicated that the CBP impacted them as readers. The percentage is higher among those who read *Feed* (28.1%), but the difference between readers and non-readers of *Feed* is not statistically significant. Results are similar for whether the program impacted students as writers, listeners, and speakers. However, 31.3% of those who read *Feed* indicated that the program impacted them as critical thinkers, compared to only 13.2% of non-readers, and

this difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$; see Table 3). The qualitative responses concur; one student wrote that the program made her “think and truly listen to what is being said,” while another felt that the program made students “think about the big picture.” A few students also indicated a benefit in writing skills, stating that their essay writing skills improved. Other qualitative responses did not reveal significant benefits in other literacy dimensions (i.e. reading, listening, and speaking).

Whether they were readers or non-readers of the common book, the great majority of students indicated no change in their reading habits or attitudes towards reading as a result of the CBP. The qualitative responses generally support these findings. When asked whether the program impacted their reading habits, students were polarized: they already loved reading or they did not. Example qualitative responses were, “I’ve always been an avid reader” or “I don’t like to read very much, so it didn’t really change my habit.” For some, the CBP expanded their reading horizons; a few students liked “getting to read a new book [they] would never have chosen to read.” Meanwhile, those less enamored with the program felt that a required fictional novel was “too high school,” that it detracted from course content, or that their professors simply did not use the book because it did not relate to the course.

Cross tabulation analysis revealed that those who read *Feed* were more likely to indicate that the program helped them understand course content, make connections across courses, and gain an appreciation of science or technology. The qualitative responses demonstrate that some students benefitted in applying course content; for example, one student wrote that the program “extrapolates and challenges students to apply out of the box concepts to their course content.” Students observed their professors applying different lenses to the same book; one student liked “that [I] read one book but it applied across all courses.” Students also stated that an increased awareness of the subject matter in the common book was another benefit; for instance, students thought more about the impact of technology because of *Feed*.

We performed a logistic regression to ascertain whether gender, program of study, perceptions of program benefits, and reading *Feed* affected the likelihood that students perceived a lasting impact. The logistic regression model is statistically significant, $\chi^2(5) = 19.671, p < .001$. The model explains 45.0% (Nagelkerke R^2) of the variance in perceptions of a lasting impact and correctly classifies 84.5% of the cases. A student who thinks that the CBP impacted him/her as a critical thinker was 9.7 times more likely to indicate that the program had a lasting impact. No other predictor adds significantly to the model.

Overall, the majority of readers and non-readers did not feel that the program had a lasting impact and did not recommend that the program be continued (see Table 4). The qualitative responses indicate that students remember receiving a free book, using the book in courses, and seeing common book posters around campus. A few were able to recall the actual purpose of the program (to create common ground and improve skills). While a small number of students expressed the sentiment, “the book stays with you,” most had no recollection of the program: “I don’t remember anything, so what does that tell ya?” Some students tied the lack of impact to the inconsistent or limited use of the book in classes by professors; as one student said, “Maybe if more classes used it, it would.” Other students simply stated, “I didn’t read it.” Many students tied their decision not to read the book on the basis of the book itself. One student felt that “the book choice isn’t always relevant to students,” while another thought the program could be continued “with better books.”

A concerning theme throughout the qualitative responses was the negative attitude of some students towards reading. Reading was not valued as a skill; for example, one student stated, “We read textbooks, clearly we don’t need to read fiction to gain skills” and another, “I don’t see what skills I could have gained. We read books in high school.” This resulted in many students stating that they only “skimmed” the common book. Many students also commented that they only read when required: “It [reading] is not a fun activity and I only read when I have to” and “I only read what I had to.” Other students saw no purpose or reason for reading books. For example one student wrote, “People coming into university are not interested in talking about books” while another stated, “I don’t think as a university student you should be forced to read a book.” Students also felt they had “too much reading” and “no time to read” and thus the common book was an “extra.” For instance, some stated, “students often don’t have time or energy to read a whole novel” and “too much course load to read.”

Discussion

For those students that read *Feed*, there was some lasting impact in terms of understanding course content, making connections across courses, an appreciation of the theme of the book, critical thinking (particularly the ability to apply different lenses to a given text) and to a lesser extent, essay writing. The CBP had no impact on reading behavior or attitudes towards reading, with many students failing to see the value or purpose of the program. In fact, many students have “no recollection of it.” While 63% reported reading *Feed* in 2013 (Ferguson, Brown, & Piper, 2014), only 36.8% indicated that they read *Feed* in the present

study, three years later. The majority of students felt that the program did not have a lasting impact and should be discontinued. Our findings are in line with Liljequist and Stone (2009) who found that students did not value or want the continuation of their common reading program.

It appears that the initial program impact was undermined by a number of factors: the low buy-in/support from professors, a failure to communicate the purpose of the program to students, and book choice. A number of students received the book but were unsure why they were supposed to read it: "I am never really sure what it is all about or how to get involved or what it involves." We believe this low initial program impact translated to low lasting impressions of the program. This is compounded by the fact that the CBP was primarily a first-year experience. For most students, there was no discussion of the program or the book after the first year. For Maloy et al. (2017), the CBP at their college offered explicit faculty development opportunities, was promoted as a "campus-wide responsibility," and was "not relegated to those who teach first-year courses" (p. 72). It is possible that the lack of opportunities to reinforce the benefits of the CBP yearly contributed to its low lasting impact. Some students in our study felt that the CBP could have a lasting impact "if it is the right book." Book choice has been extensively noted in the literature as a major factor in the success of CBPs (Ferguson, Brown, & Piper, 2016; Grenier, 2007; Liljequist & Stone, 2009; Maloy et al. 2017; Nadelson & Nadelson, 2012). However, research also shows that it is highly unlikely for one book to please everyone (Ferguson, Brown, & Piper, 2016).

Many of the students we surveyed do not like reading and were frank in the qualitative responses, overtly stating so: "I don't like to read very much." The idea of postsecondary students' being alliterate (being literate yet choosing not to read) is documented in the research (Applegate, 2014; NEA, 2007) and has also emerged in other studies about CBPs. For instance, the students in Mallard, Lowery-Hart, Andersen, Cuevas, Campbell's (2008) research also lament about "having to read a book" (p. 96). Students in our study often cited lack of time to read, stating that they are already burdened with course work. While this may be true for some students, perhaps as Mokhtari, Reichard, and Gardner (2009) and Huang, Capps, Blacklock, and Garza's (2014) discuss, students are prioritizing other forms of technological communication over reading.

Unlike Goldfine, Mixson-Brookshire, Hoerrner, and Morrisey (2011), students at Nipissing University did not have an enhanced appreciation of books because of the CBP. Clearly the CBP at Nipissing did not make reading converts out of non-readers. For students who did not enjoy reading, the CBP was an unrelated extra that they were too busy for. Instead, the majority of these students viewed course textbook reading as valuable. Perhaps these students are uninterested

(or perhaps unable) to take an aesthetic stance towards reading (Rosenblatt, 1994) and are looking for correct, textbook-based answers as they read. These readers may be more focused on a transmission approach to reading (Maloy et al., 2017) than having multiple transactions with the text (Rosenblatt, 1994). These non-readers also viewed being asked to read a novel as being forced to read, and they wanted an incentive directly related to their course, rather than reading for aesthetic purposes. Alternatively, perhaps a mandatory CBP cannot be aesthetic reading at all. The notion that an assigned common book can encourage reading for enjoyment may be misguided, particularly considering that choice of books is well documented in the literature on reading motivation (Gambrell, 1996, 2011; Guthrie, 2015).

Some students, however, were able to take different stances to reading. Like the students in Maloy et al.'s (2007) research, readers of the common book in our study felt that the CBP helped make connections across courses and disciplines. In making these connections, we propose that these students had different transactions and critical conversations between themselves and the book (Rosenblatt, 1994). "It helped draw one concept across all courses," explained one student. In fact, critical thinking was the key benefit we identified in both our quantitative and qualitative findings, with 31.3% of readers believing that their critical thinking skills improved with the CBP. Our qualitative results support this with students saying it "helped with critical thinking" and "it forced me to think." Improved critical thinking skills associated with CBPs have also been reported by Goldfine, Mixson-Brookshire, Hoerrner, and Morrissey (2011). The other lasting impact that was found in our qualitative results (but not the quantitative) is that, for some, the CBP had an impact on student essay writing skills.

The fact that a number of students felt that "no one goes to university to talk about books" is highly concerning to us. Not only are we aware of the research that demonstrates that those who read are more likely to perform well academically (Burgess & Jones, 2010; NEA, 2007) as well as contribute to civil society (NEA, 2007), we are troubled by the lack of understanding of the role of reading in higher education. Literacy permeates through all facets of higher education. We are all readers, writers, listeners, and speakers-and feel that reading books is an integral part of a 21st century education.

Recommendations

While each university and college CBP is context specific to an individual institution, and we caution about the overgeneralization of our findings, we make general suggestions for CBPs. First and foremost, we recognize that students need to read the book for the program to have an impact. However, given that readers

of the book in our study also only report a few lasting benefits of the program, we acknowledge that simply reading the book is not enough. We recommend that CBPs engage upper-year students as well as faculty who teach upper-year classes. Involving all students on campus appears to be successful in the program described by Maloy and colleagues (2017). Wider student and faculty engagement could alter the culture of reading across the institution and increase the number of people having a shared literary experience. Imagine the benefit to a freshman of having a common learning experience with an upper-year student and the conversations that could occur. Given the importance of faculty buy-in to the student incentive to participate, greater support and development opportunities for faculty would encourage wider integration of the CBP into courses. Further, we recommend that the goals and purposes of CBPs be explicitly explained to all participants. The CBP should also not be the only avenue on campus to emphasize the importance of literacy to students. The program should be part of an extensive toolkit of initiatives emphasizing the importance of literacy to the human experience.

Limitations

For our study, we sampled students in professional programs (i.e. Business, Criminal Justice, Nursing, Social Welfare). It is possible that results might be different if we surveyed students in the Humanities or Sciences. In addition, our sample included transfer students and third-year students who were taking fourth-year courses. The transfer students were not exposed to the CBP and the third-year students had a different book for their freshman year. However, we do not believe that their exclusion would change our results significantly. Finally, we did not ask students about their reading behavior prior to participating in the CBP or about their use of other forms of media that might compete with reading.

Final Thoughts

Because our study is limited to our university and its CBP, we encourage researchers to conduct further longitudinal and retrospective studies into the long-term impact of CBPs. In addition, we suggest more research is needed about the impact of CBPs on students' perceptions of themselves as readers (avid readers compared to averse readers). We also think it would be fruitful to collect data on competing forms of media and their effect on participation in CBPs.

CBPs are a popular and relatively costly venture for colleges and universities but may have little value in terms of lasting impact. While our study reveals that the CBP at Nipissing University did have a modest impact on critical thinking skills and essay writing skills, the majority of students forgot about the program and had little recollection of it three years later. However, perhaps more concerning, the qualitative responses from the survey indicate that many students feel that reading should not be a part of their postsecondary education and that reading a common book detracts from course content. A significant number of students do not value aesthetic reading at the postsecondary level. These findings raise grave concerns as many students seem not to recognize the importance of literacy in undergraduate education and, moreover, how literacy is woven into the fabric of all education and life.

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HONORING ALL OF THE LANGUAGE ARTS: A CONSTRUCTIVIST APPROACH TO PRESERVICE TEACHERS' CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

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Abstract

Observation is an integral skill for an educator. Effective practicing teachers use observation to inform and improve their planning, instruction, and assessment. Preservice teachers need to be scaffolded in the development of that skill so that they can utilize observations in their K-12 classroom. Teacher education programs must be strategic in how they scaffold preservice teachers' observational skills. In this article, describe how through a longitudinal research study, we have created a systematic approach to observation throughout our teacher education program. We describe the theoretical frame on which we base the study and elaborate on the methods and the evolution of those methods as our research purpose developed over four years. Last, we share the findings of the study over time and offer a discussion of those findings.

Introduction

Observation is an integral skill for an educator. Effective practicing teachers use observation to inform and improve their planning, instruction, and assessment. Preservice teachers need to be scaffolded in the development of that skill so that they can utilize observations in their K-12 classroom. Placing preservice teachers in classrooms hoping they observe what is significant and relevant about

teaching and student learning is not enough. Although preservice teachers have spent countless hours in the classroom as students, developing the lens to observe the classroom through a teacher's view challenges much of their preconceived notions. The context of the classroom suddenly becomes a complex space.

Spending time in classrooms observing cooperating teachers and students through various field experiences is part of teacher preparation programs. Therefore, teacher education programs must be strategic in how they scaffold preservice teachers' observational skills throughout their program. This systematic approach to observation must meet the developmental needs of the preservice teachers, evolving with their understandings of teaching and learning, so that they can hone this skill, reflect on their improvements, and utilize their knowledge of observation in their future teaching. To that end, we will describe how through a longitudinal research study, we have created a systematic approach to observation throughout our teacher preparation program.

First, we describe the theoretical frame on which we base the study. Next, we elaborate on the methods and the evolution of those methods as our research purpose developed over four years. Third, we briefly share the findings of the study over time. Last, we offer a discussion of those findings.

Theoretical Framework

In describing our theoretical framework, we mainly focus on the theory of constructivism. We also include social constructivism due to the social nature of teaching and learning. Additionally, we explain the term observation as an approach to research in general, and then specifically in teacher education.

Constructivism

Constructivism has had a significant impact on education from the 1920s to present-day. Constructivism is a theory of learning that emphasizes the active construction of knowledge by individuals (Gunning, 2010). Constructivist theory has influenced educators' understanding of student learning, the role of the teacher, classroom instruction, and knowledge acquisition. "From a constructive viewpoint, learning occurs when individuals integrate new knowledge with existing knowledge . . . [which] can only occur when the learner is actively engaged in the learning process" (Tracey & Morrow, 2017, pp. 55–56). As long as the mind is actively engaged, learning is occurring and ongoing.

According to Tracey and Morrow (2017), there are three components to Constructivism. First, much learning is not observable to the external viewer. Second, individual learners engage in a hypothesis-testing experience. Third,

inferencing, or filling in the gaps, plays a major role in learning. As previously mentioned, Constructivist Theory informs classroom instruction as well. Types of learning activities from a Constructivist stance include investigative and creative knowledge and skill acquisition that include the following: a personalization of the topic/problem, methods of inquiry and production modeled after practicing professionals, and an end-product geared to a specific audience (Renzulli, 2006).

Social Constructivism is a social learning perspective based in Constructivism but centralizing the role of social interactions in the construction of knowledge and learning. The premise of Social Constructivism is that learning is a result of social interactions with others. A key idea in Vygotsky's Social Constructivism is scaffolding, which is described as providing of assistance by adults or more competent peers during learning (Tracey & Morrow, 2017). Scaffolding is required to move students beyond their current capabilities. In other words, what a student can do with assistance today, they may be able to do on their own tomorrow. This approach can be applied to preservice teachers using observations to learn about teaching. Consequently, it is necessary to scaffold preservice teachers in observational skills and approaches so they can apply this to future classroom practices.

Observation

Observation is important to learning. "To understand fully the complexities of many situations, direct participation in and observation of the phenomenon of interest may be the best research method" (Patton, 2014, p. 21). Therefore, observation is important to learning about teaching and learning. Many view observation as being a tool for those who ascribe to Behaviorism because of the focus on observable behaviors. In fact, Social Cognitive Theory, which combines elements of Behaviorism with social learning theory, purports a concept of vicarious learning, which considers the notion that people can learn by observing others (Tracey & Morrow, 2017). This is the foundation of field experiences in teacher education programs. Although there are strengths to learning-by-watching models, there are also limitations of observations, such as observer influence on the context, observer selective perception, sole focus on external behaviors, and limited time (Patton, 2014).

Moreover, "observers need to be disciplined about not assuming they know the meaning to participants of what they observe without checking with those participants" (Patton, 2014, p. 287). Consequently, observers need to practice observing, and differentiate between observation and interpretation. A successful observer takes field notes in order to capture what s/he is viewing. Observational data must have depth, detail, facts, and accuracy (Patton, 2014).

We reviewed two distinct methods of observing teaching by preservice teachers: unguided and guided (Anderson, et al., 2005). In conducting unguided observations, preservice teachers are given only a general area of foci. According to Bell, Barrett, & Allison (1985), unguided observation requires observers to organize their thoughts to individually-devised frameworks rather than a given - and possibly limiting - structure. Preservice teachers who engage in unguided observations view the classroom more generally and through multiple lenses, acquiring a greater understanding of the complexities and realities of teaching (Anderson, et al., 2005). To distinguish the difference between the two approaches, guided observations allow preservice teachers to identify and focus on a single aspect of teaching or learning. Still, in viewing classrooms through a single lens, preservice teachers may not see the larger context (Anderson, et al., 2005). Therefore, we developed an approach of blending the two observational methods, allowing the preservice teachers to understand the complexities of the whole classroom as they relate to specific aspects of teaching and learning.

Methodology

The focus of this longitudinal study was on preservice teachers' observations during each spring of field experiences that occurred in early childhood and middle childhood, semester-long English Language Arts methods courses at a Midwestern Jesuit, Catholic university over four years. The preservice teachers were required to complete field hours as part of their English Language Arts block. The courses were taken either one or two semesters prior to student teaching. Over the four years, data were collected from a total of 85 preservice teachers during their English language arts methods courses. Preservice teachers were placed in a variety of K-12 settings such as parochial elementary schools, public, suburban schools, and various urban, public schools. Early childhood preservice teachers observed in kindergarten through third-grade classrooms. Middle childhood preservice teachers were placed in fourth through eighth-grade classrooms.

The process for collecting data during the semester-long English language arts course has been systematic. After the first year of the study, in order to scaffold the preservice teachers to utilize the required observational tools, we provided in-depth targeted instruction regarding how to take detailed field notes, supplied examples of formats for taking field notes, viewed video clips of classrooms for practice, and discussed the differences between observations and interpretations. Next, preservice teachers visited a public space and practiced taking field notes. These notes were brought back to class, and students reflected on the challenges of observing.

Once the preservice teachers entered the field, they were required to engage in a two-step blended observational approach (Bender & Young, 2010). First, during weekly field experiences, preservice teachers took observational field notes for the duration of one-hour of unguided observations in K-12 English Language Arts instruction. Using the field notes as a starting point, preservice teachers then chose one specific event to analyze on a guided observational tool called a Theory-to-Practice tool (Appendix A). This tool directed preservice teachers to choose their own experiences interacting and teaching, observations of students interacting with each other, or teaching episodes facilitated by the classroom teacher. Moreover, the tool required preservice teachers to engage in reflection by providing a narrative description, making a connection to course texts and theories, offering recommendations, explaining why they chose their topic of focus, and stating how what they observed would specifically impact their future teaching.

Due to research findings, the tool evolved over the first three years, as did our research purpose. In that way, we continued to construct our understanding of how the preservice teachers understood observation as well as what role it played in our teacher preparation program field experiences. For that reason, methods of data analysis also differed between the years. Following is an explanation of how the data were collected and analyzed.

Year One

Data from the observation notes and Theory-to-Practice tools were analyzed using analytic induction, a process in which initial coding categories were identified from patterns within the data sources (Bogdan & Biklen, 2011). Founded in grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), we allowed themes to emerge from the data. Engaging in qualitative grounded theory coding, we created the codes as the data were studied (Charmaz, 2004). First, the theory-to-to practice tools underwent microanalysis in order to generate initial categories, followed by axial coding where categories were related to their subcategories (Strauss & Corbin, 2014). Data were coded into two themes: *literacy events* and *classroom organization*. Within these themes, the following categories emerged: writing, reading process, word study, classroom routines, and classroom behaviors.

Years Two-Three

In year two, we initially analyzed the data using the codes from year one, however, due to a research interest in English Language Arts, we chose to deductively analyze the tools based on the six language arts: reading, writing, speaking,

listening, viewing, and visually representing. We wanted to know how the preservice teachers were actively constructing their learning about the six language arts. Consequently, the Theory-to-Practice tools were coded for the six language arts. However, this became problematic when narrative descriptions were too broad, multiple language arts overlapped, or preservice teachers lost focus on the theory-to-practice tool.

Some of the descriptive events included more than one of the six language arts, and were coded thus. However, when multiple language arts were identified, but a single language art was the focus throughout the tool, it was coded as that language art because our goal was to determine what was drawing their attention. For example, a preservice teacher may have written a narrative that included discussion in the lesson prior to the reading assignment, but if the preservice teacher focused on the reading assignment itself or students' reading throughout the tool, then the language art was coded simply as reading. Although this caused much questioning and negotiating for us while coding, we coded the narrative description notes in this way to be consistent in identifying the particular language art discussed by the preservice teachers throughout the Theory-to-Practice tool. It became quickly evident that reading and writing were privileged over listening, speaking, viewing and visually representing.

Year Four

When constructing case studies in the field of language and literacy, a case is defined as "a small, naturalistic social unit" (Dyson & Genishi, 2005, p. 2). In order to better understand our preservice teachers' understanding of observation and their process in constructing that understanding, we chose a qualitative approach to case studies. "The aim of such studies is . . . to see what some phenomenon means as it is socially enacted within a particular case" (Dyson & Genishi, 2005, p. 10). Consequently, four preservice teachers volunteered to be research participants, two early childhood and two middle childhood preservice teachers.

There was a need to collect multiple sources of data in qualitative research to demonstrate that different data sources yield essentially the same result (Patton, 2014). Therefore, three kinds of qualitative data sources were collected in this research: preservice teachers' four Theory-to-Practice tools, three in-depth, open-ended interviews, and a final survey. The interviews were a new data source created for the case studies specifically (See Appendix B for interview schedule).

The interviews exemplified naturalistic inquiry as part of qualitative data that emphasized personal experience and engagement. Participants took part in a series of three open-ended, semi-structured interviews (Holstein and Gubrium,

1995). The interviews lasted approximately ten minutes each. The early childhood interviews were completed either in person or via email. The middle childhood interviews were completed in person in the researcher's office and were transcribed after the data collection occurred.

The three data sources were triangulated for each case, and we engaged in open coding of the data sources, using analytic induction (Bogdan & Biklen, 2011). Next, the researchers came together to identify the categories, using cross-case comparison. When generating categories, we made comparisons between data, contexts, and concepts (Charmaz, 2004).

Case studies can make unique contributions to professional knowledge (Dyson & Genishi, 2005). In the fourth year, we wanted to examine the development of the preservice teachers' understanding of observation and its role in the K-12 classroom. Constructivism holds that learning takes place through internal mechanisms that are often unobservable to the external viewer" (Tracey & Morrow, 2017, p. 56). In that case, learning can occur without any noticeable indicators. Consequently, we chose to narrow our focus to four cases. Consistently, the preservice teachers noted that the two-step blended approach to observations improved their understanding of the complexities of teaching and their need to focus on student learning.

Findings

Since our research focus evolved during the four-year study, so did our findings. Preservice teachers' engagement in the process had established specific patterns and variations in preservice teachers' field observation notes and Theory-to-Practice tools. Consequently, this section will be subdivided by the years of our study in order to not only show our evolution, but to also demonstrate how it has influenced our goal to create a systematic approach to observation. Although our focus was originally limited to our methods students, we recognized the need to hone observational skills throughout the development of our preservice teachers in our teacher preparation program.

Year One: Emerging Themes

The themes that emerged through our data analysis included literacy and classroom events. By literacy events we meant classroom practices and interactions that centered on written and/or oral expression. Classroom events were defined as classroom rituals and routines as well as classroom behaviors, including management. Table 1 identifies the themes and their specific subcategories.

TABLE 1
Literacy and Classroom Events

Writing	Reading Process	Word Study	Classroom Routines	Classroom Behaviors
Process Genre	Fluency Comprehension	Language Use Phonics Spelling Vocabulary	Morning Schedules Field trip preparation Daily rituals such as transitions and centers	Classroom Management Behavior Expectations in Special Situations

We found preservice teachers focused more on literacy events than classroom routines and behaviors although middle childhood preservice teachers were more concerned with classroom management. Consequently, due to our interest in the six language arts, we specifically addressed the literacy events when reporting the data on observation (Bender & Young, 2010; Young & Bender, 2011).

Years Two-Three: The Language Arts

As literacy researchers, we noticed that preservice teachers tended to focus on two of the six language arts - writing and reading, rather than listening, speaking, viewing, and visually representing (Tompkins, 2016). Consequently, in the third year of teaching and using the blended process of observation, we added the six language arts to the Theory-to-Practice tool, asking preservice teachers to identify an area(s) of focus for their observation. Not only had we discovered we needed to scaffold preservice teachers in learning about teaching and observation, but we also recognized the need to scaffold them with regard to identifying and implementing all of the language arts.

Year Four: Case Studies

In the fourth year of the study, we interviewed preservice teachers to gain a more in-depth understanding of the process of learning about observation and how it impacted their learning about teaching. Consistently, the preservice teachers noted that the two-step blended approach to observation improved their understanding of differentiating instruction and the importance of focusing on student learning. Moreover, preservice teachers stated that this approach illuminated the significance of establishing relationships and classroom routines that promote student engagement and effective learning. Interestingly, the one graduate-level preservice teacher placed more emphasis on using observation to learn about her teacher’s pedagogy rather than focusing on student learning.

Preservice teachers noted how observations improved their recognition of differentiated instruction and the impact this knowledge has on student learning. For example, Maddy, an early childhood education preservice teacher, indicated that observation was crucial for planning and implementing instruction that engaged students. She also noted that using the two-step process showed her how observation can be used to plan instruction that meets the needs of all students.

Isabel, a middle childhood preservice teacher, was more focused on the science of teaching. She paid close attention to the action and words of her cooperating teacher, viewing her as a model to emulate. She believed that the purpose of being a keen observer was to grow professionally by observing other in-service teachers. She recognized that reflecting on those observations was important for student learning because that would influence her future practice.

All four participants grew in their understanding of the importance of observation in learning about teaching. Specifically, when describing the importance of observation in the classroom, their language shifted, ranging from “really” important to “vital” and “crucial.” In fact, Rob said that observation is “the most important thing for improving instruction and student learning and behavior.” Their understanding of observation evolved as well. For example, preservice teachers discussed observation being necessary for differentiating instruction, forming relationships with students, documenting student behaviors, increasing student engagement, and viewing the classroom through multiple lenses.

Discussion

Preservice teachers are placed in contemporary classrooms to learn about teaching. However, many preservice teachers spend time in the classroom unsure of what is important and how this experience could or should influence their future instruction. In order to improve the time preservice teachers spent observing cooperating teachers and K-12 students in authentic classrooms, we developed the blended process of observation. Based on current research, we combined unguided, ethnographic-type field notes with a guided Theory-to-Practice tool (Bender & Young, 2010; Young & Bender, 2011). Providing a blended process with the tool was important in scaffolding preservice teachers to engage in effective observations. We believed the process would alleviate their confusion and make their observations more meaningful. Moreover, we realized that the process of observing is adaptive in nature and required preservice teachers to reflect and reorganize their thinking based on the context of the classroom (Twomey Fosnot & Perry, 2005).

However, even after teaching the blended process, many of the preservice teachers’ comments indicated that they were still not equipped to engage in effective observation. As experienced educators, both in K-12 and higher education,

we know that the classroom is a minefield of learning opportunities and literacy events, so we had to do more. “Constructivism assumes that knowledge has multiple meanings, process and product are emphasized, and problem-solving is the focus” (Szabo, Scott, & Yellin, 2002). We decided that we needed to practice and model better observational strategies.

We have also adjusted the process to meet the needs of preservice teachers at all levels in our education program. The Theory-to-Practice tool has been adapted for preservice teachers in our Introduction to Education course where students go into the field for the first time to observe. While they still engage in open-ended field notes, the tool was modified to only two columns where they are expected to make connections between what they observe and a theory discussed during the course. Our current purpose is to intentionally scaffold preservice teachers in the necessary skills and strategies throughout the process of learning about observation.

We have used the blended process to expand the preservice teachers’ understanding of various pedagogical practices such as differentiated instruction, assessment, and classroom management. We continue to seek ways to implement the blended process within the teacher development continuum. For example, we plan to re-design the Theory-to-Practice tool for preservice teachers in their student teaching field experience, knowing the tool will be simplified, time-efficient, and more practice-oriented.

Conclusion

As mentioned earlier, observation is an integral skill for all educators. It is an essential way that preservice teachers learn how to teach, how students learn, and whether or not learning is occurring in classrooms. “Learning is not the result of development; learning *is* development. It requires invention and self-organization on the part of the learner” (Twomey Fosnot & Perry, 2005, p. 29). Successful in-service teachers use observation to inform their planning, instruction, and assessment. Consequently, it is imperative that preservice teachers be scaffolded in the development of observational skills and strategies so that they can utilize it in their future K-12 classroom. We believe that teacher preparation programs must be intentional and strategic with regard to how they scaffold preservice teachers throughout their entire program. This systematic approach must meet the developmental needs of the preservice teachers, evolving with their understandings of teaching and learning.

Like Dewey (1916), we believe that the central role of the learner is as a constructor of her/his own knowledge and that this can best be accomplished

through problem-based learning and social collaboration within a constructivist location of learning. Engaging in observation can improve instructional practice. Over the course of four years, we have scaffolded preservice teachers in the art of observing, offered instruction and practice regarding how to take field notes, offered examples of various forms of field-note taking, and provided feedback to support this process. Moreover, preservice teachers have been guided in how to complete the Theory-to-Practice tool. By scaffolding preservice teachers in this blended process of observation, we have increased our understanding of meeting preservice teachers' needs by engaging in a cycle of continuous learning and professional growth. This not only helped our preservice teachers learn about teaching, but it also had implications for our teacher preparation program overall.

Dewey (1916) also emphasized the role of the physical environment, which for our preservice teachers is ultimately the K-12 classroom. Due to its flexibility and viability, we assert that this blended process has much to offer K-12 education by not only helping to educate preservice teachers, but by also supporting those who support practicing teachers such as mentors, literacy coaches, principals, and curriculum leaders. This process can ultimately help assist teachers to impact their planning, instruction, and assessment. The blended process can provide the aforementioned stakeholders a framework for gaining critical insights regarding how preservice teachers and teachers construct their knowledge of teaching and learning in order to positively impact K-12 classrooms.

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APPENDIX A

Theory-to-Practice Tool

The theory-to-practice log entry will serve as a tool for you to record and reflect on your observations. Your entries may pertain to (1) your own experiences interacting and teaching, (2) observations of students interacting with each other or (3) teaching episodes facilitated by the classroom teacher. Be sure to include an APA style works cited.

Date _____ Name _____ Role _____

Modes of Language: Reading ___ Writing ___ Listening ___

Speaking ___ Viewing ___ Visually Representing ___ Other ___

Narrative Description:
Reflection/Interpretation:
Connection to Theory:
Recommendation(s):
How will this observation impact your teaching?
Why did you select this area of focus?

APPENDIX B

Interview Schedule

1. What is your understanding of observation?
2. How important is observation?
3. How did your observations change?
4. What skills are necessary to be an effective observer?
5. How could observations improve student learning?
6. What do you still want to work on with regard to observation?
7. How will observations impact your teaching?

PRESERVICE TEACHERS' SENSE OF EFFICACY FOR LITERACY INSTRUCTION: EXAMINATION OF AN UNDERGRADUATE DELIVERY SYSTEM

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Abstract

Preparing and retaining quality teachers is essential for achieving excellence in education. This paper attempts to determine how an undergraduate reading delivery system affected pre-service teachers sense of self-efficacy for literacy instruction. This article uses a cross-longitudinal study to look at 100 undergraduate students enrolled in an EC-6 Generalist with a Reading emphasis at a southwestern university. These students were pulled from three different points within the teacher preparation program. This paper uses the Teacher Sense of Efficacy for Literacy Instruction (TSELI) as administered to all students as well as a follow up focus group and focused on factors affecting preservice teachers' sense of efficacy for literacy instruction. Results from the survey were used to create questions and discussion for the focus group. This article demonstrates that pre-service teachers must be prepared in multiple different areas to meet all the educational expectations in their first year of professional teaching. This article also finds that teacher candidate self-efficacy fluctuates as they move through the different stages of an undergraduate reading teacher preparation program.

Introduction

Preparing and retaining quality teachers is essential for achieving excellence in education (Darling-Hammond, 1999). In order for teacher preparation to be successful, students must be aware of the challenges they will encounter when becoming a teacher. A stellar educator knows how to overcome the setbacks he or she will undoubtedly meet throughout a career in teaching. Novice educators, however, may experience different obstacles during their first year working in their profession (Johnson & Birkeland, 2002). Therefore, it is imperative for new teachers to be better prepared in order to effectively adjust to their real-world environments. One way of preparing novice teachers to deal with those obstacles is to develop their sense of efficacy. Self-efficacy can be defined as teachers' beliefs about their abilities to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning (Armor et al., 1976). Efficacious teachers will be less likely to be disheartened when facing unforeseen challenges. They will be capable of persevering through obstacles that occur in the many facets of their field (Dowson & McInerney, 2003).

Over 40 years ago, teachers' sense of efficacy was identified as one of the few educator characteristics related to student achievement (Armor et al., 1976). Since then, researchers (Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2000; Pajares, 1994; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007) have been interested in the origins, measures, and factors involved in the formation of efficacy. Besides the relationship to student achievement, teacher efficacy has been associated with commitment to teaching, persistence in the teaching field, and reduced burnout. Bandura's theory of self-efficacy (1977; 1986; 1997; 2001) suggests that efficacy may be most malleable early in learning, making educator preparation programs even more critical to the long-term development of teachers' sense of efficacy.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory which accords a central role to cognitive, vicarious, self-regulatory, and self-reflective processes (Bandura, 2001). The capability to reflect upon oneself and the adequacy of one's thoughts and actions is another distinctively human attribute featured in Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 2001). Early research in self-efficacy measures were based in Rotter's (1966) work, but as Bandura's theory of self-efficacy gained influence and acceptance in academia, the majority of the subsequent work in the field uses his measures (Woolfolk & Shaugnessy, 2004). Self-efficacy was first defined in Bandura's 1977 article *Self-Efficacy: Toward a Unifying Theory of Behavioral Change*, constructed through four different interwoven areas: mastery

experiences; verbal/social persuasion; vicarious experiences, and interpretation of physiological/affective states. Self-efficacy helps to determine the choices people make; the effort they put forth; persistence and perseverance in the face of difficulties; and the degree of anxiety or serenity they experience as they engage in the tasks that make up their day to day lives (Bandura, 1986; Usher & Pajares, 2008).

Pajares (1994) focused on pre-service teachers' sense of self-efficacy as they moved through an educator preparation program. The four influences of efficacy have been viewed differently, typically with mastery experiences as the most influential, however the other three were not given a specific ranking (Bandura, 1977). Pajares (1994) found that verbal persuasions and vicarious experiences were critical sources of women's self-efficacy beliefs. This stands in contrast to Bandura's placement of importance on mastery experiences. It does not however discount the importance of actual experiences, only that in individuals the work of the four areas is more interwoven than originally thought.

Efficacy expectations vary on several dimensions and have important implications for the performance of an individual (Bandura, 1977). For example, efficacious beliefs can differ in the magnitude of the effect they have on the person. They can also differ in generality. That is, the experiences and expectations can be more general to any experience, or are only related to specific areas. Experiences that build efficacy can also vary in strength, depending on how quickly the self-efficacious beliefs of an individual may be diminished by encountering obstacles or struggles. As long as there is a gradual sense of success in the face of setbacks, there will still be a boost in self-efficacy (Usher & Pajares, 2008).

Methods

This cross-sectional study looked at undergraduate students enrolled in three different points or courses of an undergraduate reading program. This paper specifically focused on factors affecting preservice teachers' sense of efficacy for literacy instruction. The research question guiding this study was: how does an undergraduate reading delivery system affect pre-service teachers' sense of efficacy for literacy instruction.

Participants

The participants were 100 undergraduate students enrolled in an EC-6 Generalist with a Reading Emphasis program at a southwestern university. Students enrolled in the EC-6 Generalist take a total of six reading courses as part of their degree requirements. For the purposes of this study, three courses were selected: READ 1, the initial reading course taken by students; READ 2, the midpoint reading

course; and, READ 3, the final reading course taken prior to student teaching. READ 1 is the course where students are introduced to the main components of reading theory and practice. READ 2 is the course where undergraduate students diagnose, asses, and correct reading problems in a one-on-one setting with an elementary student. READ 3 is the culminating course for those students working towards a teaching certification.

Procedures

First, the Teacher Sense of Efficacy for Literacy Instruction (TSELI) (Tschannen Moran & Johnson, 2011) was administered to all participants. Results from the survey were used as the basis for questions with the focus groups (see Appendix A for TSELI and Appendix B for questions). The questions centered around four variables: providing targeted feedback; monitoring students use of reading strategies; modeling effective writing strategies; and adjusting reading materials to the proper level for individual students. The groups were course specific for a total of three focus groups. The focus group discussions were video recorded to ensure accuracy. Transcriptions of each recording were made and coded according to Bandura’s (1977) four influences of efficacy: mastery experience; social/verbal; emotive/physiological; and vicarious (see Table 1). In order to establish interrater

TABLE 1
Influences of Efficacy

Domain	Example of Verbiage
Mastery Experience – Self-efficacy is gained through actual experience	“You learn so much more by doing,” “real classroom experience.”
Social/Verbal – Self-efficacy is gained through positive reinforcement from peers and/or mentors	“And I have a male . . . teacher and we talk about my classes all the time,” “I feel like we could learn a lot from her,”
Emotive/Physiological – Self-efficacy is gained (or lost) through emotional state and/or through physical feelings	“feel prepared to be a teacher in the classroom.” “I feel good about it.”
Vicarious – Self-efficacy is gained through watching or hearing about someone else’s practice.	“I think I am able respond on my feet with students, just because I have been prepared to do so.”

reliability among the four researchers, initial descriptive coding was completed as a group using an apriori list until there was 100% agreement of the coding. The initial group coding allowed for conversations to determine phenomena for coding, finalize concept definitions, and make differentiations more precise.

Findings

The findings are presented first according to the course (Read 1, Read 2, or Read 3) and then with the corresponding domains (mastery experience, social/verbal, emotive/physiological, and vicarious). Overall, teachers reported levels of self-efficacy, but the contributing domains of self-efficacy evolved from participants in the first, second, and third courses in the undergraduate reading program. The emotive/physiological domain was highly related to self-efficacy in all three courses, while the mastery domain increased over each course and the vicarious-professor domain decreased over each course.

READ 1

A high level of self-efficacy was noted for participants enrolled in their first reading class, READ. During the READ 1 focus group discussion, participants used a substantial number of phrases which were coded "vicarious" based upon the professor (see Table 2). Vicarious is where participants' self-efficacy is influenced through watching or hearing about someone else's practice (Bandura, 1997). Throughout the READ 1 focus group, participants discussed a great deal about what they saw and heard their professors do within their own classroom environments. Some examples of comments coded as vicarious include: "She would always give her own experiences and examples," and "Like she'd give us the lesson and say 'whenever I used to teach this, I did this for my students.'" Another example of vicarious influencing self-efficacy was noted when participants said: "You know even throughout the lessons she gives us websites and she tells us that we can print this out and save it."

The second most frequently occurring influence of self-efficacy noted during the READ 1 Focus Group discussion was emotive/physiological. In this case, emotive/physiological meant self-efficacy gained through an emotional state and/or physical feelings (Bandura, 1997). Participants in the focus groups used the word "feel" a large number of times when they spoke. It was one of the most prevalent verbs used in comparison to others in this cohort. Some examples of comments coded as emotive/physiological included, "I feel like we could learn a lot from her." Another participant commented, "we all agreed that we'd all be really nervous at first because it is new to us." One participant said, "We feel pretty good actually, especially since this is the first and only class we have taken

so far.” The comment, “I feel like this course would be the most helpful,” was interspersed throughout the discussion.

READ 2

Beginning educators often have few positive mastery experiences when they encounter challenges working with their students. This was true for participants in the READ 2, the midpoint reading course. For many participants this was the first course which required interaction with children in an educational setting.

Findings from the READ 2 focus group participants found that mastery experience was the largest influence of self-efficacy. During the focus group discussion, participant language reflecting mastery experience was coded 20 times, versus four times in READ 1 focus group (see Table 2). For instance, one READ 2 participant remarked, “you know in my brain I am thinking about so and so, you know good readers often do this when they read. That’s what I usually do.” Another participant said, “The issue that I had with her is that she would read so fast that her comprehension was kind of skewed, so that when we would take turns reading, I noticed that when I would read, she would try to match like my pace and expression when it was her time to read.” Still another participant remarked, “I felt she was understanding more what she was reading, and she was more responsive to the question that I asked after we had finished reading the

TABLE 2
Occurrences Within All Transcripts

Courses	Emotive Physiological	Mastery	Social Verbal	Vicarious Online	Vicarious Other	Vicarious Peer	Vicarious Professor	Total
READ 1	8	4	4	0	3	0	16	35
READ 2	9	20	2	5	1	0	12	49
READ 3	8	17	6	2	2	0	8	43
Totals	25	41	12	6	6	0	36	

book.” A final example of a participants remark reflecting mastery experience was, “After I found out he doesn’t do well reading and writing, he does better with hands on activities and games, that is what I used mostly.”

The second most frequently occurring influence of self-efficacy verbalized by the participants in their interviews was vicarious experiences shared by their professors. Verbs and nouns were used indicating self-efficacy emanating from information and experiences given by their professor.

While READ 1 Focus Group participants indicated vicarious experiences via professors 16 times, READ 2 Focus Group mentioned these 12 times (see Table 2). READ 2 Focus Group participants seemed increasingly focused on their one-on-one experiences with their students, as they applied theory to practice. One participant remarked, “I think for me what I used a lot was what I learned from my guided reading courses, and because of that I knew what were my student’s independent level was, and their instructional level was.” Another participant said, “We said that [our professor] went over, before we would do the assessments she would go over it with us and show us what is was supposed to look like, how it was supposed to sound, and what was supposed to come out of it”

READ 3

Self-efficacy increased for the READ 3 focus group when compared to READ 1 and 2. Participants in this course are provided a supervised experience in field-based activities, in addition to on-campus activities. As the participants applied the information learned and obstacles overcome, their self-efficacy improved and they became less reliant upon any one area (see Table 2) (Bandura, 1977; Usher & Pajares, 2008).

Participants in the READ 3 focus group used phrases like “getting your feet wet”, “hands-on”, and “real classroom experience” to refer to their mastery experiences. One participant said, “I just expanded on it and talked more about it and then had a discussion focusing on what was in the book.” Another participant remarked, “I was preparing beyond what I would teach just in case they had already exceeded what you thought they knew or in case they didn’t understand anything at all.” One participant referred to a discussion they had with their student, “Or if it is a sight word I might say have you seen this word before?” A final example of mastery experience in the READ 3 focus group discussion was, “But they had already been . . . they already understood it, they already had references to butterflies outside, in the school garden, so they were already prepared, and I wasn’t prepared enough.”

Vicarious experiences via professors was coded eight times for the READ 3 focus group participants (See Table 2). READ 3 Focus Group participants spoke

of hands-on experiences which in turn developed a stronger sense of efficacy. However, as they approached the end of the course, participants felt a stronger connection with their professors. One participant remarked, “I was taught here at the university how to introduce the word wall and how to break apart words,” and another participant said “especially reading because I think we have some amazing professors, and I am not just saying that because you are a professor.”

Emotive/physiological experiences were also coded eight times for the READ 3 focus group participants (See Table 2). For example, one participant mentioned, “I think you first have to be confident in what you’re about to do but um after that I think it is just knowing how to teach reading.” The participants agreed that a reading teacher should always be prepared by saying, “I can’t just walk into a classroom not knowing anything” and “because a good teacher is prepared for all levels.” At the end of the discussion, the READ 3 focus group participants felt more confident about their teaching skills and some of them even mentioned “I think I can teach reading.”

Discussion

This study found that the participants’ sense of efficacy for literacy instruction was externally influenced. In other words, vicarious experiences were coded more often than mastery experiences (See Table 2). The participants felt that they had the ability to do well in the field of education when provided vicarious experiences from their professors. These participants felt that they were the recipients of knowledge and understanding from their professors, rather than more active participants in their education. Many of the participants felt their professors supplied them with information and resources, in a friendly, non-threatening environment which in turn increased their level of self-efficacy for literacy instruction.

Bandura (1977) and Usher and Pajares (2008), found that emotive/physiological triggers have a strong impact on the self-efficacious belief of students, especially when they are early in their learning of the subject. Once students have a more established presence in the subject area, emotive/physiological triggers begin to have less effect if their experiences have been positive and more effect if their experiences have been negative. Their findings were affirmed by the findings of this study.

Overall, the READ 1 students who were at the start of their reading education program had a high level of self-efficacy. However, it is noteworthy to mention that their confident feelings were based upon their beliefs regarding professor’s ability to effectively teach them. This concept aligns with what is found in the work done in self-efficacy: that is, the self-efficacy of students is impacted by

the self-efficacy beliefs of their teachers, or in this case of their professors (Pajares, 1994; Pajares & Miller 1997; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy & Hoy, 1998).

Students at the beginning of their reading education program had an external locus of control, and gave vicarious and emotive/physiological coded phrases which were largely based upon their professors, is worth considering when designing the early reading courses in such a program. While it may be natural for students new to a setting to have such an external locus of control, it may be beneficial to design lessons or experiences which encourage a more internal locus of control. Students who feel they are able to have a large effect on their ability to be successful are more likely to be motivated to learn.

Additionally, it is important to create an environment that positively influences the emotive/physiological area of self-efficacy so that when setbacks are encountered later on students are better able to move past them in the self-identification as educators (Usher & Pajares, 2008). While Bandura (1977) did indicate that mastery experience was the most influential factor in a person's self-efficacy, he did not rank the other three and their importance is usually dependent upon the other external factors taking place (Woolfolk & Shaugnessy, 2004).

The mastery experience references indicated in the interviews that students were thinking about the link between the information they previously learned and its application in the tutoring sessions with their students. While the thinking appeared present, these students did not seem sure how their growing knowledge and understanding of reading would play out in a real-world setting. Upon entering situations during which they had to "think on their feet" with young students encountering difficulties with reading, there seemed to be somewhat of a disconnect felt upon the part of the READ 2 students, regarding the relationship between the theory they learned in READ 1 and actual practice. When analyzing students' interviews, it became apparent that much of their time was spent reflecting upon theory and how to apply it. This is a necessary, excellent practice, but it does appear to be connected to a drop in overall self-efficacy.

In the analysis of what actually influenced self-efficacy levels of students in READ 3, mastery experience was also the largest factor concerning self-efficacy levels. This time, self-efficacy was gained through actual experience. One of the student's responses mentioned, "It helped me feel more prepared because I had never done something like that before. It is different when you are just reading about it than when you actually do it. It gives you something to look back on. If you have to do this in the future, you are like ok I have done this already, so I know the rules I have to do, and I know that some students may not be at a certain level, and some students might exceed a certain level. It helps you be prepared for any kind of circumstance." This is an example of a student using previous experiences to improve her teaching, which plays into Bandura's (1977)

statement that mastery experience is the most important aspect in determining a person's self-efficacy.

Furthermore, vicarious and physiological students played major roles in READ 3 students' self-efficacy based on their responses during the focus groups. One of the students stated, "I am actually in field base, so I have seen my CTs [Classroom Teachers] do it with guided reading". Another student also added, "my professor was really positive. She would help me with my lesson plans. She would say of this is a really good activity you should try this." Students were getting more hands-on experiences in their field-basing course, and with the former experienced developed in READ 2, students were feeling confident with their pre-service teaching experience.

Conclusion

After reviewing the students' responses from READ 1 and 2 during the focus groups, it was assumed that their self-efficacy was going to decrease. Nevertheless, mastery experiences showed that students felt more confident after they have some experiences applying the skills they have been taught working with students in a real classroom. In conclusion, the undergraduate delivery system analyzed in this study was designed to prepare pre-service teachers with theoretical knowledge and practical skills so that they were able to deal with the numerous obstacles imposed by the reality of the teaching profession. This study demonstrated that pre-service teachers must be prepared academically, didactically, intellectually, psychologically, and emotionally to meet all the educational expectations in their first year of professional teaching.

In addition to mastery experiences, vicarious experiences and attention to physiological states were found to play major roles in READ 3 students' self-efficacy. One of the students stated, "I am actually in field base, so I have seen my CTs." The preservice teachers in this study moved from an external locus of control to an internal locus of control as they had the opportunity to apply the knowledge they gained via vicarious experiences as they worked one-on-one with students (Rotter, 1966). This suggest that a better understanding of Bandura's influences of self-efficacy may be one way educator preparation programs help better prepare future teachers to deal with the demands of literacy instruction.

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APPENDIX A

Teacher Beliefs - TSEL		This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create challenges for teachers. Your answers are confidential.												
<i>Directions:</i> Please indicate your opinion about each of the questions below by marking any one of the nine responses in the columns on the right side, ranging from (1) "None at all" to (9) "A Great Deal" as each represents a degree on the continuum. Please respond to each of the questions by considering the combination of your current ability, resources, and opportunity to do each of the following in your present position.		None at all	Very Little	Some Degree	Quite A Bit	A Great Deal								
1.	To what extent can you use a student's oral reading mistakes as an opportunity to teach effective reading strategies?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9				
2.	To what extent can you use a variety of informal and formal reading assessment strategies?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9				
3.	To what extent can you adjust reading strategies based on ongoing informal assessments of your students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9				
4.	To what extent can you provide specific, targeted feedback to students' during oral reading?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9				
5.	How much can you do to meet the needs of struggling readers?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9				
6.	To what extent can you adjust writing strategies based on ongoing informal assessments of your students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9				
7.	To what extent can you provide your students with opportunities to apply their prior knowledge to reading tasks?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9				
8.	To what extent can you help your students monitor their own use of reading strategies?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9				
9.	To what extent can you get students to read fluently during oral reading?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9				
10.	To what extent can you model effective reading strategies?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9				
11.	To what extent can you implement effective reading strategies in your classroom?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9				
12.	To what extent can you help your students figure out unknown words when they are reading?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9				
13.	To what extent can you get children to talk with each other in class about books they are reading?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9				
14.	To what extent can you recommend a variety of quality children's literature to your students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9				
15.	To what extent can you model effective writing strategies?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9				
16.	To what extent can you integrate the components of language arts?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9				
17.	To what extent can you use flexible grouping to meet individual student needs for reading instruction?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9				
18.	To what extent can you implement word study strategies to teach spelling?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9				
19.	To what extent can you provide children with writing opportunities in response to reading?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9				
20.	To what extent can you use students' writing to teach grammar and spelling strategies?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9				
21.	How much can you motivate students who show low interest in reading?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9				
22.	How much can you do to adjust your reading materials to the proper level for individual students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9				

APPENDIX B

Focus Group Questions:

- Targeted feedback – To what extent can you provide specific, targeted feedback to students during oral reading?
- Students monitor – To what extent can you help your students monitor their own use of reading strategies?
- Writing strategies – To what extent can you model effective writing strategies?
- Adjust – How much can you do to adjust your reading materials to the proper level for individual students?

COHORT PARTICIPATION: IMPACT ON PERSONAL LEARNING NETWORKS

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Abstract

Professional development is complex, especially for educators in rural settings. The purpose of the study was to examine personal learning networks (PLNs) of PK-12 educators enrolled in graduate school coursework. Research has shown PLNs are an avenue for individuals to connect to others, especially for educators in rural communities. Additionally, there is a need for district and higher education partnerships with quality professional learning opportunities. However, there are often not enough teachers in districts to economically warrant classes being held in one district, so cohorts are formed from multiple districts within geographical regions. This study examined the following research questions (a) what is the perceived impact of personal learning networks for educators in rural districts; and (b) does participating in a personal learning network impact educators' practice? The study found PLN participation impacted for educators learning, communication, and classroom pedagogy, especially those from rural districts.

According to Catapano (2015), "In the education world, PLN stands for Personal Learning Network. What it means is that an individual has developed their own

personalized “network” of fellow educators and resources designed to make them a better teacher. This network exists both in their real-life relationships and online through their social media connections” (p. 27). Within this collective intellect, answers to many questions can be found, teachers find new approaches to instruction, alternate strategies, and a great pool of resources to draw upon. A personal learning network offers access to the wisdom of a global collection of teachers with insights to what works and does not work inside the classroom, which is ultimately extremely valuable in the education community.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

The exploration and explanation of human learning is an ongoing endeavor across disciplines. Vygotsy’s (1978) study of children’s social interaction and cognition led to the Social Development Theory (SDT). The concepts of SDT have been applied more broadly, including Bandura’s Social Learning Theory (1977) which evolved to become known as Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) (1986). Through SCT, Bandura (1986) provided a model of human learning as triadic and reciprocal relationship involving a person, their environment, and behavior. This SCT has been an accepted theory for human learning in the educational field. Both SDT and SCT are connected to the work of Lave and Wenger (1991) in studies of apprenticeships where learners were involved in activity specific tasks termed “legitimate peripheral participation” (p. 29). From these observations the authors (Lave & Wenger, 1991) defined “communities of practice” (p. 29). Wenger (1998) went on to state, “communities of practice are everywhere” (p. 6). Often, participation in these communities is not formally recognized and occur at work, school, family, in face-to-face and virtual settings. Furthermore, Wenger (1998) goes on to explain that learning, as the result of interaction with others, becomes “a kind of community created over time by the sustained pursuit of a shared enterprise” (p. 45). It is this engagement that defines both formal and informal communities of practice (CoPs) in this study.

In regard to personal learning networks (PLNs) it is important to differentiate from a similar educational phrase know as a professional learning community (Hord, 1997) which has become commonly known as a PLC. The term professional learning community was first used in the business setting (Digenti, 1999; Tobin, 1998). The acronym PLN was later used by Warlick (2009) and has since been widely used across disciplines. The concept of PLNs, as well as CoPs, and the idea of situated learning create the underlying theoretical foundation of the study.

Rogers' (2003) diffusion of innovations theory suggests that educators will be unlikely to participate in a PLN unless the advantages of doing so have been clearly explained and first demonstrated to them (Rogers, 2003). Maloney (2015) looked at how technology and PLNs work together in order to facilitate learning and professional development of educators. The study found that social, cognitive, and teaching presence were three key components to any successful online learning experience. Furthermore, Maloney suggests "Personal learning networks offer participants an opportunity for participants to actively construct knowledge as they interact collaboratively with a diverse group of others around their shared area of interest, all with a view to improving their practice as educators" (2015, p. 295).

A study by Sciuto and Nehring (2017) focused primarily on the different struggles new educators face and how PLNs play a role in those struggles. Isolation was identified as a main struggle for new educators in which most research concludes that the culture of teaching, the nature of the profession, and even the structure of the school (Cookson, 2005) are in part to blame for the lack of opportunities teachers have to learn in collaboration with others. The research by Sciuto and Nehring (2017) found there to be a lack of support for the use of new online social technologies to foster growth through personal learning communities and professional development (Beach, 2012; Crawford, 2011; NCATE, 2010), which indicates missed opportunities to support struggling new teachers in the digital age (Sciuto, 2017). Isolation is typically divided into four distinct categories: (1) physical, (2) geographical (Cookson, 2005; Rogers & Babinski, 2002; Schlager & Fusco, 2003), (3) professional and (4) emotional (Buchanan, Prescott, Schuck, Aubusson, Burke, & Louviere, 2013; Dodor, Sira, & Hausafus, 2010; Hadar & Brody, 2010; Ingersoll, 2002; Lortie & Clement, 1975; Moor & Chae, 2007). This definition of isolation connects well with the current study looking specifically at PLNs involving rural school districts who are more isolated geographically in nature.

Another study by Van Harpen (2015), conducted research with secondary school principals of schools in rural areas, which found that the school leaders prefer to access support through face-to-face connections, but utilize online connections when limited by time and distance. Consequently, utilizing PLNs and face-to-face connections may be contrary to contemporary models of professional development, but may provide professional growth for school leaders in small districts and rural areas (Van Harpen, 2015). The research supports the need for PLNs in rural communities as a necessary factor for growing professionals. Without the development of PLNs in rural areas, the educators are severely limited in professional development that will enhance the work and outcome

that is seen in the classrooms. Van Harpen's (2015) study demonstrated that face-to-face connection is preferred and yet, in a technology driven society, combining media with PLNs has provided opportunities to educators in rural areas that once would not have been afforded the opportunity.

There have been a limited number of studies exploring the function and role of personal learning networks (PLNs) among various groups and organizations. Research on how educators can use PLNs to pursue their professional development goals is lacking along with the perceived benefits of a PLN to emerging educators. A gap exists in the literature concerning the critical dimensions of PLNs and how to use them for teacher professional development (Greenhow, 2009). The lack of research may prevent scholars, practitioners, and leaders from fully exploiting the potential of PLNs as a form of teacher professional development (Flanigan, 2011; Greenhow, 2009; Greenhow, Robelia, & Hughes, 2009).

In order to address these gaps, this study looked at relationships between PLNs and PK-12 teachers from rural districts, enrolled in graduate courses at one Midwestern university. Participants were taking courses in literacy, leadership, research, and curriculum and instruction. Participant's perspectives on PLNs were measured using a Qualtrics survey. Gender, age, and other demographic characteristics were not gathered in this study. The study involved 103 graduate-level university students who voluntarily participated in an online survey in order to explore the relationships between rural school districts and PLNs. The survey specifically examined cohorts formed by students taking graduate-level coursework in order to provide insight about how PLNs impact future educators, especially those from rural school districts. This study explored the following guiding questions: (a) What is the perceived impact of personal learning networks for teachers and educators from rural districts? (b) To what extent does participating in a personal learning network impact teachers' practice?

Method

The current study intentionally used a mixed methods design to gather data. Quantitative data were gathered using a Likert scale and qualitative open-ended questions were integrated in order to add depth and understanding. A mixed methods design was used to create a snap shot of participants' perspectives followed with more in depth rationale as to why an individual chose to rank each question accordingly. By allowing both means of data collection it provided a well-rounded picture into participant's viewpoints on the topic of PLNs. According to Creswell, "A researcher may want to expand the breadth, depth, and range of the research by using different methods and different ways

of inquiry, resulting in more comprehensive results that will expand the scope of study” (Creswell, 2013, p. 202). The mixed methods design encapsulated both research questions perfectly. The first question was: what is the perceived impact of personal learning networks for teachers and educators from rural districts? This question collected specific quantitative PLN data. The second question was: to what extent does participating in a personal learning network impacts teachers’ practice? This question targeted qualitative responses in order to add depth to the data. Another reason mixed methods was used is that “integration gives readers more confidence in the results and the conclusions they draw from the study” (O’Cathain, Murphy, & Nicholl, 2010). Furthermore mixed methods also helps researchers cultivate ideas for future research” (O’Cathain et al., 2010, p. 203). The use of mixed methods in the current study provided an advantage for looking at future research on PLNs. Using both quantitative and qualitative data provided for rich data collection about PLNs in this study.

Participants

The participants in this study were graduate students who were members of educational cohorts. In this study a cohort is defined as people who have come together from different grade levels, schools, and/or districts to a central location to take graduate classes across the State of Wisconsin at a midsize comprehensive Midwestern university. Only participants who completed at least two courses with the cohort were eligible to participate in the study. Approximately 354 surveys were sent and 103 graduate students voluntarily and anonymously participated in the study.

Data Collection

In this study, a link to a survey was sent via email to the graduate students enrolled in graduate coursework. Once students clicked the survey link, they were first prompted to read an informed consent document and electronically sign before they could answer the survey prompts. After signing the informed consent document, students responded to survey questions in one of two contexts (a) those who felt they were involved in a PLN, and (b) those who felt they were not involved in a PLN. This was a blind survey, meaning no identifying information was obtained from the subjects in this study.

While taking the survey, participants were unable to return to previous pages or respond to questions out of order, although they were given the option to skip questions or opt out at any time. Participants were also instructed to contact the researchers for assistance or debriefing if they felt any distress during

or after taking the survey. The entire process took an average of twenty minutes to complete. Incomplete data were deleted after one week of inactivity and those participants' information were not recorded or included in the sample results. At the end of the survey, participants were thanked for their participation and instructed to contact the researchers through email if they had any further questions.

Depending on the answers provided, and skip logic path, the online survey had approximately 20 questions that included Likert as well as open-ended questions. The Likert questions were used as forced response questions to serve as a qualitative measure, with simple descriptive intent. The open-ended questions focused on the students' PLN involvement, communication methods used, topics discussed within the PLN, and the impact of PLN participation on professional learning, teaching strategies, and student learning.

Analysis

Consistent with standards of acceptable research practice in the educational field, this study used qualitative methodological measures. A 5-point Likert scale was used for survey questions and analyzed using Qualtrics. The open-ended qualitative data were analyzed separately by each researcher. Key words and phrases from participant responses were coded and collated. The researchers visually reviewed and analyzed the data looking for themes, patterns, and discrepancies. All discrepancies were discussed between the researchers for consistency and reliability in analysis, interpretation, and categorization of the data.

Results

According to the findings, of the 103 participants who started the survey 70 participants (N = 70) answered all the questions. Of those 70, 78.67% said they felt they were part of a PLN and 21.33% felt they were not. For those who felt they belonged to a PLN, 10.2% stated they initially became connected to a PLN because of proximity and cost, 12.2 % reported other reasons not mentioned, 18.4% indicated it was because it was a requirement, 26.5% reported it was due to belonging and commonality, and 32.7% stated they joined for professional development. Results of the study show benefits to those associated with a PLN. The participants conveyed that the connections made as a result of a PLN allowed for self-improvement and a connection with others. Additionally, results show there was a desire for some who were looking for a connection.

Connection for Personal-Improvement

The overwhelming majority (93.87%) of participants stated they already felt connected to a PLN, and as a result of their cohort participants felt it has helped broaden their professional perspective, allowing for personal improvement in some way. Connecting to others via a new network allowed these educators to hear from others and gain a sense of belonging. These networks provided the venue for information to be shared. This finding is supported by qualitative statements such as “I have gained insight and ideas from professors and colleagues that I have implemented in my own teaching” along with “getting to know how things are done at different school districts opened up my thinking about how I could be doing things to better help my students.” Another high number of those same participants (87.76%) stated their involvement in a PLN has influenced their teaching style or strategies they have used in relation to literacy instruction, interventions, leadership, and communication. These findings are confirmed by qualitative statements such as “I have changed how I teach. I post learning targets, question students differently, and use much of what I have learned in my daily teaching” along with “I try and implement the new ideas and learning I gain from the interaction of the PLN in various settings such as intervention or during whole class instruction. It has led me to investigate various topics further to deepen my understanding. I am able to respond more effectively to students and provide stronger support to my colleagues.” These participants shared educational techniques, instructional ideas, and various resources. Educators in this study were able to develop as professionals as a result of their PLNs. Table 1 reports the perceived benefits of being part of a PLN.

TABLE 1
What Are Some of the Benefits of Being Part of a PLN

Response	Percentage of Participants
Hearing from others	38.78
Belonging & community	24.49
Networking	16.33
Learn new ideas & techniques	10.20
Outlet for resources	6.12
Other	4.08

Connection with Others

Participants in the study reported using the following means of communication, ranked by frequency of use: email, face-to-face, Facebook, texting, and Google in order to stay connected to their PLN (Table 2). This provides valuable information about the fact that while there are newer means of communication, email is the number one preferred method to communicate. Related to this is the fact that 57.14% of the participants still site face-to-face communication used, whether it is in the hallway, at a coffee shop, or during graduate course time. This provides strong evidence that face-to-face interactions are still an important venue for learning.

While staying connected is a crucial part of using a PLN it also shows insight as to why PLNs are so helpful for educators. Most of participants (85.71%) stated they had educated-related conversations with others in their courses who do not teach in their district. Responses in this area included “There are others outside of my district who can share ideas and get a different perspective” and “Learning together, learning about other district practices, and learning together. It is all about communication.” In general, these conversations included topic such as, in order of most popular, instruction, curriculum, professional questions, student behavior, and teaching.

Looking for a Connection

In this study, less than a quarter of participants (21.33%) felt they did not belong to a PLN. Digging deeper into this group that did not belong to a PLN, it was found that a remarkable 95.23% said they would like to be part of a PLN. An equivalent number (14.28%) of participants stated some benefits to belonging to a PLN included a sense of belonging, growth (personally and professionally), networking, resources, and creativity. Similarly, close to two-thirds (64.7%) of participants said they felt a PLN could help promote a more collaborative

TABLE 2
Reported Means of Communication

Response	Percentage of Participants Using
Email	81.63
Face-to-Face	57.14
Facebook	32.65
Texting	30.61
Google	28.57

environment between colleagues with 23.5% disagreeing and 11.8% unsure. When asked about what factors prevented participants from engaging in a PLN, family and time were the two largest factors.

Discussion

It was the purpose of this study to explore the impact of personal learning networks (PLNs) on PK-12 teachers and administrators, from rural districts, who chose to participate in graduate school coursework at the same mid-size university. These findings have revealed an understanding of PLNs among educators within rural cohorts, which is an area where little research has been conducted. Data collection and analysis found both research questions to be impactful. The first research question was (a) What is the perceived impact of personal learning networks for teachers and educators in rural districts? The results of this question were found to have a positive influence based on what participants stated during the qualitative aspect of the study of open ended comments. The open ended questions provided insight into the impact of being connected to a PLN for educators in rural districts. This supports previous research, which found “For educators, learning in community has become accepted practice. The concept of a professional learning community (PLC) began with the notion of collaborative work around shared views, focus, practice, and reflective conversations among educators within a school or district” (Newmann & Associates, 1996, p. 52). Additionally, this shows the importance of the current research by expanding benefits received by participants from being a part of a PLN to others outside of one school or district. Creating a PLN, involving practices and styles from many different districts, provides greater benefits to educators.

The second research question was (b) Does participating in a personal learning network impact teachers’ practice? Evidence from this research study was significant in that the findings showed that 87.76% of participants felt their involvement in a PLN influenced their teaching style or strategies they have used. This high percentage of participation shows that over three quarters of participants felt their teaching strategies have been affected just from being in a PLN.

Expanding on the concept of social learning Bandura (2001) asserted that, through mass media, learning could occur beyond a person’s immediate environment in what was termed the “symbolic environment” (Miller & Dollard, 1941). The work by Bandura ties well to the current study by looking at the importance of mixing personal, behavioral, and environmental factors and shows just how important mass media, or a PLN, can have on an individual’s learning.

Limitations

The overall findings of the study were both encouraging and positive, although the study had several limitations. One limitation was a small sample ($n = 70$) taken from only one Midwestern university. Furthermore, within this setting only one college within the larger university was included. Additionally, sample data was gathered at one specific moment in time, as opposed to a longer time period. The problems posed by using this convenience sample make it challenging to generalize the results to a wider population. Another limitation of the research was that participants completed the survey online, without supervision, and no attempt was made by researchers to follow-up, clarify, or enrich results. Since the surveys were taken online, at various locations, it was difficult to ensure that there were no interferences with the participants while they were taking the surveys. Finally, the response rate of the study was 70 due to a large number of participants who dropped out while taking the survey, or before they finished. This is known as experimental mortality (Rogers, 2003) resulting in a threat to the internal validity of the study. In order to address these limitations, future research incorporating more colleges within the university or even further gathering data from more than one university around the country is recommended. In future studies it will be important to consider how other groups could differ from the current study population when generalizing these results.

Implications

With the current limitations in mind, future implications from the study could be an additional study looking at the triangulation between administrators, instructional coaches, and students. Hord (1997) further defined a PLC to include “administrators and teachers working together toward shared vision, shared leadership, shared values, and improved personal practice to improve student learning” (Hord, 1997, p. 52). Data collection with this triangulation in mind is currently in place. Another future implication would be looking at longitudinal research from both the administrative perspective as well as from the student perspective. This follow up study would enhance the findings from the current research and provide more depth into the benefits of Personal Learning Networks.

There are many insightful implications, for educators from this study. The study shows that email still matters and is an extremely important avenue of communication used in the digital world where other options, such as texting and skype are available. This current study shows PLNs have a large impact on PK-12 schools and students who are our future educators. PLNs are a vital aid in helping future educators grow in their teaching styles and to gather perspective

from others. This is especially true in rural areas where teachers may not have easy access to PLNs. Most importantly, the current research encourages future participation in PLNs, with evidence showing that educators understand the importance of PLNs.

Conclusions

Keeping up with the demands of being an educator and a graduate student in the 21st-century remains a challenge. Universities continue to strive to not only increase enrollment, but to improve the learning experience of graduate students. Graduate-level cohorts offer a unique learning experience for educators from rural areas. Among these cohorts, PLNs are formed and learning is enhanced for those who participate. Ultimately, PLNs are valued and impactful for graduate students, especially those in rural areas where access to learning opportunities and learning networks may not be easily accessible.

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DISRUPTING THE UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM: ENGAGING PRESERVICE TEACHERS IN A STUDY ABROAD “PASSPORT” ACTIVITY

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Abstract

Study abroad experiences can be valuable to preservice teachers for many reasons, including experiential learning and pedagogical development. Most teacher preparation programs do not include study abroad opportunities. This study examines an interruption in the usual teacher preparation curriculum through the inclusion of a two-week study abroad experience embedded within semester-long educational psychology and literacy courses. In particular, this paper highlights a “Passport” assignment that student participants complete abroad to increase their cultural awareness and then apply to literacy instruction of English Language Learners in tutoring sessions.

The growing number of English Language Learners (ELLs) in the United States (U.S.) places a demand on educational institutions, specifically teacher preparation programs, to equip preservice teachers (PSTs) to serve this student population. Teacher training programs need to provide PSTs with the knowledge and skills to effectively support culturally and linguistically diverse students in the classroom. Typically, students enrolled in a master’s level teacher preparation program are required to take a

specific number of graduate credit hours and complete practica and a student teaching experience to obtain a teaching license. These face-to-face instructional experiences are valuable, but they may not necessarily expose PSTs to teaching environments outside of their comfort zone, especially environments that include linguistically diverse student populations. One way to increase cultural competence and prepare students to teach ELLs is through study abroad programs (Marx & Moss, 2011; Marx & Pray, 2011). Study abroad programs often focus on broadening participants' cultural competence, but few programs take this focus and pair it with pedagogical instruction in ways that expand training specific to PSTs. And even fewer include activities outside of the study abroad program to enhance students' learning experience. Thus, the purpose of this study is to describe our attempt to disrupt the usual university curriculum by providing preservice teachers the opportunity to engage in cultural learning experiences with a "Passport" activity in a two-week study abroad program in Italy inside of a semester-long course.

Literature Review

Study Abroad

Study abroad experiences generally immerse individuals in a language, land, and culture other than their own. These experiences can initially create feelings of frustration and cognitive dissonance that later lead to understanding and empathy for other languages, cultures, and groups of people (Medina, Hathaway, & Pilonieta, 2015; Nero, 2009). Study abroad programs designed for the field of education often provide PSTs international experiences lasting anywhere from a couple of weeks to a semester long program with the intention of building participants' cultural competency and helping them to understand the challenges of language learning (Medina et al., 2015; Nero, 2009; Shiveley & Misco, 2015). This can be done in the contexts of coursework and student initiated activities outside of the classroom including trips to museums and cultural performances (Freed, Segalowitz, & Dewey, 2004).

Researchers have found many benefits of study abroad experiences for pre- and in-service teachers including increased empathy, patience, open-mindedness, cultural competency, and knowledge of second language acquisition and a shift in their teaching practices (Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Medina et al., 2015; Nero, 2009). Study abroad not only helps foster broad social and cultural understandings, but also helps develop knowledge related to contexts as narrow as a single classroom. The applicability of study abroad experiences to teaching is clear. PSTs gain experience through an international practicum that they would not be able to obtain otherwise and gain a deeper understanding of other cultures and worldviews and the ability to adapt their teaching strategies to those different

perspectives (Doppen & An, 2014; Kabilan, 2013). The insights gained through study abroad can be applied to professional growth, personal growth, cultural competency, classroom management techniques, pedagogy, and more (Doppen & An, 2014; Lu & Soares, 2014). Teachers who study abroad create a more welcoming environment that includes and values all students' languages and cultures, apply new teaching strategies, have more empathy for ELLs, build better relationships with ELL students and their parents, and show more patience when working with ELLs (Colville-Hall, Adamowicz-Hariasz, Sidorova, & Engelking, 2011; Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Lu & Soares, 2014; Medina et al., 2015; Nero, 2009; Shiveley & Misco, 2015).

Medina et al. (2015) specifically studied how a study abroad experience leads to positive changes in PSTs' notions of ELL students. In addition to the benefits already mentioned, they also found that PSTs were more likely to become advocates of ELLs as a result of their study abroad experience. Ultimately, "teacher education study abroad programs can be transformative for preservice teachers, leading them on a path toward an ethnorelative worldview and culturally responsive approaches to teaching" (Marx & Moss, 2011, p. 36). Study abroad experiences often expose students to a variety of settings that can lead to transformative learning. This transformative experience can best be understood in terms of experiential learning.

Experiential Learning

Kolb (1984) posits "learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience" (p. 41). Study abroad programs offer first-hand experiences that provide students with opportunities to communicate across cultural and international boundaries and a chance to reflect on cultural similarities and differences (Office of Postsecondary Education, 2005). In their study of the impact of international experience on student learning, Cisneros-Donahue, Krentler, Reinig, and Sabol (2012) found that U.S. university students perceived that their functional knowledge improved following a study abroad experience. Additionally, students reported significant differences in their knowledge regarding interpersonal accommodation. In particular, students discussed gaining patience and flexibility, enhanced cultural sensitivity, and improved understanding of the interdependence of countries and of the significance of language and cultural differences. The potential impact that study abroad and experiential learning can have on PSTs drives the research for this study as well as our broader study that seeks to answer the question, How do preservice teachers

describe their beliefs and their knowledge of literacy education, language, and culture before, during, and after a study abroad course? This article focuses on the use of experiential learning as part of the cultural exploration portion of the study abroad program and addresses the question, How does the “Passport” activity contribute during and after travel to preservice teachers’ study abroad experience?

Method

Participants

The seven PSTs who participated in this study are enrolled in a five-year teacher preparation program that results in a Master of Teaching degree and licensure as an elementary educator, grades preschool to six. Prior to their graduate education, PSTs are enrolled in the Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies program, which offers interdisciplinary liberal studies taught by professors in both the College of Humanities and Sciences and the School of Education. As part of their undergraduate experience, PSTs are encouraged to select at least one minor to deepen their knowledge of a subject area (Virginia Commonwealth University, 2017). Upon matriculation to the graduate program, PSTs enroll in methods courses related to science, social studies, and mathematics. In their second semester of graduate study, the students enroll in courses in special education, ethics, and educational psychology as well as a four-credit graduate reading course. Throughout both the undergraduate and graduate programs, these PSTs participate in service-learning and practicum experiences to prepare them for employment in public schools.

Typically, study abroad participants simultaneously enroll in the educational psychology and diagnostic and remedial reading courses in their second semester of graduate study. The instructors of both of these courses and their doctoral teaching assistants lead and facilitate the study abroad program and include content related to a variety of pedagogical approaches in their lectures. The reading course has an extensive emphasis on working with ELLs and includes an opportunity to provide one-on-one reading instruction in a school-based tutoring program. The PSTs meet twice weekly with an at-risk reader for 30-45 minutes. An effort is made to work with children who are learning English as their second language. The tutoring component of the class session is followed by lecture and instructional activities.

In the middle of the 2017 spring semester, the participating PSTs departed the U.S. for their two-week study abroad experience based in Florence, Italy. The time in Italy, albeit condensed, allowed the PSTs to observe instructional practices and teach lessons in Montessori, International Baccalaureate PYP, and

Reggio Emilia inspired educational settings. The study abroad program and related courses are rigorous and include additional readings, completion of a travel journal, group presentations, lesson planning, and additional class meetings when compared to the traditional on-campus sections.

A “Passport” to Learning

In addition to the main coursework, students complete a “Passport” of activities while studying in Italy. The “Passport” contains six areas outside of the field of education from which students select one to explore during their time abroad to broaden their cultural competence. Students choose between architecture, art, science, history, religion, and literature. These areas of study were chosen due to their contributions to the rich culture of Italy and the numerous sites available related to these topics. Students are given a “Passport” with recommended sites for each thematic area with the expectation that students will become an expert in a particular topic by visiting four out of the five suggested places of interest. For example, for students interested in science, the “Passport” suggests they visit the Galileo Museum, the Boboli Gardens, the Natural History Museum, the Leonardo da Vinci Museum, and the Botanical Gardens (see Appendix for more information). Each suggested location is accompanied by a brief description, address, hours of operation, and admission price. The “Passport” activity was added to the study abroad program as a way to enhance students’ study abroad experience by encouraging the use of the Italian language, immersing them in the local environment, and empowering them to use their own experiences as a means to develop knowledge of Italian culture and better understand the challenges language learners face.

Results

Participants shared their “Passport” learning experiences and newly acquired knowledge through an oral presentation to their classmates in Italy and a written assignment completed once they returned to the U.S. Out of the seven participants who completed the “Passport” activity, five chose to study architecture and two chose religion. Participants seemed to enjoy sharing their experiences during the oral presentations. Their classmates sometimes interjected comments during the presentations agreeing that they also had a similar experience or learned the same information. During the presentations, questions arose that led to further exploration and some PSTs visited sites that were not part of their original study area based on information shared during the presentations. In one case, PSTs

studying architecture noticed a labyrinth carved into the stone of an ancient church that could not be explained by the materials available at the site or by the guide inside. This labyrinth became a topic of discussion in class and its image was shared by email so other PSTs could find the location for themselves. In the written assignment, the PSTs shared additional information about their experiences and related their learning to life in the U.S. One PST who studied architecture connected the past uses of piazzas to their present day use saying,

The piazzas were interesting to visit. It was cool to learn that they used to be the center of the town. Most piazzas would feature a church at the center, and around would be loggias or market places where business would be conducted. I found it interesting that piazzas are still used today in similar ways, as a gathering place for people of the city. Nowadays the piazzas are used for relaxation and pleasure, featuring restaurants, gelato shops, and the occasional flea market.

A student who explored religion was also enamored by the historical context of the churches she observed in Italy. She wrote,

By having the chance to explore several religious sites in Italy, I feel as though I have taken a great deal away from these experiences. As I wandered through these sites and worked to read the information about them, I couldn't help but think about the fact that most of these sites are still fully functioning. To have the ability to attend a church as old as these and as filled with history as these, I was in awe.

Here this student briefly mentioned her struggle to read the information signs. She further discussed the challenge of language again later on in her paper in regards to a synagogue she visited. She wrote, "Sadly, most all of the information was in Italian, but we had the ability to try and understand what we were looking at." All of the PSTs had little knowledge of Italian and repeatedly discussed their difficulty in understanding text and spoken language. Some of the students were even able to reflect on their experiences and think of ways to apply it to their future classroom. A student who studied architecture commented in her paper,

I now have a new passion for buildings and architecture, so I think I will have a fun time teaching architecture lessons to my future students. There are many SOLs [Standards of Learning] that cover change over

time, and architecture would be a great way to demonstrate that change to students. . . . I always believe in the value of connecting learning to students' real life experiences, and I never would have thought of architecture being able to relate to their life experiences so well.

This student seems to have transferred her newfound knowledge about architecture to her teaching practice in a way that aims to engage students in the curriculum. She continued to apply her experience to her teaching in her paper saying,

With technology available to most classrooms, it is easier than ever to transport students to another place in the world, to have them gain a sense of appreciation for what we have here. Google maps can be used easily to "transport" students to another place in the world from the comfort of our own classroom.

Again, this student reflects on her time in Italy in a way that will benefit her future students. Overall, the students' comments in both their oral presentations and written assignments informed their cultural competence of Italy and gave them a space to transfer and relate that knowledge to aspects of their life at home and their future classrooms.

Discussion

This study helps to reveal how important study abroad experiences like these can be for PSTs. The "Passport" activity helped students gain insight outside of the Italian classrooms they visited, enriched their knowledge and appreciation of the Italian culture, and provided multiple opportunities to interact with Italians as a language learner. Their newfound expertise and cultural awareness helped students recognize that ELLs not only bring another language with them into the classroom, but a unique set of cultural practices and values. Following the study abroad experience, participating PSTs seemed to have gained a deeper understanding of what it means to be an outsider in a foreign context, and discussed greater sensitivity to the power dynamics associated with language learning. Students' learning experiences allowed them to create lesson plans and a classroom environment that was supportive of the lived experience of ELLs and targeted around the specific learning needs of these populations. Findings from this work suggest that this type of first-hand experience provided by the use of the "Passport" mirrored Kolb's cycle of learning in which "a learner has a

concrete experience, engages in a period of reflection on that experience, engages in abstract conceptualization wherein the individual formulates theories and ideas related to the experience, and, finally, performs active experimentation or new actions” (Bohon, McKelvey, Rhodes, & Robnolt, 2017, p. 6). By affording this opportunity in a structured way, the Italian study abroad program gave participants a transformative experience in which they critically reflected on their perspectives of ELLs and developed the kind of thinking that will enable them to meet the needs of their diverse students in the future (Kolb, 1984). By sharing the cultural learning experience with the Italian students and their tutees, the PSTs began moving along the path toward more sensitive teaching.

Conclusion

The results of the “Passport” activity lead us to recommend a similar component to study abroad programs. The “Passport” activity helps connect literacy, culture, language, and understanding through the fusion of pedagogical and multicultural elements around coursework that spans both the abroad and home contexts. It also provides students with a structured and sensitive experience that can have lasting effects on them as both teachers and human beings while at the same time equipping them with the cultural competence and tools necessary to meet the shifting needs of the public-school system and ELLs.

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APPENDIX

“Passport” Brochure



SELECT YOUR AREA OF PASSION...AND EXPLORE!

Art	Religion	History
<p>□ Galleria degli Uffizi (Works by da Vinci, Michelangelo, Botticelli, Raphael, and more!) Piazzale degli Uffizi; 8:15-18:50 Tue-Sun; closed Mondays; €6,50</p> <p>□ Museo del Bargello (Sculpture gallery); Via del Proconsolo 4; 8:15-13:50; closed 2nd & 4th Monday & 1st, 3rd, and 5th Sunday of each month; €4</p> <p>□ Galleria Palatina e Galleria d'Arte Moderna; (Located in the Pitti Palace); Piazza Pitti 1; 8:15-18:50 Tues-Sun; closed Monday; €8,50</p> <p>□ San Miniato al Monte* (Gallery in a church); Via del Monte alle Croci; 8:00-12:30 and 15:00-18:00 Mon-Sun; Free</p> <p>□ Casa Buonarroti (Michelangelo's Home); Via Ghibellina 70; 10:00-17:00 Wed-Mon; closed Tues; €6,50</p>	<p>□ Santa Maria del Fiore* (Il Duomo); Piazza Duomo; 10:00-17:00 M-W & F; 10:00-16:30 Thur; 10:00-4-4:45 Sat; 13:30-16:45 Sun; Free; <i>Baptistry</i> 11:15-19:00 Mon-Sat; 8:30-14:00 Sun; €5; <i>Campitelli (Bell Tower)</i> 8:30-19:30 Mon-Sun €6</p> <p>□ Museo di San Marco (religious complex); Piazza San Marco 1; 8:15-13:50 M-F; 8:15-16:50 Sat & Sun; closed 2nd & 4th Monday & 1st, 3rd, and 5th Sunday of each month; €4</p> <p>□ Museo di Orsanmichele* (church and museum); Via Arte della Lana; Church open 10:00-17:00 Tues-Sun; Free; Museum open 10:00-17:00 only on Mon; Free</p> <p>□ Basilica di Santa Croce (Franciscan church); Piazza di Santa Croce; 9:30-17:50 Mon-Sat; 14:00-17:50 Sun; €6</p> <p>□ Santa Maria Novella (Church and Cloisters); Piazza Stazione 4; 9:00-17:30 Mon-Thurs; 11:00-17:30 Fri; 9:00-17:00 Sat; 13:00-17:00 Sun; €5</p>	<p>□ Forte di Belvedere (Fortress built at the end of the 16th century); Via di San Leonardo 1; 10:00-20:00 Fri; Wed; Closed Thur; €5</p> <p>□ Palazzo Davanzati (Ancient Florentine House); Via Porta Rossa 13; 8:15-14:00; closed 2nd & 4th Sunday & 1st, 3rd, and 5th Monday of each month; €6</p> <p>□ La Cappella Medicea (The Medici Chapel) Piazza Madonna degli Aldobrandini 6; 8:15-16:30; closed 2nd & 4th Sunday & 1st, 3rd, and 5th Monday of each month; €6</p> <p>□ Museo Archeologico (Museum housing Etruscan, Greek, Roman and ancient Egyptian artifacts) Via della Colonna 36; 14:00-19:00 Mon; 8:30-19:00 Tue & Thur; 8:30-14:00 Wed, Fri-Sun; €4</p> <p>□ San Miniato al Monte* (gilded church in Florence from the 11th century); Via del Monte alle Croci; 8:00-12:30 and 15:00-18:00 Mon-Sun; Free</p>
<p>Literature</p> <p>□ Museo Casa di Dante (Dante's Home); Via Santa Margherita 1; 10:00-18:00 Tue-Sun; closed Mon; €4</p> <p>□ Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana (Laurentian library); Piazza San Lorenzo 9; 8:00-14:00 M, W, F; 8:00-17:30 T & Th; €3</p> <p>□ Dan Brown's Inferno Guided Tour; Mon, Fri, & Sat at 3:00 pm; tours are ~2 hours; €35; register at https://www.vianor.com/tours/Florence/Inferno-Florence-Guided-Tour/d519-3534492/</p> <p>□ Basilica di Santa Croce (Houses a monument to Dante); Piazza di Santa Croce; 9:30-17:50 Mon-Sat; 14:00-17:50 Sun; €6</p> <p>□ Villa della Petraia* (Home to the Accademia della Crusca—an Italian society for scholars and linguists); Via della Petraia 40; 8:15-17:30 Mon-Sun; closed 2nd & 3rd Monday of each month; Free</p>	<p>Architecture</p> <p>□ Santa Maria del Fiore* (Il Duomo designed by Giotto, Arnolfo, & Brunelleschi); 10:00-17:00 M-W & F; 10:00-16:30 Thur; 10:00-4:45 Sat; 13:30-16:45 Sun; Free</p> <p>□ Piazza San Lorenzo and Palazzo Medici Riccardi (Home to the Medici & designed by Michelozzo); Piazza San Lorenzo; 9:00-18:00 Thurs-Tues; closed Wed; €7</p> <p>□ Piazza Signoria e Galleria degli Uffizi (By Arnolfo, Vasari, & Buontalenti); 8:15-18:50 Tue-Sun; closed Mondays; €6,50</p> <p>□ Piazza Santo Spirito* (Church by Brunelleschi); Piazza S. Spirito; 10:00-12:30 & 16:00-17:30 Mon & Tues and Thurs-Sat; 16:00-17:30 Sun; closed Wed; Free</p> <p>□ Palazzo Pitti e Giardino Boboli (Pitti Palace & gardens by Brunelleschi, Ammannati, & Parigi); Piazza Pitti 1; 8:15-17:30 Mon-Sun; closed the 1st and last Monday of each month; €7</p>	<p>Science</p> <p>□ Museo Galileo (History of Science Museum); Piazza de' Giudici 1; 9:30-18:00 Mon-Sun; 9:30-13:00 Tues; €9</p> <p>□ Giardino Boboli (Boboli Gardens) Piazza Pitti 1; 8:15-17:30 Mon-Sun; closed the 1st and last Monday of each month; €7</p> <p>□ Museo della Specola (Natural History Museum); Via Romana 17 9:30-16:30 Tue-Sun; closed Mondays; €6</p> <p>□ Museo Leonardo da Vinci (da Vinci Museum; houses many of his inventions); Via dei Servi 66/68; 10:00-18:00 Mon-Sun; €7</p> <p>□ Orto Botanico (Botanical garden); Via Micheli 3; 10:00-17:00 Sat-Mon; €6</p>

ENGAGING
ALL READERS
THROUGH
LITERACY,
LANGUAGE,
AND CULTURE:
INNOVATIVE
AND SEMINAL
STRATEGIES
FOR PRESERVICE
TEACHERS

“IF YOU’RE NOT READING, YOU’RE NOT GROWING”: EXPLORING THE READING HABITS OF PRESERVICE TEACHERS IN A CHILDREN’S LITERATURE COURSE

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine preservice teachers’ reading interests, reading habits, and knowledge of children’s literature. The participants were 78 undergraduate preservice teachers (PSTs) enrolled in three sections of a children’s literature course at a regional university. Data consisted of a reading habits and interests survey and an open-ended midterm exam essay question. Survey responses were tallied and grouped according to the research questions, then analyzed alongside the mid-semester responses. Findings indicate that the amount of reading undergraduate PSTs do is comparable to previous studies; however, their exposure to genre helped them to consider how they might implement literature in their future classrooms. These findings may help teacher educators to encourage undergraduate PSTs to continue their reading journeys as they become teachers.

Two undergraduate PSTs are lounging in the lobby of the business building where our class on children’s literature is held. One is prone on a bench, with a book stretched out at arm’s length. The other is sitting on a chair nearby with

his feet propped up on a stool, nose inches away from the book he's holding. I, their professor, greet them as I walk by to prepare for today's class. They mutter a "hello" without looking up and I'm not offended. This is a common scene on a university campus; however, there's a difference here. What they're intensely looking at are not textbooks for a course they're taking. One is reading *The Giver* by Lois Lowry (1993) and the other is reading Jack Prelutsky's (1984) poetry book, *The New Kid on the Block*.

As a professor and teacher assistant of a children's and adolescents' literature course, we feel we have done our jobs when we see occurrences like the one above. However, we have heard many preservice and in-service teachers claim that they do not like to read. The Pew Research Center (Perrin) reported in 2016 that about 25% of American adults said that they had not read a book in the past year. The National Endowment for the Arts (2007) found that nearly half of Americans ages 18 to 24 read no books for pleasure and that the percentage of those who did fell seven points from 1992 to 2002. Current literature related to the reading habits and interests of both pre- and in-service teachers is sparse. The studies that are available report that many teachers are not spending enough time reading (Applegate & Applegate, 2004; Gray & Troy, 1986; McKool & Gespass, 2009; Mour, 1977; Nathanson, Pruslow, & Levitt 2008). This presents an issue where the teacher is not investing regular reading practice times in order to be able to share a true love of reading, as well as authentic reading strategies.

On a recent episode of the Jimmy Kimmel show, one of his employees interviewed people on the street, asking them to "name a book – any book." Sadly, out of the several people they showed in the video, none of them did. Of course, the show might have neglected to air people who did name books; however, watching this was cringeworthy, at best. With the distractions of the Internet, social media, and on-demand streaming, reading for pleasure may be taking a backseat. Adding the demands of family and work create few opportunities to set aside blocks of quiet time for reading. In three years of teaching the children's literature course at our university, we have definitely noticed how few of our undergraduate preservice teachers read for pleasure. We know this because we informally survey them during the first class, where one of the questions asks them to indicate how many books they have read for pleasure over the past year. The overwhelming majority lists zero to five.

Children's literature courses have the potential to influence the reading habits and interests of future teachers; therefore, it is important that these courses are included in the sequence of coursework leading to teacher certification (Cremin, Mottram, Bearne, & Goodwin, 2008). During such courses, the instructor shares hundreds of books with PSTs and asks that the PSTs read and

critique 50 books across type and genre during the semester. One objective of this course is to create what Miller (2013) calls “wild readers,” also known as avid readers. Miller surveyed over 800 adult readers and found that they engage in similar activities: they “dedicate time to read,” “self-select reading material,” “share books and reading with other readers,” and “show preferences for genres, authors, and topics” (pp. xxiii-xxiv). Carpenter (1997) reported that, during her study, more PSTs read for pleasure at the end of a children’s literature course than they did at the beginning. It is crucial to perpetuate this course as one that benefits PSTs’ future students and that it is not just viewed as “kiddie lit,” a course filled with meaningless literature-based activities, such as creating dioramas and thematic units with trade books (Hoewisch, 2000).

This study will help to improve practice by inspiring teachers to read more so that their love of reading will carry over to their teaching (McKool & Gespass, 2009) and will continue a dialogue with reading course instructors around ways to encourage preservice teachers to develop solid reading habits.

Review of the Literature

Knowledge of Children’s Literature and Preparation for Future Classroom Instruction

We turned to schema theory in order to frame how our undergraduate PSTs accumulate and assimilate new information into their existing schemata. Providing effective literacy instruction that allows students become proficient readers continues to be a major goal in teacher and literacy education. Teachers are required to teach genre and genre elements as part of either the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) or their state standards. Analyses of all genres and their elements should be essential in teacher education courses so that teachers are prepared to build courses of study around genre during both reading and writing instruction.

Anderson and Pearson (1984) discussed how readers have varying schemata of different text genres. The undergraduate PSTs enrolled in the children’s literature course usually carry with them limited knowledge of available books for children, genre and text type included. Usually, their knowledge is related to their reading experiences when they were growing up. Some have children of their own or work with children in a daycare setting, which provides them with other ways of interacting with these texts. This prior knowledge allows them to tack on what they learn in class, and, in many cases, alter their perceptions of what they know or think they know (Tracey & Morrow, 2017). The more adults read, the more practical knowledge they have (Stanovich & Cunningham, 1993);

therefore, teachers who read a lot might possess more knowledge to pass along to their own students than those who do not.

In order to increase the carry-over of reading passion to children in the classroom, educators need to possess knowledge of children's literature (Benevides & Peterson, 2010; Draper, Barksdale-Ladd, & Radenchich, 2000; Many, Howard, & Hoge, 1998; McCutchen, Harry, Cunningham, Cox, Sidman, & Covill, 2002). Cremin et al. (2008) surveyed 1,200 primary teachers, asking them to identify authors and illustrators of literature for children. Forty-five percent of the participants identified all correctly, suggesting that many teachers may rely on the use of a very limited selection of books and authors in their classrooms.

Dillingofski (1993) argued the importance and role of children's literature in classrooms. She explained that 50% of teachers who read children's books on their own found this practice to be helpful in their personal and professional growth. Studies such as hers serve as one reason why a course in children's literature is a necessary piece of the teacher preparation program. Taking the time to read widely and across genres ensures that teachers are familiar with all types of texts. Whether teaching in a Common Core state or a state that has its own standards, as ours does, it is expected that teachers have a full understanding of each genre and its characteristics. In a study that looked at middle and secondary school teachers enrolled in a secondary English Language Arts graduate course, Bentley (2013) asked her students to complete an "unfamiliar genres" project, where students were required to learn about and teach a genre with which they were uncomfortable. Her students chose texts either out of "curiosity" or texts that were "intimidating." Bentley reported that the assignment was successful in that it stretched teachers' knowledge and allowed them to use these texts for many purposes, such as mentor texts for writing.

Dillingofski (1993) and Morrison, Jacobs, and Swinyard (1999) suggested that a concentrated effort be placed on taking steps to motivate teachers to read more frequently. To investigate the relationship between teachers who read personally and their instructional practices, Morrison et al. (1999) surveyed elementary teachers who used children's literature in their classrooms. The authors reported that teachers who read on their own used a large number of classroom instructional strategies associated with best practices, such as reading aloud, guiding children to select books in the library, recommending books, using time in class for children to read independently, and talking with other teachers about children's literature. This is why it is important to include strategies and ideas for using text as part of the curriculum in children's literature courses.

To what extent does teaching a course in children's literature impact PSTs once they are inducted into the profession? While there is a small amount of

literature on this specific subject, there do exist findings on how teacher preparation programs affect the daily practices of teachers. Clark, Jones, Reutzell, and Andreason (2013) stated, “teacher preparation programs do indeed influence the perceptions, abilities, and understanding of beginning reading teachers at the beginning of their teaching career” (p. 99). This aligns with Maloch, Flint, & Eldridge et al.’s (2003) and Hoffman, Roller, Maloch et al.’s (2005) findings that new teachers take on board instructional reading strategies that they learn in training and apply them in their classrooms. More specifically, Carpenter (1997) reported that PSTs enrolled in a children’s literature course discussed the “new practices they adopted as a result of the course” (p. 264), as well as their newfound ability to talk about children’s books in more sophisticated ways.

Adult Reading Habits and Attitudes

In addition to acquiring a foundational knowledge of children’s literature, it is also important for teachers to nurture their own reading growth by forming good reading habits. Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) defined engaged readers as those who “. . . coordinate their strategies and knowledge (cognition) within a community of literacy (social) in order to fulfill their personal goals, desires, and intentions (motivation)” (p. 404). Guthrie (2004) and Tracey and Morrow (2017) added that these readers also read habitually, and are what Miller (2013) describes as “underground readers,” who read at every opportunity. Readers also thrive on engaging with others about books (Gambrell, 2011; Guthrie, 2004, 2015; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000) in activities such as book talks, book clubs, and recommending books to family and friends. Engaged readers are intrinsically motivated, as is evidenced by their interest, dedication, and confidence (Guthrie, 2015).

Undergraduate PSTs should finish a children’s literature course with, if not a love of reading books for children, at least an appreciation for it. Mour (1977) surveyed 224 graduate students enrolled in a reading program over a period of two semesters and reported that many did not read recreationally. More specifically, he found that only 25% of the participants labeled themselves enthusiastic readers, and the remainder as moderate to light readers. Also, only 25% read more than six books per year. Similarly, one-third of the 80 preservice teachers participating in Gray and Troy’s (1986) study were reading a book at the time of the study, and only half of those associated reading with enjoyment. Sheorey and Mokhtari (1994) looked at the reading habits of students taking developmental reading courses and found that they spent a mere 4.75 hours per week on recreational reading. Blackwood, Flowers, Rogers, & Staik (1991) and Gallik’s (1999) findings were bleaker, as both reported their participants devoting

2.5 hours per week to reading. In 2009, Mokhtari, Reichard, & Gartner surveyed 4500 undergraduate students who indicated that they spent more time on the Internet than on reading, although they rated recreational reading as “extremely important” (p. 617).

McKool & Gespass (2009) explained that the lack of time presents a challenge to pleasure reading. Yet, teachers who read at least 30 minutes per day were also most likely to use best reading practices in their classrooms. Benevides & Peterson (2010) contributed to this idea by noting that PSTs may dislike textbook reading and writing assignments if attached to course assignments. Participants were more likely to read and enjoy the act of reading if they were able to choose what they read. The results of their study indicated that beginning teachers should develop as literate individuals, as well as literacy teachers.

Part of this development as literacy teachers, says Papola-Ellis (2016), is helping teacher candidates choose texts that deal with “tough topics” (p. 18), so that they will feel comfortable using all kinds of books in their future classrooms. This facet of the Papola-Ellis study is relevant here because reading books about sensitive topics is part of the curriculum in the children’s literature courses. Several studies have directed attention to the use of bibliotherapy in classrooms to address such issues as problem-solving, death and dying, and bullying, to name a few (Flanagan, Vanden Hoek, Shelton, A. et al., 2013; Iaquina & Hipsky, 2006; Jalongo, 1983; Mar, Oatley, Hirsh et al., 2005; Sullivan & Strang, 2002).

Cummins (2012) emphasized that teachers should foster a love for reading, books, and learning and that they need to be teacher-readers and ignite a fire for the passion of reading. The new generation of PSTs, many of whom are digital natives, are exposed to more online reading, yet may decide to read printed books. According to a Pew Research Study (2018), nearly one-in-five Americans listen to audiobooks, and the number of those who do has risen since 2016. However, printed books still account for 65% of Americans’ reading. Pew also reported twice as many people aged 18 to 29 than those aged 50 to 64 read digital texts, although the former number is still small at 10%.

Nurturing Teachers’ Reading Habits

Applegate and Applegate (2004) discussed the “Peter Effect” that occurs when teachers find it difficult to pass on the love of reading to the children in their classrooms because they themselves do not have consistent reading habits. They explain that, similar to the parable in the Bible, teachers cannot give that which they do not possess. On the other hand, those teachers who make reading a daily

habit transmit the love of reading naturally. To prove their point, they surveyed a total of 379 university sophomores majoring in education and found that 51.5% of them were not enthusiastic about reading and only a quarter of them truly enjoyed the act of reading. Benevides and Peterson (2010) found, similarly, that many PSTs do not begin their teacher preparation programs with firmly established reading habits and only 61% of them associate reading with enjoyment. Nathanson et al. (2008) replicated the Applegate and Applegate (2004) study with graduate students and found that 56% of unenthusiastic readers did not have a teacher who shared a love of reading, while 64% of enthusiastic readers did have such a teacher.

Those who have conducted research in the area of teachers as readers have several suggestions for increasing both preservice and inservice teachers' quantity of reading. Just as teachers often provide independent reading times for children, teachers need to be given this gift, as well. Knowing that time is a concern, McKool and Gespass (2009) and Mour suggested teacher preparation programs and schools provide designated reading times. To support this endeavor, schools might stock professional libraries and encourage book clubs for teachers. It is then anticipated that children will see their teachers as reading role models (Morrison et al., 1999). Some schools have dedicated times where faculty, staff, and children read, such as a DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) time, as it is one thing for teachers to talk about their reading and another to actually read in front of their students. Steven Layne (2009) suggested teachers have a "hot read" that is a children's book. The teacher places the book in a prominent area of the classroom with a "hot read" label and leaves the children to wonder what that book is about and why the teacher might have chosen to read it, thus creating excitement amongst them.

Few studies have considered the effect that coursework in teacher certification programs affects PSTs' reading habits. Clark et al. (2013) looked at preservice teachers enrolled in a reading methods course and concluded that education coursework does "indeed influence the perceptions, abilities, and understanding of beginning reading teachers at the very beginning of their teaching career in a myriad or ways" (p. 99) and that teachers often use what they learned during those courses in their first years as a teacher. In her study of PST knowledge of children's literature, Pearce (2015) found that a course in children's and adolescents' literature had a much larger effect on PSTs' reading habits, more so than the reading methods courses that they took. Shaw, Dvorak, and Bates (2007) similarly discussed how knowledge attained in teacher preparation courses influences the beliefs of PSTs.

Our integrated mixed methods study sought to answer the following questions about undergraduate PSTs enrolled in three full semester sections of the children's and adolescents' literature course at one university: 1) What are PSTs' reading interests as related to genre and what knowledge about genre do they possess?, 2) What are PSTs' reading habits and how do these change over the course of the semester?, and 3) What information related to children's literature have PSTs learned to use in their future classrooms?

Methods

Setting and Participants

Children's and Adolescents' Literature is a course required at our university for undergraduate students seeking teacher certification in Early Childhood (EC) through sixth grade interdisciplinary studies and all-level special education. When students finish this course, they are expected to possess an understanding of the history of children's literature, elements of genres, and how to match books to children based on a variety of factors. The assignments include researching and presenting a children's book author; conducting a web search related to children's literature; participating in a literature circle group; creating of a portfolio of book reviews/critiques.

The participants for this study included 78 undergraduate PSTs enrolled in three sections of a children's literature course. All but one were female, and 55% identified as White, while 45% identified as Hispanic. At the time of the courses, 56% of the PSTs were classified as seniors, 36% as juniors, and 8% as sophomores. Ninety-one percent of the PSTs were seeking a degree in interdisciplinary studies and EC through sixth grade certification and the other 9% were seeking an early childhood degree without certification. About 25 PSTs were enrolled in each section. The same number of PSTs completed both the beginning- and end-of-semester surveys, as well as the mid-semester exam responses. One instructor, the first author of this article, taught one section, and another instructor taught two sections. Both instructors used the same curriculum and textbook.

Data Collection Procedures

As part of the course, the PSTs completed Donalyn Miller's (2013) "Wild Reader" survey (with her permission) on paper at the beginning and end of the semester. The survey contained 11 items, five of which were open-ended. The remaining items required participants to place a check next to their answer choice. Miller

created this survey, distributed it to 100 avid readers, and analyzed their responses in order to write *Reading in the Wild* (2013). There is no reliability and validity information available for this survey. This anonymous survey included questions about the time they devoted to reading each week, what kinds of books they liked to read, how they shared books with others, and how they planned for future reading.

We also analyzed a mid-semester reflection, completed electronically, that asked the PSTs to discuss what they had learned in the course about children’s literature and how they might implement this knowledge in their future classrooms. These responses were not anonymous; however, during the data analysis process, identifiers were removed.

Data Analysis Procedures

First, we gathered responses to the survey questions and grouped them together under the corresponding survey questions, tallying where appropriate and gathering percentages of responses. We coded open-ended responses by looking for similar topics and formed themes in order to answer the research questions (Saldaña, 2013). For example, we considered item two (On average, how much time do you spend reading each week?) when attempting to answer the second research question: what are PSTs’ reading habits and how do these change over the course of the semester? We listed their responses from each point in the semester and grouped them into ranges, comparing these responses to the first item, which asked students to briefly explain if they considered themselves to be avid readers.

We used the research questions to guide our hand-coding of the surveys. We grouped responses of similar items together (such as items six through nine that asked about favorite genres, books, and authors, which helped us to address our first research question). The themes we identified after analyzing the survey responses were: reading interests, knowledge of genre, and reading habits.

We then compared all beginning and end of semester responses side-by-side to note similarities and differences. After analyzing all survey data, we coded the mid-semester reflection responses according to the three themes found in the survey responses and discovered the emerging theme of undergraduate PSTs’ use of knowledge in their future classrooms. We each read through and independently coded the surveys and mid-semester exam responses in order to create interrater reliability. As we were using the research questions as a guide, we agreed on every categorization of responses. There are subcategories for each theme that will be discussed in the findings section below.

Findings

Reading Interests and Knowledge of Genre

Reading interests. On the Wild Reader (Miller, 2013) survey, participants were asked to indicate which types of books for certain age groups they commonly read. The most popular category for both the beginning and end of semester survey was fiction picture books. This was followed by fiction books for early elementary students, young adults, and adults. Nonfiction picture books and nonfiction books for early elementary students and adults (including professional books) were listed as the next popular. The least read types of books for both beginning and end of semester was poetry for middle grade students, young adult students, and adults. (See Table 1).

Drilling down to specific genres, a survey question asked participants to indicate which genre they gravitated toward when they read for pleasure. Both beginning and end of semester results were similar. Although several students mentioned that they had enjoyed learning about genres with which they were unfamiliar, there was no indication that there was a major shift in the genres that they read for pleasure. The two most popular genres amongst participants were realistic fiction and fantasy, followed by traditional literature (myths, legends, folktales/fairytales). The least popular genres were historical fiction, science fiction, and poetry. (See Table 2).

Specific popular titles did not change much from the beginning of the semester to the end of the semester. Forty-six percent of the titles named as

TABLE 1
Reading interests by type and age level

Type of Book	Beginning of Semester (<i>n</i> = 78)	End of Semester (<i>n</i> = 78)
Fiction picture books	65	52
Early elementary fiction	56	44
Adult fiction	52	46
Nonfiction picture books	45	34
Young adult fiction	49	28
Professional books	37	30
Middle grades poetry	16	10
Adult poetry	15	11
Young adult poetry	8	5

TABLE 2
Reading interests by genre

Type of Book	Beginning of Semester (<i>n</i> = 78)	End of Semester (<i>n</i> = 78)
Realistic fiction	65	45
Fantasy	53	55
Traditional literature	43	30
Historical fiction	28	13
Poetry	21	10
Science fiction	18	12

favorites were books for children or adolescents at the beginning of the semester, versus 43% named at the end of the semester. The same titles showed up on the lists at both times during the semester: the *Hunger Games* trilogy (Collins, 2010), the *Harry Potter* series (Rowling, 1999), *The Giver* (Lowry, 1993), *Twilight* (Meyer), 2006), and *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (Carle, 1969). Interestingly, the percentage of popular authors of children’s literature mentioned as favorites dropped from 48% to 36%. The same authors were mentioned as the most read at both points in the semester, however, with three of the four being authors of children’s or adolescents’ literature: J. K. Rowling, Eric Carle, and Dr. Seuss.

Knowledge of genre. During the first few days of the children’s literature course, the undergraduate PSTs raised many questions about genre. Although they knew the difference between texts that are fiction and nonfiction, they confused the many subgenres under each and demonstrated difficulty with texts that contain both fictional and factual content (e.g., historical fiction). As evidenced in their responses presented here, genre in general was not something to which they had given attention prior to this course. As the PSTs prepared and worked on their lists of books to read for the culminating literature portfolio assignment, instructors received a handful of inquiries each week pertaining to the categorization of books. Some common questions surrounded the difference between contemporary realistic fiction and historical fiction; literary nonfiction and informational texts; and fantasy and other fiction texts. The class sessions were organized around genre, and this seemed to alleviate some confusions by the middle of the semester, when PSTs completed the mid-term essay question that asked about what they had learned and how they would use this information in their future classrooms, which is where this particular group of data was derived.

Almost half of all participants mentioned in their midterm responses that they had already learned a great deal about genre, especially how all genres available for adults are also available for children and adolescents. They said that they learned the “elements” of each genre by “going into depth” about one genre per class session. It helped that the instructors of the course provided a wealth of examples of each genre and subgenre, as well. One student said, “I thought I had an idea of what the different genres are, but I really didn’t,” and another said, “I never knew how many genres there are!” At this point in the semester, the PSTs were better able to identify the genres of the texts they were reading for their literature portfolios, as this student indicated: “It’s getting easier to be able to tell what is what.” They also considered the implications of learning about genres for their future classrooms. They spoke of being able to categorize their books by genre rather than “throwing all the books in a basket and tell[ing] the students to just read!” Others mentioned the importance of exposing children to all genres and not letting them “just get comfortable with one” and that children “should not be afraid to read any type of genre.”

Reading Habits

Amount of time devoted to reading. When asked on the survey if they were “avid” readers, 41% responded “yes,” 42% responded “no,” and 15% said “somewhat.” At the end of the semester, to our surprise, the numbers were not much different: 42% “yes,” 44% “no,” and 14% “somewhat.” They were also asked to indicate the number of hours they spent reading during a typical week. On both the beginning and end of semester surveys, about 50% said they read one to five hours per week. The next largest group (24%) said they read between six and ten hours per week. The remaining PSTs indicated that they read anywhere from 11-30 hours per week. (See Table 3). As being an avid reader can

TABLE 3
Amount of time spent reading

Hours	Beginning of Semester (<i>n</i> = 78)	End of Semester (<i>n</i> = 78)
<1	4	1
1 to 5	39	40
6 to 10	19	19
11 to 30	16	18

mean many things, several participants explained on the survey why they identified this way. Juggling more than one book at once and starting a new book immediately after finishing one was mentioned, as was choosing to read over participating in other activities, as in “venturing off into a book rather than a TV show or game.” Other avid readers indicated that they read as “much as humanly possible” and that “once I get a book I enjoy there is no stopping!” These readers thrive on getting caught up in books and finding books that “stir up all [their] emotions.” It seems as though avid readers “always make time” for books, regardless of other responsibilities and activities.

At the beginning of the semester, over half (52%) said that having to complete assigned reading for school tends to take up the majority of their time. At the end of the semester, this number dropped to 40%, probably due to the lightening of the reading loads in courses. The reason of “too busy” was given by 49% of PSTs at both points in the semester. Other reasons provided on the survey were “a lack of information about books,” “too tired,” and family or work obligations. PSTs claimed that life gets in the way, as most of them worked part- or full-time jobs. As one student lamented: “I don’t read as much as I like because I’m too busy with work.” Participants also noted an excessive amount of schoolwork as a reason for not having time to read. They wrote the following comments: “I used to love to read during my free time; however, now I’m a full-time student,” “Being assigned so much to read for my classes prevents me from reading for pleasure,” and “The only thing I read these days are my textbooks.” Quite perplexing was what some PSTs wrote about time. Comments like, “I would read more if given the opportunity” and “I would choose to read if I had the time” were vague and concerned us, because if they did not have the time as university students, will they have the time as teachers? Donalyn Miller (2013) reminded educators that “wild readers dedicate time to read” (p. 5).

When were participants most likely to find the time to read for pleasure? Those who had children at the time of this study said that most of their reading occurred while reading books aloud to them: “Since having kids most of my reading revolves around books that my children enjoy.” For others, pleasure reading had to be postponed for breaks when they were not taking courses. Several who indicated they were “avid readers” read every night or during lunchtime at work. Reading in “spurts” was also mentioned, as when there was enough time or they had a new book to read.

The course also awakened or reawakened the love of reading for some of the PSTs. One mentioned that she was “dreading” all the reading that was required for the children’s literature course and admitted that she had always tried to like reading but did not; however, the course “opened [her] eyes to reading and

drew [her] into liking reading.” Others who had been readers prior to the class said that they enjoyed the opportunity to read for pleasure again and viewed this time as a gift. One even said that she left each class wanting to “read more books rather than watch TV”!

Sharing books with others. Sharing books with others is a rewarding experience that is usually a good indication that someone is an avid reader (Miller, 2013). When asked to respond in what ways they shared books with others (participants were able to choose more than one), participants on both the beginning (57%) and end of semester (51%) surveys indicated that they read aloud to children, either their own or students in classrooms they visited. The next most popular way (50% beginning and 43% end of semester) to share a book was to donate them to places that sell used books or to service agencies. Thirty-two percent (beginning of semester) and 27% (end of semester) responded that they post books they have read to social networking sites, and 22% indicated that they gave “spontaneous testimonials” of books they had read to friends and family. The least popular methods of book sharing, both on the beginning- and end-of-semester survey, were participating in book clubs and writing reviews. One student said, “I believe that books were meant to read and to be shared with others, not just sit on a shelf collecting dust.”

When asked to share what they enjoyed about the course, several PSTs mentioned the book talks that were conducted during each class session. Each student delivered a brief talk on a children’s or adolescent book of their choosing and “sold” it to the class by giving the gist of the text, reading aloud a bit, and suggesting a teaching practice for it. This assignment provided PSTs with the opportunity to practice a strategy that they can use with their future students to grow excitement about books. It also exposed them to over 20 books for children with which they were most likely unfamiliar. One student wrote, “Many times I will be stuck with not knowing what to read and then I remember a book a peer shared.” The PSTs mentioned how the book talks gave them many ideas not only for books, but how to use them in the classroom, as well. Two PSTs wrote, “We get the opportunity to share ideas with each other and teachers NEED ideas” and “Sharing books with certain features you may need when you teach a certain subject helps greatly.”

Use of Knowledge of Children’s Literature in Future Classrooms

Importance of sharing a love for reading. Participants were asked to respond to the statement, “Please provide additional information about your

reading experiences,” which generated writings of their past experiences with reading, the ways in which they spread the joys of reading to children, and therapeutic reasons for reading. Several PSTs wrote that they did not like reading in school due to the way it was taught or the lack of emphasis on the joy of reading. For instance, one student said that the reading program in their school consisted solely of reading books and taking a test over them on the computer. Another mentioned that reading felt like a “chore.” Many admitted that this course made them “want to be more of a reader” and gave them a good reason to get back into reading.

As was evident in their responses, participants picked up on the importance of reading aloud to children and modeling reading behaviors. They mentioned wanting to “pass on to their students” the love of reading that the instructors strived to demonstrate in class. One student made a powerful statement when she said, “I am not a strong reader, and I want to make sure my future students don’t experience what I experienced growing up. I want my students to love to read for school and read for fun.” Several of our PSTs had children of their own, so they brought with them the understanding of the impact that reading to their own children had, and this was confirmed throughout their experience in the course. They talked about reading to their children every night, thereby setting a model of reading for them, as well as having their children witness their own pleasure reading. One participant mentioned that she tells her children, “If you’re not reading, you’re not growing.”

Classroom library. About half of the PSTs discussed in their mid-course exam response that this course helped them consider their future classroom libraries. Several said that they had purchased books that the instructors used in class and that these were the start of their libraries. One student used another assignment, the libraries and bookstores assignment, to describe how she would display her books and said that she had never “put much thought . . . to how the books were organized” in the bookstores.

Moreover, these preservice teachers were thinking about the content of their libraries, both the kinds of materials they wanted to include and how they might attend to the needs of their students. This course helped many to feel more “confident” about their selections and understand that they needed a wide assortment of books, genres, and levels. Quality was mentioned several times as the PSTs had learned in class how to “make wiser decisions” when selecting high quality children’s literature. For, “books that may be cheaper in price [may also be] cheaper in quality.”

Attending to children’s cognitive and emotional needs through literature.

While we wished for our undergraduate PSTs to complete this course with a new

perspective of literature for children and possess knowledge of what is available, we devoted a considerable amount of class session time on ways to use books in the classroom. We asked them how they might take what they had learned into their future classrooms, and some common responses were that they planned to use books for bibliotherapeutic purposes and use social contexts to teach reading. Our participants also indicated that they now had the knowledge they needed to match texts to readers.

Our PSTs claimed not only to have learned to appreciate literature for children, but also what to consider when choosing reading materials for children. In their mid-semester exam responses, they defined “appropriate” texts as ones based on several things, such as “a child’s age and maturity level,” their “interests,” and what they might “connect with.” One student put it best when she wrote, “it DOES matter what type of literature we give to our students.” Another realized that, while something “might not interest me personally, it might be the spark one student needs to grow their love for reading.”-

We also discussed ways to use bibliotherapy in the classroom and how to select texts for the diverse classroom. One student said, “One thing that has stuck with me throughout the course is that as a future educator I need to have books in my library that deal with real life situations that the children can go back and relate to if needed.” The PSTs also learned about using a book’s illustrations for therapeutic purposes, as in, “If my class is really having a tough day, I would probably pull out a calming book that had a lighter color scheme and no zigzag lines to read to them.” They also wrote about not shying away from controversial topics such as war, death, and real-life problems and said that using such texts may help “children to cope and understand reality.”

We spent a class session discussing the work of such theorists as Vygotsky (1978) and Rosenblatt (2004) with our undergraduates, expounding the importance of the sociocultural aspect of literature. Several participants shared how they enjoyed listening as their peers shared works of children’s and adolescents’ literature through author presentations and book talks. They also viewed these experiences as demonstrations for what they can do in their classrooms to encourage sharing. One student wrote how she would use book talks so that children can “work together and discuss important key points they noticed” and how “this will get students excited.” Perhaps one of the most insightful quotes about using children’s literature was what one student said about the kinds of books she wants to use in her future classroom: “I have learned to stock up my classroom with books that will fit my students’ needs, not just mine.”

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to uncover the reading habits and interests of undergraduate preservice teachers enrolled in a course in children’s and adolescents’ literature, as well as their plans for applying what they learned in the course to their future classrooms. Half of the undergraduate PSTs surveyed indicated that they read between one and five hours per week. This number differs from the bleaker findings of previous studies – that few students and teachers read for enjoyment (Gray & Troy, 1986; Mour, 1977; Sheorey & Mokhtari, 1994). Forty percent of our students claimed to be “avid” readers, although 49% said that they were often “too busy” to read. The finding that half of our undergraduate PSTs told us they were “too busy” to read is concerning and is similar to Blackwood et al.’s (1991) and McKool and Gespass’s (2009) reports on how a lack of time is a common reason for not reading books. We understand that most of our students were enrolled in several courses per semester in addition to working half- or full-time jobs. Our university also serves a large number of nontraditional undergraduate students who have families. Several PSTs, however, commented that the children’s literature course awakened a love of reading for them. Carpenter (1997) also found that, after PSTs’ took a semester-long course in children’s literature, more of them read for pleasure than at the beginning of the course.

The instructors shared hundreds of books with the undergraduate PSTs during the course, so it was expected that their knowledge of genre would grow. Indeed, on their mid-semester exams, participants spoke to how the course cleared up some of their confusions about genre. Also, at the completion of the course, they were armed with information that would help them teach genre in the classroom as it is required in our state’s essential knowledge and skills document. During their study of genres of children’s literature, they figured out which genres they enjoyed reading the most and the least, while still understanding that they will need to expose their future students to all genres. To do this, they realized they must possess knowledge of the elements of each genre, as well as how to locate book titles, similar to the findings of Bentley’s (2013) successful genre study project. Our course also included a close study of our state standards (not CCSS) as they pertain to genre study. Cremin et al.’s (2008) findings suggest that many primary inservice teachers know little about available picture books. We are confident that our PSTs will finish their teacher preparation programs with a firm foundation in this area and will possess knowledge of the literature their own students are reading (Hassett, 2009; Morrison et al., 1999).

Our PST participants contemplated how they would use their newly acquired knowledge of children’s literature in their future classrooms. On their

surveys and mid-semester responses, the majority of PSTs discussed how they would devote attention to the organization of their classroom libraries and be thoughtful about the materials that would be included. This finding mirrored that of Hoffman et al. (2005) and Maloch et al. (2003), who asserted that teachers take on practices that they learn in their teacher preparation programs and use them in their own classrooms. Several also commented how they felt ready to attend to children's cognitive and emotional needs using literature as a conduit. They were prepared to share their love of reading with their future students, which, according to Applegate and Applegate (2004) and Nathanson et al. (2008), is crucial to building a love of reading amongst young readers.

Implications

This study has implications for the instructors of not only undergraduate reading education courses, but all education courses that lead up to the conferring of their degree. These findings will help instructors get to know PSTs as readers and provide insight as to how they might encourage more reading across the courses undergraduate PSTs take as part of their preparation to become teachers.

The significance of this study reaches beyond the university classroom and into the readerly lives of PSTs. Literacy education instructors, whether they teach children's literature courses or courses with a literature component, might find it useful to ask students at the beginning of the course which genres they currently read and what titles they have read within those genres. This will serve two purposes: to explore their PSTs' knowledge of genre in order to build knowledge in this area and to widen their reading interests. At the very least, PSTs would benefit by way of exposure to genres with which they are unfamiliar, thus helping them attain an understanding of the plethora of high-quality literature available. Course instructors can also use parts of this survey for each course to find out what undergraduate PSTs are reading and also how they can help them grow or continue to grow a reading habit that will continue into their careers as teachers. This, in turn, will hopefully help them instill similar habits in their young students, as instructors model the process of finding out what interests students have and ways to cultivate those.

Limitations

Several limitations existed as part of this study. A small sample based on convenience was used and the participants were located at one university. Two different instructors taught the courses in which the PSTs were enrolled, so differing perspectives may have impacted survey responses. Exam responses were taken at the

mid-semester point, which did not provide PSTs with the opportunity to reflect on the entire semester’s content. They might also have written comments on the survey and midterm exam item that their instructors want to hear. We realize that the PSTs’ self-reported amount of reading might be high due their concurrent enrollment in a children’s literature course where they are required to read a large number of books. Mokhtari et al. (2009) contended that “respondents often have hazy recollections when asked to recall specific details of what they did in large blocks of time over days and weeks; thus, they tend to exaggerate, forget, or underestimate some aspects of their reading habits” (p. 210). Also, the survey and mid-term exam questions did not ask the PSTs to indicate whether or not they read digital texts, so there may be a chance that they did not include this type of reading in their responses.

Directions for Future Research

We wonder what the current reading interests and habits are of undergraduate PSTs who have just completed all their coursework for their degrees? Also, what is their knowledge of children’s and adolescents’ literature and in what ways are they interacting with these texts? As participants often reported on their own school experiences (which we did not ask for), it would be interesting to find out what undergraduate PSTs’ childhood reading interests and habits were and how these impact their current reading interests and habits. In addition to these wonderings, how might course instructors in all content areas in teacher education programs encourage PSTs to increase the amount of reading they do and expand the number of genres they read?

Conclusion

We want to put books into the hands of our preservice teachers so that they do the same with their young readers. The results of our study tell us that we are making an impact, maybe not in the quantity of reading our PSTs do, but, at the very least, we are awakening or reawakening their passion for reading. We know this because of the excitement in their written comments on surveys and mid-semester exams. Reading through thousands of their words made it evident that a course devoted to children’s literature can provide future teachers with a desire to pass along the love of reading to their students and understand that, in one PST’s words,

It DOES matter what type of literature we give to our students. We need to be patient and kind and learn how each and every one of our students learns and what they are interested in.

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SHAPING AND BEING SHAPED: EXPLORING PRESERVICE TEACHERS' LITERACY AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

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Abstract

This qualitative study examined the literacy autobiographies of preservice teachers. The study investigated positive and negative moments in the preservice teachers' lived experience, as well as how they see those experiences influencing their teaching philosophies. Data collection consisted of the preservice teachers' literacy autobiographies. Preliminary findings indicated that all preservice teachers had an early positive view of literacy; however, as they progressed in upper elementary and middle school years they lost interest in reading due to specific instructional practices. The preservice teachers could specifically pinpoint "powerful moments" when their view of themselves as readers/writers shifted. In addition, in reflections the preservice teachers were able to identify ways, based on their own experiences, that they could support literacy in their future classrooms.

It is well documented that teachers serve as gatekeepers in classrooms, developing a classroom culture that values or devalues certain skills, knowledge, and actions. Since teachers were once students, it is not surprising that the beliefs and values can be carried on from teacher to student. Ruddell and Unrau (2004) suggested that the affective and cognitive factors of teachers' backgrounds in classrooms strongly influenced their instructional decisions. Even more alarming is the

consequences of what Applegate and Applegate (2004) call the “Peter Effect”, the negative impact on the literacy futures of pre-service teachers who do not view themselves as readers.

Narratives are an essential element of human life (Barthes, 1975; Grassie, 2008; Taylor, 1989) (as cited in Goodson & Gill, 2011) and serve many purposes. They allow people the ability to construct identities, develop meaning from experiences, and to transform themselves. In the narrative, human actions are united with their intention, values, and purposes (Goodson and Gill, 2011, p. 6). Preservice teachers have long literacy narratives, which trace back to their earliest memories of reading and writing at home. These narratives are dynamic, in a process of being continually constructed and amended as they progress through school.

Understanding the literacy narratives of preservice teachers, as well as how they see them shaping their lives is important to teacher education so that teacher educators can use these literacy narratives in order to help preservice teachers critically reflect on their experiences, rather than replicating them without contemplation in their classroom. The purpose of this study was to investigate the literacy practices that shaped the development of preservice teachers literacy identities, as well as the way preservice teachers see those practices impacting their instructional practices as they prepare to enter the classroom.

Theoretical Framework

In our work, we adopt a social constructivist approach to literacy education. From this perspective we believe that learning occurs through social interaction with others, as students build knowledge by engaging with teachers and students in classrooms. The notion of literacy as a social practice is well established. Heath (1962) argued, “Language is first and foremost a socially-situated cultural form” (p. 253). This argument is supported by Vygotsky’s (2012) claim that the primary function of speech is communication, and, therefore, speech is developed for social purposes. Based on this understanding he argued that social and cultural methods of speaking and acting become a part of the individual’s internal method of constructing meaning.

Staying with the social, collective development of knowledge, Vygotsky asserted that “an essential feature of learning is that it creates the zone of proximal development; that is, learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with peers” (Vygotsky, 2012, p. 90). Allowing students to draw on their funds of knowledge in the construction of

meaning, then allows for the possibilities for all students to be positioned as the more competent other, at different times and spaces during instruction.

From this stance, the literacy classroom is a social environment where students construct meaning not only of course content, but also of what it means to be a student and a teacher. Learning these ideas and concepts can benefit students when it comes to being successful as students, but what about those who have learned what it means to teach from the many years observing teachers, who then decide to study education in order to become a teacher themselves.

Zeichner and Gore (1990) used the theory of teacher socialization to examine teachers' beliefs. This theory proposed that becoming a member of the society of teachers occurred through a process of pre-training as a student, pre-service teacher education, and in-service teaching experiences. Similarly, Lave and Wenger (1991) proposed the idea of Communities of Practice (CoP), which Wegner (2006) defined as a group of people with a common passion who learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.

The CoP framework emphasized the social nature of learning, which is constantly shaped and being reshaped by the members within a broader socio-cultural environment. (Wegner, 1998). In addition, membership in a CoP shapes the individual. In the CoP, as members interact they develop a shared understanding and shared repertoire. The individual is learning as they are becoming, as well as belonging to the community. Lave and Wegner (1991) referred to this process as *legitimate peripheral participation*, a method of apprenticing new members who progress from novice to expert members.

In the context of schools and preservice teachers, the CoP represents their community well. Unknowingly the preservice teacher has been a member of the CoP from the time they first entered formal schooling. As preservice teachers (the *novice*), they are guided and mentored by faculty and cooperating teachers (the *expert*), as well as their former teachers. The preservice teachers' experiences as students, have shaped how they interpret themselves and the world, how they view teaching and learning; as the progress through the teacher education program the CoP continually shapes them. We embraced this idea of the social and historical influences on learning, of a long-history of belonging to a CoP, and the influence both have on preservice teacher's views of literacy.

Review of Literature

Teacher Beliefs

Research has shown (e.g., Bullough, Hobbs, Kauchak, Crow, & Stokes, 1997; Zeichner, 2007) that there is a discrepancy in the pedagogical methods taught

in teacher preparation programs and those that are enacted in school classrooms. Bullough et al. (1997) investigated the perceptions of faculty members in a teacher education program, focusing on tenured-track faculty who were discipline driven researchers and field-focused researchers, as well as clinical faculty. They identified several tensions that occurred across the faculty groups, one being the tension between theory and practice. While they were focused on development of PDS schools, the study identified the need for “instructors who share a commitment to the value of inquiry and reflection in teacher development” (Bullough et al., 1997, p. 94).

Shaw, Dvorak, and Bates (2007) conducted a mixed-methods study which investigated elementary preservice teacher the literacy knowledge, beliefs, and self-efficacy. The research questions sought to investigate the change that occurred in the preservice teachers after completing their literacy methods course. In contrast to earlier studies (Bullough et al., 1997, Zeichner, 2007), they found that the preservice students’ beliefs about literacy changed over the course of the semester, indicating that the teacher educators may in fact have an impact on preservice teachers’ beliefs. They felt that their results may have been influenced by the instructional use of preservice teachers’ prior experiences and beliefs in instruction, as well as their weekly practicum which they completed along with the course.

In a more recent study, Lipp and Helfrich (2016) sought to examine the growth in pre-service teacher’s understandings of literacy best practice. The study used pre and post survey results, student reflections, and observations to analyze the growth in understanding of running records and guided reading groups of 11 undergraduate, elementary preservice teachers. Their findings suggested that, “growth of best practice literacy instruction is shown through preservice teachers’ enhanced abilities to define, assign importance, and relate to implications for student learning as well as develop efficacy around their use” (Lipp & Helfrich, 2016, p. 54). While the study found increased knowledge during the time that they were engaged in a literacy course and field experience, we do not know if the preservice teachers continued to apply this knowledge once they had completed the teacher preparation program.

Literacy Autobiographies

Using reading autobiographies to understand individual’s perceptions of reading is not a new phenomenon, having been used since the 1950s. In her content-area reading class, Powell-Brown (2003) gathered informal oral narratives from her students about their perceptions of reading. She reported that each semester she had students who reported that they did not like to read, although they were capable readers, due to experiences in their K-12 schooling.

In a more formal mixed methods study, Daisey (2009), investigated the attitudes and beliefs about reading of 124 secondary preservice teachers. In their study, they found the K-12 teachers were highly influential in determining their view of reading, both negatively and positively. In addition, they found that by discussing and digging into students experiences, many of them planned to do things differently than their teachers (e.g., read aloud even though their teachers had not read aloud to them). This suggests that through coursework and reflection on preservice teachers' narratives, there is potential to change how students view themselves as readers and the practices they plan to implement in their classroom.

More recently, MacPhee and Sanden (2016) conducted a qualitative study of preservice teachers' literacy histories and reflections on their identities as readers and writers. Their findings identified specific practices (e.g., choice, read alouds, and multi-modal literacies) that motivated students, as well as specific practices (e.g., required reading, round robin reading, and book projects) that discouraged students. They also noted that school writing experiences and grades/test scores were identified as both motivating and discouraging. In delving further into the overlapping categories they argued that it was the environment the teacher created, as well as their perception of how the teacher viewed them that determined whether an experience was positive or negative. They posited, "School practices have a life-long influence on the ways that they [preservice teachers] viewed literacy and its role in their lives" (MacPhee & Sanden, 2016, p. 35).

If a teacher's influence can extend and impact a student's identity for the rest of their life, it is imperative that we help preservice teachers learn from their narratives. To help them reflect on the experiences that have influenced the way they view literacy and what that means for the classroom practices they will enact in their classrooms. Our work sought to help our teachers make connections between their experiences and their beliefs; to help them begin to contemplate (early in their teacher education program) the impact that they can have on student's literacy views and to begin thinking forward to the implications for their classroom.

Methodology

This purpose of this study was to investigate the lived literary experiences of elementary preservice teachers enrolled in a literacy foundations course and how these experiences shaped their views of themselves as readers, as well as their beliefs about literacy practices. Narrative inquiry was used to gather student reflections. This study was designed to answer the following research questions: 1) What patterns do we see in the literacy autobiographies of preservice elementary

teachers? 2) How do they see their literacy experiences as shaping their current view of themselves as readers and writers? 3) How do these experiences shaped their current view of literacy pedagogy?

Participants and Context

The participants were 35 preservice teachers enrolled in an elementary education program at a regional university in Kentucky. Thirty-two of the participants were female with three being male. The majority of the preservice teachers were traditional students, however, two of the female participants were non-traditional students. Participants had been admitted to the Teacher Education Program and were enrolled in one of two different sections of Language Arts Foundations P-5 (ELE 302) course during the spring 2017 semester. ELE 302 is one of the first courses students take once admitted to the program. It provides an overview of the six language arts areas, content and state standards for teaching the language arts, and theories and research related to teaching and learning the language arts.

Data and Analysis

Data for this project consisted of literacy autobiographies composed by the preservice teachers early in the course. This assignment is completed within the first two weeks, to encourage student reflection on their literacy experiences prior to “digging in” to the foundational concepts of literacy instruction. Completing these early, allows us to continually refer back to their autobiographies as we delve into the science of teaching reading, to connect their experiences to instructional practices. We also discuss them in class, analyzing the practices that were viewed negatively and positively by different students and why that may be. The Literacy Autobiography Project (Appendix) required preservice teachers to reflect on their literacy experiences across their schooling. Both researchers read the narratives after the semester was complete and identified themes and issues using emergent coding (Merriam, 2009). Initially, each of the researchers coded the autobiographies independently. After completing initial coding, the researchers met and discussed initial codes, refined and collapsed the coding system, then recoded the autobiographies. Our position as social constructivists influenced our coding, as we were both drawn to the social influences in instruction and how they shaped our students’ literacy identities. After several iterations of coding we focused on specific classroom practices, the influence of important individuals, and how the preservice teacher sees the moments impacting their teaching.

Findings

In their literacy autobiographies our participants identified both positive and negative impacts on their literacy development. In our analysis, we also noted that as students progressed through school they described a decreasing interest in reading. In the following sections we will discuss the practices, people, and ways that the preservice teachers discussed being shaped by their literacy autobiography.

Early Childhood and Elementary Experiences

Twenty-one of the preservice teachers commented on parents and grandparents that provided a positive influence early in their literacy experience. These experiences included family members reading aloud to them at night, visits to the library, purchase of books and magazines, and participation in family reading nights. Students consistently remarked on the importance of family members' participation in their early literacy experience, especially the significance of reading aloud to them at night. One student described the impact that her father made on her literacy journey:

My father was an avid reader. One summer, my father, mother, sister and myself gathered every other night in the living room for dad to read to us. He had finished a cheesy horror novel and felt that he could omit the bad parts, but also invite us on this adventure that really gave me the best impression of reading. We all listened eagerly to every word that came out of his mouth. Our expressions were priceless and he ended shocking paragraphs with bulging eyes and emphasis on the last few words of dramatic paragraphs. His excitement for reading made more of an impact on me than anything in my k-12 education ever would.

Another student expanded on the love of reading that developed with a home library:

During the fourth grade year, my mother and father remodeled one of our spare bedrooms and turned it into a library. Mainly for my mother because she ran out of room on her bookshelves in her office, but because of this home library, I became more interested in reading. I loved going into this baby blue room with big white bookshelves full of so many different authors and genres. Just by being in that room, I felt smarter and more intelligent.

Twelve of the preservice teachers reflected on the significance of elementary teachers reading picture books aloud to them in an engaging fashion. Of interest, students also elaborated on middle and high school teachers who also read aloud to the class. Students viewed this as a “bonding” time and specifically recalled the books that made an impression on them. As Mary (pseudonym) stated. . . .

In 3rd grade, I remember my teacher reading Old Yeller and Where the Red Fern Grows out loud to the class. Even though at that point we were reading to learn instead of learning to read, I still think it was more beneficial to us that she read those books out loud to us. I could have grasped the concept easily enough but I got more of the book because she would stop reading and have us talk about what happened.

Reading Incentives

A major theme that developed among the writers of the Literacy Autobiographies was the implementation of reading incentives (e.g., Accelerated Reader, Book-It, etc.) at the elementary and middle grade levels. As shown in Table 1, eleven preservice teachers viewed Accelerated Reader as a negative aspect of their literacy experience. Some of the negative experiences associated with this program included that one had to read books within one’s reading level, points were tied to grades, and teachers put too much pressure on students to get the required points. Unfortunately, a few students commented that Accelerated Reader caused them not to want to read; therefore, leading to a negative view of reading. As one student from a rural school system stated,

During my 7th grade year, I got the (AR) book point (sic) I was required to get, but there was no incentive. If you didn’t get them, it would affect your English score on your report card. Over the course of my 8th grade year I made a wild decision. I informed my parents that I would take

TABLE 1
Reading Incentive Programs

Effect	Accelerated Reader	Pizza Hut—Book It Program	Reading Counts
Positive	4	5	1
Negative	11	0	0

N = 21

an F for my Accelerated Reader points and make an A in my English class. My grade would then average out to a B since the accelerated points only counted for a small percentage. I had decided to completely walk away from reading books.

The preservice teachers that commented on the positive aspects of an incentive based reading program specifically mention receiving pizzas, prizes, and recognition (oral and written). They wrote about the joy they felt when they were recognized for achieving their goals. Lisa (pseudonym) wrote about a special incentive when she completed one hundred AR tests:

After a few days, my teacher called me out into the hall to tell me what my reward was. She told me that my reward would be [I would be] teacher for the day! I was so excited I could hardly sit still. A few weeks later I had put on my prettiest dress and came to school ready to teach! My parents had come with me to school to see me be teacher for the day! I taught math, and then read to the class some books we were reading. The local newspaper people came as well and took pictures of me reading to my class. They published the picture with an article in the newspaper and I was on cloud 9! That is by far my favorite reading memory, and it also made me more excited to be a teacher myself one day!

Middle and High School Experiences

An alarming discovery, while reading the Literacy Autobiographies, was the amount of preservice teachers ($n = 16$) who reflected on how they developed a negative view of reading in the middle grades. They specifically mentioned that they were subjected to specific reading lists and most of the titles were not in their areas of interest. They began to look at reading as a chore. Reading teachers who did not made reading a chore by doing such things as consistently assigning worksheets, not actively engaging students, and lack of motivation were specifically noted. From a positive standpoint, eight students ($n = 8$) reflected on their teacher's influence in the middle grades years by assisting them in the selection of chapter book series, thereby, creating a fondness for reading.

During the high school years, eight students noted that they were subjected to pre-determined reading lists that were of no interest to the student, which created a negative view of reading. Trips to the library became less frequent, and engaging activities promoting reading were almost non-existent. We also noticed that some of the preservice teachers wrote about Advanced Placement classes

that were taught by engaging teachers who directed students in such activities as Project Based Learning and incorporating drama into the classroom.

Writing Experiences in Elementary, Middle and High School

Writing at the elementary level consisted of preservice teachers (n = 5) who reflected on learning to write letters and sentences and the positive motivation they received from their teacher. Seven students reflected on the joy of being able to write stories at home and at school. They mentioned the joy they felt from the creation of their own story or poem. Peer editing at the upper elementary and middle grades, along with writing to pen pals from another country was described as a very positive experience. Sixteen students expanded on negative experiences of writing at the elementary, middle, and high school level. The negative experiences ranged from writing portfolios, On-Demand Writing, informative essays, and book reports. The common theme throughout these negative experiences was that they were not given a choice to write about what interested them. As one student stated:

In kindergarten, I was able to create my own book, it was part of the Young Authors competition. I created the most fantastic book that I personally wrote and illustrated. I remember how fantastic it felt to hold my book after my teacher added the plastic binding. I was so proud and felt that everyone should read this book. After all, it was published, it must have been fantastic. That was the only year that the young authors program would inspire me. After that, specific requirements for my book would be needed. Why even bother writing anything if it wasn't what I wanted to write?

Preservice Teachers' Reflections

The reflection component of the assignment asked students to reflect on their written Literacy Autobiographies and how those experiences shaped their view of themselves as readers and writers. Furthermore, they were asked to expand on how these experiences shaped their current view of literacy pedagogy. Of interest, the majority of the preservice teachers could specifically pinpoint a time in their academic career that served as a catalyst in their own view of being a reader and writer, and many of them specifically mentioned that this assignment required them to reflect on how the influences of family members and teachers shaped their literacy viewpoints, and how this would impact their future classroom.

Out of the thirty-five preservice teachers who participated in this assignment, twenty-two participants referred to teachers who made the literacy

classroom fun and engaging. They specifically mentioned the reason that this teacher was noteworthy (i.e., teacher read to them in different voices, motivated them to read, allowed them to act out books, “weaved” literacy into different content areas, allowed them to have a reading buddy, and displayed a passion for literacy through “fun” activities). The preservice teachers also commented about teachers who provided an “inviting” place to read. These places included a reading loft, reading tent, and beanbags. They also wrote about how these engaging teachers inspired them to imitate this in their own classroom.

Allowing students to choose what they want to read and write was an overarching theme in the reflections. Sixteen preservice teachers positively commented on teachers who allowed them to select books that interested them at the elementary, middle, and high school level. They also reflected on teachers who allowed them to “just write” about events, feelings, and thoughts that were of importance to them in writing journals that were not graded. For many of these students, their love of writing of stories and poetry developed from a freelance approach initiated by influential teachers, as eloquently stated below:

I always appreciated the teachers who would give us journal time and then proceed to say that they wouldn't read it, only check to see if it was done. I think that this is great because the students have time to express their thoughts and feelings as well as get the privacy they desire. They don't have to censor their writing, nor do they have to feel shy about their writing. They can write what they want and they're the only ones who have to see it.

Lack of choice in reading was an area that elicited a negative passionate response. Eight preservice teachers commented that they knew that certain books were required, especially at the high school level, but not being able to select books that interested them, curtailed their love of reading. They stated, in their own classroom, that they would provide students with different genres and allow them to select what they want to read. Likewise, a structured writing process (i.e. sandwich method, five paragraph essay) provided students with a lack of motivation for a meaningful writing experience. Six preservice teachers commented that they would teach different methods of writing in their own classrooms, then allow students to complete a writing topic in different formats and allow them to choose which one they prefer. One preservice teacher eloquently stated:

As a future educator, I want to give my students the opportunity to understand that writing can be enjoyable. Writing is not math or science. Writing is writing. We try to fit writing into a little box of do's and

don'ts. We write papers like math equations—one step at a time and if one step is skipped or missed, the end result is completely wrong. Wrong according to whom though? I aim to provide my students with diverse reading and writing experiences in order to show that such subjects are flexible as well as fun under the right circumstances.

Conclusion

Thirty-five preservice teachers responded to the questions concerning their background and development in the area of literacy. Our findings align with those of earlier researchers (Powell-Brown, 2003; Daisey, 2009). Our students do not claim the identity of readers and through the autobiographies discussed instructional modifications they could make to encourage literacy in their classroom. A majority of the respondents reported positive experiences in early childhood. Positive experiences in elementary school were often connected to the instructional practices of the teacher, included teachers reading to students and the uses of reading incentives. Similarly instructional practices (e.g., pressure, associating reading for points, and AR) had negative impacts on preservice teachers' views of reading. In middle school, a negative view of reading emerged in middle school in which teachers required reading which did not illicit the interest of the students. Required reading lists, teachers who did not make reading fun, and use of worksheets contributed to the negative view of reading in middle and high school. Writing in elementary, middle, and high school resulted in similar findings. However, those who were provided an opportunity for choice reported more positive experiences. While the impact of specific instructional practices was not a surprise to us, the use of the autobiographies as a way to consider future pedagogy seemed to allow the preservice teacher time to reflect and consider the impacts of specific practices. Our hope is that by highlighting and discussing these experiences and their long-term impact on students' literacy identities, as well as having students consider the implication on their teaching futures we can begin to push-back against the "Peter Effect" (Applegate & Applegate, 2004). This builds on the work of Ruddell and Unrau (2004).

It was disheartening to read the many autobiographies of students who began their lives with a love of literacy, which over time was extinguished through instructional practices and teacher behaviors. This indicates to us that despite the efforts of teacher educators, the discrepancy between best practice pedagogical methods taught in teacher preparation programs, assimilation into the CoP of practicing teachers during their K-12 years, and the influence of affective and cognitive factors of teachers' backgrounds are continuing to influence

pedagogical practice. In our study, the literacy autobiographies provided a foundation and allowed students to begin with their funds of knowledge, in order to develop and build meaning from the course content. Our intention was that by beginning with their experiences, we could use the social-constructive approach in our classroom in order to strengthen the influence of preservice education in the CoP in which students are situated.

Considering the number of respondents who discussed affective moments in the educational experiences, we feel that preservice teacher educators need to spend more time helping students process their experiences, as well as critically evaluating them and considering the impact on different students. Going forward, we would like to continue to follow these students, conducting focal-group interviews and observations as they progress through the teacher education program to delve further into how reflecting and analyzing their experiences can help shape the way they think about literacy pedagogy. Ideally, we can follow them as they transition to in-service teachers to see if this leads to any influence on their instruction.

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APPENDIX

ELE 302- Literacy Autobiography

Narrative is radical, creating us at the very moment it is being created
—Toni Morrison, Nobel Prize Speech

Overview:

Write a 4-5 page paper (typed double-spaced) that explores your literacy background and or development and describe how this background influences your current philosophies about teaching writing. The **final page** should include the heading Reflection and reflect on how your story impacts your views of teaching.

Goals:

As teachers we are shaped by our own experiences, these experiences then shape the way we teach, the way we respond to students, and the instructional decisions we make. Every person has his or her own unique relationship with books. In order to understand what has shaped your views of literacy you must first investigate them. In this assignment you will write an autobiography that focuses on your development in literacy, going back as far as you can remember. This is the story of how you learned to read and write, how you formed your opinions about reading and books. If you have certain vivid literacy memories—either positive or negative—these are excellent milestones to use in your literacy development. (Outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 4)

Getting Started:

For this assignment, you'll need to prepare by culling your memories. Jot notes to yourself as you try to go back as far as you can to the first time you actually remember reading and/or writing something—anything. Think about how and

when and where and with whom you learned to read and write, how you learned to use language effectively (to get something you wanted, to make someone laugh or cry, to change someone's mind). Think about the kinds of reading and writing you have done at various stages of your life: What did you read and write before you started school? When you were 7 or 8? When you were a teenager? In college? Think about the places where you have read and written, and the times, and how you felt. You might use questions like the following to prompt your memories:

Books/Materials

- Favorites/least favorites at each age, why?
- Characters/authors you remember
- The look/feel of a book
- Did you have different experiences with different sorts of reading materials: hardcovers, paperbacks, comic books, magazines, reference books, cereal boxes?
- What sorts of reading materials were in your house?
- Did you own books?
- Did you borrow books from others?
- Did you receive them as gifts?
- Favorites/least favorites at each age, why?
- Characters/authors you remember?
- What type of writing did you do?
- What purpose did writing serve?

Places

- Where/when did you read? Write?
- Where did you find books and/or other reading materials?
- Did you buy, acquire, or check out books at school? In your community?
- Did you go to the public or school library?

People

- Who do you think most influenced your reading? Writing? Why?
- What role did teachers have in shaping you as a reader? Writer?
- Who were other people who shaped your reading?

- Were these positive or negative influences?
- Did you share books with friends?
- Did you share your writing?
- How did people react?
- Did you go to the library with family/friends?
- Did you talk about books?

Final page-Reflecting on the Story:

- Are there overall patterns you notice in your reading history? Ways that reading has functioned in your life? Ways that it used to function that are no longer the case? What was reading and writing like in elementary school? In middle school? In high school? What did you read/write when you weren't in school?
- In considering your entire story up to this point, what, if anything, do you notice about your own experiences with literacy; reading, writing, and/ or texts that can help inform your future work as an elementary educator?

SUPPORTING LITERACY TEACHING THROUGH REHEARSAL

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Abstract

Drawing from a case study of a semester-long school-based practice-oriented undergraduate literacy education course this article examines from a practitioner inquiry lens how the language utilized by the teacher educator within rehearsals supported the development of pre-service teachers in learning to teach. An analysis of 43 rehearsals delineated functions of language that framed the rehearsal generally in addition to functions of language that sought to support the enactment of specific literacy instruction routines. Suggestions are made for entry points for teacher educators seeking to utilize rehearsals in their own literacy education coursework.

Introduction

With growing pressure on teacher education programs to respond to the ever-evolving and increasingly complex reality of schools, there is a renewed focus on practice-based approaches, shifting learning within teacher education programs from learning *about* teaching to learning *how* to teach (Ball & Forzani, 2009; Zeichner, 2012). Such a shift has required the development of pedagogical approaches that support planning for, enactment of, and reflection upon teaching in ways that prepare pre-service teachers to impact student learning on day one of their first day in their classrooms. To that end, this piece takes up the question of whether differing types of teacher educator's feedback on pre-service teachers' practice impacts their ability to enact literacy instruction.

Theoretical Framework

With a renewed focus on learning *how* to teach, rather than about teaching, my work in teacher education is framed by social learning theory, particularly communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015). Within this framework, learning is conceived of the ways by which one comes to be recognized as a particular identity by other members of that community. Ways of being recognized include ways of using language and using specialized vocabulary to demonstrate capacity of one's belonging, ways of acting, and enacting particular routines that belong to the particular group, and learning and utilizing knowledge that is unique to that particular group. Within a teacher education program, the role of a teacher educator is like that of a guide, seeking to support pre-service teachers (PSTs) as they move from marginal activity at the edges of the community, such as when observing classroom activity, to center, where they, themselves, are engaged in the activity of teaching. To be clear, in this instance, I am less interested as a teacher educator in supporting communities of practice bound to my individual course; while this is important, I emphasize connecting my PSTs to the larger practices of teaching literacy education. Through connecting to larger Discourses (Gee, 1989) of how we are recognizable as literacy educators, we build sturdy identities within the local context of our coursework while participating in a larger, global conversation about literacy teaching and teachers.

Conceptual Framework

Given the theoretical framing of my course operating as a conduit for more intensive and nuanced participation in the community of practice made up by literacy educators, several concepts, specifically practice and competency, become essential when considering course design. For some, practice refers to time spent learners within an educational context, whether the context is a school or a community agency. While such an approach increases exposure, it does little to support the ways PSTs are learning how to teach within these contexts. In other words, the challenges of preparing competent teachers will not be addressed by simply increasing the number of hours they spend within the field with learners. For the purpose of this article, *practice*-based teacher education is conceived of as “professional training that attempts to focus novices’ learning more directly on the work of teaching” (Forzani, 2014, p. 357). In this respect, practice emphasizes the qualities and alignment of experience with focus on how teaching is enacted. There is an “intense focus on particular, well-specified practices and not

on the length of time students spend ‘in the field’ or the orientation of a program to a specific community or school district” (Forzani, 2014, p. 358).

With practice being specific work involved in enacting teaching, it becomes important to consider the ways in which PSTs demonstrate competency. In the design of coursework, I have borrowed definitions of competency from multicultural education (Sue, Arredondo & McDavis, 1992), thinking of competency as having three interrelated dimensions: beliefs, knowledge, and skills. Beliefs are those mindsets about teaching, learning, and learners that impact the act of teaching. For each global competency, there are certain ontological perspectives a PST must embody or wrestle with in order to demonstrate that competency. In addition, there are specific kinds of knowledge a PST must possess in order to make instruction meaningful for and responsive to students. A Making Words lesson (Cunningham & Cunningham, 1992), for instance, is but a routine if the PST does not have significant content knowledge in phonics and an understanding of orthography. Finally, there are specific skills, or practices, that promote learning within the routine. These instructional routines provide a container for learning about how to teach (Lampert & Graziani, 2009).

Methodology

Context

The UMSL-Normandy Literacy Clinic is the gravitational center of literacy education coursework at the University of Missouri, St. Louis (UMSL). A five-year-old partnership between the school district and UMSL, the Literacy Clinic utilizes school-wide screening data to identify students who are “average” within a singular grade, typically second or third, for small instructional teams of PSTs to enact literacy instruction with. This screening data is supplemented with a variety of diagnostic literacy assessments that shape targeted small group literacy instruction.

All PSTs enrolled in the Literacy Clinic are responsible for the data of one elementary student. This is meant to support dialogue about student learning that emphasizes learning and changes in learning across the clinic as a whole, rather than isolating conversation to small groups. While each PST is responsible for the data of one student, they work in instructional teams of, typically, three-to-four peers; collaboratively, they are responsible for the planning of a lesson enactment. Individually, one member of the instructional team becomes the lead instructor for any given week; the role of lead instructor shifts from one week to the next, meaning all PSTs have equal opportunities to be an instructional lead

multiple times throughout the course of the semester, typically twice. The two non-lead members of the instructional team are then tasked with one of two jobs: observing the elementary students within the teaching enactment and tracking the ways in which instructional time is used.

Instruction lasts for approximately one hour and is broken up in manageable chunks using a variety of instructional routines adapted from a small group guided reading lesson plan (Richardson, 2016). Instructional teams collaborate using Google Docs, an official collaboration tool of the university, to plan for instruction. Google Docs allows a convenient and efficient method for instructional planning. These instructional plans, written in narrative form, are reviewed by myself and returned to the team for revisions prior to rehearsal and enactment, allowing PSTs to develop a familiarity and expertise in their planning before rehearsing one small piece of their plan in anticipation of teaching.

Rehearsals (Lampert et.al., 2013) are opportunities to walk through one small section of an instructional plan; just as in a rehearsal for a play. This pedagogical routine allows PSTs to consider their language choices, the use of instructional materials, and further refine their instructional plan. Rehearsals are an emerging pedagogy of enactment (Grossman & McDonald, 2008), which has proven particularly powerful in math education courses (Kazemi, Ghouseini, Cunard, & Turrou, 2015). Within the context of the Literacy Clinic, instructional leads self-select a smaller piece of their larger instructional plan to enact in front of their peers. In this pedagogical approach, PSTs play the roles of the elementary students within the small group; the student the PST is embodying corresponds with the individual student whose data they are steward of. Due to this, the PSTs that are roleplaying students have knowledge of the elementary students' literacy strengths and areas for growth as reported in their literacy assessment data and well as the weekly reflections on student learning instructional teams must file at the close of every clinic meeting. This knowledge allows the PSTs to respond within the rehearsal in ways that align with what is known about the elementary student and promotes another perspective on how elementary students might respond to literacy instruction.

Rehearsals, however, are not peer reviews. The teacher educator in any given rehearsal interacts with both the instructional lead as well as the PSTs in the roles of students, providing coaching around language choice, material use, and content knowledge within any given instructional routine. It is an intensely personal act, one that at first PSTs often think of as intimidating given the immediacy of feedback, but ultimately beneficial in their development as teachers (Husbye, 2016). The purpose of this particular article is to understand the ways feedback moves by a teacher educator within rehearsals support the literacy teaching of

pre-service teachers, turning a critical eye to the ways in which I, as a teacher educator, structure rehearsals within my school-located, practice-based course.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data utilized in this manuscript reflects one semester of a multiple case study project (Yin, 2013) using a practitioner inquiry lens (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009) to understand the mechanisms that support ambitious teaching in literacy education. Data collected includes audio and video recordings of teaching rehearsals and enactments, PST-produced instructional plans, weekly reflections on teaching and student learning, and mid- and end-of-semester interviews. For the purpose of this article, data analysis focuses on rehearsals and how I, as the teacher educator, structured the functions of my talk to support PST development as an educator in a single school-based, practice-oriented course of undergraduate pre-service teachers during the spring 2017 semester. A total of 43 rehearsals were analyzed. Each rehearsal was transcribed and then descriptively coded based upon the particular element of the instructional plan that was rehearsed (Saldaña, 2009).

Analysis of the rehearsals was approached in two phases. In the first phase, I analyzed the language structuring the rehearsal for generalities, seeking to understand common approaches to establishing the rehearsal, regardless of what element of their instructional plan a PST was rehearsing. The second phase of analysis sought to move beyond generalities to consider the factors I emphasized as I spoke with PSTs about their teaching in the rehearsal. Utilizing previous coding schemes, I was able to isolate specific routines (Word Work: Making Words or Book Introductions, for example) to establish the frequency with which I posed particular kinds of questions or reframed teaching activity. These were coded in terms of function: how did they help PSTs respond, in the moment, to have both fidelity to the instructional routine as well as student learning? These codes and a random selection of examples of each code were then checked against a critical peer group familiar with this work to ensure a minimization of researcher bias in the larger project.

Findings

Framing the Rehearsal: Front End

Despite rehearsals seeking to explore a variety of instructional routines as enacted by the PSTs, there were several common functions I employed as teacher educator to frame the rehearsal itself. Two moves at the onset of a rehearsal were nearly universal across the dataset: *professional decision making* and *awareness of boundaries*. Professional decision making is a larger umbrella code referring to

scaffolding PST thinking around two interrelated concepts: the instructional routines themselves as well as the ways in which they see these instructional routines connecting to student learning. Rehearsals nearly always begin with *tell me about this routine*, or some derivative of the question. The function of this routine is to highlight PSTs' understanding of the routine itself; by the time they reach rehearsal, there have been multiple opportunities to defossilize (Vygostky, 1978) the routine into its component parts. I want to ensure that PSTs can speak to the various moving parts, as it were, they are about to enact with their peers, and ultimately with their elementary students. A closely linked question is that of *how will this support your students' learning?* Also housed in professional decision making, this question highlights the PST's understanding of the affordances of the instructional routine and how that routine matches the instructional needs of the small group they are working with.

The second move, *understanding of boundaries*, refers to the ways PSTs acknowledge and reflect upon their development as a teacher, particularly attending to the boundaries of their own knowledge about teaching. Within a rehearsal I utilize questions that seek to help frame boundaries of what PSTs know and what they believe they know, with the understanding those boundaries will be pushed throughout the course of our collective work during the semester. The purpose of this kind of questioning is not to identify what the PST knows and does not know, though it certainly does do this, but rather to create possible learning futures for my PSTs. Borrowing from Peter Johnston (2012), I work to emphasize in my language with my PSTs what they do not know *yet*.

Knowing the various components of any given instructional routine is content-based knowledge, whereas understanding the complexities of selecting an instructional routine to support student learning requires synthesis and an awareness of the routine and student data. This kind of understanding needs to be supported through questioning. For example:

Nicholas: Right, so that's how a sound sort functions. Now, talk with us about this supports your students' learning. Why this routine?

Cassie¹: Um . . . well. I don't know, I was thinking about the part of the plan I felt okay doing but guess I didn't really think about how this connected to their learning.

Nicholas: Okay, so let's back up for a second. What's your process goal for word work this week?

1. Names of all pre-service teachers are pseudonyms.

- Cassie: To, um, to be able to differentiate between long-I and short-I sounds.
- Nicholas: Where did that come from? Why did you choose that goal?
- Cassie: Well, I was looking at the spelling features, the primary spelling inventory, and most of the students in my group didn't, they didn't get the long I and short I sound. It's the only short vowel some of them struggled with.
- Nicholas: Great, so you just described some of your decision making around your goals, so we're going to shift to linking that to the routine. [turns to class] So let's help Cassie think about whether this objective, this goal, matches with the routine. Who can help? [Morgan raises here hand.] Morgan, help us understand.
- Morgan: So, I could be wrong, not my students, but I think it matches because it might be they don't know the, the graphemes]
- Unidentified: [Interjection: Phonemes!]
- Morgan: [right, thank you, the phonemes, so you would want to make sure they knew the difference between /i/ and /i/. You're sorting, so this would give them experience doing that.]
- Nicholas: Well-reasoned, other thoughts?
- Cassie: Can I jump back in? So that got me thinking about, about the spelling part. So I want them to, at the end, be able to spell these things, right? So am I doing the wrong routine? This is just sounds.
- Morgan: Right, sounds now, but the next routine might be analogy charts where you introduce the spelling patterns. It's like Nick said last week, it's not a sprint, it's a marathon.
- Cassie: I just haven't had to connect all of this before.
- Nicholas: Right, that's why we're here, that's why we rehearse, to figure these things out. It's the first time we're doing this, so it's weird thinking in these ways, but it's one of the competencies we'll work on over the course of the semester. I'm always going to be interested in your thinking about your decisions, you've been warned. Let's move into rehearsing the sort.

The above vignette from a rehearsal demonstrates the ways in which PSTs think about both the mechanisms of any given instructional routine as well as how that instructional routine allows them to engage in meaningful work with their elementary students. Throughout this portion of dialogue, coming after Cassie's explanation of the steps she will engage in when enacting her sound sort, both Cassie as well as some of her peers are building hypotheses about teaching literacy, particularly how to develop competencies in professional decision making. Within a rehearsal, I always want to engage beyond the sole instructional lead rehearsing; in this rehearsal, I pivot from Cassie, who is building an understanding of the interconnectedness of the instructional planning I have asked them to engage in, to her peers to help build a hypothesis in regards to the ways the routine is connected to her instructional goals. Morgan provides an explanation, moving to a use of discipline-specific language with *graphemes*, which is edited by an anonymous classmate to *phonemes*. Such work emphasizes our mutual investment in one another's development as literacy educators. Furthermore, as rehearsals continue across time, the nature of these questions shift, interrogating the potentials and limitations of individual instructional routines as elementary students' growth requires more sophisticated teaching. Opening a rehearsal with questions that emphasize professional *decision making* and *awareness of boundaries* allow us, as a class, to reinforce what we know about teaching while also coming to recognize things yet to be understood.

Routine-Specific Coaching

While rehearsals tended to follow a consistent opening, regardless of the instructional routine being rehearsed, the specifics of coaching during the teaching portion of the rehearsal shifts depended upon the routine. That said, there are several commonalities that hold true when I am structuring a rehearsal in the moment. My coaching tends to align with three functions: *coherence*, *invitations to improvise*, and *collaborative engagement*. *Coherence* refers to the ways in which the enactment, the *doing* of teaching the routine, aligns with the goals set forth by the PST. Table 1 provides an outline of the practices within each routine I seek to support through my coaching. *Invitations to improvise* posit alternative trajectories for PSTs to consider in terms of their own teaching as well as the reactions of the elementary students to that teaching. *Collaborative engagement* seeks to support the ways in which the class, as a whole, engages in the rehearsal during what could be conceived of an individual endeavor. Given that each routine differs in the ways it is enacted during teaching, each routine has specific elements that serve as something of a gravitational pull in terms of my feedback within the routine itself.

TABLE 1
Elements of Import in Individual Literacy Instructional Routines

Routine	Elements of Import
High Frequency Words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sequence of Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ What's Missing ◦ Mix and Fix ◦ Table Writing ◦ Dry Erase Board • Word Choice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Why that word?
Book Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connects to prior knowledge without pulling attention away from the text to be read. • Provides a gist of the story that allows readers access to text without giving away challenges / secrets. • Vocabulary is necessary to the story and of high utility. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Vocabulary with appropriate support is left for readers to discern (if vocabulary strategies have been taught).
Coaching Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough text analysis attends to the challenges within the text that readers may encounter. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Strategies to support independent reading have been identified. <u>Cannot</u> be “sound it out.”
Book Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a variety of question types that utilize answers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ found within the text, ◦ use information found within the text but requires some organization by the readers, ◦ and is grounded in readers’ experiences and connected to text. • Questions connect to content and process goals laid out at the beginning of the lesson.
Word Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selects a word study routine that correlates with the unit (sound, spelling pattern, rime, etc.) to be studied. • Unit is chosen based upon student data. • Closing statement supports generalization.
Guided Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Framework for guided writing connects to text. • If dictated: sentences emphasize practice of spelling patterns and high frequency words being studied. • If structured: structure supports deeper understanding of the text.

To illustrate: this is a rehearsal from a lesson coming early in the semester wherein PST Kennedy is rehearsing her book introduction for the text *Growing a Salad* (Smith, 2004) in front of a group of her peers representing the readers in her small group.

- Kennedy: Hi friends. Today, um, today we're going to read a book called *Growing a Salad*. Have any of you eaten a salad before?
- [Heads nod.]
- Kennedy: And what was that like?
- Nicholas: Time [out]. Kennedy, you changed this first section of your book introduction. Talk to me about your thinking.
- Kennedy: So in my lesson plan, I went straight into the gist of the book and you wondered about how, like how entertaining that would be for the readers. So I thought starting out with a question would be a way to get them engaged and thinking about the book.
- Nicholas: Okay, so, so tell me about the gist of your book.
- Kennedy: It's a boy and his mom and they, um, live in an apartment so they grow a garden on their balcony. Terrace? Anyway, they eat what they grow.
- Nicholas: Readers, think about the gist Kennedy just gave you and I want you to think about how the start of the book introduction would support your student's reading of this book. What are your thoughts?
- Daniel: I think it's a bit misleading, right? The book is called *Growing a Salad*, but the important part is the growing, not the salad. So, um, starting with the salad gets them thinking about things that aren't as important.
- Kennedy: You're so right. It's Clara's book introduction [rehearsal done the prior week].
- Nicholas: What did we learn from Clara's book introduction?
- Clara: Not to rehearse book introductions? [laughter]
- Nicholas: Stop, it was good, there was good work there. So let's build on that.
- Clara: One thing you could do, the thing Nick made me think about, was getting kids into the text with experiences, but to experiences that matter, you know, kind of like what you're trying to do with the salad but not the salad. So [turns to Nicholas] could she say something like "Have you planted a seed before?"

- Nicholas: So, let's entertain that, that question for a second. Kennedy, what kind of reaction did you get when you asked your question about the salad?
- Kennedy: They, uh, just nodded. They didn't say anything.
- Nicholas: Why do you think that is?
- Kennedy: Because the question is yes or no. It doesn't make kids say anything.
- Nicholas: So does Clara's question change that?
- Clara: No, I just asked the same question.
- Nicholas: Right, so try this question: what do we need to plant a seed? You may want to, Kennedy, get a dry erase board and make a list. Try that.
- Kennedy: So does it matter that that will be my vocabulary too? Like, if they say soil, do I have to go over it again?
- Nicholas: Nope, but you'll want to think through how to integrate your vocabulary if you can. Let's try it.

In this rehearsal, we collectively interrogate through collaborative engagement the opening question of the book introduction in terms of how it connects to and prepares readers for successful, independent reading of the text. Kennedy is asked to consider the ways in which her initial question both invites interaction as well as prepares her students for the subject matter. While Kennedy had a solid understanding of the gist of the story, she had not determined the importance of concepts within the text. Her initial question was tangentially related to the text; we were able, as a collaborative, to build from a previous rehearsal (Clara's, in particular) to consider students' possible uptake of the questions they are asked in a book introduction. This coaching supported the development of coherence to the larger rehearsal. Given the time constraints of a rehearsal, I invited Kennedy to engage in improvisational work, asking her to try out a new question and see where it might lead.

Framing the Rehearsal: Back End

When I first began using rehearsals in my coursework, the instructional routine would be rehearsed and the rehearsal would end. As I watched my PSTs enact their lessons afterward, I noticed, and they reported in reflections, a nervousness about addressing all that was discussed in a rehearsal. It was difficult in situ to

maintain all the feedback in ways that were not overwhelming. I began with this semester's students to *synthesize* and *determine importance* the rehearsal. As an example, the closure for Kennedy's rehearsal:

Nicholas: Okay, Kennedy, we've covered a lot in your book introduction, from your initial question for engagement to your vocabulary introduction. You always want to be thinking about how these things help students with the text, how does it support them in reading it on their own? When you're teaching, really focus in on that first question and make it stick to the book. I know the rest of your team is updating the plan [on Google Docs] but changes are always tricky. When you're teaching, remember to give yourself wait time, just like you would with your students, to make sure you're connecting to the book.

In this example, just as we ask the students we work with the balance both process and content goal, I give Kennedy two goals: a process goal to maintain an awareness of how her scaffolding activity prepares students to read the text independently and a content goal to address the initial question in her book introduction. The content goal is immediately obtainable while the process goal continues to develop across the course of the semester.

Discussion

Pre-service teachers who experience Literacy Clinic report how the coaching within a rehearsal is beneficial in their development as teachers (Husbye, 2016); inquiries are often made by other faculty in regards to bringing rehearsals into their own coursework. The purpose of this present work has been to make the functions of the language I use with PSTs within a rehearsal clear so that others might adopt a similar pedagogical approach, with the understanding that rehearsals, just like teaching, are personal but also public and may differ from the rehearsals I have described here. Rather, I have sought to identify functions of language that lend themselves to supporting PSTs in becoming members of a community of practice as they are learning how to teach. Through these exchanges, PSTs begin to revoice, internalize, and reflect upon ways of teaching that are recognizable by a larger community.

Since this article has been a snapshot of the work my PSTs and I have done in our school-based literacy education course over the course of one semester, it

has relied heavily on my own analysis of the rehearsals we engaged in over the course of that semester; while I have attempted to address validity within the analysis through checking with a critical peer group, they were only provided with a random selection of examples for each code. As such, no one with the peer group knows the breadth or scope of the data set. While these findings align with my lived experiences of these rehearsals, there is always the potential for bias. Additionally, this article has focused on rehearsals as a way to support literacy teaching; while it has provided snapshots of the ways I have used rehearsals as a way to coach my PSTs into ambitious literacy education instructional routines, I have not addressed the teaching enactments. Further work coming out of this data will address this limitation, seeking to connect what occurs in a rehearsal with the teaching enactment with children.

Moving forward, as teacher education continues to shift toward practice-oriented experiences for PSTs, the channels by which PSTs receive feedback about their teaching in the moment. Drawing parallels between coaching and instructional change in elementary schools (Walpole, McKenna, Uribe-Zarain, & Lamitina, 2010), coaching as seen in a rehearsal becomes an important support in helping our PSTs develop competencies around ambitious literacy education for students (see Husbye, Wessel Powell, Vander Zanden, & Karalis, 2018).

Conclusion

For teacher education programs, it seems there are a never-ending litany of resources that will be inaccessible, for any given number of reasons. Teacher education programs are being continually asked to, as the colloquialism goes, do more with less. My work with rehearsals in my school-based practice-oriented course is not an attempt to do more with less, but to adopt approaches to teacher preparation in literacy education that are more efficient and impactful. Depending upon the size a class, rehearsals represent a large time investment, and time is a resource that, while stable, is also finite. This work sought to understand, at a somewhat basic level, the moves I was making as a teacher educator to support my PSTs in their learning *how* to teach.

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PHONICS AND PHONEMIC AWARENESS IN A TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM: AN ANALYSIS OF THE ACHIEVEMENT AND PERCEPTIONS OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS

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Abstract

This mixed methods study examines the achievement and perceptions of 104 pre-service teachers enrolled in a literacy methods class with specific instruction in phonics and phonemic awareness. Quantitative data was collected from the course-embedded pre-test and post-test and was analyzed with descriptive statistics. Qualitative data was collected from a student questionnaire on phonics instruction and was analyzed using conventional and summative content analysis. The results of the study show that pre-service teachers benefit from direct instruction in phonics and phonemic awareness but often find these concepts difficult to learn. The pre-service teachers in this study held more accurate perceptions of their own knowledge of phonics and phonemic awareness than pre-service teachers in other studies.

Introduction

Since the publishing of the National Reading Panel's findings, there is little debate on the importance of phonics and phonemic awareness (PA) to effective reading instruction. Phonics and PA comprise two of the five foundational blocks of reading (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2001).

The significance of the National Reading Panel's findings is not only important for students but also for teachers. If teachers are to successfully teach phonics and PA to children who are learning to read, they must have a solid understanding of these foundational components. Well-trained teachers are critical for the research-based reading instruction recommended by the National Reading Panel (Spear-Swerling & Brucker, 2003, 2004).

Many teacher preparation programs in universities across the United States recognize the importance of aligning their programs with research-based literacy instruction (Moats, 2009). To ensure that graduates are well-prepared to enter the teaching field, universities embed instruction on foundational reading components such as phonics and PA in literacy methods courses for pre-service teachers majoring in elementary education and special education. Even though phonics and PA are taught in universities, research indicates that many pre-service teachers graduate with limited knowledge of phonics and PA after completing literacy methods courses (Cheesman, McGuire, Shankweiler, & Coyne, 2009; Washburn, Joshi, & Binks Cantrell, 2011). Even more alarming is research which suggests that pre-service teachers' perceptions of their understanding of phonics-related constructs are inflated; pre-service teachers believe they know more about phonics and PA than they actually do (Salinger et al., 2010; Washburn et al., 2011).

Literature Review

The Necessity of Phonics for Pre-Service Teachers

The teacher plays a critical role in a child's literacy development (Darling-Hammond, 2000). For students to experience success in reading, they need teachers who have a deep understanding of language constructs such as phonics and PA (Moats, 2009; Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2000). The need for well-trained reading teachers is even more imperative for struggling readers and at-risk populations (Moats, 2009). Studies have shown that a teacher's knowledge of phonics-related concepts can positively impact their students' success in reading (Al Otaiba & Lake, 2007; Brady, Fowler, Stone & Winbury, 1994; McCutchen et al., 2002; McCutchen, Green, Abbott, & Sanders, 2009; Piasta, Connor McDonald, Fishman, & Morrison, 2009). This is not only true for in-service teachers, but also for pre-service teachers. Research by Spear-Swerling and Brucker (2003, 2004) showed a correlation between pre-service teachers' growth in phonics-related concepts and an increase in the post-test scores of the children they tutored as part of the course. Considering the influence that teachers have

on the reading success of their students, it is vital that pre-service teachers graduate with the skills needed to teach phonics and PA.

Research has also shown that pre-service and in-service teachers, when given the opportunity, can grow in their understanding of phonics and phonemic awareness through university training and professional development (McCutchen et al., 2002; Washburn, Binks-Cantrell, Joshi, Martin-Chang, & Arrow, 2016; Washburn et al., 2011). However, studies reveal that the training received in universities may be inadequate or insufficient for pre-service teachers. University professors may not have a strong knowledge of basic language constructs (Binks Cantrell, Washburn, Joshi, & Hougen, 2012). Textbooks or course readings used in literacy methods courses may not be aligned with the five foundational components of reading proposed by the National Reading Panel (Joshi, Binks, Graham, et al., 2009; Walsh, Glaser, & Wilcox, 2006). Courses may not provide enough practice in phonics and PA (Cheesman et al., 2009; Moats, 2009).

The Success of Pre-service Teachers in Learning Phonics

Research indicates that pre-service teachers struggle with learning basic language constructs (Washburn et al., 2016) even though phonics and PA are taught in universities. Some pre-service teachers fail to meet proficiency in word study after explicit course instruction (Spear-Swerling & Brucker, 2003, 2004). According to Moats (1994, 2009), phonology, orthography, and language constructs are complex concepts which require time and practice to learn. Literacy methods courses may not provide as much instruction as is needed for pre-service teachers to develop proficiency in phonics and PA.

The literature provides an extensive record of pre-service teachers' limited understanding of phonics and PA. In a comparative study of pre-service and in-service teachers, Bos, Mather, Dickson, Podhajski, and Chard (2001) found that both groups scored poorly on a knowledge survey of language structure and phonics. Pre-service teachers ($n = 252$) correctly answered 53% of the twenty questions while in-service teachers correctly answered 60% of the questions. Salinger et al. (2010) conducted a large-scale study of 99 teacher education programs and 2237 pre-service teachers to determine the extent to which teacher education programs focus on the foundational components of reading presented in the National Reading Panel's findings and the extent to which pre-service teachers succeed at learning those components. They found that 88% of the pre-service teachers felt their course work had a moderate or strong emphasis on phonics and PA. Yet, pre-service teachers ($n = 2237$) correctly answered only 53% of the questions on alphabets.

In another study, Washburn et al. (2011) found that two-thirds of the pre-service teachers scored below 60% on an assessment of phonological, phonemic and morphemic awareness, and only six participants (roughly 7% of the sample) scored at or above 70% correct. The results indicated that pre-service teachers scored better on concepts related to syllabication and worse on morphology. In further research, Washburn et al. (2016) confirmed that pre-service teachers' difficulty in learning the basic components of language is not unique to the United States. Similar to the other English-speaking countries, the mean scores of U.S. pre-service teachers fell significantly below the established baseline of 70%. U.S. pre-service teachers correctly answered 50% of the questions on a survey of language constructs. Scores on individual sub-tests were: morphology (20%), phonics (38%), phonemic awareness (53%), and phonological awareness (73%).

Cheesman et al. (2009) focused their study on recent university graduates ($n = 223$) in 102 different school districts. They found that only 18% of first year teachers met the benchmark of 80% on a survey of PA. Of the remaining participants, 53% showed an inconsistent understanding, and 29% had limited knowledge of PA. This study suggests that pre-service teachers do not acquire the necessary foundation in PA before entering the field.

Perceptions of Pre-service Teachers toward Learning and Teaching Phonics

The existing research implies that pre-service teachers feel more prepared to teach phonics than they actually are. This phenomenon is not unique to pre-service teachers as Cunningham, Perry, Stanovich, and Stanovich (2004) found that in-service teachers' perceptions of their knowledge of phonics, phonemic awareness, and language constructs were not accurate. The teachers ($n = 722$) in the study thought they knew more about phonics and PA than they actually did.

Salinger et al. (2010) found that pre-service teachers perceived their university program of study had a strong emphasis in phonics-related concepts and pre-service teachers felt they had adequately learned the skills. A total of 79.3% of pre-service teachers in the study felt they sufficiently learned phonemic awareness, and 94.8 % of pre-service teachers felt they learned phonics. Yet, competency tests revealed otherwise. On an assessment to test their knowledge, pre-service teachers only answered 53% of the questions on alphabetics correctly. Similarly, in a study by Washburn, et al. (2011), the researchers found that the pre-service teachers ($n = 91$) perceived their understanding of language constructs to be stronger than it actually was.

Purpose

The existing literature describes the crucial need for pre-service teachers to be well-trained in phonics and phonic awareness. An overwhelming number of studies indicate that pre-service teachers have limited knowledge in phonics and PA. The literature suggests a discrepancy between pre-service teachers' achievement and self-perceptions. This purpose of this study was to examine further the discrepancy found between pre-service teachers' ability and attitude. As the pre-field teachers in this study were enrolled in a literacy methods course in which proficiency in phonics and PA was required for course completion, the researcher hypothesized that the results may differ from other studies found in the literature.

Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following questions:

1. How do the pre-test scores of pre-service teachers compare with their post-test scores in phonics and PA?
2. On which components of phonics and PA do pre-service teachers score the highest and lowest?
3. What are the perceptions of pre-service teachers in regards to learning and teaching phonics and PA?

Methodology

The study utilized mixed methodology of the convergent design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Following the convergent design, the researcher collects and analyzes quantitative and qualitative data separately. Then, the researcher merges the two sets of data and interprets the results. In this form of mixed methodology, both qualitative and quantitative data are given equal weight in their importance to the study. The basic presupposition is that a study design with both types of data will provide a more complete understanding of the phenomenon. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the four-step process of the convergent design adapted for use in this study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 118).

Context and Participants

The study was conducted in a teacher education program at a private university in the mid-Atlantic region. The university has a total enrollment of 15,000 undergraduate students. Approximately 250 students graduate from the elementary

<p>STEP #1</p>	<p>Collect QUANTITATIVE Data <i>Procedures:</i> Distribute a pre-test to pre-service teachers at the beginning of the semester and a post-test at the end of the semester (n = 104) <i>Products:</i> Pre-test and post-test scores</p>	<p>Collect QUALITATIVE Data <i>Procedures:</i> Distribute questionnaire with six open-ended short answer questions to pre-service teachers (n = 104) <i>Products:</i> Data from participants organized by short answer question.</p>
<p>STEP #2</p>	<p>Analyze QUANTITATIVE Data <i>Procedures:</i> Descriptive statistics <i>Products:</i> Mean, median, and mode of pre-test and post-test scores by total participants; Percentage of growth by group and total participants</p>	<p>Analyze QUALITATIVE Data <i>Procedures:</i> Conventional and summative content analysis by research and assistant <i>Products:</i> Major themes identified by short answer question</p>
<p>STEP #3</p>	<p>Merge the Two Sets of Results <i>Procedures:</i> Side-by-side comparison of the qualitative and quantitative results <i>Products:</i> Summary table by research question</p>	
<p>STEP #4</p>	<p>Interpret the Merged Results <i>Procedures:</i> Consider how the merged results produce a better understanding of the phenomenon <i>Products:</i> Discussion of the results</p>	

Figure 1. The four-step process in the convergent design (adapted from Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

education program each year. The study participants were 104 college students enrolled in five different sections of a methods course on teaching elementary reading. Ninety-eight participants were female, and six were male (see Table 1). All participants were either an elementary education major or a dual education major with elementary education and special education. The methods course had a strong emphasis on phonics and PA with pre-service teachers needing to meet a proficiency benchmark in phonics-related skills in order to pass the class.

Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis

A pre-test and post-test in phonics, phonemic awareness and word study were administered in class at the beginning and end of the semester to measure student

TABLE 1
Study Participants

Group	<i>n</i>	Male	Female
Group 1	21	1	20
Group 2	25	2	23
Group 3	19	1	18
Group 4	19	2	17
Group 5	20	0	20
Total	104	6	98

growth in the course curriculum. The course utilized *Phonics and word study for the teacher of reading* by Fox (2014) as the main resource for phonics and word study. The pre-test and post-test contained 75 multiple choice questions ranging from a variety of phonics-related topics such as phonemic awareness, consonant and vowel sounds, digraphs, diphthongs, blends, syllables, accents, morphemes, consonants, compound words, and contractions. The pre-test and post-tests were embedded within the course textbook. The tests were equivalent but not identical. While the course did have a phonics benchmark requirement, the pre-test and post-test were not used for that purpose. The pre-test and post-test were utilized to measure growth from the beginning of the semester to the end. As the purpose of the study was to measure growth throughout the course, a curriculum-based assessment (CBA) was selected. CBAs use content from the course curriculum to measure student progress (Overton, 2016).

The pre-test and post-test scores for each pre-service teacher were entered by group into Excel charts for descriptive statistical analysis. The overall mean scores of the combined groups and each group were calculated. In addition, the percent of growth was calculated for the combined group and each group. Next, an item-analysis was conducted to determine which phonetic concepts were scored correctly and incorrectly by most pre-service teachers. Frequency counts were computed for each question. The questions with the ten highest frequencies and the questions with the ten lowest frequencies on both the pre-test and the post-test were identified.

Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis

Qualitative data were collected through a phonics questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to pre-service teachers in conjunction with the post-test. The questionnaire contained six open-ended questions on the following topics: 1) the pre-service teacher's overall experience with learning phonics in the course;

2) the pre-service teacher's recollection of learning phonics in elementary school; 3) the most difficult aspects of learning phonics in the course; 4) the easiest aspects of learning phonics in the course; 5) the pre-service teacher's perceived level of preparedness to teach phonics in the future; and 6) the amount of time the pre-service teacher spent studying phonics throughout the course.

The qualitative data from the questionnaire were combined into one data set for analysis. The data was organized by question. The researcher and an assistant began by identifying themes to code similar types of data (Maxwell, 2013). After the codes were established, the researcher and assistant determined the frequency of each identified theme. According to Maxwell (2013), the frequency of themes can provide evidence to support conclusions in qualitative analysis. The process of categorizing responses by themes and verifying the frequency of the themes is also known as conventional and summative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

The researcher and the assistant conducted the conventional content analysis separately. Then, they met to discuss the emergent themes. The discussion continued until they reached a consensus on the emergent themes. Next, the researcher and the assistant separately calculated the summative content analysis. They met again to discuss the frequency counts. The discussion continued until consensus was reached. The use of two individuals to analyze the qualitative data provided a form of triangulation (Patton, 2002).

Findings

Quantitative Findings

Overall, the pre-service teachers answered approximately 41 out of 75 questions correctly on the pre-test and answered 53 out of 75 questions correctly on the post-test. Group 5 had the lowest pre-test mean score and subsequently the lowest post-test mean score. Group 1 had the highest pre-test score, but Group 4 had the highest post-test score. Table 2 shows the mean scores by sub-groups.

TABLE 2
Mean Scores by Group

Group	Pre-test <i>M</i>	Post-test <i>M</i>
Group 1	45.14	53.00
Group 2	39.88	52.00
Group 3	40.95	52.58
Group 4	43.21	59.95
Group 5	37.35	51.85
Total	41.26	53.73

The mean score of all the groups was 41.26 on the pre-test and 53.73 on the post-test. Table 3 provides a complete list of the descriptive statistics, including the mean, median, mode, and standard deviation of the pre-test and post-test.

On average, pre-service teachers answered 55% of the questions correctly on the pre-test and 71% of the questions correctly on the post-test. From the beginning of the semester to the end of the semester the overall percentage of growth for the total group was 30.22%.

The results of the item analysis revealed that the phonics-related concepts which most pre-service teachers scored correctly were similar on both the pre-test and post-test. Pre-service teachers performed very well on questions related to syllabication, matching phonemes, onsets/rimes, compound words, and diphthongs. For example, on the pre-test, a question on syllabication and a question on phoneme matching had the highest frequency of 99 correct responses. On the post-test, a test question on phoneme matching and a test question on compound words had the highest frequency of 103 correct responses. Table 4 provides a list of the phonetic concepts in the test questions with the highest frequency.

The same trend continued for the most difficult test questions. The items which the majority of pre-service teachers scored incorrectly on the pre-test

TABLE 3
Descriptive Statistics

	<i>M</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>Mode</i>	<i>SD</i>
Pre-Test	41.26	41	43	10.51
Post-Test	53.73	54	52; 61	10.09

TABLE 4
Phonetic Concepts in Test Questions with the Highest Frequency of Correct Responses

Pre-test question	<i>f</i>	Post-test question	<i>f</i>
Syllabication	99	Phoneme matching	103
Phoneme matching	99	Compound words	103
Syllabication	97	Syllabication	102
Diphthongs	96	Phoneme matching	101
Compound words	95	Diphthongs	98
Syllabication	94	Rime	98
Onset	92	Rime	96
Syllabication	91	Phoneme matching	96
Phoneme matching	90	Onset	95

continued to be the most difficult items on the post-test. Pre-service teachers struggled with test items related to diacritical marks in pronunciation keys, placing accent marks, understanding free/bound morphemes, applying vowel/consonant patterns, and matching certain phoneme sounds. A test question on accent marks had the lowest frequency of correct responses on the pre-test ($f=14$) and on the post-test ($f=15$). See Table 5 for the complete results.

The quantitative results reveal that pre-service teachers grew in their understanding of phonetic concepts from the beginning of the semester until the end of the semester. Additionally, phonetic concepts which were the easiest and the most difficult at the beginning of the semester remained the easiest and most difficult concepts for pre-service teachers at the end of the semester.

Qualitative Data Findings

The first short answer question asked pre-service teachers to describe their experience with learning phonics in the course. Five themes emerged from the data. Table 6 displays a list of the themes and their frequencies. The majority of pre-service teachers ($f=58$) stated that learning phonics was a positive experience. Pre-service teachers used descriptive phrases such as: fun, exciting, enjoyable, great, or loved it! The second major theme was that learning phonics was challenging ($f=44$). For some pre-service teachers it was both fun and challenging. Common descriptors of this theme included: major challenge, difficult, tough, hard, frustrating, or confusing. The third theme was that pre-service teachers

TABLE 5
Phonetic Concepts in Test Questions with the Lowest Frequency of Correct Responses

Pre-test question	<i>f</i>	Post-test question	<i>f</i>
Accent marks	14	Accent marks	15
Morphemes	18	Vowel/consonant patterns	20
Schwa	19	Vowel/consonant patterns	22
Blends	19	Diacritical marks	37
Diacritical marks	21	Diacritical marks	39
Phoneme matching	26	Diphthongs	41
Diacritical marks	26	Morphemes	45
Accent marks	28	Accent marks	48
Consonant sounds	30	Diacritical marks	50
Diacritical marks	30	Phoneme matching	52

TABLE 6
Pre-service Teachers' Perceptions of Learning Phonics

Emergent themes	<i>f</i>	Common phrases
Learning phonics was a positive experience.	58	fun, exciting, great
Learning phonics was challenging.	44	difficult, frustrating, challenge
I learned a lot about phonics.	38	understand more
Learning phonics was helpful.	20	beneficial, rewarding
Learning phonics was time-intensive.	5	needed more time

reported learning a large amount of phonics through the course ($f=20$). They made comments such as: "I understand so much more now." Two other themes that emerged were learning phonics was helpful ($f=20$) and required a lot of time. ($f=5$).

The second short answer question asked participants to explain their prior knowledge with learning phonics. Specifically, pre-service teachers were prompted to describe their recollection of learning phonics in previous schooling. A total of 48 pre-service teachers positively affirmed that they learned phonics in school. For example, one pre-service teacher stated, "Yes, I remember learning phonics in school, and it was very foundational in teaching me to read and spell." Of those 48, sixteen said the phonics they learned was not as extensive as the phonics in the course. For example, one pre-service teacher stated, "I do remember learning phonics but definitely not in this much detail." Seventeen pre-service teachers said they somewhat remember learning phonics, but they did not answer with a definite yes. For example, one pre-service teacher stated, "I vaguely remember learning phonics as a kid." A total of 46 pre-service teachers stated they had no remembrance of learning phonics prior to the course. A sample response was, "I have no memory of learning phonics before this." See Table 7 for the frequency of each theme.

The third and fourth short answer questions asked pre-service teachers to explain which aspects of learning phonics were the most difficult and which were the easiest during the course. There was wide variety of responses to the questions. The concepts identified as the most difficult were diacritical marks, phonics rules, vowels, and voiced/voiceless sounds. Pre-service teachers listed phonemes/sounds, syllabication, consonants, vowels, and onsets/rimes as the easiest concepts to learn. Table 8 provides the frequencies of the five most common responses to each question.

The fifth short answer question was designed to solicit information regarding the pre-service teachers' self-efficacy toward teaching phonics. An

TABLE 7
Pre-service Teachers' Prior Knowledge of Learning Phonics

Emergent themes	<i>f</i>
Yes, I remember learning phonics.	32
Yes, but it was not this extensive.	16
I somewhat remember learning phonics.	17
I do not remember learning any phonics.	46

TABLE 8
Pre-service Teachers' Perceptions of the Most Difficult/Easiest Phonetic Concepts

Difficult concepts	<i>f</i>	Easiest concepts	<i>f</i>
Diacritical marks	25	Phonemes/sounds	19
Phonics rules	24	Syllabication	15
Vowels	14	Consonants	14
Voiced/voiceless <i>th</i>	10	Vowels	10
Schwa	7	Onsets/rimes	9

overwhelming 82 pre-service teachers reported that they felt prepared to teach phonics at the end of the course. Ten pre-field teachers felt somewhat prepared, and eight responded that they did not feel prepared to teach phonics at the end of the course. Four pre-field teachers did not respond or gave an answer that did not fit in one of the themes.

The final item on the questionnaire asked the pre-service teachers to estimate how much time they spent studying phonics each week during the course. Over 80% of the class reported spending 90 minutes or less studying phonics each week with 4 pre-service teachers spending no time studying, 29 pre-service teachers spending 1-30 minutes, 37 pre-service teachers spending 31-60 minutes, and 15 spending 61-90 minutes.

Merged Findings

In mixed methodology of the convergent design, the results of the quantitative and qualitative data sets are merged for a joint analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In this final step, a side-by-side comparison is utilized to determine where the data points overlap (see Figure 2). In regard to the first research question on how the pre-test scores compare with the post-test scores, the quantitative data

RQ #1: How do the pre-test scores of pre-service elementary education teachers compare with their post-test scores in phonics and PA?	
QUANTITATIVE DATA Pre-service teachers answered 55.01% of questions correctly on the pre-test and 71.64% correctly on the post-test. Overall, there was a 30.22% of growth.	QUALITATIVE DATA Pre-service teachers expressed that they learned a lot (n = 38), it was a positive experience (n = 58), and it was helpful (n = 20). Yet, it was also very challenging (n = 44).
RQ #2: On which components of phonics and PA do pre-service teachers score the highest and lowest?	
QUANTITATIVE DATA <u>Highest Scoring:</u> syllabication, matching phonemes, onsets/rimes, compound words, diphthongs, contractions <u>Lowest Scoring:</u> diacritical marks, accent marks, morphemes, vowel/consonant patterns	QUALITATIVE DATA <u>Easiest Items:</u> phonemes/sounds, syllabication, consonants, vowels, onsets/rime <u>Most Difficult Items:</u> diacritical marks, phonics rules, vowels, voiced/voiceless sounds, schwa
RQ #3: What are the perceptions of pre-service elementary education teachers in regards to learning and teaching phonics and PA?	
QUANTITATIVE DATA <u>Learning:</u> Overall, there was a 30.22% of growth from the pre-test to the post-test. <u>Teaching:</u> Pre-service teachers answered 71.64% of the questions on the post-test. Using the university grading scale, this would be a C.	QUALITATIVE DATA <u>Learning:</u> Pre-service teachers expressed that the experience was positive (n = 58) and beneficial (n = 20); yet it was also challenging (n = 44). <u>Teaching:</u> The majority of pre-service teachers (n = 82) felt prepared to teach phonics as a result of the course.

Figure 2 Merged results by research question

reveal that test scores rose from a mean score of 41.26 on the pre-test to a mean score of 53.73 on the post-test. The percent of growth of the overall group was 30.22%. This corresponds with the qualitative data in which the pre-service teachers indicated they learned a lot about phonics through the course ($f=38$); learning phonics was a positive experience ($f=58$); and learning phonics was beneficial ($f=20$).

The second research question focused on which components of phonics and PA pre-service teachers perform the best and worst. The results show that the quantitative data set and the qualitative data set align. The test questions with the highest frequency of correct responses on the pre-test and post-test were similar to the phonetic concepts which pre-service teachers identified as the easiest

to learn. For example, syllables, phonemes, onsets and rimes are on both lists. Pre-and post-test questions with the lowest frequency of correct responses were similar to the phonetic concepts which pre-service teachers identified as the most difficult to learn. The most difficult concepts in both data sets were diacritical marks, patterns/phonics rules, and vowels.

The topic of the third research question was the perceptions of pre-service teachers toward learning and teaching phonics and PA. The perceptions of pre-service teachers and their success in learning phonics were addressed above within the section on the first research question. In regard to pre-service teachers' perceptions of preparedness to teach phonics, self-efficacy was relatively high as 82 participants, or 79% of the total group, stated they felt prepared to teach phonics. According to the quantitative data, the total group of participants correctly answered about 72% of the questions on the post-test. Using the university grading scale, this would be a grade of a C.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the achievement and perceptions of pre-service teachers enrolled in a literacy methods class with an emphasis on phonics and PA. Specifically, the study was designed to discover: (Q1) how pre-service teachers' pre-test scores compared with their post-test scores, (Q2) which phonics-related concepts were easiest and most difficult, and (Q3) what perceptions pre-service teachers held towards learning and teaching phonics-related concepts. The discussion focuses on four major findings: (a) pre-service teachers experienced growth in their understanding of phonetic concepts; (b) pre-service teachers held accurate perceptions of their learning; (c) pre-service teachers faced challenges in learning phonics, and (d) a methods course with an emphasis on phonetic concepts cultivated pre-service teachers' self-efficacy toward teaching phonics and PA in the future.

Growth in Phonics and PA

The pre-service teachers in this study experienced a 30% growth from the pre-test ($M=41.26$) to the post-test ($M=53.73$). Pre-service teachers correctly answered 71% of the questions on the post-test. Not only was growth demonstrated through the pre-test and post-test, but also growth was one of the emerging themes from the questionnaire. A total of 37% of pre-service teachers ($n = 38$) mentioned that they learned a great deal from studying phonics and PA in a literacy methods course. These findings align with the research which demonstrates that pre-service teachers can grow in their understanding of phonics and

PA through specific training (McCutchen et al., 2002; Washburn et al., 2016; Washburn et al., 2011).

The post-test score of 71.64% is higher than other studies which reported scores of 50-60% on knowledge tests (Salinger et al., 2010; Washburn et al., 2016; Washburn et al., 2011). The difference in scores may be attributed to the high-stakes benchmark embedded in the literacy course described in this study. The pre-field teachers' fear of failure may have been a motivating factor, leading to higher gains in knowledge of phonics-related constructs. Despite the higher score when compared to other studies, a test average of 71% is only an average score. As noted by Cheesman et al. (2009) and Moats (1994, 2009), teacher education programs need to evaluate the amount of course time and practice pre-service teachers receive in phonics and PA. Pre-service teachers may need more explicit instruction to fully understand basic language constructs and be able to teach them.

Accurate Perceptions

A comparison of the questions that most pre-service teachers scored correctly or incorrectly on the pre-test and post-test with the pre-service teachers' perceptions of what was most difficult or easiest about learning phonics reveals that the pre-service teachers' perceptions of their understanding of phonics and PA was fairly accurate. They were able to self-assess which phonics-related components were the most challenging and which were not. In addition, there was not such a wide discrepancy between the pre-service teachers' self-perceptions and basic knowledge as in other studies. For example, Salinger et al. (2010) found that 80% of the pre-service teachers felt prepared to teach phonics, but they only answered 53% of the questions correctly on an alphabets competency test. In this study, 79% felt well-prepared to teach, and they answered 71% of the questions correctly on the post-test. This may indicate that pre-service teachers in this study held more accurate self-perceptions than pre-service teachers in other studies. This is contrary to studies by Cunningham et al. (2004) and Washburn et al. (2011) in which the participants over-estimated their knowledge and understanding of phonics and PA.

Challenges in Learning

While the pre-service teachers in this study demonstrated growth in their understanding of phonics and PA, additional knowledge and training is needed. Overall, pre-service teachers correctly answered 71% of the questions on the post-test. In many colleges, this would equate to an average grade of a C. In order

to be well-prepared to teach literacy, a higher level of proficiency is warranted. According to the questionnaire results, the majority of pre-service teachers spent some time studying phonics and PA each week. Also from the questionnaire, an emerging theme was that learning phonics was challenging. This finding aligns with what other researchers have reported regarding the difficulty pre-service teachers have with learning language constructs (Washburn et al., 2016; Washburn et al., 2011). Success in phonics and PA requires explicit instruction and opportunities for practice (Moats, 1994, 2009).

Some of the items that the pre-service teachers found the most difficult in this study were similar to other studies. For example, Washburn et al. (2011) found that pre-service teachers struggled the most with morphemes, but the least with syllables. In this study, questions on morphemes had a low frequency of correct responses and syllabication had a high frequency of correct responses.

Self-Efficacy in Teaching

Based on the questionnaire results, 47% of pre-service teachers ($n = 46$) expressed that they did not have any recollection of learning phonics in their K-12 experience. However, after a literacy methods course with an emphasis on phonics and PA, 79% ($n = 82$) indicated they felt prepared to teach phonics in the future. As mentioned previously, research supports the idea that pre-service teachers can expand their knowledge of language constructs when given the opportunity (Washburn et al., 2016; Washburn et al., 2011). As teachers become more proficient in phonics and PA, it is predicted that their self-efficacy in teaching also increases. Pre-field teachers in this study expressed confidence in teaching phonics and PA after meeting the proficiency benchmark for the course. However, more research is needed to confirm the impact that additional training has on teacher self-efficacy, particularly due to the findings which suggest teachers overestimate their actual ability in phonics and PA.

Limitations

There are several limitations to the study. First, the study used a curriculum-based assessment for the pre-test and post-test. While curriculum-based assessments are beneficial to measure individual student growth, they tend to have limited reliability and validity (Overton, 2016). Second, the qualitative responses were collected in person during class. This method of data collection can lead to higher scores due to social desirability bias (Dillman, 1978) or the relationship that exists between a university professor and students. The final limitation is that

the data was collected from only one university. Thus, the findings are limited in terms of generalizability.

Concluding Remarks/Recommendations

Phonics and phonemic awareness are two of the foundational components of learning to read. Pre-service teachers with a proficiency in phonics and PA are more equipped to teach all children to read. As many pre-service teachers report having limited prior knowledge in phonics and PA, teacher educator programs should include an emphasis on phonics and PA in literacy methods courses. Professors teaching the courses must be knowledgeable and must provide pre-service teachers with ample opportunities to practice these challenging concepts.

Future research is needed to determine how to help pre-service teachers succeed in learning phonics and PA. Experimental studies which test the effectiveness of instructional methods for pre-service teachers would be beneficial. A qualitative case study or phenomenology would provide a richer understanding of the struggles pre-service teachers experience in learning phonics and PA.

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THE POWER OF FAMILY INVOLVEMENT: PREPARING PRESERVICE TEACHERS TO UNDERSTAND MORE ABOUT THE OUT OF SCHOOL LITERACY LIVES AND CULTURES OF CHILDREN

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Abstract

The authors of this chapter present the narrative findings and discussions of their collaborative study during year two as they continue to modify instruction in three undergraduate classes to aid preservice teachers as they acquire expertise in building sustained relationships with the parents of their students. In this iteration, our findings suggest that preservice teachers learned ways to have positive interactions through a literacy night, they learned that these interactions were not as difficult as they had imagined, and having varied situations where learning was at the forefront was a plus. Moreover, preservice reflexive narratives indicate that building these opportunities

within the courses cemented their beliefs about the benefits parental involvement have on the overall achievement of their students.

Introduction

Preservice teachers (PSTs) who enter the profession oftentimes need more experiences in the ways the out of school literacy lives of their student shape what they know and do not know with respect to literacy and its instruction. That is, during the first year of instruction these new teachers find themselves in situations where their impassioned ideas about building relationships with their students' parents lack a link to practical experiences or knowledge about how to reach out to parents, how to carry on a personal conversation, and how to inquire about the out of school literacy lives of their students and parents.

More specifically, in traditional field-based programs like ours, preservice teachers are exposed to opportunities for acquiring practical experiences through interactions with other educational professionals during the internship and residency semesters (i.e., other teachers, administrators, curriculum and instruction, and campus workers), yet it is difficult for PSTs to have sustained experiences with individual parents due to their limited time and roles on campus. So, while they realize that building relationships with parents is a must, it is something for which they need more exposure.

Theoretical Perspectives

We take on a sociocultural perspective (Vygotsky, 1978) with respect to this study. As educators we follow the apprenticeship model (Rogoff, 1990) that suggests that in an organized setting like a classroom, learning happens when novice is led by a more experienced other as they engage in explicit organized activities.

Family Involvement

It has been long known that family involvement in the in and out of school literacy lives of children is both necessary and beneficial (Linder & Foote, 2002; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Still, preservice teachers need more training as they study preventions and practices with respect to addressing the reading difficulties of young children. Although teachers have little to no control over what happens in the home environment, it is still necessary for teachers to understand the predictive power family involvement has both in the short term and the long term in literacy development. Moreover, the National Center in Educational Statistics (2003, P. 74) concluded, "students with higher values on the home

literacy index scored higher on the reading scale compared to those with lower indexes,” indicating there was a correlation between children’s literacy skills and family involvement.

While children in richer home environments do have access more books, the NCES (2003) study concluded that family involvement is important for all families, regardless of socioeconomic status. As a consequence, it is necessary for all preservice teachers to be aware of the correlation between reading achievement and family involvement.

Inquiry Questions

To continue to build expertise and understanding about how to better prepare preservice teachers to engage with parents, university faculty used the following questions to guide this study’s iteration.

1. What do preservice teachers experience as they engage in a literacy night with parents, caregivers, teachers, and faculty?
2. What, if anything, can we learn about parental involvement from the narrative reflections of these preservice teachers?
3. What are the preservice teachers’ perceptions with respect to parental involvement?

Methodology

This paper uses a qualitative, naturalistic methodology to study what happens as preservice teachers engage in a family involvement unit in two reading courses during spring and fall 2017 semesters. Specifically, we use an action research approach (Pine, 2008; Stringer, 2007) because it allows educators at all levels, including professors and their students, an opportunity to study and solve a problem they are facing in their particular situations as they seek to improve the learning outcomes of their students. In this iteration, the purpose of this action research cycle is to study the experiences of preservice teachers as they engage in a family literacy night, as they reflect on their experiences, and as they consider what plans they need to put in place to create a classroom that enables these interactions to happen naturally. The following sections provide information about the district and school setting, a brief description of the preservice teachers, the course descriptions for RDG 360 and RDG 370, and the list of the artifacts. The findings and discussion sections to address each of the inquiry questions follow the aforementioned sections.

Context

Family involvement simultaneously became a focus in our university literacy courses and a larger community and university-based project. In the fall of 2016, prompted by our new university president, the university, the local independent school district (ISD), and the city where both are located embarked on a new partnership to pool the strengths and address the needs of all three entities in order to allow each partner to better achieve their goals and serve their constituencies. This exciting initiative was named ASPIRE, A School Partnership for Inspiration, Recreation, and Education.

An initial collaboration with curriculum leaders from the district revealed literacy and parent involvement to be two of the highest priorities. Aligning well with our goal to create deeper understanding of how to form partnerships with parents/families and to support literacy development with our PSTs, the Professional Development Committee, composed of school/university/community members, had brainstorming meetings and proposed numerous ideas to meet the challenge of enhancing literacy and parent involvement. The challenge was to truly listen to each other and to build our processes and next steps in a way that honored the community, the school, and the parents. Through it all, our professors recognized that our PSTs will be a major the beneficiary if we succeed.

Keeping the community, school and university partnership as the focus, university faculty participated in a workshop at Ball State University, where a “Schools Within the Context of Community” program has been implemented (“Schools Within the Context of Community,” n.d.). Following the BSU training, our university faculty members joined local school district administrators in a collaborative effort to design a community-focused strand for PSTs who are interested in community-based work. During the Fall 2017 semester, an initial group of three PSTs enrolled in an introductory education course participated in an intimate listening session with three caregivers of school-aged children. The listening session was held at the school district’s parent center, which served as a neutral location for a casual conversation. The faculty members who organized the listening session deliberately left out an agenda so that authentic interactions could develop through organic conversations. The caregivers (a grandmother, a single dad, and a mom of kids with special needs) shared their experiences raising the children in their care and what they thought PSTs might need to know about students’ lives outside of school. After the listening session officially concluded, two of the three PSTs continued their conversations with caregivers in the parking lot for almost an hour.

The PSTs who participated in this listening session came away with a better understanding of how meaningful interactions with caregivers can help build strong relationships with families both in and outside of school. One PST

commented that the listening session “helped me to understand how to approach parents and caregivers in a way that makes them more comfortable.” The PSTs also realized that what has been considered a “traditional” family makeup consisting of a mom and dad is not the norm for many school-aged children. A PST concluded that “as professionals, we should make it a point to use more inclusive language so that no students feel uncomfortable or out of place.” The PSTs also expressed a desire to participate in more events like the listening session in the future.

Participants

Participants include students who took two undergraduate courses in reading education in Commerce, Texas during the spring 2017 and fall 2017 semesters. In sum, there were 37 students in RDG 360 and 26 students in RDG 370 in spring 2017 and 20 students in RDG 360 and 30 students in RDG 370 in the fall 2017 semester (Enrollment Data). All students submitted the “how to” assignment, and 48 of 56 students submitted the questionnaire. From the demographical data we can report that 90 percent of the students were female and 10 percent were male, students taking these courses were in their final semester prior to student teaching, and all of the students were pursuing Texas certification.

Reading Methods Courses

In this iteration, the participants are taking the final two courses prior to student teaching. The classes meet twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays for one hour and fifteen minutes. Below are the course descriptions for the two courses.

1. RDG 360 Word Analysis Skills. This course examines word examination of word identification within the context of language. The focus of this course is an examination of how to implement TEKS when facilitating children’s development of the phonological system through writing. Specific attention is given to strategies that are useful to readers in the areas of word knowledge and word analysis.
2. RDG 370 Reading and Literacy II. This course builds upon the theoretical foundations of reading and literacy presented in the previous course, RDG 350. The developing teacher will explore how to integrate school reading and writing instruction. The focus of this course is an examination of how the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) can be implemented with basal readers, trade books, literature, cognition, reading comprehension, comprehension strategies, formal assessments, and informal assessment strategies.

Artifacts

In this iteration, we collected a questionnaire about perceptions and beliefs relating to parental/family involvement, a final “how to” assignment about their ideas about how to interact, and notes and “ahas” students submitted during class time to instructors.

1. *“How to” Involve Parents in the Literacy Classroom.* With this artifact PSTs were able to write out a plan with the intention to involve the family during their initial year of teaching. The purpose of this assignment was to ignite PSTs to put into practice their experiences with the literacy night and as a way to generate a tool they can use as they planned what to do with families of their future students.
2. *Family Involvement Follow-Up Questionnaire.* With this artifact PSTs in RDG 360 were asked about beliefs, experiences, and plans related to parental/family involvement. We received 48 responses (See Appendix A for survey questions).
3. *Informal Conversations and Discussions.* PSTs and professors had ongoing informal conversations about how to involve families in the literacy instruction of students. These informal conversations were an avenue to gauge the internalization and understanding for the practices PSTs were learning and as an opportunity for faculty to answer questions and provide clarification.

Data Analysis

We chose a thematic analysis process for analyzing the essays and questionnaire responses. Beginning with the individual questionnaire responses, we used inductive coding to generate initial codes that were later combined to form larger categories where themes emerged across the questionnaire data set. We also used inductive coding to analyze the essays, first individually and then across essays, and the themes that emerged from this analysis were then compared with the findings from the questionnaire responses. Our notes from the informal discussions and conversations served as an additional data source for comparison.

Findings

Putting It to Practice: Family Literacy Night

The Family Literacy Night provided each of our participants an opportunity to engage with students and their parents as they played literacy games (See Figures

1 and 2). Following their involvement in the Family Literacy Night, we asked the participants to provide feedback about the event and to comment on their experiences playing the games with students and their caregivers. Specifically, we asked what they learned from creating the games, instructing students how to play, and supporting students as they played. All participants considered the Family Literacy Night a success, although many had hoped for a larger attendance. Several PSTs commented that interacting with parents/caregivers was easier than they had expected and that conversations with caregivers and teachers included sharing ideas for supporting students with engaging activities. One PST noted that the children whose parents/caregivers who participated by playing the games seemed more interested and engaged than the children whose parents/caregivers simply observed. The PSTs also made suggestions for future Family Literacy Night events such as the addition of simple prizes like stickers or pencils, the option to include PSTs' own children, and logistics like table and game arrangement.

When asked to reflect on what they learned during the Family Literacy Night, the prevailing theme was that children need differentiation. The vast majority of participants reported that they adjusted the games and activities based on individual student needs. Because the children were free to play any game they wished, the PSTs were challenged to make on-the-spot modifications to games that, in their original form, may not be developmentally appropriate for the child. For younger students who wished to join an activity designed for older students, the PSTs quickly modified the game by changing the focus to a more developmentally appropriate objective or skill, provided scaffolding, gave examples, read words aloud for students, and allowed the students to be creative with the modifications and "make it their own." The PSTs noticed that while some students did not need major modifications made to the games, they still needed support. PSTs supported students by activating background knowledge, explaining the concept or instructions for the games in different ways, modeling how to play the games, providing wait time for the students to process the instructions, and encouraging students as they attempted the activities.

Many PSTs who submitted essays reflected on the Family Literacy Night as well. Based on the essays, the participants refined their expectations of parent/caregiver engagement and learned some strategies for involving students' families. After the intervention, several noted that parents could be involved both in and out of class, and that they should offer multiple and varied opportunities for parents to increase involvement including academic game nights like the one we offered.



Figure 1. Two preservice teachers working with students and parents at the Family Literacy Night in Commerce Texas. April 27, 2017.



Figure 2. Two preservice teachers working with students at the Family Literacy Night in Commerce, Texas. April 27, 2017.

Writing a Plan: How-to Essay

During the Spring 2017 semester, we implemented a new assignment for the RDG 370 course. The how-to essay assignment was intended to give PSTs the opportunity to research strategies for successfully engaging families and strengthening the school to home connection and then to develop a plan for achieving this connection during their first year of teaching. The essays also included a reflection of the PSTs' own experiences with family involvement during their time in K-12 schools.

Common themes emerged in the participants' experiences. Most identified their parents as active or supportive of their education with many sharing how their parents came to school "sitting at the small tables," helping them with "projects, homework, and made sure all . . . papers were signed," signing up "first to volunteer," and attending various functions including: field days, band concerts, lunch, extra-curricular activities, athletic events, open houses, and ARDs. One shared that "everyone at her elementary school knew [her] mom." However, several also shared that their parents' level of engagement decreased as they moved into the secondary grades. A few participants shared the barriers their parents faced that kept them from engagement including: "demanding schedules," "deployment," and "important careers." While an older participant wrote that she believed her parents weren't involved because they thought it was "the teacher's job to educate the child" and their involvement would have felt like interference, most participants reported that their parents were either involved or wished to be more involved in their children's education. The reflections found in the essays support the comments made on the portion of the questionnaire that specifically asked about the participants' own experiences with their parents' involvement.

The essay participants recognized the connection between parent/caregiver involvement and students' success (Epstein, 1991) with nearly all of them specifically naming this academic benefit in their essay as an important goal in their future classroom. However, the participants wondered, "How do I get the parents of my students more involved?" and "How do we get families of low income or very little time involved?" Their plans to engage parents/caregivers in their classroom varied and were unspecific leading us to believe that our students should be taught specific strategies for engaging parents/caregivers and help develop benchmarks for measuring engagement to determine the rate of success at engaging parents/caregivers.

Though these participants knew and named parent/family involvement as an indicator that would lead to increased academic success for their learners, they struggled to find ways to engage parents/caregivers. Some participants relied on

traditional means specifically including parent letters, a recommendation box, and an Open House.

Most recognized the important role of clear, positive, and consistent communication with parents/caregivers including the use of newsletters and a website to keep families informed of opportunities and to make them feel valued as they participate with their students. Several participants also wanted to hear from parents/caregivers through meetings and surveys about how they could be more involved or make it easy for them to participate. Others planned to send home assignments that involved the parents/caregivers to encourage interaction. Most wanted to do more than “traditional Open Houses.”

Internalizing the Power of Family Involvement: The Follow-Up Questionnaire

As part of our reflective practice, a portion of the questionnaire focused on perceptions about family involvement that PSTs bring to our program, how prepared PSTs feel they are to actively engage parents/caregivers, and their suggestions for ways educator preparation programs (EPPs) could better prepare them to engage parents/caregivers once they become teachers.

We were interested in learning what perceptions the PSTs held about parent/caregiver involvement in schools, specifically their perceptions about why teachers may be hesitant to involve parents/caregivers. As we refine course assignments and discussion topics, being aware of the perceptions our students bring to our university classrooms is vital. The most common perception noted by the PSTs in the questionnaires is that teachers are hesitant to involve parents/caregivers with classroom activities because they would have to relinquish control over their classroom and/or instruction. An overwhelming number of PSTs made comments such as “parents may not do things the way the teacher likes” or that “students act differently when their parents are around.” The overall perception of the participants appears to be that parent/caregiver involvement centers around, or is strictly limited to, parents/caregivers helping out in the classroom.

Another prominent perception was that teachers realize how busy parents/caregivers are and either assume they will be unable to engage with school activities or do not want to add more to parents’ already hectic schedules. One PST mentioned, “teachers may feel that they are overstepping in asking for [parents’] time.”

Many PSTs thought the prospect of creating and planning opportunities for family engagement is overwhelming because teachers already have so many job-related responsibilities. Common responses included “teachers already have too much on their plates,” “teachers lack the time and energy to think of ways to

include parents,” and “teachers don’t have enough time to seek parental involvement or train parents on techniques that would most help.”

Finally, several PSTs noted that teachers may be hesitant because they simply do not know how to effectively engage or involve parents/caregivers. These responses were often linked to their ideas about teachers’ limited time and abundance of other responsibilities. One participant commented that “coming up with ways to engage parents can be difficult and teachers need time to think and be creative.”

The PSTs touched on this topic in their essays as well. While there was some overlap in themes, PSTs detailed some additional barriers to family involvement in the essays. Most recognized the barriers to parents/caregivers participating such as language barriers, unclear or untimely communication, an abundance of negative communication, reluctance of an uneducated parent/caregiver to engage, and the burden on the teacher to facilitate various opportunities to include all parents/caregivers. However, few addressed the barriers with specific strategies for overcoming them.

The participants had an opportunity to share experiences they have had that help them feel prepared to actively engage the families of their future students. Several PSTs mentioned courses they had taken during their EPP that included readings, discussions, or assignments related to parent/caregiver involvement. A few of the PSTs are parents of school-aged children and recounted their experiences with their children’s schools and teachers. Even with these experiences, the majority of the participants said they needed more knowledge and support in this area.

In the questionnaire, we asked the participants about how EPPs can best help PSTs learn about meaningfully involving and engaging with parents/caregivers. All 48 questionnaire participants commented that EPPs should include parent/caregiver involvement as a focus in the coursework, but they differed on how much to focus on the topic. Many suggested a standalone course that focuses exclusively on family engagement and involvement in the schools, while others considered it worthy of discussion over a few class days. Most participants stressed the importance of actual experiences with parents/caregivers, like the Family Literacy Night provided. As one PST noted, “we have heard and read that parent involvement is super important, but have not been given many opportunities to practice this or see it in practice.” Another participant mentioned having actual interactions as part of the EPP because “it is important for preservice teachers to realize that collaboration with parents and community partners is very important. No one knows the student as well as a parent. They can give valuable insight.” Other suggestions for course development included discussions about ideas for reaching and including all parents/caregivers, tips

for effectively communicating with parents/caregivers, opportunities to develop plans, and information on how to set up and conduct home visits.

Discussion

The focus of inquiry was to explore how the data support the changes we are making to courses and how the data inform us on improvements we can make to the EPP in order to better prepare PSTs to engage parents and caregivers. Our reflective practice approach led us to conclude that while the addition of course assignments provided some meaningful learning opportunities for our PSTs, there are some areas in which we could enhance these experiences and provide additional support to deepen their learning.

The data showed that the PST perceptions about why teachers may hesitate to create opportunities for parent/caregiver involvement overwhelmingly included the assumption that the purpose of parent involvement is to assist teachers by helping out in the classroom. Faculty members in EPPs should address this assumption by thoughtfully considering why we, as educators, want to engage families and how we can help PSTs to understand the benefits for everyone involved.

As part of our reflective practice, we realized that we need to provide more explicit direction and guidance on the how-to essay assignment. The purpose of the assignment was for PSTs to seek out resources and research on how teachers and schools have successfully engaged families so that they could formulate their own plans for engaging families once they are classroom teachers. Many PSTs need more scaffolding on seeking out accessible, practitioner-based research literature and using those resources to develop plans of action.

While all PSTs found the Family Literacy Night beneficial for all involved, many expressed disappointment that the event was not as well attended as we had hoped. After consulting with the school principal, it was decided that the next Family Literacy Night would be held on the same evening as the Book Fair preview and school choir performance. Making it a bigger event will hopefully draw in more families.

As university faculty have created and revised course assignments to focus on family engagement, the need for more extensive vertical and horizontal alignment has become evident. Faculty members across the content areas will need to revisit course topics to see where we can insert other suggestions made by PST to provide a more comprehensive course progression.

Finally, PSTs expressed a desire for more experiences engaging with families in the communities they will later serve. The ASPIRE community partnership will hopefully provide such opportunities. Through continual interaction

between the ISD faculty and the university faculty, the Professional Development committee of ASPIRE foresaw both groups of faculty co-learning (rather than considering university faculty as the experts) with PSTs being a part of these conversations as well. With the addition of listening sessions with the caregivers of students currently enrolled in the ISD, a “parents and caregivers as experts” mindset can emerge so that PSTs and current educators at all levels can learn from the families of the students they teach and serve.

While the ASPIRE collaboration, as well as the Professional Development efforts associated with it, are still in their infancy, it is these ideas that we advocate for leading to better literacy instruction, implementation of “the pedagogy of listening” to our students and to each other, and authentic family involvement in the ISD schools. If achieved, the University/ISD/City Professional Learning Community should indeed become a “learning organization” producing more success in achieving goals and ongoing improvement for all partners.

Advice to Teacher Educators

We have learned many lessons as we attempt to support the acquisition of principles and practices related to family involvement with our preservice teachers. Below are a few takeaways from our experiences during our last two years.

1. Be willing to develop units that explicitly target interactions between preservice teachers and families.
2. Family Literacy Nights preservice teachers opportunities for substantive engagement time with caregivers.
3. Invite preservice teachers to identify beliefs about the purpose of family involvement early on provides faculty an opportunity to clear common misconceptions from the start.
4. Explicitly communicate to preservice teachers the multiple purposes of family involvement; that is, to get to know students, to build a support network, and to have a line of constant dialogue between home and school.
5. Plan community events with local independent school districts.

In conclusion, preservice teachers are at the forefront of our educational system so it behooves us as teacher educators to provide opportunities that prepare them for the multiple roles they will serve as elementary and secondary teachers. As professors of these energetic, vibrant minds we must endeavor to scaffold these experiences for them as bravely attempt to navigate them for the first time.

Delimitations

The findings in this naturalistic study are specific for this individual context, students, and professors. While some aspects of this paper can be found in other situations, these findings are not generalizable to other contexts or situations. However, we share our experiences with this study in the hopes that it ignites other teacher educators, professors, and students to take action and consider implanting family involvement units within their literacy undergraduate courses.

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APPENDIX A

Family Involvement Follow-up Questionnaire

1. What do you think is the major reason that teachers do not encourage more family involvement in their classrooms and schools than they do?
2. How can teacher education programs better prepare preservice teachers to utilize family involvement strategies? (Please be as specific as possible.)
3. What experiences have you had that have prepared you to utilize family involvement strategies? (Please be as specific as possible.)
4. Should education courses include at least one lecture/discussion section on family involvement in relation to the content of the course? Why or why not?
5. Please provide feedback on the Family Literacy Night. What was your role? How successful do you think it was? If you were to participate in another literacy night event, what would you do differently or the same?
6. During the Family Literacy Night, how did you adapt your game or activity to accommodate the children who visited your station? What did you learn about yourself as a teacher as a result of participating in this event?

7. Were your parents involved in your school when you were a child?
____ Yes ____ No
8. If you answered “yes” to the previous question, how were your parents involved?
9. Did you appreciate their level of involvement?
____ Yes ____ No ____ Other (please specify)
10. With what grades do you think parental involvement is important? (Check as many as apply.)
____ PK – 3

____ 4 – 6

____ 6 – 8

____ 9 – 12

SUPPORTING THE LITERACY DEVELOPMENT OF AT-RISK FIRST TIME COLLEGE STUDENTS THROUGH THE EXPLORATION OF LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

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Abstract

This chapter discusses the rationale, goals, content, and development of a reading course designed for First Time in College (FTIC) students who were deemed not college ready by their performance on a state assessment. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected to determine the effectiveness of the course design and student transfer of knowledge to other courses. Qualitative data revealed that students learned strategies that they valued and were able to transfer to other academic classes. Quantitative findings were mixed. Results of the Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory showed statistically significant improvement. Retention and GPA data revealed possibly positive trends, but not statistically significant growth.

Introduction

Current statistics indicate that approximately 69 percent of high school graduates immediately enroll in postsecondary education, but only 59 percent of students who begin a bachelor's degree complete that degree within six years. At open access institutions (those most accessible to minority and lower income

students), that rate drops to only 32 percent (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). While, as a nation, we are doing better at improving high school graduation rates and postsecondary enrollment rates, we are not doing as well at making sure that students who enroll in postsecondary programs have the skills and knowledge needed for success. According to Jenkins and Boswell (2001), for the large numbers of students involved, many of whom are minority, low-income or disadvantaged, the effectiveness of postsecondary programs in transitioning students to upper level classes is a crucial part of access to higher education. These statistics suggest that continued critical reflection on the policies, practices, and design of postsecondary literacy instruction is needed.

Context

The Higher Education Coordinating Board in Texas requires that universities provide developmental education services for those students who are not college ready according to their scores on a state assessment administered to incoming college students. Prior to 2016, our institution provided this instruction in English/writing and math, but not in reading. Students who were identified as college ready in writing, but not reading, were falling through the cracks. Analysis of test results for these students indicated that those who did not meet the college ready standard in reading had instructional needs in the areas of inferential understanding and understanding of literary elements. This translated as a need for genre specific pattern analysis related to text structure and rhetorical conventions/signals.

The university's Department of Reading was tasked with the development of a course to meet the needs of these students. Current research in the field of developmental education has identified a need for instruction that is contextualized, including content that can be connected to life experience so students are able to make connections between content and their lives. The goal in developing this new course was to bridge the gap between contextualized, real-world learning and the need for increased facility with academic language and the discourse of college (Ambrose, Davis, & Ziegler, 2014). This article will present the reasoning behind the content of the course as developed and explain how consistency was ensured across course sections. In addition, data from the first year of implementation will be shared.

Demographics

Texas Woman's University (TWU) is the largest public institution primarily for women in the United States, with a male population of 12.5 percent. The main

campus is in Denton, Texas and there are two additional campuses, focused on health sciences, in Dallas and Houston. TWU meets the criteria for a Hispanic serving institution. Many of the students are enrolled in college for the first time, known as First Time in College (FTIC). Forty percent of these students attend part time and 85 percent receive financial aid. The population of the university is comprised of 10,400 undergraduate and 5,200 graduate students.

Course Design and Content

The Department of Reading is a graduate department, offering master's and doctoral degrees in Reading Education, within the College of Professional Education. Faculty in the department also teach courses for the university's undergraduate teacher education program. The developmental reading course was designed by a faculty member, working with a doctoral student who had many years of experience teaching developmental reading and writing at a community college. All nine sections were to be taught on campus using face-to-face delivery. Sections were limited to no more than 15 students, allowing for interaction and support. The course was to be taught primarily by adjunct instructors. Therefore, it was designed to be taught with consistency across the various sections. The course was structured around three modules which purposefully scaffolded the length and complexity of texts and tasks (Table 1). Texts were selected for readings taking into consideration the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the student population, but more importantly were selected because their content was likely to promote lively discussion around human situations with which students, regardless of cultural background, would connect.

The philosophy behind the course design assumed literacy learning to be a holistic process. Learning occurs in collaboration between learner and text, learner and learner, learner and teacher, and learner and community. Design of the course focused on literacy as a social practice with the goal of preparing students for text complexity, such as text coherence, organization, disciplinary conventions, and sentence structure, rather than focusing on discrete skills (Shanahan, Fisher, & Frey, 2012). Explicit instruction was included along with many opportunities for feedback and application of learning.

Course Modules and Strategies

The course was structured with a scaffolded sequence of three modules. Module 1 set the foundations of the course which included reflection on literacy processes, expository text structures, identifying structure through discourse patterns, and text analysis. Three strategies for analysis were introduced and then

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TABLE 1
Course Overview

Module	Readings	Engagements
Setting Reading Foundations & Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Code to Zero</i> novel excerpt • WWI history textbook excerpt • “Be Cool to the Pizza Dude” (<i>This I Believe</i> essay) • Malcolm X essay - “Literacy Behind Bars” • Ivan Dole - “A Mom, A Dad, A Library, and Beyond” – Narrative poem • “How I Found Humor as a Quad Amputee” – video transcript from <i>Elephant in the Room</i> • “The Dog Ate My Disk and Other Tales of Woe” – essay from <i>The Chronicle of Higher Education</i> • “The Joy of Reading and Writing: Superman and Me” – Sherman Alexie essay from <i>The New York Times</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of reading processes & strategies (Almassi) • Introduction to text structure analysis with graphic organizers • EASY Vocabulary assignment • MAPP analysis strategy • Discussion board responses
Building Fluency & Stamina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Langston Hughes – “Thank You Ma’am” • Smith-Yackel - “My Mother Never Worked” – personal narrative • Dweck – “The Secret to Raising Smart Kids” – article from <i>The Scientific American</i> • “The Five Characteristics of Grit” – Forbes article • Malcolm Gladwell – “Brain Candy” – essay from <i>The New Yorker</i> • Winn-Excerpt from <i>Television: The Plug-in Drug</i>” • Excerpt from <i>Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide</i> by Nicholas D. Kristof, Sheryl Wu Dunn • “Malala – The Target” – article from <i>Vanity Fair</i> 	<p>Continued recognition and application of comprehension strategies to longer and more complex texts.</p> <p>Applying analysis of text structures and MAPP to longer and more complex texts.</p> <p>Continued focus on vocabulary with EASY.</p> <p>Discussion board responses.</p>
Internalizing Reading Philosophies & Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taylor Swift’s “Blank Space” video • Justin Timberlake’s “Can’t Stop the Feeling” video • Diana George essay “Changing the Face of Poverty” from <i>Popular Literacy: Studies in Cultural Practices and Poetics</i> • Billy Collins’ poem – “To My Favorite 17-Year Old High School Girl” • Natasha Tethewacy’s poem – “White Lies” • Ted Kooser’s poem – “Abandoned Farmhouse” • Ivan Dole’s popplet poem – “Know Words Wisely” • Print ads from Volkswagen, Amour.com, McDonald’s • Video ads from Pantene, Hershey’s, Young Director Awards, Sum of Us, Chevrolet P&G, Habitat for Humanity, U.S. Army, U.S. Marine Corps 	<p>Rhetorical analysis of multimodal texts</p> <p>Visual APP/Visual Rhetoric</p>

used throughout the course. The first strategy was presented on a handout identifying expository text structures with accompanying graphic organizers. Students used this resource throughout the semester. The second strategy was the MAPPS strategy (adapted from Dole & Taggart, 2014) that provided the students with a mnemonic they could use to guide their annotations and analysis of any text.

MAPPS – A roadmap makes it easier to get where you need to be.

M – MARK or annotate as you read in order to know these key ideas:

A – What is the reading ABOUT? (Topic)

P – What is the POINT of the reading? (Main Idea)

P – What is the PROOF? (Supporting/Key details)

S – SUMMARY = A+P+P or Topic + Main Idea + Key details

The third strategy introduced in Module 1 was called EASY (adapted from Dole & Taggart, 2014). This method for learning vocabulary provided a process for using common context clues encountered while reading. Students created PowerPoint slides for three new words each week throughout the semester. Each slide included a visual representation in addition to the four parts of the mnemonic.

EASY – Think of the Staples tagline – “That was easy!”

E – Example. Create an original sentence using the word correctly

A – Antonym. Include the word’s opposite (if there is one) or what the word is not

S – Synonym. Include a word with a similar meaning or a simplified definition.

Y – Your Logic. Using prior knowledge (logic), make a personal connection to the word.

Module 2 continued the use of the three strategies, with a focus on building stamina and fluency. The module included longer readings with a range of genres and structures. Students were expected to understand and apply additional strategies and skills, including previewing the text, activating prior knowledge, setting purposes for reading, generating and verifying predictions, using imagery and visualization, and monitoring comprehension. In Module 3, students were expected to internalize these processes and strategies, applying them to video,

poetry, and images. Lessons included visual analysis using rhetorical structures and rhetorical appeals (Dole, 2016).

Methodology

The mixed-methods study was designed to determine if the course was making a difference in students’ reading strategies and if those skills transferred to other academic courses they were taking. Since the course was pre-designed with specific student learning outcomes and given to the instructors to teach, it was important to interview instructors to see if the course was implemented with fidelity or if instructors made changes, and if so, the rationales for the changes. It was also important to review institutional data to see if students’ GPAs increased in the semester following their participation in the developmental reading course and if students were retained. Data sources included those collected from the students, from selected faculty, and institutional data on student GPA and retention (Table 2).

The procedures for collecting and analyzing the data from the students, institution, and faculty are explored in the following sections.

Student Data

The Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory (MARSI) (Mokhtari & Reichard, 2002) was developed to assess adolescent and adult readers’ metacognitive awareness of and perceived use of reading strategies while

TABLE 2
Data Sources

Collected from Whom	Data	TimeLine
Students taking the course	Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory (MARSI)	Pre- First Week of Class Post- Last Week of Course
Students taking the course	Reflection Paper based on SLOs	Final exam
Selected Faculty (n = 4)	Interviews	After Completion of Course
Institutional Data	GPA and Retention	At the end of the first year (2 semesters)

reading academic or school related material. This instrument has been validated and has been shown to be reliable based on standard measurement criteria. Students enrolled in the developmental reading courses took the MARSJ as a pre-post activity. The MARSJ is comprised of three areas:

1. **Global Reading Strategies** focused on generalized, intentional reading strategies aimed at setting the stage for reading,
2. **Problem-solving Strategies** focused on solving problems when text becomes difficult to read, and
3. **Support Reading Strategies** focused on use of outside reference materials, note taking, and other support strategies.

The pre-post testing allowed instructors to see how the students changed over time in their understanding and use of strategies.

A second set of data was collected from the students enrolled in the courses in the form of a written reflection paper at the end of the course, based on a choice of the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). Through this final reflective essay, student perceptions about reflecting upon what worked well for them in the course and what strategies they were able to transfer to other contexts were collected. Students were presented with the Student Learning Outcomes for the course and asked to select two of those SLOs to address when answering the prompt: What would you say if someone asked, “Tell me about your reading course. What did you learn? How will you use that knowledge?”

Institutional Data

Institutional data were collected from the university’s Office of Institutional Research and Data Management. Data collected included the average GPA after the first semester and the average GPA after the first year. Two objectives for looking at this data were to (1) determine if the GPA increased after participation in this course, and (2) if students continued as TWU sophomores.

Faculty Data

All instructors were chosen because of their knowledge of the reading process and reading instruction, and because of their extensive experiences teaching reading. Three instructors held doctoral degrees in reading, and were teaching teacher education courses in reading and ESL/bilingual. Two of three were former elementary teachers and one was a former high school teacher. Two of

the instructors were current doctoral students in the Department of Reading, one of whom was the co-designer of the course. One instructor was a retired Special Education teacher who had several years of experience teaching Adult Basic Education. Three of the instructors taught two sections. Instructors participated in an orientation prior to teaching the course. They were provided a pre-designed course in the university’s online learning system, Blackboard. The course included texts, resources, and lesson ideas for each of the three modules. Instructors were expected to follow the provided curriculum in order to ensure fidelity of instruction.

Four of the six instructors were available to be interviewed at the end of the semester. The purpose for these interviews was to identify how the instructors perceived the overall course development and what, if any, changes were made to the course as they taught it. The interviews were conducted either face-to-face or by telephone.

Findings

The results of the intervention are presented according to each stakeholder, beginning with the quantitative and qualitative student data, followed by the institutional data, and finally by the faculty data.

Student Data MARSII inventory

Independent samples t-tests were conducted to examine changes in the three subscales of the MARSII from beginning to end of the semester in a sample of undergraduate students. Specific subscales included Global, Problem Solving, and Support. Paired samples t-tests were not conducted due to the lack of an ID variable that could be used to link pre- and post- scores. Thus, the reports below are based on results of the independent samples t-tests.

TABLE 3
MARSII Mean Scores

	Pre-test	Post-test	Significance
Global	3.17 (Medium)	3.89 (High)	P < .01
Support	3.28 (Medium)	3.99 (High)	P < .01
Problem-solving	3.79 (High)	4.11 (High)	P < .01

- **Global:** There was a significant increase in Global Reading Strategies from beginning to end of the semester. Specifically, the sample mean increased from 3.17 (categorized as Medium based on scale norms) to 3.89 (categorized as High).
- **Support:** There was also a significant increase in Support Reading Strategies from beginning to end of the semester. Specifically, the sample mean increased from 3.28 (categorized as Medium) to 3.99 (categorized as High).
- **Problem Solving:** Lastly, there was a significant increase in Problem-Solving Strategies from beginning to end of the semester. Specifically, the sample mean increased from 3.79 (categorized as High) to 4.11 (categorized as High).

Reflection papers

The students' reflection papers written at the end of the semester ($n = 85$) were analyzed by two of the researchers (Briggs and Watson) working side-by-side. Each researcher read and coded all of the papers independently, identifying which Student Learning Outcomes students' had addressed (Table 4) and looking for important ideas within the reflections, using open codes. Codes were

TABLE 4
Final Reflection Results

Student Learning Outcomes Reflected Upon in Final Reflection Paper	Number of Students Who Reflected on the Category
Developing effective active reading strategies for comprehending texts from a variety of genres and text structures.	34
Drawing complex inferences by analyzing and evaluating information within and across texts of varying length and genre.	23
Developing an effective personal approach to the expansion of academic vocabulary across a variety of disciplines.	32
Effectively analyzing how literary texts evoke personal experience, reveal character development, and elicit emotional response from the texts.	17
Applying knowledge of the reciprocal nature of reading and writing in constructing meaning from texts.	6

then compared, combining similar codes and identifying important ideas in the responses.

These numbers indicate that approximately 40 percent of students who wrote a reflection paper self-reported that they developed active reading strategies for comprehending texts from a variety of genres and text structures and that they developed an effective personal approach for the expansion of academic vocabulary across a variety of disciplines. Twenty-seven percent of students indicated that they learned to draw complex inferences by analyzing and evaluating information within and across texts of varying length and genre. Twenty percent of students acknowledged that they learned how to effectively analyze literacy texts to evoke personal experience, reveal character development, and elicit emotional response from the texts. Only 7 percent of students indicated that they valued the application of the reciprocal nature of reading and writing in constructing meaning from texts. Additionally, students identified in their self-reflections reading strategies that they were using in other classes in which they were concurrently enrolled.

A number of students also reflected on the culture of learning built within the class and the emphasis on the social nature of literacy practices. For example, one student stated, “While attending this class, I saw every student grow together and we grew as a class.” This appreciation for the culture of learning seemed to vary by section and instructor, with students in sections where the instructor’s approach was more remedial than developmental commenting less frequently on the relationships built.

Nine students indicated that they used the vocabulary strategy, EASY, used in the developmental reading course. One student said,

In middle school and high school I learned to use [context clues]. I found that difficult and that I still didn’t understand what the word means [sic]. The EASY slides helped me understand the words faster . . . Especially the example and the synonym.

Thirty-three students indicated that they used comprehension strategies taught in the developmental reading courses in other courses they were taking. One student wrote, “In dance class we read and discussed articles on improvisation, so I decided to use my analysis and ‘MAPP’ summary to help me better understand, and it definitely helped a lot.”

Five students wrote about using information about text structures in other classes. One of these students reflected that

The text structures and graphic organizers were one of my favorite tools to use, especially when I take lecture notes during psychology and micro-economics classes. I also found them beneficial in my history class in that they helped me to keep key dates and persons organized so I could more easily recall information for exams. I also found the graphic organizers useful in unifying my thoughts and ideas while composing an essay. Having this tool increased my confidence level when completing a writing assignment.

Twenty-two students reflected on being able to use general strategies taught in the developmental reading class in other classes. An example of a general reflection was,

While being in this class, I have learned new vocabulary words, text structures, making inferences, and many more. Being in this class has made me become a better reader . . . I am no longer the odd crayon out of the coloring box when it comes to reading.

Another student wrote about literacy as a social practice saying, “While attending this class, I saw every student grow together and we grew as a class.”

Institutional Data

While the GPA data did not show statistically significant difference between the students whose scores would have qualified them for enrollment in a developmental course in 2015 (prior to first offering of the course) and the students in the first cohort of the developmental reading course, the trend seems to be promising (Table 5). We will continue to track this data in future semesters.

TABLE 5
GPA Data

Term	Gender	Headcount	Average TWU GPA after first semester	Average TWU GPA for the first year
15/FA	F	88	2.85	2.88
	M	4	1.70	(none enrolled)
16/FA	F	107	2.67	2.75
	M	4	1.14	3.05

TABLE 6
Retention Data

Cohort Description	Headcount	Number of Students Retained for the First Year	Percent of Students Retained for the First Year
15/FA Identified Student Cohort	92	72	78.26
16/FA Developmental Reading Student Cohort	111	76	68.47
16/FA First Time in College (FTIC)	1302	1006	77.27
Texas Retention Avg. 2015 FTIC			77
National Retention Avg. 2015 FTIC			66

We also compared retention data for the first developmental reading cohort to retention data at the university, state, and national levels (Table 6). While students from the 2015 cohort, who would have been enrolled in a developmental reading course had it been offered, were retained at a higher rate than the 2016 cohort who completed the course, we found it encouraging that the retention rate of this cohort was equal to the state level retention rate and higher than the national retention level. Again, we will continue to track this data to observe trends over time.

Faculty Data

From the interviews it was found that faculty had different perspectives of how a developmental college course should be taught. Two instructors, whose experience in teaching reading was in the elementary grades, viewed the class as a remedial course that should focus on reading skills rather than a course addressing students' facility with academic language, discourse of college, text complexity, and reading as a social practice. These instructors often looked for easier articles for the students to read. Other instructors appreciated the course structure and content provided for them. One of the instructors said, "Students were transformed by the articles—the 'who am I?' aspect was engaging and caused them to be reflective." Another instructor noted that at first the strategies that were taught were seen by the students as mandatory, but by the end of the semester students

were using the strategies automatically. At the suggestion of faculty after the first semester, the course delivery was changed from one three-hour period per week to two 1 ½ hour sessions each week. Faculty reported that meeting twice a week for shorter periods of time was supportive to the instruction and seemed to help students stay engaged.

Discussion

Texas Woman's University's student population includes many FTIC students, minority students, and students whose first language is not English. It is important to TWU that students who enroll in our university are supported to be successful in their coursework, stay in school, and graduate. The developmental reading course is one way of supporting freshman as they engage in academic coursework for the first time. This study is important because it provides a way to reflect on the effectiveness of a course design and whether it positively affects students taking the course.

The qualitative data that were collected in the form of the student reflection papers tied to course outcomes at the end of the semester showed that the course had a positive influence on the students in terms of their learning and the transfer of skills to other university classes. Overall, student comments were positive.

The quantitative data were mixed. The MARSII Inventory showed highly significant increases in all three areas: global, problem-solving, and support strategies. However, these scores were based on independent t-tests rather than paired t-tests because identification (ID) variables were not available. It will be important to include individual identification codes for students in cohorts we follow in the future. Neither the grade point average data, nor the retention data collected from the institution showed significant differences between the 2015 and 2016 cohorts of students. However, we found it encouraging that the retention rate of the 2016 cohort was equal to the state level retention rate and higher than the national retention level. More than two years of data collection and analysis will be necessary in order to establish trends in these two areas.

Because of the multiple sections of the course being offered each semester, and the importance of content fidelity, we felt it was important to collect interview data on a random sample of instructors. What we found was an instructor's personal theoretical stance on developmental reading influenced the way the course was taught. One instructor approached the course more like a remedial course than a college developmental course. She tended to replace the articles provided in the course shell with easier ones for the students and teach from a skills-based approach rather than a cognitive approach. For future semesters,

new instructors for this course will need to be orientated to the purpose of the course and helped to understand the course architecture and content, especially the emphasis on rhetorical structures. Pairing a new instructor with a mentor instructor who is teaching this course with the intended fidelity will help ensure that there is consistency across the sections of the course each semester. Fidelity of instruction will be helpful as we continue to collect data and follow up with students in their next semesters of study.

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EXPLORING THE READING STRATEGY USE OF EFL COLLEGE STUDENTS: TRI-LINGUAL CHINESE STUDENTS ATTENDING A UNIVERSITY IN SOUTH KOREA

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Abstract

The study investigated the metacognitive awareness of and the use of reading strategies by tri-lingual Chinese foreign exchange students enrolled in a South Korean university. Additionally, the study examined the differences in the reading strategies used by these Chinese university students using self-reported data about their language proficiency in Chinese, Korean, and English. The results indicated that the students used Global reading strategies the most followed by the Problem-solving strategies and Support strategies. The study found that the Chinese university students who felt they had higher language proficiency in all three languages reported using more strategies than did the students who felt they had lower language proficiency although the differences were not statistically significant.

Introduction

Reading is a cognitive thinking process that requires the reader to have constant interaction with the text to construct meaning (Bernhardt, 1993). Research in the field of reading in a second (L2) or foreign language has reported that the process of reading in a L2 or foreign language may be more complicate and difficult than reading in a first language because the meaning-construction in L2 requires

not only pertinent content background knowledge or cultural background to comprehend the text, but also language or sophisticated literacy skills (Brisbois, 1995; Hong-Nam & Szabo, 2016). Therefore, L2 readers continuously employ various reading strategies in order to overcome the reading difficulties such as lack of language skills or background knowledge. For instance, they utilize metacognitive strategies such as monitoring their comprehension, previewing the text, and checking the context clues to manage reading. They use cognitive strategies such as guessing the meaning of unknown words, adjusting their reading speed, or rereading the text to improve comprehension. They also use strategies such as using the dictionary when encountering unknown words, taking notes, or underlining the information in the text to aid their reading comprehension (Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002).

In addition, research has reported that there is a strong relationship between L2 language proficiency and the use of reading strategy by L2 readers (Hong-Nam & Page, 2014; Zhang & Wu, 2009). The consensus of the research has shown that students with higher target language proficiency tended to use reading strategies more than students with lower language proficiency. L2 readers with advanced language skills are more strategic and become more proficient readers. Naturally, proficient L2 readers tended to not only be aware of what they were reading and possessed greater metacognitive knowledge about reading, but they also used strategies more appropriately and effectively than less proficient readers as has been shown with L1 readers (Paris & Jacobs, 1984; Presley & Afflerbach, 1995).

Purpose of the Study

Since the agreement to form diplomatic relationship between China and South Korea in 1992, there have been numerous cultural, educational, and social exchanges between the two countries. More and more Chinese students have enrolled in universities or colleges in South Korea to pursue their higher education, especially after the recent economic boom in China. According to the data from the South Korean Ministry of Education (2017), there are 123,850 foreign students studying in various universities across South Korea. Among the foreign students 68,184 (55%) are Chinese students. Currently almost 2,000 Chinese students are attending Konkuk University in Seoul, South Korea (Ministry of Education, 2017).

The increasing number of Chinese foreign exchange students studying in South Korea has focused the attention of teachers and researchers on the particular needs of these students. It is very important for instructors in South Korean universities to gain understanding of the differences in the thinking and learning

behaviors of Chinese students. This understanding will assist the instructors in helping the Chinese students to become more academically successful and in helping the students adjust to South Korean society.

To date, the majority of studies on readers' metacognitive awareness of reading strategies have examined EFL/ESL readers' awareness and their use of strategies in various language contexts. However, little is known about the strategic reading awareness of Chinese students studying in a South Korean EFL context. Therefore, this study has significance because it looked at the use of reading strategies that Chinese foreign exchange university students used while they were attending a university in South Korea. The research questions of this study were:

1. What are the reading strategies used by tri-bilingual Chinese college students when reading academic materials in Korean and English?
2. Is there a relationship between reader's reading strategy use and their self-rated language proficiency in Chinese, Korean, or English?

Theoretical Framework

This study is framed using metacognition (Flavell, 1979) activities which supports the idea that reading is a cognitive process which occurs as a result of the interaction among the reader, the text and the context in which the reading takes place. Flavell (1985) identified two components of metacognition as he felt one needed to have knowledge of the cognitive process as well as to know how to regulate one's cognitive processes. Thus, metacognition is the ability to think about one's thinking and fixing or adjusting one's understanding when a dissonance with what is being newly learned and what has already been learned are different (Flavell, 1979; Griffith & Ruan, 2005). Additionally, one has to think about whether the strategies that are being used to help with understanding are working, and if they are not one needs to know how to change them or know different strategies that could be used.

Literature Review

Metacognitive Awareness and Reading Strategy Use

Reading strategies help students make sense of the text they are reading. Reading strategies are defined as the deliberate conscious procedures used by readers to enhance reading comprehension (Sheorey & Mokhtari, 2001). Reading strategies are also referred to as "the way readers manage interactions with written text for effective reading comprehension" (Carrell, Grajdusek, & Wise, 1998, p. 7).

Thus, it can be inferred that readers consciously or unconsciously employ reading strategies in order to maximize their reading comprehension.

There are a variety of strategies that can be used by individuals to help improve their understanding of any type of text. Research has found that good readers know not only what strategies to use when encountering difficulties in reading, but also when and how to use them effectively (Garner, 1980; Hong-Nam & Page, 2015; Kletzien, 1991). For this study, the strategies have been grouped as they are found on the Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS; Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002). The SORS was adapted from Mokhtari and Reichard (2002) for use with an English Language Learners in order to measure L2 readers' metacognitive awareness and use of reading strategies. The first category of strategies is Global or metacognitive reading strategies as they are intentionally and carefully planned techniques that are used to monitor text reading. The second category is labeled Problem-solving strategies or cognitive strategies as readers should be able to pick and use practices that allow the reader to solve problems when they arise while reading. The third category is labeled Support strategies such as highlighting or rereading as these are specific actions and procedures used by learners while working directly with the text.

Students who are deficient in metacognitive awareness tend to use extra time to understand words than to construct meaning from the text. As a result, they find reading academic material difficult and do not know how to use appropriate reading strategies and skills for efficient comprehension (Hong-Nam & Page, 2014; Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002). Thus, both teachers and students need to become more aware of the strategies that are used by the readers in order to help students learn how to use a variety of these strategies and become more successful strategic readers which empowers the learner to manage their own learning (Baker & Brown, 1984; Cummins, Stewart, & Block, 2005).

Language Proficiency and Strategy Use

Language proficiency refers to one's ability to speak or perform in that language (Oxford, 1990). Research has continuously reported that language proficiency might play a role in the use of reading strategies (Green & Oxford, 1995; Hong-Nam & Page, 2014, 2015; Lai, Li, & Amster, 2013; Phillips, 1991). For example, Lai and Li (2013) found that language proficiency had a significant effect on strategy choice and use for Taiwanese college students. Hong-Nam and Page (2014) also reported similar findings in their study when examining how the English proficiency of Korean EFL university students impacted their overall use of reading strategies. The general consensus of these research studies showed that advanced or proficient language users had accuracy and fluency as well as used

a variety of strategies and were able to communicate and write about academic content more effectively.

There have been several studies that look at the preference of use of strategy categories but these have conflicting results. As seen in a study conducted by Salahshour and colleagues (2012) it was found that Iranian high school learners used metacognitive strategies the most while cognitive strategies were the least used. However, a study done by Hong-Nam and Page (2014) found that English language high school learners used problem-solving or cognitive strategies the most followed by global or metacognitive strategies. Therefore, it is important to look at the preferences of the students in order to know how to help them become more strategic learners.

Methodology

Participants

The participants in this study were 175 Chinese students attending a university in Seoul, South Korea. The participants were undergraduate foreign exchange students majoring in various disciplines and consisted of 92 freshman, 11 sophomores, 59 juniors, and 13 seniors. They were composed of 52 male and 123 female with a mean age of 21.3. Additionally, the participants in this study were native Chinese who were fluent in the Chinese language. In order to attend a university in South Korea, they had to demonstrate that they were fluent in the Korean language, as Korean is the language of instruction in South Korean universities. Therefore, before these Chinese students could be admitted to the university as foreign students, they had to take and pass the TOPIK (Test of Proficiency in Korean). They also have learned English as a foreign language in school since elementary school. Thus, these Chinese foreign exchange university students were tri-lingual and familiar with or able to use the three languages as they spoke Chinese (their native language) and used Korean and English languages to study in Korea (See Table 3 for specific proficiency level in the languages).

Instrument

The current study used the revised questionnaire used in Zhang and Wu's study (2009) which was adopted from *Survey of Reading Strategies* (SORS, Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002) to measure the awareness of reading strategies and strategy use. The original SORS (Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002) has 30 items but the revised questionnaire has 28 items. In the revised questionnaire, Items 14 from the original questionnaire was deleted because the information of the item was somewhat

overlapped with Item 25. Items 4 and 8 from the original were rephrased into one statement because two items were very similar in nature. Items 2, 3 and 21 were rephrased into simple statements to make them more comprehensible for the participants.

The same three main categories found in the original SORS were used in the revised questionnaire as shown in Table 2. Thus, the Global or metacognitive strategies category has a total of 12 items: 1, 3, 6, 8, 12, 15, 17, 20, 21, 23, 24, and 27. The Problem-solving or cognitive strategies category has a total 7 items: 7, 9, 11, 16, 19, 25, and 28. And, finally the Support strategies category has 9 items: 2, 5, 10, 13, 18, 22, 26, 29, and 30. Additionally, the same 5-point likert-scale from the SORS was used: 1= I never or almost never use this strategy; 2= I use this strategy only occasionally; 3= I sometimes do use this strategy; 4= I usually use this strategy; and 5= I always or almost always use this strategy. The overall means for each category or group of strategies are categorized as: high (mean of 3.5 or higher); moderate (mean of 2.5 to 3.4); and low (mean of 2.4 or lower)

The Chinese version questionnaire from Zhang and Wu's study (2009) was used for the current study in order to maximize the comprehension of the questionnaire and minimize any possible errors from misunderstanding English. Both Chinese and English versions of the questionnaires were read and reviewed by a Chinese student at the university and the two versions were compared for accuracy.

Data Collection and Analysis

The questionnaire was administered to the 175 Chinese foreign exchange university students at the end of fall semester of 2016 in their English courses. Descriptive statistics were calculated for summarizing demographic information and describing students' awareness and use of reading strategy. An ANOVA test was used to determine if the differences in mean scores were statistically different in strategy use among the three strategy categories (Global or metacognitive strategies, Problem-solving or cognitive strategies, and Support strategies) as well as strategies that were used when the participants were grouped by their self-rated language proficiency levels (Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced) in Chinese, Korean, and English.

Findings

Reading Strategies

To answer research question #1, "What are the reading strategies used by trilingual Chinese foreign exchange university students when reading academic materials in Korean and English?", the data were examined. Table 1 shows the

TABLE 1
Summary of Overall Strategy Use and F-tests for the Three Strategy Categories

Variable	<i>M</i>	S.D.	Rank	<i>F</i>	Sig.*
Global Reading Strategies	2.91	0.86	1		
Problem-solving Strategies	2.90	0.91	2	1.02	0.36
Support Strategies	2.79	0.89	3		
Total	2.87	0.88			

Note. * $p < 0.05$ (Scheffé post-hoc test)

mean scores and standard divisions for the total use of strategies by the Chinese university students in all three areas. The results of data analysis indicated that overall the Chinese students used all reading strategies at the medium range or level ($M=2.87$). But, there was a difference in the use of strategies used among the three categories. The Global or metacognitive strategies were used the most ($M=2.91$) followed by the Problem-solving or cognitive strategies ($M=2.90$) and finally by the Supporting reading strategies ($M=2.79$). However, because the mean scores were so close, the ANOVA test revealed that the mean differences in the strategies used among the three categories were not statistically significant ($F=1.02$, $p=0.36$).

However, when looking at the mean scores of each item from the three categories, some strategies were reported to be used more than other strategies. Table 2 shows the preference of strategies used by the Chinese university students in descending order. The three strategies that were reported to be used the most were under the Global or metacognitive category: 1) Item 10, "I try to guess what the content of the text is about when I read" ($M=3.04$), 2) Item 8, "I use typographical features like bold face and italics to identify key information" ($M= 3.01$), and 3) Item 11, "I check to see if my guesses about the text are right or wrong" ($M=2.98$). But upon further examination, the data showed that the Chinese university students preferred to use strategies from the global category more than from the other two strategy categories, as from the top 12 preferred strategies, 7 of these strategies came from the Global or metacognitive category (Items, 10, 8, 11, 7, 4, 3, & 5).

The three strategies that were reported to be used the least were strategies that were found under the Support category: 1) Item 26, "I ask myself questions I like to have answered in the text" ($M=2.67$), 2) Item 24, "I paraphrase (restate ideas in my own words) to better understand what I read" ($M=2.69$), and 3) Item 22, "When text becomes difficult, I read aloud to help me understand what

TABLE 2
Preferences of Reading Strategies of Chinese Students

Rank	Item	Description	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1	10(GS24)	I try to guess what the content of the text is about when I read.	3.04	1.12
2	8(GS20)	I use typographical features like bold face and italics to identify key information.	3.01	1.18
3	11(GS27)	I check to see if my guesses about the text are right or wrong.	2.98	1.05
4	7(GS17)	I use context clues to help me better understand what I am reading.	2.97	1.08
	23(SS13)	I use reference materials (e.g., a dictionary) to help me understand what I read.	2.97	1.08
5	18(PS28)	When I read, I guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases.	2.96	1.14
	21(SS10)	I underline or circle information in the text to help me remember it.	2.96	1.17
6	4(GS12)	When reading, I decide what to read closely and what to ignore.	2.94	1.06
7	3(GS8)	I review the text to know about its length, organization and main idea.	2.93	1.06
	5(GS3)	I use my prior knowledge (e.g., knowledge about the theme of the text, or grammar knowledge) to help me understand what I read.	2.93	1.09
	15(PS16)	I stop from time to time and think about what I am reading.	2.93	1.06
	17(PS25)	When text becomes difficult, I re-read it to increase my understanding.	2.93	1.17
8	16(PS19)	I try to picture or visualize information to help remember what I read.	2.92	1.06
	19(PS9)	I try to get back on track when I lose concentration	2.92	1.09
9	14(PS11)	I adjust my reading speed according to what I am reading.	2.91	1.03
10	9(GS23)	I check my understanding when I come across new information.	2.90	1.04
11	6(GS15)	I use tables, figures, and pictures in text to increase my understanding.	2.87	1.11
12	25(SS25)	I go back and forth in the text to find relationships among ideas in it.	2.86	1.06
13	1(GS1)	I have a purpose in mind when I read.	2.82	1.06
14	28(SS30)	When reading, I think about information in both English and my mother tongue.	2.80	1.13
15	13(PS7)	I read slowly and carefully to make sure I understand what I read.	2.79	1.08
16	2(GS6)	I think about whether the content of the text fits my reading purpose.	2.78	1.07
17	27(SS29)	When reading, I translate from English into my native language.	2.77	1.13
18	12(GS21)	I critically analyze and evaluate the information presented in the text rather than passively accept everything.	2.76	1.06
19	20(SS2)	I take note of the key expressions and ideas while reading to help me understand what I read.	2.72	1.04
20	22(SS5)	When text becomes difficult, I read aloud to help me understand what I read.	2.70	1.12
21	24(SS18)	I paraphrase (restate ideas in my own words) to better understand what I read.	2.69	1.14
22	26(SS26)	I ask myself questions I like to have answered in the text.	2.67	1.10

Note. GS=Global Reading strategies, PS=Problem-solving strategies, SS=Support strategies

I read" ($M=2.70$). However, the Chinese students preferred not to use strategies from the support category, as from the 12 least used strategies 7 of the strategies came from the support category.

Relationship Between Strategy Use and Trilingual Proficiency

To answer research question #2, "Is there a relationship between reader's reading strategy use and students self-rated language proficiency in Chinese, Korean, and English?", several steps were taken. First, the participants were asked to self-rate their language proficiency in Chinese, Korean, and English. As seen in Table 3, the majority of the Chinese students (92 %; $n = 162$) felt their Chinese language proficiency was at the advanced level. Additionally, when reporting their Korean language proficiency, the majority of the Chinese students (80%; $n = 140$) considered themselves to be intermediate Korean learners. However, the majority of the Chinese students (57%; $n = 99$) reported they felt they were at the beginning level of English language proficiency.

Second, the differences in use of reading strategy were examined by language proficiency levels. The results of ANOVA test revealed that there were no significant differences in reading strategies used among the three strategy categories (Global, Problem-solving, and Support) by Chinese language proficiency level. However, the study found a statistically significant difference in reading strategy used among the three strategy categories by Korean and English language proficiency levels. As shown in the Table 4 below, the advanced Korean and English language learners reported using all three categories of strategy more than the other two language proficiency groups (beginning and intermediate). Additionally, more strategies were used when these students were reading in Korean or English and not in their first language (Chinese).

TABLE 3
Self-Rated Language Proficiency

	Beginning		Intermediate		Advanced	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Chinese	1	1	12	7	162	92
Korean	7	4	140	80	28	16
English	99	57	74	42	2	1

TABLE 4
Summary of Reading Strategy Use by Language Proficiency

Variable	Strategy	Language Proficiency								F	Sig.*	Difference
		Beginning		Intermediate		Advanced		Total				
		M	S.D.	M	S.D.	M	S.D.	M	S.D.			
Chinese	Global	1.75	0.00	2.99	0.69	2.91	0.87	2.91	0.86	0.97	0.38	--
	Problem-solving	1.71	0.00	3.05	0.73	2.91	0.92	2.91	0.91	1.01	0.37	
	Support	1.67	0.00	2.83	0.72	2.80	0.90	2.79	0.89	0.82	0.44	
Korean	Global	2.05	0.92	2.93	0.82	2.99	0.90	2.91	0.86	3.88	0.02	
	Problem-solving	1.69	0.50	2.95	0.89	3.01	0.86	2.91	0.91	7.06	0.00	A>I>B
	Support	1.63	0.50	2.81	0.87	3.01	0.86	2.79	0.89	7.37	0.00	
English	Global	2.67	0.88	3.20	0.70	4.17	0.59	2.91	0.86	11.23	0.00	
	Problem-solving	2.64	0.86	3.22	0.72	4.35	0.51	2.90	0.91	12.77	0.00	A>I>B
	Support	2.59	0.93	3.01	0.73	4.44	0.16	2.79	0.89	9.23	0.00	

Note. * $p < 0.05$ (Scheffé post-hoc test)

Limitations

There are several limitations to the study. First, the sample size among the language proficiency levels in each group were not equal as the Chinese language group consisted of 162 students who felt they were advanced students, while only 28 felt they were advanced in Korean and 2 felt they were advanced in English. Second, these students did more learning in the Korean language as that was the language of the university. Third, the data from the surveys were self-reported data as the Chinese university students were asked to rate their use of strategies and what their language proficiency levels were in Chinese, Korean and English.

Discussion

This study found that these tri-lingual Chinese foreign exchange university students attending a university in South Korea were aware of and used some reading strategies. However, there are many strategies that they did not use as the total mean was only 2.87 which was at the low end of the moderate level range. Additionally, when looking at each category of strategies (Table 2), these

results showed that these students were at the moderate level range when using strategies from all three categories. Global reading or metacognitive reading strategies which have students monitor their reading intentionally while working with comprehension of the text, had a mean score of 2.91. The Problem-solving or cognitive reading strategies, which have students use strategies when problems with understanding arise during the reading, has a similar result with a mean score of 2.90. But the Support strategies, which allow students to use mechanisms such as note-taking or reading the text aloud, had a mean score of 2.79. Previous research conducted by Poole (2009) found that females overall strategy use was significantly higher than males. Thus, it was expected that these mean scores would be a lot higher as there were 52 males and 123 females in this study.

Additionally, this study added support to previous research that has shown that there is a strong relationship between language proficiency and strategy use (Cabaysa & Baetiong 2010; Lai, Li, & Amster, 2013). In this study, strategy use was compared to language level proficiency with the same students who were trilingual as they spoke Chinese, Korean, and English. It showed that one must feel proficient with one's language skills in order to use more overall reading strategies to become a more a strategic reader. The results of this study showed that more strategies were used when these students were reading in Korean or English rather than in their first language (Chinese). The Chinese university students may be unaware of their use of strategies or did not feel to use any strategies to comprehend the text and communicate with others. They may have unconsciously used reading strategies but did not report the strategy use when reading in Chinese because their fluent Chinese language skills did not require them to consciously employ any reading strategies.

This study provided a picture of the strategies preferred by these Chinese foreign exchange university students which in turn will allow faculty members who are teaching these Chinese university students to examine their use of these Global or metacognitive, Problem-solving or cognitive, and Supporting strategies in order to determine how to help them with academic learning, as thus far research has shown that preference varies from group of students to group (Abbott, 2006; Bremner, 2006; Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2007; Hong-Nam & Page, 2015, 2014; Salahshour et al. 2012; Sheorey & Baboczky, 2008). The findings of study also support the idea that oral language is important for literacy development and it suggests that university faculty members need to have a lot of oral activities in the classroom, as ELLs learn language primarily by listening to language in use around them.

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