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Literacy Instruction in the Wake of Common Core State Standards

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This dissertation, LITERACY INSTRUCTION IN THE WAKE OF COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS, by JENNIFER BARRETT-MYNES, was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, Doctor of Philosophy, in the College of Education, Georgia State University.

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- Barrett-Mynes, J., Bingham, G., & Patton-Terry, N. (April, 2011). Early Literacy Skills and Invented Spellings. Georgia State University Language and Literacy Consortium.
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ABSTRACT

LITERACY INSTRUCTION IN THE WAKE OF COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

by
Jennifer Barrett-Mynes

As teachers modify their instruction to meet English Language Arts (ELA) Common Core State Standards (CCSS), how do these modifications influence literacy instruction and learning opportunities afforded to students? While the CCSS standardized objectives for literacy instruction, the enacted curriculum is uniquely shaped by teachers and their students (Coburn, 2001; Datnow & Castellano, 2000; Smagorinsky, Lakly, & Johnson 2002). This study describes how two elementary school teachers in one school: (a) perceived the ELA CCSS and their influence on instruction and the enacted curriculum; (b) adapted and aligned literacy instruction to respond to implementation of the CCSS; and (c) created instruction and literacy learning opportunities influenced by the ELA CCSS. To investigate the rich, nested levels of context in which teachers used the ELA CCSS to construct literacy instruction and learning opportunities for children, I applied a sociocultural framework and Engeström's third generation Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) model to create a theory-driven description of how teachers approached CCSS implementation and literacy instruction. Case study and CHAT methodologies were used to address the questions focused on instructional implementation of ELA CCSS and literacy learning. I analyzed data from interviews, observations, and documents through

grounded theory's constant comparative analysis (Charmaz, 2006) to uncover specific themes related to CHAT. Once I identified activities based on my constant comparison analysis, I performed a CHAT analysis on the selected activities (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). Findings from this study provide information about the implementation of the ELA CCSS in literacy instruction and the enacted literacy curricula. Findings suggest that multiple levels of context influenced the ELA CCSS implementation, including teachers' perceptions (Coburn, 2001; Maloch & Bomer, 2012). They also suggest that while teachers may teach from a standardized curriculum, the literacy learning opportunities differ in each class (Pacheco, 2010).

LITERACY INSTRUCTION IN THE
WAKE OF COMMON CORE
STATE STANDARDS

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Jennifer Barrett-Mynes

A Dissertation

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Degree of
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ABBREVIATIONS

Common Core State Standards	CCSS
English Language Arts	ELA
No Child Left Behind	NCLB
Cultural Historical Activity Theory	CHAT
Race to the Top	RTTT
National Reading Panel	NRP
National Early Literacy Panel	NELP
Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills	TAKS
Elementary and Secondary Education Act	ESEA
Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers	PARCC
Individual Education Plan	IEP
Response to Intervention	RtI
Leadership and Learning Center	LLC
Initiate Respond Evaluate	IRE
Initiate Respond Follow-up	IRF

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

If ever existed a group who most whole heartedly believed in the adage “you gotta change with the times,” it would be America’s educators. Teachers must act fast and learn on the go to keep up with all too swiftly changing learning objectives. In the past few decades, the federal government has given more attention to state standards and teacher accountability as seen through standard assessments. In the 1990’s, President Clinton used the accountability of teachers and schools as a federal campaign. This later manifested into *Goals 2000* program, and set the ground work for national standards (Moe, 2002). President Bush furthered Clinton’s educational goals for accountability with *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) in 2002. The enactment of NCLB increased federal involvement in schools, moving the federal goal of national standards a step closer. President Obama has teachers “Racing to the Top” to enable their students to score well on assessments and to make our country’s educational system appear stronger. Now educators face what to them seems a somewhat sudden and substantial shift of academic objectives that require teachers to align curricula and practices with the national Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

Change in curricular objectives and programming is far from new for teachers. In my first year of teaching I noticed a 28-year veteran teacher napping during our latest literacy program training. After the training she told me,

This ain’t new. I’ve seen this all before. In fact I have seen it more than once. They act like all these ideas are new, but really they are just the same few ideas and concepts being recycled with a new spin and presented again. You wait, child. This is new to you today, but it is going to go

away, and if you stay in long enough, you'll see it again. They may be calling it something different, but you'll see it again.

I hear her words still, ringing true in the curriculum research of Glatthorn and Jailall (2000). Glatthorn and Jailall illustrate that we have the same basic frameworks for curriculum trends, which they term as “streams,” which ebb and flow over time. The curriculum streams grow wide with high use during certain decades, and then narrow as they become sparsely used in other decades. Curricular objectives and programs may trickle, but never truly fade. In a study of teacher reactions to the *Success for All* literacy program (one of many scripted programs meant to cover materials for the state curriculum and assessments), Smagorinsky, Lakly, and Johnson (2002) found that experienced teachers viewed *Success for All* as similar to other previously implemented literacy programs in the repetitive cycle of curricular trends.

Teachers' experiences, world views, and pedagogical beliefs influence their responses to mandated change in the literacy curriculum and curricular programming, inevitably resulting in a variety of practices (Cross, 2009; Datnow & Castellano, 2000; Powell, 1996; Smagorinsky et al. 2002; Troia, 2011). This study considers that even when the curriculum is standardized, teachers may veer from the mandated path to work with the curriculum from his or her point of view.

Research Questions

This study was especially timely because it was conducted during the first year of CCSS implementation for many states. In this study I refer to curriculum as the written set of learning objectives. While curriculum is not analogous to standards, the CCSS objectives do lay out a curriculum for teachers to follow. Thus, for the purposes of this

study, I identify the CCSS as a curricular document that led curriculum design in the contexts I investigated.

I also refer to the enacted curriculum, or what is actually taught in the day to day classroom. As a study of ELA curricula, I focus on the enacted curriculum, its history, its stakeholders, and the influences that shape it. I think that examining the social, cultural, and historical factors of any activity is important. My research works within a sociocultural theoretical framework, with an even more specific focus on Engeström's Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT). With this sociocultural lens on activity systems within the enacted curriculum, I address the following questions:

- 1) What do teachers report about implementing ELA CCSS in their literacy instruction?
- 2) How are teachers implementing ELA CCSS into their literacy instruction?
- 3) What instructional opportunities are created in the enacted literacy curriculum?

This report of the study begins with a review of the history of the US educational system from the federal level, and an overview of policy creation and its relationship to curricular change. To frame this research on literacy curriculum and instruction, I review the research on literacy and language development and its influences on policy and practice. The literature review will provide a brief historical review of literacy research, policy, and instruction, followed by a review of literature on how Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) has been used as a research framework for literacy and curriculum. For the purpose of this research I define literacy as “reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing critical thinking practices” (Wyatt-Smith & Cumming, 1999, p. 29), and therefore limit my review of literature accordingly. Following is an outline of my theoretical framework and how it informs my definition of politically based

curriculum and the enacted curriculum. I outline how CHAT guides my understanding of the societal and historical influences on classroom literacy learning. The outline continues with research about the teacher's role as curriculum maker, and how despite set curriculum mandates, the teacher's perceptions and behaviors provide varied learning opportunities for children within the enacted curriculum.

Significance

This study investigates teacher practices and the enacted literacy curriculum in one school during the first year of implementation of ELA CCSS, a phenomenon affecting the majority of teachers, students, and school communities across the nation. Engeström's third generation CHAT provides a model to explore how teachers make sense of ELA CCSS and incorporate these new standards to engage children in literacy practices. Activity systems analysis provides a theory-driven description of (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010):

- What is learned from individual activity within shared experiences, and how multiple viewpoints influence individual experiences, as seen through the teachers' work within the grand scale of education as well as within the community of their own school as they undergo adapt curriculum to meet CCSS
- How goal-directed actions of a teacher influence what activities and learning opportunities take place as part of object oriented activities

This study examines how two teachers in one school: (a) perceived the ELA CCSS and their influence on instruction and the enacted curriculum; (b) adapted and aligned literacy instruction and the daily literacy curriculum to respond to

implementation of the CCSS; and (c) created instruction and literacy learning opportunities influenced by ELA CCSS.

Curriculum Policy and Education

Policies and societal values are always present in classrooms (Edmondson, 2005). Curriculum policy research is constructed from bodies of law and regulations pertaining to what “should” be taught in school (Elmore & Sykes, 1992). Curriculum policy study is the combination of research around developmental learning, politics and sociology, government sponsored interventions and assessments, and public policy. Policies are designed from the creator’s vision of an ideal society (Edmondson, 2005). Policy decisions are based on means-end analysis (Shannon & Edmondson, 2005), contrived and implemented to produce positive results on standardized test scores. Often policies may be created in reaction to other events. For example, the Reading First Initiative program was a response to what people viewed as the failures of the Reading Excellence Act (Edmondson, 2005). Sometimes political circumstances, like global test results and elections, spur policy and enforcement even though the correct or best path remains unclear (Elmore & Sykes, 1992). Policy making aims to create what is thought to work based on past research.

The consequences of policies are unknown during design and implementation phases (Elmore & Sykes, 1992). The previously mentioned Reading First Initiative resulted in an increased wave of prescriptive scientifically proven (through credible and relevant quantitative studies) reading programs given to teachers to aid yearly annual progress (Edmondson, 2005; Neuman et al., 2002). Branching from the call for scientifically proven methods to improve test scores, NCLB promoted the use of

prescriptive programs to boost scores and show teacher accountability. The research supporting this policy centered around study of the “Texas Miracle” in which students quickly improved on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills [TAKS] (Hoffman, Assaf, & Paris, 2005). What may not have been highlighted to the public during NCLB design and implementation were the critiques of study around this miracle.

Researchers, such as Hoffman, Assaf, and Paris (2005), share their concerns over the effects standards-based reform on teachers, teacher education programs, and the curriculum. They question the negative impact on marginalized populations.

Investigating the impact of the TAKS, Hoffman et al. (2005) conducted a survey of teachers and specialists who were members Texas State Reading Association to examine how educators perceived the TAKS influenced teachers, students, and instruction. From 200 educator responses, they found that teachers questioned the validity of the test—especially for ELLs and minority students. Grant and Wong (2005) agree, stating that “Language-minority students have been systematically excluded from traditional attempts to increase the reading performance levels of school-aged children” (p. 217). Hoffman and colleagues revealed that teachers were concerned about the exclusion of ELL students and were worried that administrators and parents did not question the validity and effects of the standardized assessment.

Teacher accountability based on test scores led to test-driven teaching practices and instances of teachers cheating on standardized assessments. In Hoffman’s study, teachers felt as though the instruction shifted to more test prep starting from the beginning of the school year and peaking months before the actual test. They noted that the instances of teachers cheating, especially in low performance schools, were higher

than ever. Other critics of the Texas Miracle state that in promoting the programs behind the Texas Miracle, policy makers did not address the questions concerning other factors that may influence student test scores other than curricular programs, such as parental income, maternal education, and the quality of the classroom teacher (Paul, 2005).

To critically analyze policy, one needs to look at it from a historical perspective (Shannon, 2005). Critiques of policy-based programs and legislation such as Reading First and NCLB illustrate the need for more thoughtfully designed policy creation and implementation. While the U.S. federal government has spent tens of millions on studying reading programs in just the last few decades (Shannon & Edmondson, 2005, p. 24), the research used to support model educational design has not been critical and in depth. Research in curriculum policy should examine what is asked of our schools, teachers, and students, as well as the after effects of policy implementation (Elmore & Sykes, 1992, p. 186). Studies like that of Hoffman et al. (2005), Kavanaugh (2010), & Smagorinsky et al. (2002) provide insights into how teachers perceive and implement policy and educational mandates. NCLB increased this test-induced stress phenomenon and led to test-focused instruction and ethical dilemmas of low achieving school educators (Dunn, Airola, Lo, & Garrison, 2013). NCLB and its system of negative consequences for poor performance left teachers and administrators concerned for their jobs and their schools. Instances of school-wide cheating, like that in the Atlanta Public Schools (Tagami, 2013), became a national concern. Will the response be any different in rewarding teachers for high scores in Race to the Top (RTTT)? If educators felt pressure to cheat to keep their positions, what pressure will they feel to receive rewards by scoring

higher than their peers? I question how RTTT and the ELA CCSS will influence teachers, students, and literacy instruction.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A sociocultural theory, such as CHAT, is appropriate for the study of literacy and literacy curriculum, as literacy education itself may be seen as a cultural-ideological practice (Kostogriz, 2000). Kostogriz claims literacy education as a cultural-ideological practice because it is steeped within a broad social network of knowledge, cultural and political contexts, previous educational policies, and global and localized institutions. With this in mind, socio-cultural theory is an excellent paradigm for educational research (Lee, 2011), making CHAT the “best kept secret of academia” (Roth, 2007). A history of sociocultural theory, CHAT, and activity theory are described in this section, along with the benefits of use as both a framework and methodology for literacy education research.

Socio-Cultural Theory and CHAT

Rooted in Russian psycholinguistics, socio-cultural theory is based on the Marxist belief that the possibility for change occurs within social activity (Engeström, 1999; Engeström & Miettinen, 1999). Marxism focuses on investigating phenomena in the work place or other social systems by studying origins of development. This theory indicates that observable activity is influential to the inner experiences of the individual (Engeström, 1999). Vygotsky’s contributions to sociocultural theory helped bridge how social activity begets individualized development. In Vygotsky’s view, culture and actions within social systems transfer from social activity and mediating objects to inner conceptualizations (Moll, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978). Culture can be defined as a dynamic and unbounded combination of socially shared codes and representations of ways of

doing, being, and perceiving, that cannot be separated from history or language (Bruner, 1995; Peshkin, 1992; Vygotsky, 1978). A blurred boundary occurs between culture and science, so that culture may be considered a mediating artifact as one uses cultural codes to help mediate one's meaning making (Clifford, 1986).

Vygotsky expanded sociocultural studies of activity theory to the fields of language and social literacy acquisition. Higher psychological functions come from two lines of development that blend to make child's behavior: biological origin and sociocultural origin (Vygotsky, 1978), which Davydov (1995) refers to as our biosocial human nature. While not discounting the biological development of children, cultural psychologists consider how development occurs psychologically within socially situated mediated events (Cole, 1996).

Language comes from a social matrix where meaning is shared by individuals, and children learn through exposure and collaboration with "expert language users" over time to create experiential semantics in a system that is constituted of language, cognition, and communication (Nelson & Shaw, 2002). Interactions among children and more competent others allow for the scaffolding of language, in which conflict motivates movement from lower to higher order thinking (Veresov, 2010). Language allows people to interpret experiences, express relations, and participate within the culture. One develops dialect, language, and one's culture itself from the environment in which one lives (Halliday, 1978). Therefore it may be this conglomeration of psychology, anthropology, linguistics, and other human sciences that contribute to language and reading development (Bruner, 1995).

Vygotsky, Luria, and Leont'ev, worked together in Russia in early to mid-1890's to examine culture and cross-cultural roles in language during the early stages of CHAT development (Cole, 1996). Luria believed cultural mediation alters the structure of psychological function. The mediation of language and learning focuses on the relationship between human agents and objects which are also mediated by cultural means, tools, and signs (Center for Research on Activity Development and Learning-CRADLE, n.d.). Tools and signs are used to mediate social and psychological processes of meaning-making (Werstch, 1999). Tools serve as a way to reach the object, or goal, of activity and may be physical or psychological. Tools are used to externally reach the object. Tools, whether physical or psychological, serve in meaning making opportunities around a goal or objective. Signs, or semiotically produced cognitive tools, change the psychological action of the behavior and not the object itself (Veresov, 2010). For this study I use Cole's (1996) definition of tool, though Cole prefers the term artifact to tools. Cole refers to artifacts as: (1) actual objects, (2) modes of actions (e.g. beliefs and traditions), and (3) things that are not directly practical, such as perceptions.

Cole further explains this work on mediation and artifacts in his description of cultural mediation in which humans live in a world of artifacts beyond the physical world. With artifacts (including language and literacy), humans interact and make meaning. Therefore, it is the societal and individual interactions with artifacts that give them meaning (Figure 1).

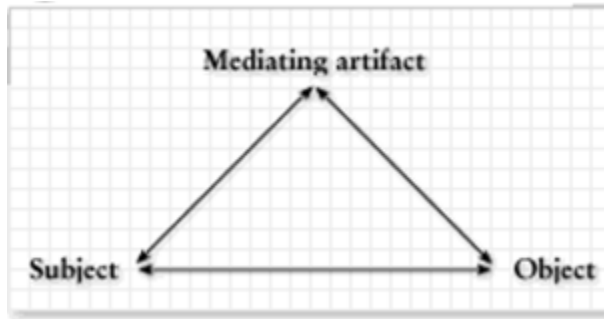


Figure 1. First Generation CHAT Model

Yet as people interact with the artifacts for meaning, the artifacts regulate the people's interactions with the artifacts themselves in the mediation process towards an objective. Therein making the relationship between person/group of people (subject), object (goal), and mediating artifact bidirectional and interdependent, as seen the continuously developing CHAT models.

The original model of mediating theory focused mainly on the subject (be it singular or plural), the objective goal, and the artifacts used for mediation. It did not greatly account for the larger context in which the activity occurs. To examine practice-bound cognition, examinations of both the collective group and individual perspectives within the greater social context are necessary. Researching only at the social level may take away from the perspectives of the individuals, and research only from the individual level leaves out the community (Engeström & Cole, 1997)—both are important.

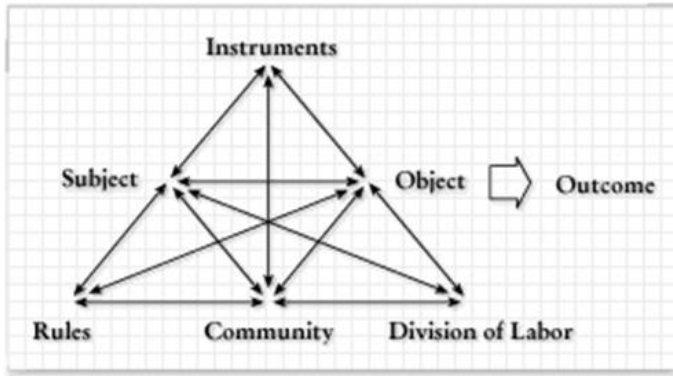


Figure 2. Second Generation CHAT Model

Leont'ev's second generation of theory added a second step between individual action and community activity. Leont'ev's theory (Figure 2) provides that subjects, as individuals within the community, are possessing of perspective, including the subjects' relationship and interactions with the greater community.

The subject focus is the top of the triangle that represents Vygotsky's original subject, object, and artifact mediation. The social, or community focus, occurs in the bottom of the mediational triangle demonstrating how the subject relates to the community, divisions of labor within that community (the fixing of a particular job for individual based on society), and what rules are involved in the interactions (Center for Research on Activity Development and Learning-CRADLE, n.d.). Thus an activity, or event around a certain objective, can be analyzed from the individual's level at the personal stage of interaction and the individual within the larger social network.

The objective, or simply stated object, of activity theory is what Engeström and Cole (1997) claim as a vertical dimension between the goal of individual's action and the motives of the collective, wherein the individual is not always provided access to the

collective motives and objects. Yet the collective development remains interlaced with the novel actions of the individuals involved. Engeström and Cole find that “it is in this interpenetration that novel motives, cultural models, and collective moments are initiated” (1997, p. 306). They further explain that development often occurs in the contradictions within the individual and collective, when there is a lack of coordination between the two that reveals zones of proximal development for both individual and collective (Cole & Engeström, 1993).

Though the second generation activity theory aimed to examine both the individual and collective, Cole and other cultural psychologists still found it lacking in its inability to include culture, multiple perspectives, dialogue, and voice (Cole, 1996). It lacked the ability to demonstrate the social context and culture in which the activity occurred. The culture of one community or individual may, may not, or may only partially reflect that of other subjects within the activity; the complexities of which could not be examined in the first two CHAT models.

Engeström proposed the third, and most recent, generation of activity theory (Figure 3). The third generation from Engeström blends Bakhtin’s ideas about language as being inseparable from social and history factors and Leont’ev’s concept of activity (Engeström, 2001). Engeström and Cole (1997) use third generation CHAT to incorporate many activity systems for analysis, allowing for diversity and dialogue to play its part upon the whole.

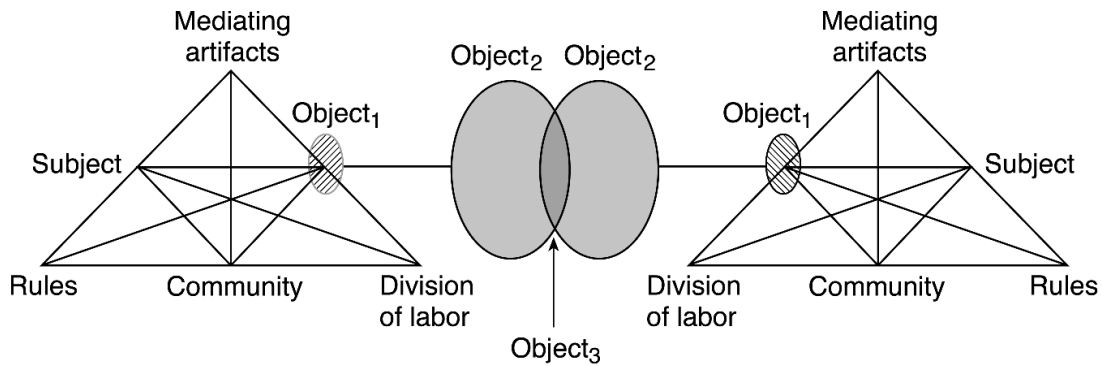


Figure 2. Third Generation CHAT Model

Third generation CHAT provides for the joining, or intersecting, of two systems (ex. classroom students and educators) as each works towards its own individual and collective goals. Subjects of activity “engage inter-subjectively by virtue of having some common object that they are working together on, one that embodies their collective motives” (Williams, Davis, & Black, 2007, p. 2). The combining of these two systems (Seen as activity one and activity two in Figure 3) creates a third object. The merger of the two activities creates a third object as tension occurs between objects of the first and second systems, allowing for mediation to occur in the zone of proximal development, which has the possibility of leading to new meaning making and expansive learning opportunities (Engeström, 1999).

Contributions of Activity Theory in Education Research

Though slow in coming, activity theory has inched into educational research, particularly research on literacy instruction (Kostogriz, 2000; Wuori, 2009). Activity theory has been primarily used in psychology of play, learning, cognition, and child development (Engeström & Miettinen, 1999). Its appearance in literacy research has been

well met by those who agree with Cole (1999) that acquisition of language and literacy is formed through mediated activity that has life-long growth from cultural-historical roots.

The definition of activity to which I will refer, comes from Fisher (2011), which states that activity is a historically, culturally, and socially situated action in which people are engaged towards a shared objective. A more detailed descriptor of activity may be found in Davydov's (1999) referral to activity as "a specific form of the societal existence of humans consisting of purposeful changing of naturally and social reality" (p. 39). Participation in the activity involves countless others as activity theory comes from cultural historical roots (Tolman, 1999). For example, if I chose to sit and read a book alone and engage in the solo activity, I myself did not write the book, inform the author, create its genre, or establish the rules within literature creation. Thus I am participating in an activity "with" the greater community of others which form and abide by the rules. The activity itself has been changed by participants over time as new types of literacies and genres are born. I myself bring my own goal, process, and means to the activity. I relate to the book from my own location in my culture, experiences, and knowledge (Engeström, 2001).

The Benefits of Using CHAT

Activity theory, specifically CHAT, examines development and learning within a system that focuses on subjects within a community; therefore, CHAT has great potential for educational research (Roth & Lee, 2007). Within cultural-historical activity theory, learning is defined as "an expansion of one's action possibilities" and is a bi-product of

one's actions to reach the end product or goal (Roth, 2007, p. 187). Language and literacy act as tools around an action, practice, or mediation.

In this study, I use the third generation CHAT model by Engeström to provide ecological validity, which Cole (1996) defines as “the extent to which a behavior sample in one setting can be taken as characteristic of an individual’s cognitive processes in a range of other settings” (p. 222). Cole further defines ecological validity through Bronfenbrenner’s lens in which research must maintain the integrity of the real-life situations it is designed to investigate and be faithful to the larger social and cultural contexts from which the subjects come. Instead of examining behavior and learning in one context at one time, CHAT allows for an examination of behaviors from one context across behaviors of the activity system. Cole (1996) credits activity theory as a way of verifying ecological validity. He agrees with Brunswik (1943) in not wanting to isolate individuals and activities from larger patterns in life, and instead advocates for studying interactions among individuals and an object or individuals and other person(s). Cole finds that CHAT provides a frame, as suggested by Lewin (1943), where events around physical and or social “boundary zone” can be viewed with Brunswik’s activity observation and analysis. CHAT, in Engeström’s model, allows for the examination of the boundary zones of inner and outer activity culture, along with the historical context that has led to the current state.

CHAT and the Enacted Curriculum

Curriculum policies are implemented differently across locations, schools, and classrooms, with different emphasis put on instructional strategies and materials providing widely varied ways of presenting the same curriculum. Policy development and

enforcement around curriculum and education is a top down process that gets touched, and filtered, by the many individuals it passes on the way down to teachers' individual interactions with students. Part of CHAT's lens for examining physical, social, and historical boundaries around an activity includes focusing attention towards cultural models, schemas, and scripts (Black, 2007; Burch, 2007; Cole, 1996; Gutierrez, 1993).

With its cultural historic lens, CHAT invites investigation and analysis of activities in which patterns of interaction and discourse inform researchers about social relationships, normative discourse practices, knowledge exchange systems, and participant beliefs (Gutierrez, 1993). Schemas involve selection mechanisms that relate and filter information for an individual, but cultural schemas are the patterns of systematic characterizations in a given group (Cole, 1996). The individuals within a group construct their own schemas as seen through their own roles and relationships within the group and its culture. Cole points out that individuals must engage in a large amount of interpretation to figure out which cultural schemas apply to particular circumstances and how one should interpret them. In this study, the cultural historical perspective of how national policy and local educational system decisions have influenced the enacted literacy curricula were investigated through interviews with school administration, a first grade teacher, and a second grade teacher. Both teachers were school representatives for local school system training on CCSS.

How do people comprehend the cultural schemas in which they participate, and their place within them? Gutierrez, Cole, and Engeström all formulate that cultural schemas include cultural scripts. These cultural scripts take place within the schemas, and specify who may participate in an event and the social role that is to be played with

which objects and in what sequence (Cole, 1996). In other words, cultural scripts provide information about people's roles and how they are to be played. Scripts are not an event or a single occurrence, and they do not occur outside of context. Instead they are characterized by particular patterns of participation, social hierarchies, discourses, and interactional patterns both within and across activities (Gutierrez, 1993). Similarly, Gee (2005) uses the term Discourse to suggest that cultural scripts influence our social identity of who we are and what we do within a group (although he doesn't use the term "scripts"). Scripts may contribute to what we are to do, or what we *think* we should be doing. Cultural scripts and schemas are both part of our cultural toolkits (tools used to help understand human behavior in context).

The socio-cultural nature of CHAT provides scope for one to examine not only the culturally binding contexts of activities, but the construction of development for the individuals within the activity (Veresov, 2010). Through the use of CHAT one can examine the role of development through its nature; asking, for example, what is being developed through the activity? CHAT allows for attention to the sources and moving forces of the mediation—person(s), artifacts(s), or object(s). CHAT also provides room for one to examine the results of developmental change within the activity. Veresov (2010) states that there is “no other developmental theory in psychology which describes and theoretically reflects all these aspects of the process of development in their interrelations and unity” (p. 84).

Decisions around educational curriculum involve many individuals and agencies. Researchers need a framework that will incorporate key imposing factors of the environment surrounding curriculum and its implementation down to the individual

teachers and the enacted curriculum. This includes teacher planning, materials, instruction, administrative decisions, and workings within policy (Walker, 1992). Reliance on large-scale quantitative studies to inform policy leads to a narrowing down of what educators think of as “literacy” (Johnson, 2003). In addition, this narrowed view does not represent the multiple ways in which children engage in literacy learning through a variety of literacy activities within the curriculum. CHAT allows for an investigation of curriculum from multiple points in time and perspectives. Furthermore, CHAT also helps to answer questions posed by Walker (1992, p. 112) around how methodological perspective may discover:

- How to study curriculum practices in relation to their contexts rather than as isolated, independent factors?
- How to research differing values, interests, and perspectives of all those involved in curriculum practices?

CHAT provides a widely encompassing framework for examining curriculum policy implementation in the classroom. The activity of literacy instruction from mandated literacy curriculum standards involves many players at many levels. Each player engages within the activity with the player’s own objective, but the overall objective of helping children to be successfully literate is influenced by the merged objectives of the multiple players. CHAT allows for the consideration of the players and their objectives as they act within the activity. Due to this strength, CHAT seemed most appropriate to frame this research around teachers’ literacy instruction informed by ELA CCSS in the enacted literacy curriculum. Part one of the following chapter attempts to provide an overview of how governmental, academic, and classroom players have

engaged in establishing and assessing practices for teaching meaningful literacy skills. Part two of the next chapter provides a look at the small but growing body of research involving CHAT as a framework for literacy and curriculum research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The following literature review is constituted from two areas of literacy research. The first reviewed area of research considers the relationship between literacy research, policy, and instruction. With CHAT as my framework, I provide readers with a brief historical outline of literacy research and connect this history with instruction in the literacy curriculum. The ELA CCSS were created within a historical context. The second area of research reviewed describes how CHAT has been used in literacy and curriculum implementation research, as this knowledge helps to inform the development of the current research study.

A Historical Look at Literacy Curriculum and Instruction: Research, Policy, and Practice

Literacy research and literacy practices have a bidirectional relationship, with each working to inform the other. Research concerning literacy practices informs researchers as to what practices around what skills may be seen as effective in particular contexts. Research about successful practices influences curriculum design and teacher practices. Both research and practice function together in this cyclical process.

Literacy instruction and the focus of literacy curricula in schools have changed through the past century with an increasing influence of standardization of curriculum and federal government involvement. As described in the previous chapter, curriculum has a long history of state and federal government influences. The following section outlines a brief history of research of literacy instruction and student literacy achievement and its relationship with literacy curriculum design and literacy practices. The purpose is to provide a description of the ebb and flow of trends in curricular objectives backed by

educational research. While research supports specific skills and instruction, there was never any streamline consensus leading to a homogenous conclusion for literacy development and learning. As previously mentioned, the trends, like educational streams of curriculum, are never completely diminished when another trend is highlighted in research and instructional practices.

Literacy research and curriculum instruction have historically focused on phonics and comprehension, involving processes that occur from both outside and inside the text. The outside-in model of literacy holds that literacy learning starts with outside factors and contexts that have influence on the very words of the text (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). The opposing view of literacy development is the inside-outside approach in which literacy learning occurs through decoding sounds in units. The literacy curricula of the 1950's through the 1970's were highly influenced by behavioristic thinking and cognitive psychology. Prior to the 1950's language acquisition was viewed through the lens of behaviorism and thus language development came from prompting and responses through interaction with others (Freeman & Freeman, 2004). Throughout the 1960's and 1970's the view that language skills, syntax, and grammar focused attention to a Formalist view of language structure, providing that it can be examined from a sublexical (phoneme and letter), lexical (word level), clause (sentence level), and discourse level (Frishkoff, class lecture, February 13, 2012). *Learning to Read* and *The Great Debate* by Jeanne Chall were both published in 1967, advocating for a curricular focus on phonics and code breaking, bringing with it a multitude of practices involving the use of phonics and decoding through skill and drill, rote learning, worksheets, controlled vocabulary, and basals (Denton, 1998; Hammond & Raphael, 1999; Pearson & Hiebert, 2010).

Curricula with objectives that revolve around phonics rely on an inside-out process of decoding sounds in units. Literacy curricula which focus on phonics include instruction around the processes in which children learn letters, sounds, the link between grapheme (graphic representation of individual units of sound) and phoneme (smallest unit of sound in a language), phonological awareness (attending to sound structures) and grammar to make sense of text. The terminology involved in the study and teaching of sound are numerous and complex, with phonemic awareness and phonological awareness being used interchangeably. The International Reading Association (1998) clarifies these terms, “To be precise, phonemic awareness refers to an understanding about the smallest units of sound that make up the speech stream: phonemes. Phonological awareness encompasses larger units of sound as well, such as syllables, onsets, and rimes” (p. 3).

The phonics-based view of reading dominated reading curriculum through the 1970s. Researchers (and policy makers) became concerned when they noticed that reading test scores for children above second and third grade showed a decline once comprehension and critical thinking became a part of the tests. Chall called this “the fourth grade slump” and differentiated “reading to learn” from “learning to read.” Chall suggested that prior to grade four, children were “learning to read” and after grade four they were “reading to learn.” However, Chall’s critics believed this false dichotomy between “learning to read” and “reading to learn” could be overcome through a more language-focused approach to literacy instruction.

Whole language, introduced by Frank Smith and popularized by Yetta and Kenneth Goodman, became popular in the 1980s. During the late 1970’s and 1980’s Smith, Luke, and the Goodmans each argued the need for curricular focus on

comprehension skills taught holistically using whole language instruction (Goodman & Goodman, 1990; Savage, 2011). Whole language theory provides that meaning making is three pronged, coming from the semantic system (meaning in language), syntactic system (information about the form and the structure of the language), and the graphophonic system (the sound relationship between the orthography/symbols and phonology/sounds of a language) (Goodman & Goodman, 1990).

Curriculum centered on whole language instruction is theoretically framed by Vygotsky's view of language and reading as psycho-cultural or psychosocial (Goodman & Goodman, 1990). While not disclaiming that meanings are "in the mind," Bruner (1996) describes meanings as having origins and significance in the culture from which they are created. He states that it is this "cultural situatedness of meaning that assures their negotiability and ultimately their communicability" (p. 3). Kutz (1997) describes language as developing through a universal acceptance as a social construct within a culture. While Halliday (1978) further perceives language as a way in which people interpret experiences, express relations, and participate within the culture, and that one develops dialect, language, and one's culture itself from the environment in which one lives. Therefore it may be this conglomeration of psychology, anthropology, linguistics, and other social sciences that contribute to the idea of "whole" language and reading development (Bruner, 1995). When approached with whole language, the literacy curriculum involves instruction via multiple means of addressing reading and comprehension; phonemic awareness (recognizing and manipulating individual sounds in language) exists as one of many learning objectives.

Reading Development and the Reading Wars

Chall's *The Great Debate* (1967) marked the beginning of an ongoing debate among educators as to which skills should receive greater focus in the literacy curriculum. During this deepening debate of phonics vs. whole language, word recognition vs. socio-psycholinguistic, inside-outside vs. outside-inside, the United States Congress commissioned two meta-analysis of literacy research to help answer questions concerning instructional approaches towards set literacy objectives. The first was commissioned with the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) in 1997. The agenda was to create a panel to "assess the status of research-based knowledge early reading development" (Pearson & Hiebert, 2010, p. 287). Timothy Shanahan (n.d.; www.readingonline.org), member of the National Reading Panel (NRP) and the National Early Literacy Panel (NELP), issued the statement that the purpose of the NRP was,

To ensure a reasonable standard of quality and to protect respect for public institutions and professions, an authoritative group is appointed to carry out an objective review of the research and to decide upon a standard of practice. The federal government then endorses this standard and benefits are provided to those whose professional practice is consonant with it.

The NRP consisted of 14 panel members who were asked to provide a comprehensive report reviewing literature from scientifically based research in which literacy instruction effectiveness was measured by child assessment outcomes. The panel selected English only experimental and quasi-experimental studies that examined the impact of repeated reading or some other form of guided oral reading instruction on reading achievement of students in grades K-12 (National Reading Panel, 2000). NRP began its meta-analysis with a set of selection criteria to create a purposeful sample, which in turn diminished the number of possible studies for review (Cunningham, 2002). Educational researchers

questioned the surprisingly low number of studies in the meta-analysis, as well as its generalizability due to its considerably small numbers of participants in many of the studies (Garan, 2002). The report itself had two versions. The first report was published without subgroups, and the second report included subgroups. Critics noted that publishing two reports could be confusing or misleading.

The NRP reported on five areas of curriculum instruction: 1) alphabetics (phonemic awareness), 2) fluency, 3) comprehension, 4) teacher education and reading instruction, and 5) technology use in literacy instruction (Cunningham, 2002). Findings on alphabetics indicated that explicit instruction of phonemic awareness should be included in instruction. Results from the report led to a noticeable increase in phonics instruction in the literacy curricula across the country. Fluency was to be instructed through guided, repeated oral reading, though there was confusion in the meta-analysis between fluency in oral vs. silent reading. NRP summaries about comprehension suggested professional development focus on teaching vocabulary instruction. The teacher education component of the NRP reported that more teacher development correlated with higher children's assessment scores. The use of technology for literacy instruction was seen as inconclusive but promising. Aside from the cautions against generalizing these findings due to the limited sample, NRP was also criticized for its lack of minority representations among tested populations and its lack of studies concerning children age five and under (Garan, 2002). When research does not properly address minority students and students from a range of ages, then policy, curricula, and instruction are created that may not be appropriate for meeting the needs all students (Gutierrez et al., 2002).

In response to the lack of early childhood literacy instruction assessment in the NRP, Shanahan chaired the NELP as one of nine panelists. In 2001 The National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) partnered with the Head Start Bureau resulting in the NCFL's organizing and overseeing the NELP. The purpose of NELP, according to the 2007 report, was to:

Create a summary of scientific evidence on early literacy development and on home and family influences on that development. The panel's primary purpose was to synthesize research to contribute to decisions in educational policy and practice that affect early literacy development and to determine how teachers and families could support young children's language and literacy development. (p. III)

The NELP report's meta-analysis listed six key skills necessary to promote literacy and success in writing: alphabet knowledge, phonemic awareness, rapid naming of letter or digits, rapid automatic naming of pictures or objects, writing one's name, and phonological memory.

The NRP highlighted the use of phonemic awareness (attending to smallest units of sound) while NELP recommended phonological awareness (attending to sound structures) as predictors of successful child outcomes on literacy assessments. From these reports policy and curricula have increased reinforcement of phonics instruction. A number of literacy researchers were concerned that meaning oriented variables were listed in reports as "second tier" to phonemic awareness. They were apprehensive about the over-compensation of policy and educational systems to base curriculum and instruction on large amounts of highly structured explicitly taught code breaking skills centered on phonemic awareness (Coles, 2000; Paterson, 2002; Pearson & Hiebert,

2010). Too heavy a reliance on phonics (study of sound within language) does not lead to literacy success in later grades or a rich array of literacy skills (Coles, 2000).

Ehri et al. (2001) conducted their own meta-analysis for phonemic awareness after its strong support in the NRP and found that phonemic awareness does indeed support reading across all languages. However, they also found limitations for when and how phonemic awareness should be used. Phonemic awareness instruction should be moderate, introducing a few phonemes at a time, and not all children need the same amount of phonemic awareness instruction. Ehri et al. (2001) also questioned the use of phonemic awareness instruction past second grade since it no longer proved to be effective at that age.

After the release of the NELP report David Dickinson and peers (2009) released a response which gave credence to the importance of phonological awareness but reminded educators to consider these aspects in conjunction with NELP findings: (1) interventions highly represented in the meta-analysis are based on a narrow set of code related skills due to ease of targeting those skills; (2) language skills developed in the early childhood years have indirect and delayed effects on reading comprehension; and (3) without content, the words children read cannot map on to anything meaningful (Dickinson, Holinkoff, Hirsh-Paske, Neuman, & Burchinal, 2009).

Research from the reading wars and meta-analysis reports has presented evidence that leave educators with the understanding that literacy curricula and instruction require balance. While studies yet argue the importance of code related vs. non-code related (such as vocabulary and semantics) skills of literacy development, several lessons were

learned from the reading wars. Denton and the Southern Regional Education Board noted the following from the reading wars (1999):

- Teachers were unsure about the instruction of whole language (confusion over whether or not whole language meant whole class instruction, not having to teach skills, or the use of real books instead of basals)
- A good whole language program must include phonics and good phonics instruction but that will not be the only effective piece of a reading program
- Direct instruction of phonics is most effective when in the context comprehensive literature-based reading
- The wars allowed for no long term consistency
- Teachers had not been able to reach a consensus
- Huge costs were accrued training and retraining teachers
- Decades of children received inconsistent instruction

Reaching Common Ground in a Balanced Literacy Curriculum

A common thread throughout these lessons is the need for balance between code and non-code based skills in the literacy curriculum, as well as a dire need for consistency. With teachers teaching from unbalanced curricula and children receiving unbalanced instruction, the need for a consistent balance of literacy objectives and skills sets for all teachers and all children across the nation demanded even greater attention. Support increased for a balanced literacy curriculum after NRP 2000 which called for focus on both comprehension and decoding skills. The late 1990's revealed increasing research supporting teachers who were using an eclectic mixture of literacy practices in search of a balanced curriculum. P. David Pearson (2001) announced his position "in the

radical middle” as proponent of both code related and comprehension-based instruction. Yet balanced literacy is more than just a mixing of instructional approaches; it is a system in which one element influences other parts, and the interrelationship of these parts are considered for instruction (Rasinski & Padak, 2004). Pearson (2001) suggests that balance is not just a “means of evening the score” between code related and non-code related practices, but rather it is a matter of educators “assembling an array of skills, strategies, processes, and practices that are sufficiently rich and synergetic to guarantee a full and rich curricula for all students” (p. 82). There is no agreed upon formula to achieve balance, or one definition for teachers to use. Instead, balance should depend upon the literacy levels and needs of students, and focus individually and in small groups to meet those needs. The CCSS were designed to provide support for balance within the written literacy curriculum (Shanahan, 2013; Sparks, 2012), which Shannon (2013) states was a federal agenda for national standardization.

National Policies for School Curricula

Political interest and control of curricula are not new to this decade, or even century. In 1892, the Committee of Ten (presidents of universities working as part of the National Education Association) convened to determine the goals of the curriculum. Its intent was to prepare people for college—despite the highly dynamic population of students who may or may not have been admitted to most colleges (Moe, 1992). College entrance requirements in the late 1890’s kept those in charge of curriculum always planning for the next level, a concept that is still alive and well today. Adjustments made by the Cardinal Principles, another National Education Association group in 1918, attempted to make curriculum more adaptable to everyday use and not solely a means of

college preparation. More than a century later the CCSS attempts to prepare all students for college and career readiness.

Uniform curriculum and higher international ranking have been goals of federal legislators since the 19th century. After school systems within Prussia used established grade level standards and uniform examinations, policy makers have sought to standardize our nation (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 1992). Though it was not until the 1950's that the federal government first took a hand in issuing national policies towards education. When the Supreme Court ruled in *Brown vs. Board of Education* in 1954, the federal government took its first official step towards creating policy for all state education systems (McGuinn, 2006). Darling-Hammond and Snyder's (1992) review of curriculum history further illustrates governmental influence on curriculum in the Sputnik space race of the 1950's and 1960's in which the government pushed for improvement in education as a means of national defense and increased funding allocations towards schools for this purpose.

The last few decades have focused on the idea that standardization of curriculum may provide more equitable education for all, and promote all America's children to score well on national and international assessments (McGuinn, 2006). Policy towards this aim has been established through modifications to the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), a bill that was originally signed shortly after President Johnson took office. This act may be seen as a political strategy by Johnson to respond to civil rights pressures and religious conflicts over education by linking educational legislation to his "War on Poverty" (The Social Welfare History Project, n.d.). McGuinn claims that ESEA "initiated a new era of federal activism in education and laid the

foundation of a policy regime” (2006, p. 25). The era of federal policy and global politics continued through the Cold War, with Carter’s 1979 creation of a cabinet-level Department of Education, Reagan’s report of *A Nation at Risk* (1983), Clinton’s envisioning common requirements in the 1990’s for Goals 2000, Bush’s call for uniform expectations and goals of achievement and accountability in 2002’s NCLB, and now Race To the Top (RTTT) in 2009. Policies have all led towards further unifying a standardized curriculum, and have been passed through as legislative amendments to the ESEA of 1965.

Cuban (2007) comments on the country’s response to global educational competitions:

Prompted by low scores of U.S. students on international tests, powerful coalitions of business and civic elites... pressed state and federal officials to draft schools into preparing the next generation of engineers, scientists, and workers...all the standards based, testing, and accountability movements have strongly influenced classroom content and practices in the 1990’s and especially since NCLB became law in 2002. (p. 7)

Political school reforms spurred by policies, such as the Comprehensive School Reform Act of 1997, NCLB in 2002, and RTTT in 2009, alter how educators view the structures of school and curriculum (Kavanaugh, 2010; Smagorinsky et al. 2002). The Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center (2005) indicates that more than 8,000 schools adopted scientifically research based external school reforms. Despite the multitude of reforms that push for teachers to be held more highly accountable, the U.S. shows no sign of significant improvement in literacy skills. Children who started school as Kindergarteners and have undergone the myriad of scientifically proven programs, test no higher than their predecessors the decade before the reform acts. The Program for International Student Assessment, created in 2000 to assess 15-year olds in three major

subject areas of reading, math, and science, states that there was no measurable difference between the average score of U.S. students in reading literacy in 2000 and 2009. Among 64 other countries being assessed, the U.S. literacy average came in 10th in the ranking (PISA, 2009). Shannon (2013) also questions efforts to create a national curriculum, stating that if standardization was the key to improved test scores and could close the gap between groups of children, then individual states would have seen marked improvement after standardizing their own state curriculum.

With the lack of success in past policy in significantly improving scores from national literacy testing and ranking, another reform movement, RTTT, was implemented in 2009 to have States compete against each other for a piece of the offered \$4 billion stimulus funding. The funding was advertised to “go to States that are leading the way with ambitious yet achievable plans for implementing coherent, compelling, and comprehensive education reform” (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). States that proposed grants and were awarded some of the RTTT funding are held accountable to act on their proposal and produce results. From the Center for American Progress, Boser (2012) comments on how the national government now has more power over state government than ever before.

The Department of Education has been holding states accountable for their performance. It has rejected amendments as well as made it clear that some states are not doing enough to execute their promises. This approach is new. Historically, the Department of Education has not had either the tools or the political will to push states in this way. (p. 13)

The New Teacher Project (2012), a national nonprofit organization devoted to providing educational equality, questions the effectiveness of RTTT. Review processes and tools are subject to differing reviewers. After the first round of “racing,” critics noted that

reviewers have a range of high and low expectations depending on the person. In addition, schools were not held accountable for how hard they worked, and how far they went, to achieve set goals. Some schools totally reworked their programs and systems and went whole heartedly into RTTT plans and were scored lower than schools that barely changed things. School systems that produced good outcomes but gave few to no details in their improvement plans were not held to standards of fidelity as closely as others because they had not set them; thus they were not penalized. So sharing less about improvement plans proved to be the better choice (New Teacher Project, 2012).

A Unified Curriculum: The Adoption of the CCSS

RTTT further encouraged a standardized curriculum that would provide the 40 racing states which applied a unified set of standards for teaching and testing. Released in 2010, CCSS for English language arts (ELA) and mathematics for grades kindergarten through twelfth were encouraged for all states to adopt (Kober, Renter, & Stark, 2012). Though highly encouraged and given fiscal support if adopted, the CCSS were not mandatory. As of 2012, a total of 46 states and the District of Columbia agreed to adopt the ELA CCSS. According to the CCSS mission statement (2012), the standards were designed to be used universally by all states and to:

Provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers.

In addition they were designed to prepare “our communities to be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy” (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2012). The CCSS Initiative credits the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)

and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) for the development of the standards, and mention feedback from The National Education Association (NEA), American Federation of Teachers (AFT), National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), and National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). There was also support from the public and some practitioners. Advocates for CCSS suggested that a uniform curriculum would provide the highly desired international test score rankings and graduation rates that have been long sought after through other means of threats (NCLB) and rewards (RTTT) (Cuban, 2012).

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association (NGA) set out to provide a balanced requirement of skills and consistency through the creation of a standardized curriculum which were meant to be adopted nation-wide. As specified by CCSSO and NGA, the CCSS are meant to be (1) research and evidence-based, (2) aligned with college and work expectations, (3) rigorous, and (4) internationally benchmarked (Common Core State Standard Initiative, 2010).

The ELA CCSS in grades K–5 “include expectations for reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language applicable to a range of subjects” (CCSS Initiative, p. 4). The K-5 ELA standards are based on College and Career Anchor standards that are broadly defined goals to prepare students for literacy throughout life. Each grade then has corresponding grade specific skills related to the broader anchor standards. The more defined grade level standards for ELA include standards pertaining to: a) literature, b) informational texts, c) foundational skills around phonology and fluency, d) writing skills, e) speaking and listening, and f) conventions of the English language.

Assessment for the CCSS was the first concern that came to mind when I heard of the CCSS. I pondered how the majority of states in our country could be measured, and compared, on the same standards if the CCSS Initiative did not design a common assessment. Under the Comprehensive Assessment Systems grant category, the U.S Department of Education authorized under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the RTTT Assessment Program that provided funding to consortia of states to develop assessments for CCSS. Two leading consortia were chosen to develop assessments for the CCSS: the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and Smarter Balanced. PARCC is a consortia of states working to develop a common set of K-12 assessments in English and math to prepare for college and later careers. According to the PARCC consortium, the assessments will be ready for states to administer during the 2014-15 school year. The other federally funded consortium for assessment development for CCSS is the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium is also developing assessments in ELA and mathematics. Like PARCC, Smarter Balanced also plans to release its assessments for CCSS in the 2014-2015 school year. States are responsible for choosing their own CCSS assessment. The state in which this study took place chose the PARCC assessment.

Critiques of the CCSS

Not all educators support standardization of curriculum. Some educators are concerned that uniformity will limit the customization that is needed for differentiation among students (Gutierrez & Zepada, 2010). Others feel that the CCSS are not as rigorous as previous state standards, and will be a step backwards (Ravitch, 2012). At

this time, four states have declined to adopt the ELA CCSS (Alaska, Texas, Nebraska, and Virginia) although the CCSS Initiative refers to them as states that have “not yet” adopted. Other states such as Georgia, Alabama, and Indiana, have petitions to pass bills that will pause full implementation of the CCSS until data is provided from other states (Ujifusa, 2013). Cuban (2012) adds to the list of critiques, suggesting that attempts for blanket equality through standardizing the curriculum will be frustrating for both high achieving students and student populations who need extra support in academics. Most states are attempting to realign their previous state curriculum to the CCSS, finding the new standards more rigorous and intense than previous state standards. States are still addressing implementation, and lacking in funds to make the complete change to CCSS (Shanahan, 2013). Though educators now have direction for which specific standards are to be attained at what grade level, they are still debating which methods might best aid in implementing standards and selecting curricular materials (Gerwetz, 2012).

Two of the CCSS authors, David Coleman and Susan Pimentel, created the *Publishers' Criteria* (2011) to ensure that curricular materials help navigate teacher instruction towards the new standards. The criteria were created to help companies that develop materials and curricula to align with key features of the CCSS. Publishers and educators alike are using the criteria for curricular materials and instruction. With the creation of the *Publisher's Criteria* (Coleman & Pimentel, 2012), new curricular materials focus on ELA standards and question samples that mimic the CCSS standardized tests, creating narrower and narrower instructional opportunities (Wilson & Newkirk, 2011). Yatvin (2012), Past President of NCTE and executive board member of the Oregon Council of Teachers of English, questions what types of inappropriate

decisions and instruction will come once curriculum developers use the *Publisher's Criteria for the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Literacy*. The criteria, Yatvin claims, are even more limiting and counter to what research defines as developmentally appropriate.

Clandinin and Connelly (1992) caution that curricula are often created by researchers and governing bodies that may serve to prosper from enforcement. In response to the rush for a well “producing” curricular guide that supports CCSS, publishing companies are pushing to have the best products that are proven to match the CCSS and will hopefully enhance test scores (Gerwetz, 2012). Cohen, of Pearson’s Publishing, claims in an interview with Gerwetz (2012), that members of the CCSS construction team were working on material creation for their company. As to the effectiveness of the materials, Cohen says no one will know until after 2015 when the new assessments come out, but Cohen believes that the company that aligns and helps school systems score well on the assessments will be successful in the long term, as school systems almost always purchase materials instead of making their own from scratch.

From Policy to Practice: Interpreting and Implementing the ELA CCSS

Decisions about implementing the CCSS are still ongoing as state systems, administration, and educators make connections between and within the CCSS and its corresponding documents. Though CCSS include Anchor Standards for providing a broad set of desired skills and specific grade-level standards that add specific details for skills, how administrators and educators choose to meet those standards via instructional programs, text adoptions, and types of literacy instruction is not mandated.

Though 2011-2012 is the first year of almost nation-wide state implementation, some schools, like those in the state of Kentucky, opted for early implementation of the standards. The *Publisher's Criteria* and responses from school systems with the standards are already in place provide starting blocks for those who are just beginning the implementation process. The most notable points of interest from *Publisher's Criteria* and system feedback concern how the new standards differ from previous standards and instructional practices.

Teachers across content areas who have never focused previously on specific literacy elements are noting the change in their thinking and their practices as literacy standards integrated across the content areas (Gerwetz, 2012). For science and social studies teachers, there is an increased focus on close readings of informational texts, and allowing for students' written responses.

CCSS Bring Noted Changes

Teachers with previous experience in literacy instruction are noting that the ELA CCSS have changed their planning, use of materials, and curriculum implementation. Some of the areas of change receiving attention include the increase in informational texts, reduction of pre-reading activities, and increase in academic language (Gerwetz, 2012; Maxwell, 2012). Informational text should be used more, with informational text usage increasing in each grade level; so as students reach 12th grade 70% of readings should be non-fiction (Gerwetz, 2012). The increase in informational text is meant to help students prepare for non-fiction reading in their college and career experiences.

The decrease in fictional text is not the only change concerning teachers' use of text in their literacy instruction. Pre-reading activities are also to be limited, though

authors of the CCSS note that pre-reading activities are useful tools when used in moderation and when used for specific purposes to engage. Readers of the *Publishers' Criteria* are quick to note the document's stance on teachers sticking to the text and the promotion of sparse use of pre-reading activities. David Coleman, an author of the criteria, clarifies that pre-reading should not be banned but used only as needed in strategic ways that do not pre-empt the text (Gerwetz, 2012). Coleman urges this reduction in pre-reading activities because they believe teachers were focusing inappropriate amounts of instructional time preparing to read instead of reading and making meaning. In some instances they noted teachers using more time and instructional preparation in the pre-reading activity than in the actual reading of the text. It was considered that such practices left nothing to discover in the actual reading after over used pre-reading activities. According to the ELA CCSS, pre-reading activities should be used sparingly as a single tool in a larger set of teachers' instructional tool kits.

Explicit vocabulary instruction has been highlighted by the NRP and numerous researchers as key practice for increasing children's comprehension. The ELA CCSS focus on increasing children's vocabulary knowledge, specifically around academic vocabulary. The CCSS document states that, "The vocabulary standards focus on understanding words and phrases, their relationships, and their nuances and on acquiring new vocabulary, particularly general academic and domain-specific words and phrases" (p. 8). The *Publishers' Criteria* suggest that vocabulary development is one of the main criteria for learning to read and that materials are needed to help teachers explicitly and systematically teach more complex and academic vocabulary. These materials should

provide opportunities for “wide ranging and intense vocabulary” instructional opportunities (p. 4).

Supporting CCSS Implementation

Other professional organizations now provide support materials for educators, so that the *Publisher’s Criteria* is not the only place to turn for direction. For example, the International Reading Association has released an implementation summary for educators to help make meaning of the ELA CCSS. The need to provide guidance for teachers in ELA CCSS implementation stems from the association’s concern that information, policy, and practice are sending conflicting messages about ELA CCSS and literacy practices. These recommendations include how educators may: 1) use challenging texts, 2) provide foundational skills, 3) focus on comprehension, 4) develop student vocabulary, 5) foster children’s writing skills, 6) work on literacy across content areas, and 7) meet the needs of diverse learners. Each recommendation for practice is aligned with ELA standards.

State and local systems, along with vested interest groups like those funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, are also trying to aid in helping administrators and teachers make sense of the ELA CCSS and create quality literacy instruction around them. For instance, schools in the New York City school district have collaborated in making a digital library for educators that includes sample activities, lesson plans, and resources to meet the need of increased informational texts in the ELA CCSS. Some states are opting to buy new curricular text and materials from publishing companies who have developed new standards based instructional items. The Gates Foundation has helped fund the Literacy Design Collaborative (LDC), an initiative which claims to be

created by and designed secondary school educators. The LDC provides free online task templates and learning modules for secondary teachers (Crawford, Galiatsos, & Lewis, n.d). These help teachers give instructional opportunities, guidelines for assessing, and analysis of assessment results. Templates, modules, and courses are described in detail with samples and reflection of model lesson for teachers in the 1.0 Guidebook to LDC online, as well as presentations, publications, and newsletters from the LDC.

Policy in the Enacted Curriculum

Policy travels from larger national and state arenas down to districts, schools, and the individual classroom, and is shaped and interpreted at each point in the journey. Shannon (2005) states that “reasonable people can examine the same policy and reach different conclusions about its worth” (p. 2). The conversations around instruction also differ greatly depending on the point of location on the hierarchical scale. Toll (2005) describes teacher discourse as differing greatly from policy discourse on the topic of instruction. Toll finds that policy level discourse is objective based, or goal-oriented, and highly generalized to include all students as a single product of the education system. Whereas teacher discourses often include frequent references to controlling the choices made to help all students reach objectives.

Teachers take policy, professional development (both sought after and mandated), curricular resources, and standards into the classroom where Paris (2001) notes they try to “fit” the larger social contexts into teaching their students in the comingling of standards, materials, teacher, and children (p. 74). Teachers understand that all children are different and that legislation cannot construct a single method that will meet the diverse needs of all students in the classroom.

The enacted curriculum. Policy towards a standardized curriculum may exist, but one must question how the policy is then disseminated into the individual classrooms across the nation. Coburn (2001) states that research about instructional policy and classroom practice suggests “that teachers interpret, adapt, and even transform policies as they put them into place” (p.145). Teachers construct policy messages both as individuals and in professional communities, making decisions about how to apply the policies into individual classrooms. Curricula are socially created constructs molded by federal and local policies, communities, schools, teachers, and students. Each player contributes to how the curricula is enacted and received. While researchers have defined the enacted curriculum in a multitude of ways, all acknowledge the key players (teachers, students, surrounding policy, and text based materials), and the undeniable power and significance of the enacted curriculum within educational reform. Porter and Smith (2001, p. 2) go so far as to claim that the enacted curriculum is “arguably the single most important feature of any curriculum” and is the “actual curricular content that students engage in the classroom.” Remillard and Bryans (2004) define the enacted curriculum as a co-construction by teachers and students as they participate in classroom events. They suggest that the critical component to the enacted curriculum is the teacher’s “interpreting and responding to the words and actions of the students” (p. 355).

Despite growing bodies of research that point to the teacher as “an integral part of the curriculum constructed and enacted in the classroom,” research on teachers as literacy curriculum-makers has historically been limited (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992, p. 363). Clandinin and Connelly (1992) claim that the enacted curriculum is more influential than what is written in textbooks or mandated policy for it is what actually takes place in the

classroom, the real meaning that is made. They further outline the difference between curriculum and instruction in that the curriculum is the end goal, or body of knowledge the students should know, and the instruction is the means for getting there. Children connect the deliverance of curriculum to the curriculum itself, leaving a thin layer between teachers' behavior, implementing methods of instruction, and objectives to be learned (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 1992). The next section highlights the teacher contribution towards the enacted curriculum.

Teacher influence on the enacted curriculum. The worldviews, pedagogical beliefs, and lived experiences of teachers affect how they interpret and navigate the given curriculum (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 1992; Powell, 1996; Prawat, 1992). Powell's (1996) four-year study of two teachers with opposing epistemologies explored how teachers' prior experiences and beliefs about knowledge influence the way they implement curricula. Powell's findings indicate that teachers with objectivist epistemology may hold to the belief that children are either able to understand and correctly recall information, or they are not. Learning should be done scientifically and should support a scientific method way of thinking. Teachers may provide information uniformly, not making adaptations.

Teachers with behavioristic perspectives, such as the objectively minded teacher in Powell's study, view knowledge as set objects that may be transferred from teacher to student—learned to unlearned as if the students were blank slates (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 1992). Studies of behavioral research on curriculum have focused on the transmission of the curriculum and not the content of the curriculum itself. These studies include the teacher's use of cues as a means of operant conditioning (Skinner) that

triggers specific behaviors from children, suggesting that through this repetitive practice of presenting facts, strategies, and procedures, information may be quickly memorized. Such practices abound in scripted curricular programs like *Success For All* and *Open Court* are adopted for their ability to teach narrowly specified objectives in a short period of time. Yet even in programs that require specific times when all teachers are supposed to be on the same page (literally), teachers find ways to make the curriculum their own when it differs from their experiences as seen in the enacted curriculum (Datnow & Castellano, 2000; Kavanagh 2010; Smagorinsky et al., 2002).

Additionally, Powell (1996) finds that teachers with a subjective epistemology may adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of children and their cultural knowledge and interests. These teachers may see standards as important, but they place more importance on the needed adaptations to make the curricular material real to the students. In doing so some objectives may be skipped and some objectives may be added. Teachers who have subjective beliefs will take time to tap into background information and using children's intuition and perception, and attempt to provide culturally relevant pedagogy for their students (Ladson-Billings, 1992). Teachers with subjective worldviews often have a sociocultural perspective that is demonstrated in the enacted curriculum through child-centered activities, whole-language approaches to literacy acquisition, and inclusion of children's culture (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 1992; Prawat, 1992; Smagorinsky et al., 2002).

Furthermore, Remillard and Bryans (2004) find that teachers who have different orientations towards the curriculum based on their philosophies, experiences, and years of teaching provide differing learning opportunities for their students. Due to teacher

experiences and philosophies, teachers use the curriculum in a variety of ways, revealing that the enacted curriculum is related to the teacher as well as the actual curriculum and script. In Remillard and Bryan's (2004) curricular model, the enacted curriculum is directly related to students' practices in the classrooms, what learning opportunities they may engage in. The enacted curriculum is influenced by the teacher's ideas about teaching, the teacher's orientation towards that prescribed curriculum, and the teacher's beliefs about how information is learned.

While teachers have some influence on the enacted curricula, the degree to which they may shape the curricula varies greatly based upon their teaching environment (Au, 2007). The teacher's role of curriculum maker is encompassed within a larger context involving many players. The teacher remains an individual acting within the larger community, which may be visualized in Leontev's second generation CHAT model (Figure 2) and Engeström's extended third generation model (Figure 3). The CHAT model provides a framework with which we may view how curricula becomes constructed and enacted.

My study used a CHAT lens to examine how two teachers at one school: (a) perceived the ELA CCSS and their influence on instruction and the enacted curriculum; (b) adapted and aligned literacy instruction and the daily literacy curriculum to respond to implementation of the CCSS; and (c) created instruction and literacy learning opportunities influenced by ELA CCSS. The second part of my review of literature provides the reader with an overview of studies that have informed my thinking concerning the use of a CHAT framework in the study of literacy curriculum instruction.

Review of CHAT in Literacy Research

My search for CHAT-framed educational research returned surprisingly few studies concerning the literacy curriculum. Using search engines such as ERIC, PsycInfo, Academic Search Complete, and Google Scholar, I searched the terms “cultural historical activity theory,” “activity theory,” “sociocultural theory,” and “cultural-historical theory” in combination with “literacy,” “education,” “curriculum,” and “reading.” CHAT appeared more often in the areas of the community and culture due to their effects on education, teacher opportunities for learning through activity in the school, and more notably the curricula areas of science, mathematics, and social studies (Douglas, 2012; Edwards, 2010; Garcia, 2011; Lee, 2011; Meredith, 1998; Pacheco, 2012).

Studies directly related to literacy learning, literacy education, and literacy curricula that used CHAT (or a derivation of CHAT as the research framework) were sparse. Most studies involved high school or post-secondary students of literacy learning as participants of activities studied from the CHAT perspective. Douglas (2012) is a notable example of the former, having used CHAT to examine how pre-service teacher learning opportunities were constructed in their participating school with mentoring teachers. CHAT was used to examine the structural tensions between players (mentors and interns) in the activity of co-teaching. In Douglas’s study tensions around teaching literacy were created from both perspectives as mentoring teachers found themselves in the role of student when the pre-service teachers took on the role of teacher. Most studies involving CHAT and literacy focused on the children’s role as the learners and as main

subjects of the activity. In the current study, the teachers are the main subjects of the activity.

One notable study that used CHAT as a framework for literacy learning among students and teachers in the field of early childhood education is Wuori's (2009) dissertation study of first grade literacy as seen through the lens of activity theory. Wuori's study used grounded theory methods in a single case study to answer: 1) In what ways did a first grade classroom's object-oriented activity system meet with Engeström's model of activity, 2) What motivated children as literacy learners, and 3) What insights about children's motivation and identity did a study of literacy activity within this class provide? Wuori concluded that tools, both mental and physical, were rule-governed within literacy activities, both implicitly and explicitly. Wuori suggests that literacy was largely object-oriented in ways that were both known and unknown to teacher. Wuori poses that the teacher's efforts towards understanding children's motives and objectives would go far towards providing for more meaningful literacy learning.

Neuman and Roskos' (1997) early childhood study of children's literacy activity, focused the unit of analysis around preschool children's (ages 3 and 4) reading and writing activities. The study's theoretical framework was limited to Vygotsky and Leont'ev's sociocultural theory about learning through scaffolding with others in an activity. Findings from their study support that children activate knowledge and strategies within context and utilize contextual "tools" for thinking. Children also adapt tools of literacy for specific use in problem solving, and monitor their own understandings.

These two studies focus on children's roles in literacy meaning making and not that of the teacher in the activity. For the sake of this research which focuses on CHAT as a framework and method for studying early literacy learning (Prek-5) in an era of curriculum reform, I center the review of literature to research that involves investigating: (1) literacy instruction from a cultural historical framework and (2) CHAT as a means of researching educational curriculum change.

Cultural Historical Research of Literacy Learning

The current study is framed by sociocultural theory and Engeström's CHAT. The study focuses on activities in which teachers co-construct the enacted literacy curriculum during implementation of the ELA CCSS. The third generation CHAT model from Engeström (Figure 3) involves interacting activity systems. The interacting systems for my research include 1) the system in which the teacher operates and 2) the system in which the children operate. The interaction from these two systems led to a third objective (Engeström), or a Third Space (Gutierrez, 1995). The following section discusses how literacy instruction and learning have been informed by previous research based on Engeström's and Gutierrez's cultural historical theories.

Engeström's Third Generation Model and Gutierrez's Educational Third Space

Gutierrez has constructed a large body of research on literacy and language acquisition and teacher instructional opportunities as seen through a cultural historic, or sociocultural, lens. Exceeding three decades of research around multiple-layered players and actions in the field of literacy and second language learners, Gutierrez and colleagues used activity theory to conduct case studies. The following section details how Gutierrez has linked what she calls instructional scripts, which are created by educators to provide

learning opportunities to students, to Engeström's third generation CHAT model of conjoined object in what Gutierrez calls an educational "Third Space." This section will include other interpretations of Third Space from the field.

The concept of Thirdspace was originally defined by Soja (1996) to illuminate the unseen and imagined spaces where everything comes together—the concrete and the abstract, the physical and psychological. Thirdspace is a common place shared by all, and, because it has no set perimeters, is therefore boundless (Soja, 1996). Gutierrez takes from Soja's concept of Thirdspace the connective space in which all people share, and considers it specifically as it applies in the world of education. This redefined view of Third Space in the classroom involves members of the classroom creating a shared space in which interactions, experiences, and thinking from the teacher and the students combine to create a space for authentic learning. In Gutierrez's view of Third Space, three key interrelated and interdependent features are involved in teacher practice: language, social organization of learning and the curriculum, and pedagogy. This is promoted by socially constructed language learning opportunities in which the teacher and children have fluid and reciprocal roles. The teacher shares the role of teaching and learning inside the Third Space.

Gutierrez's educational view of Third Space in the classroom focuses on the connections of two scripts, and the normal patterns of interaction when they intersect. Gutierrez et al. (1997) defines scripts as normative patterns of classroom life that become resources members draw upon in recognizing what counts as literacy. Scripts occur from the repertoire of actions, behaviors, and discourses that are established in everyday routines in the classroom. Gutierrez poses that the teacher has a "script" that is made of

the teacher's views about: 1) the objective and how it is best achieved; 2) the way to deliver the objective; 3) tools to reach the objective; 4) the subjects (or students) and their abilities; and 5) other contextual features that provide a structure or have an effect upon teacher practices. Gutierrez's (1993) research has proposed three kinds of scripts: 1) recitation (follows Initiate Respond Evaluate/IRE cycle), 2) responsive (follows Initiate Respond Feedback/IRF cycle in which teacher expands), 3) responsive/collaborative (teacher frames activity and acts as facilitator). Gutierrez claims the use of these three differing types of scripts influences the patterns of activity by creating roles and rules for its subjects—who may participate and in what acceptable ways. This is relevant to the present study, as it helps describe the construction of roles, rules, and the use of scripts as artifacts in the CHAT analysis.

Using cultural-historical study of activity rather than individual behavior, Gutierrez, Rymes, and Larson (1995) examine the power that is constructed between teacher and students, and the participation involved in meaning making opportunities in the Third Space. They find that teacher scripts often reflect the transcendent script of the dominant accepted knowledge of the local and/or larger culture and society. Teacher scripts are also notably influenced by factors of schedules, standardized curriculum, and other mandates, that may create a sense of urgency to cover set objectives that are listed for the day, leaving little to no room to stray off course.

Gutierrez further suggests that researchers (and perhaps educators) examine the counterscript provided by students. Instead of submissively attempting to adopt, for they can never fully adopt as they are differing individuals with different experiences (Cole, 1991), students often create counterscripts which do not comply with teacher rules for

participation and voice their own thoughts, experiences, and knowledge. Counterscripts arise when teachers do not allow for students to voice their own knowledge. Gutierrez also uses Goffman's "underlife" term to refer to how students work against the teacher-dominated classroom discourse—a way to distance or separate themselves. However, when teachers allow for children's scripts to combine with their own scripts, a shared and co-constructed Third Space arises for collaborative meaning making. This involves the teacher letting go of the tight hold of his/her script and objective to allow for the students to include their own dialogues and probes, to perhaps veer from the prescribed path towards one that is of relevance to the students while still related to teacher's general or extended objective. Gutierrez finds Third Space to be the only place where true interaction and communication can occur, and refers to it as "unscripted" because two existing scripts often collide unexpectedly. Third Space occurs when the scripts of each group acknowledge each other, trouble each other, and create workable tension in which discussion occurs and new understandings take place, or as Gutierrez et al. claims "where conflicted is redefined as...a positive response bridging social spaces" (1995, p. 452). Scripts of the teachers and Third Space student counterscripts are noted within this research, and are incorporated into the CHAT model as being part of the teacher and student rules for their roles within the activity.

Third Space learning is often influenced by the decontextualized practices that teachers are strongly encouraged to adopt "in the curriculum mandated by local, district, and state policies" (Gutierrez et al., 1997, p. 370). The mandated curriculum and practices may narrow teacher's theoretical and pedagogical thinking and practices, and the way in which teachers view language and its use. Gutierrez et al. (1997) further state

the importance of collaboration in activities in curriculum that stimulates literacy development is “related to children’s access to various kinds of learning activities that require a range of ways of participating and using language to achieve competence”(p. 369). A sociocultural theory of learning and Third Space suggest that children can develop a toolkit (Gee, 1990) of linguistic and cognitive tools and practices that will promote literacy learning. Instruction involving co-participation allows for children to construct language in ways that mimic the social and linguistic goals of the larger community. By focusing on the cognitive and social links of language learning and culture, the educational system can move past debates that narrow the curriculum and focus on a more productive and multi-dimensional way to teach language arts. By using a sociocultural lens of language and literacy, one is able to “shift the foci from teaching to learning, from individuals to collectives, from classrooms to communities, and from habitual to reflective practice” (Gutierrez, 1997, p. 372).

The cultures of the people involved in the activity play a large role in the ways meaning making occurs. Children’s backgrounds may differ from the school’s culture and that will affect their classroom experiences. Moje et al. (2004) connects Moll’s funds of knowledge to the differing cultures, discourses, and knowledge inside Third Space. Each person comes into the classroom, the curriculum, and the activity with differing funds of knowledge. Each person involved in the activity is unique and thus adds a differing perspective to the discourses involved in a literacy activity. The Third Space is a new area created for knowledge and discourse construction. Discourses are in themselves types of mediational context and tools necessary for future social and cognitive development (Gee, 2005; Moje et al., 2004; Vygotsky, 1978).

Moje clearly states that the type of Third Space discussed with Moll's funds of knowledge and Gee's Discourse is specifically that of creating new space and not a bridge or scaffold between students and academia. Moje summarizes her understanding of Third Space by stating it can,

Be viewed as a space of cultural, social, and epistemological change in which the competing knowledges and Discourses of different spaces are brought together into 'conversation to challenge and reshape both academic content literacy practices and the knowledges and Discourses of youths' everyday lives. (p. 44)

In response to Moje (2004) Gutierrez states that it is not just about scaffolding, but a place for expanded forms of learning and development of new knowledge. This connective view stretches Third Space from being a closed space of scaffolding from one to another, to a transformative space that Cole (1995) refers to as a zo-ped, or pedagogy of a wise man. It moves the everyday activities to scientific thinking through participation in a carefully designed, ecologically grounded, problem-solving environment (p.152). Gutierrez suggests that Third Space expands from Cole's zo-ped because it is a collaboration of activity systems, an interdependent zone of proximal development (Engeström, 1999), and not just a collaboration of individuals. What is actually being studied in Third Space is the "matrix of language and embodied practices" (p.154). This study adopts Gutierrez's description of Third Space to examine practices and language, as seen in discourse and scripts, to analyze activities in the enacted curriculum.

Pacheco (2012) uses Gutierrez's definition of educational scripts to examine how teachers provide literacy learning opportunities in the enacted curriculum to diverse learners whose first language is other than English. Pacheco questions the practices and beliefs of teachers of ELL students in an accountability era, a time in which the main

focus of the teachers seems to be teaching required objectives from the curriculum to help their students pass end of year assessments. She focuses on how children are given and denied access to meaning making by the tools for mediation and interactional patterns as orchestrated by pressured teachers, noting that they differ based on teacher but not necessarily on activity (Olson, 2007). By focusing a case study on the effects of educational policies on one school's language and curriculum, Pacheco provides a small but detailed look at the grander picture of ongoing issues of inequality and access in literacy learning (Olson, 2007). Pacheco's study compared the construction of meaning making (story previewing and character analysis) across the two case study classrooms through narrative story events. Teachers allowed meaning making opportunities mainly through responsive and recitative scripts. These scripts included practices focused on decoding and comprehension based skills. Teacher one primarily used recitative known answer scripts in teacher IRE (initiate-respond-evaluate) for both decoding and comprehension activities, while teacher two focused mostly on responsive scripts for both, allowing children opportunities to collectively make meaning—though not in collaboration with each other. Children were not afforded activities in which to collaboratively co-construct meaning from text. Both teachers allowed the use of tools to help mediate understanding with texts, but teacher two allowed children to explore with the use of tool, while teacher one provided explicit directions and restrictions on how to use tools. Teacher one constrained opportunities for drawing on cultural and experiential knowledge in what could only be seen as a focus on skills mandated by the accountability framework. The implications of these results inform those in the field of early childhood education about how teachers' organization of mediational tools and artifacts can affect

children's meaning making opportunities. Similarly, my study examines how two teachers create learning opportunities mediated by the ELA CCSS.

The choices teachers make about organization, use of tools, creating opportunities, and scripts around literacy learning activities are connected to how each teacher views the world. A teacher's world view, understanding of literacy development and beliefs about the inclusion of the students' cultures in creating learning opportunities change how the teacher presents the literacy curriculum and the ways in which children learn literacy.

Moje et al. (2004) call for increased research about funds of knowledge and Discourse and how the two construct classroom spaces as seen in Gutierrez and Engeström's work. Kostogriz (2000) finds that research involving activity theory "can be used to provide a broad conceptual framework for the literacy research and the learning practice design" (p. 1). Johnson (2003) believes that there is a need for research around activity theory and mediated action in literacy because it provides another lens for which to observe how children make meaning beyond that of standardized quantitative measures. This study contributes toward literacy research as guided by CHAT in that it examines literacy instruction and learning in the Third Space created by the teacher, acting as a representative of the larger formalized educational institution through instruction based on the CCSS, and children of the local community (Moje et al., 2004).

CHAT as a Means of Researching the Enacted Curriculum

The proposed study investigated how literacy curricula are enacted during a time in which new curricular standards (i.e., the CCSS) are being introduced. Researchers such

as Garcia, Edwards, and Lee recognize the need for examining curricula and educational models from a CHAT framework. Garcia's (2011) investigation of science curriculum pointedly argues that curricula cannot be viewed as separate from cultural and social reproductions of goals. Edwards (2010) agrees that educators base expectations for student learning on cultural and societal beliefs about what children need and can do.

CHAT allows a glimpse at a larger picture of past and present and culture and history to examine a direction for the future, and thus should be considered as research that can lead towards informing curriculum reform. Lee (2011) presents a marked use of CHAT to study educational reform in standardizing curriculum in the area of science. In Singapore, the science curriculum was mandated to be taught through inquiry-based model for all middle school students. Lee highlights CHAT's ability to show change in practice and learning due to mandated curricular change. His research results focused on the motives and power of stakeholders, teacher conformity and contradictions to mandated assessments of curriculum, and examined practices involved in the change of practices in the enacted curriculum.

Research using a CHAT framework to investigate curricular policy standardization can also be seen in Fisher's (2011) study of the language arts curriculum. In this study, Fisher explores activity involved in writing education around the Talk to Text Project in England and the relationship between talk and writing in children ages five to seven. Fisher used a CHAT theoretical lens to investigate the development of the project within four teacher's classrooms during year one of the study, and an additional two (total of 6) in year two. Fisher used 24 hours of videoed observations and semi-structured audio taped interviews with the teachers, analyzing the data through activity

systems analysis. Results focused on the teachers' actions and learning within the activity around teaching in the new curriculum program, and were presented on the societal, institutional, and individual teacher perspectives. Fisher's study left implications for further research in understanding how teachers act as subjects within system mandated goals and the development of their orientations that influence their actions within the classroom.

My study contributes towards understanding teachers and students as subjects within literacy activity involving mandated policy based curriculum through Engeström's third generation CHAT model. I examined ways in which teachers at one school: a) adapt their previous curriculum to one that meets the requirements of CCSS, b) report modifications influence their instruction and the enacted curriculum, c) and believe adaptations to ELA CCSS influence the literacy learning opportunities children are provided.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

The goal of this investigation was to examine how two teachers' literacy instruction and student literacy activities were shaped during the implementation of ELA CCSS. I examined this phenomenon using qualitative case study methods and a CHAT framework. I present a description of my qualitative case study methodology in combination with my CHAT methods. I describe the symbiotic relationship of the two to help portray the way in which they allowed me to examine the phenomenon of the initial implementation of the ELA CCSS in the enacted literacy curriculum.

Before I disclose further details of my methodologies, I wish to inform the reader of the subjectivity in which I, the sole researcher, brought to this investigation. I provide this information because my subjectivity affects my interactions with others, the notes I took, how I choose to view and interpret events, and the level of detail to which I gave accounts (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2011). The following history is meant to inform the reader of my own experiences, my connections to the areas in question in this study, my epistemological orientation, my biases, and my pragmatic paradigm for methods. Through these experiences and understandings, I raised questions, analyzed, and made meaning of my research.

Researcher Subjectivity

Raised in a small rural town in the American South from the 1980's to 2000, I experienced a schooling environment in which all teachers had been teaching for ten years or more, and almost all members of the school were Caucasian (students, staff, and

faculty). I used basal reading books and textbooks for every subject, with the exception of my “gifted English courses” in middle and high school. My teachers taught using instructional practices that were universal and uniform without much, if any, differentiation. I attended a very large state university that made grand attempts to increase enrollment of ethnic minority students to its notably large Caucasian student population. I graduated with my master’s in Early Childhood Education after a full year’s internship in a Title 1 magnet school for the gifted, and began my first year of teaching in a high poverty Title 1 school in which 99% of the student population was African American.

I experienced my first culture shock in the classroom, seeing for the first time the culture of the school not coinciding with the culture of the students. However, I felt equipped to recognize the needs of my students within the school culture with training from my program’s strong affiliation with theories espoused by Vygotsky, Bronfenbrenner, and Reggio Emilia. Although I felt prepared to try to meet the varied needs of individuals, I struggled to teach within the curriculum that required me to follow a script and provided narrow unyielding texts given for teaching.

My next teaching job was at a Title 1 school with a growing population of linguistically diverse students and the highly scripted *Success For All* literacy program. This school was ethnically diverse, with a slight majority of Caucasian children. During my three years of teaching at this school, I was not allowed to have linguistically diverse students. The administration’s rationale was that I would attempt to use their primary language to instruct the students, and our school was strictly English immersion.

Regardless of ethnicity, children at this school were also notably not meeting standards on state grade-level tests. Due to NCLB, my school was considered a failing school and parents were given the option to have their children bussed to other local non-failing schools. Few parents accepted this choice. We were given a new state evaluator every year to help improve scores. Almost all of the teacher development and in-service workshops revolved around telling us how poorly our students were performing and what pre-testing measures we were going to use to track their progress and make data-driven instructional decisions. If our children failed one of two questions about character motivation, we were to focus highly on character motivation. Every lesson plan was to be aligned to state standards, especially those that were seen as problematic for our specific students. Field trips were canceled until after testing in the spring. Administrators mandated that recess on days when classes had PE were to be turned into extra prep time for troubling standards. Assessments that were given by teachers after semester break were only to be given in scantron format—no short answer or written responses. Assessments were to be given often, with formal state testing style assessments given via computer every six weeks. *Success for All*, our scripted literacy program, provided strict scripts around literacy standards and its own set of weekly and six week assessments.

Not only was I denied the ability to teach more than 15% of the schools population, but I was also told what to teach based on tested standards. I was told not to deviate and had to use a pre-made, one-size-fits-all script, though I cannot say I complied. After the third year, I just could not teach to the test with a scripted curriculum any longer. It felt wrong. I felt each day what I was doing was counter to what was best for children. It felt developmentally and morally wrong. Instead of leaving the classroom

altogether, a friend suggested that I transfer to a school that was not failing and so strict. Yet I knew that the situations that occurred within my school were occurring in some form or fashion in schools across the country. I decided to return full-time to graduate school to investigate literacy learning, curriculum, and policy surrounding curriculum, in hopes of becoming a more informed advocate for children and teachers.

In my graduate studies, I deepened my belief that there is a need for qualitative narratives and descriptions that can convey the realities of contexts that are influenced by policy and curriculum mandates. I thought I had my own story of what had happened to my own socio-constructivist practices when they encountered NCLB and scripted curriculum mandates. This study combines qualitative case study and CHAT methodologies to portray how teachers are implementing and responding to the mandated ELA CCSS.

Qualitative Case Study Methodology

To understand the cultural and historical influences that affect teacher instruction and literacy learning of the enacted classroom curriculum, one must have the ability to study the context of enacted curriculum, the people and cultures around the activity of literacy learning, and the interactions during the activity. This type of understanding cannot be made clear through surveys, questionnaires, and observational rating scales alone (Yin, 2009). Numerical data may provide frameworks, general understandings and beliefs around activity and culture, and scope of occurrences around the activity, but numbers cannot portray the actual lived interactions experienced by the students and teachers (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Nor do quantitative measures capture in detail the lived experiences of transitions in the enacted curriculum due to political mandates in

the way activity systems analysis of case studies may (Lee, 2011). Case studies allow for exploring the process of curriculum policy becoming classroom practice that influences student learning. Case studies are frequently used in educational research to inform policy, educational innovations, and other educational phenomena (Merriam, 1998).

Case study is a method of data collection that allows for rich and extensive examination of a phenomenon (Yin, 2009), which in this study is the implementation of the ELA CCSS. Merriam (1998) finds that a case study is a definable perimeter around a specific phenomenon, or delimited object of study, which researchers may investigate to form theories and answer questions. Case studies detail settings, subjects, and events, creating opportunities for understanding an activity or phenomenon within the surrounding cultural system (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Case studies may be simple or complex, ranging from a single individual or a class of individuals (Stake, 2005). In this study a case is referenced as a teacher and his/her class. Case studies involve collecting multiple forms of evidence to analyze and triangulate data in addition to providing theory building opportunities (Yin, 2009). Case studies allow for interpretation of data and theory creation (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011). Data from interviews, classroom observations, and collected documents allowed me to descriptively portray the first year's implementation of the new ELA CCSS in one elementary school.

My study consisted of two cases, involving two classroom teachers and children as they engaged in literacy activities framed by literacy curriculum from the ELA CCSS. Since two cases were studied jointly during the same time frame at the same school to investigate the same phenomenon of literacy activity and the ELA CCSS, the study involved multiple, or collective, case studies (Stake, 2005). Each case was studied

individually and collectively for cross-case analysis (Merriam, 1998). Yin (2009) suggests holistic multiple case studies, in which each case study is treated uniquely within the group, for the examination of new curriculum's impact in schools (p. 59).

Engaged in multiple case studies I observed, interviewed, and interacted with my participants. Observations in case studies provide a strategy that will “allow one to discover the existence of patterns of thought and behavior” (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011, p. 126). Observations are used to triangulate findings and in conjuncture to interviews and document analysis (Merriam, 1998). One-on-one interviews were included in case studies. Interviews were chosen as a means of data collection to obtain specific information concerning ELA CCSS's influence on teachers' literacy. I gathered public documents whose topics concern literacy instruction and ELA CCSS for analysis. Documents, unlike observations and interviews, are not produced for research purposes and are not dependent upon researcher or participants, making them an excellent addition for data triangulation (Merriam, 1998). Photographs of classroom arrangement, classroom or teacher materials, and environmental text were included. Details of each means of data collection and analysis are included in the following data collection and data analysis sections of this paper.

CHAT Methodology

Cultural historical research focusing on activity combines case study and CHAT methodologies to create opportunities for focused analysis around activity (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). The second chapter of this study explains how CHAT as a theory also provided a methodological framework. As a methodology, CHAT helped me focus on

literacy activity during data collection and analysis. My use of CHAT in data collection and analysis is detailed in both sections following the context of this study.

Engeström (1999) claims activity systems are really structures of the life-world, in this case the enacted curriculum of literacy instruction and learning. Activity systems form through actions between participants and become tensions that may result in the breaking and rebuilding that constitutes learning. Yamagata-Lynch (2010) defines tensions as contradictions between individual components of activity systems that affect interactions of its components, which can create difficulty for reaching object/goal. Garcia (2011) tells researchers to look for tensions that will later result in growth with consideration of teacher's role in the political, social, and cultural process. I looked for these tensions between teachers and students as teachers attempted to implement ELA CCSS into their daily enacted literacy curriculum. To do so, I followed the activity systems analysis as described by Yamagata-Lynch in her 2010 publication *Activity Systems*.

I chose Yamagata-Lynch's sequence of analysis for identifying activity systems in a qualitative case study (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010, pp. 90- 91). Step one was to complete a constant comparative analysis to identify the stories within the data. Step two was to write narratives that in thick description so the reader will understand participant experiences. The codes from constant comparative analysis helped focus the narratives by highlighting relevant information that was essential to answering the research questions. The narratives from step two helped to create the initial draft of the activity system that would be analyzed in step three, creating models for CHAT analysis.

Context

Tiger Creek Elementary (a pseudonym) is located in the outreaching suburbs of one of the largest cities in the South Eastern region of the United States. The school served a student body approaching 840, of which 4% of children were Hispanic, 4% African American, 32% Asian, and 56% Caucasian. Females represented 46% of the student population. Students whose home language is not English made up roughly 20% of the school's population. Tiger Creek was a Title 1 school with 60% of students receiving free or reduced meals, 28% receive gifted instruction, and 16% receive special education services.

At the time of this study (Winter 2012-Spring 2013) Tiger Creek Elementary was, along with elementary, middle, and high schools across 46 states, beginning the first year's implementation of the ELA CCSS. Districts across the country were in different phases of implementing the new standards. Teachers were learning about the ELA and Mathematics CCSS that they were mandated to address and how local districts would align the new standards with previous State and/or County standards. Through personal correspondence with elementary and middle school teachers, and a few administrators, I had anecdotal evidence that teachers were experiencing a wide variety of instructional supports meant to guide them in learning more about the standards and how they should be implemented. Some teachers reported considerable support; others reported having very limited support. This study focuses on the preparation and implementation of the ELA CCSS within one school, and how select teachers perceived CCSS influenced their

literacy instruction and children's literacy learning as they transitioned to these new standards.

Participants

Teacher participants were chosen based on multiple factors. First, only teachers in first and second grade were considered eligible to participate in the study. Kindergarten classrooms were not considered due to the unique teaching environment and objectives for kindergarten (e.g. socialization and familiarity with the school culture) beyond the CCSS. Third through fifth grade teachers were excluded due to their additional focus on State assessments, which, until the release of PARCC in 2014-2015, remained the State's criterion reference test.

Second, teachers were eligible if they had experience teaching in their set grade level in this district for three or more years, and were therefore familiar with the previous standards for that grade. To be able to note possible changes in instruction and the enacted curriculum with the implementation of the ELA CCSS, teachers would need to have experience with the prior curriculum requirements. Having three or more years of experience in the grade level in this district increased the chance of their comfort teaching this age group, as well as how objectives were previously incorporated into literacy instruction.

Finally, teachers who had full time educational assistance in their classroom were excluded from consideration (e.g., teachers with student teachers/interns, full time paraprofessionals, or daily licensed support teacher). Teachers with part time instructional assistants, or paraprofessionals, were not excluded as all first grade

classrooms at this school had instructional assistants for a portion of each day. I visited the selected classroom teachers in their classrooms and provided letters of consent. Initial interviews were scheduled to take place in the teacher's classroom when the children were in specials (PE, Art, Music, etc).

During my first visit to the school to meet the principal and explain my research proposal, the principal asked me who I was interested in interviewing and observing. I shared with her my criteria. She said she would speak with all of the teachers who met the criteria in first and second grade and see who wanted to meet with me to discuss participating. One teacher from each grade agreed to meet with me and later consented to participate in the study, Ms. Gabe in first grade and Ms. McCree in second.

The school principal was also asked to participate in a single interview to gather background data on how the staff was informed about ELA CCSS and how they were responding to the ELA CCSS requirements. During our second meeting, the principal consented to an interview which took place in her office the week of the first round of teacher interviews. This interview provided an administrative perspective at decision making within the county about how the CCSS entered the schools and what professional development supported its implementation. She had previously worked for the County as a teacher and had been a Vice Principal within the county prior to coming to Tiger Creek three year prior to the 2012-2013 school year.

Children in the classrooms of the two consenting teachers were given parental information forms. The parental information forms were sent home by the teachers and explained that their child's classroom was chosen for observation in a study about

learning and instruction in the literacy curriculum. The letter informed the parents that individual children would not be pictured, named, or described and that only the child's words, actions, or roles within an activity could be described in the research report. In a visit to each class, I briefly explained my role in their classrooms and to what they would be assenting (e.g., letting me write down their roles and contributions in the reading and writing activities), and that any child could tell me he or she did not wish to be a participant at any point in my visits. I answered any questions the children had at that time. No child or parent from either class elected not to participate in the study.

Ms. Gabe

Ms. Gabe (pseudonym) was in her fourth year of teaching first grade. In her 16 years of teaching she had taught a range of grades, including 3rd, 5th, Pre-K, and Early Intervention. She has a bachelor's degree in early childhood education and is certified to teach Pre-K-5 and gifted education. At the time of the study, Ms. Gabe was the first grade chair and a member of both the County's Literacy and Leadership and Literacy Assessment teams.

Ms. Gabe had 22 children in her first grade class. Her classroom was ethnically diverse with slightly more than a third of her students identifying as Asian, two as Hispanic, and the rest Caucasian. Of her 22 first graders, four had a home language other than English. Three of her students had Individual Education Plans (IEP's), one for verbal processing difficulties and two with Attend Deficit Disorder. In addition there were three other students who were currently progressing through the Response to Intervention (RtI) process with a Student Support Team. All of her students participated within the study.

Ms. McCree

Ms. McCree (pseudonym) was in her fourth year of teaching second grade. Before teaching second grade she taught in kindergarten for seven years. Ms. McCree also has a bachelor's in Early Childhood Education. She is a member of the County's CCSS Math Leadership team as well as the County's GAP team which tours schools in the county observing teachers and providing professional feedback on how well their instruction met the curriculum requirements.

Ms. McCree had 27 students in her second grade class, 11 were bilingual. Her classroom was very ethnically diverse, including children who were Caucasian, Asian, and Hispanic. A few had recently moved from Kuwait, China, and Korea. Four of her students had IEP's for speech, and one for occupational therapy.

A case comparison description summary of Ms. Gabe and Ms. McCree appears in Table 1.

Table 1
Case Comparison of Teacher Participants

	Ms. Gabe (First Grade)	Ms. McCree (Second Grade)
Teaching Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st grade • 4th grade • Early Intervention (16 years) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kindergarten • 2nd grade • GAP team member (11 years)
CCSS Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELA Representative for school • ELA Assessment team member 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MATH Representative for school
Professional Learning Preferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preferred leadership and practice readings • Attending professional seminars and workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection over summer • Learn new materials for instructional use • Communicate with other teaching professionals through online venues
Literacy Learning Beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children learn literacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children learn literacy

	<p>by having access to repeated exposure to authentic texts, and participating in meaningful activities with those texts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a variety of texts, genres, and support materials such as graphic organizers. 	<p>through participating in fun and engaging activities, almost as if by accident. Provide multimodal opportunities for learning.</p>
Previous Literacy Instructional Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole group mini lessons around basic skills lasting about 10 minutes. • Small group and individual work based on reading levels and content need. • Daily 5 offered small group structured activities that remained consistent across the year, and CAFE helped to improve individual growth in reading through conferencing with teacher and independent work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short whole group lesson as needed for skill. Small group work based on reading levels and content need. • Learning centers daily with activities provided by teachers to help learn state standards concepts. • Pulled small groups aside to work on specific skills during learning center time.

Case Study Comparison Description

This section portrays a typical day in each teacher's classroom during the literacy instructional block. Reading and writing instruction consisted of a 90-minute block of time in the early morning. Ms. Gabe's literacy block began at 8:30 and Ms. McCree's began at 9:30. The two teachers conducted their blocks in reverse order, with Ms. Gabe teaching writing and then reading in 45 minute increments and Ms. McCree teaching reading and then writing in the same increments. The description of each teacher's classroom begins with their overall beliefs about literacy learning. Next I sequentially describe each block's format as observed in the teacher's daily schedule. This description

includes the teacher's role during whole group ELA CCSS mini-lessons and small group or individual work time. Formal phonics instruction was not included during their literacy blocks due to time restrictions. Teachers attempted to cut out other pieces of the day in which to teach phonics. However, teachers did draw children's attention to letters and sounds during small group or individual instruction.

Ms. Gabe believed to promote learning children should work daily with authentic literacy learning materials and activities. Ms. Gabe had a large library to help support students' experience with texts, so large that the fire marshal asked that she remove an entire set of book shelves. Ms. Gabe enjoyed reading to and writing with her students daily.

Ms. Gabe began class each day after the close of the school's morning news. She gathered the children together on the carpet for the day's fifteen minute writing mini-lesson. During her daily writing mini-lesson she focused on teaching specific quarterly ELA writing standards. She did so by modeling these specific skills through the process for writing using graphic organizers, as well as by sharing compositions she wrote based from information from her graphic organizer. She modeled the editing process by asking students for feedback and pointing out specific strategies she wanted the children to try out in their own writing. Often students would "co-author" by providing details to enhance her writing. She modeled reading skills and strategies in much the same manner. Following the fifteen minute mini-lesson her students dispersed to their seats and begin work on their own graphic organizer, story, or edits. Ms. Gabe gathered a small group of children whom she had previously targeted from the previous day's lesson, frequently asking an additional one or two children who appear to need support that day to join at

the back table for differentiated support. She also asks her instructional assistant to work with two to three children in a small group. Ms. Gabe's group usually ranged from three to six children. The rest of the children worked independently at their seats until they were ready for edits and revisions. At this time they worked collaboratively with a partner who was also in a similar stage in their writing process to complete revision and edits in a location that is comfortable for them. The writing process generally took one to two weeks depending on the writing objective.

Each day following her writing block, Ms. Gabe conducted a reading mini-lesson which focused on specific quarterly ELA standards. She read aloud children's book (alternating between fiction and non-fiction based on the objectives) and highlighted previously taught skills-based strategies. These mini-lessons were full of talk. Both Ms. Gabe and her students asked questions and provided feedback. Though Ms. Gabe purposefully guided conversation towards the day's objectives, she frequently included children's questions and comments within the conversation, using them as scaffolds towards the objectives. After the fifteen minute mini-lesson children would break into their Daily 5 reading groups. While one group worked with the teacher, other children participated in groups that read-to-partner, read-to-self, worked at listening station computers, or worked on a written piece. The children had "response to text" activities for the read-to-self rotation, but were only observed using them in small-group time with Ms. Gabe. Children experience two rotations a day, giving Ms. Gabe time to work with two small groups of children. Her instructional assistant worked with one or two children at a time on alternate reading activities that were frequently related to Social Studies or Science as well as Reading.

Ms. McCree believed that learning should be fun. Children should be so engaged in their literacy activities that they would not realize how much they learned. During small group and independent work time, the children chose from multiple activity options, including multimodal possibilities. However, whole group learning was typically delivered through direct instruction.

McCree's literacy block began with a whole group reading mini-lesson took place on the carpet only if Ms. McCree performed a read aloud. Ms. McCree's teacher-read alouds were either selected sections of chapter books, online stories or articles, or printed articles. Some days the children read in round robin style from hand-outs while sitting at their seats during the 15-20 minute ELA CCSS-based mini-lesson. The mini-lesson interactions were teacher directed, with Ms. McCree asking questions and evaluating student responses. Ms. McCree's mini-lessons included a lot of direct instruction. After reading mini-lessons Ms. McCree worked with small reading groups during the Daily 5. The other children read-to-self using response text activities, read-to-partners asking questions of each other, used creative writing prompts to write stories, or worked at the listening station computers or grade level laptops. The children selected activities with which they were well accustomed, and often created their own rules for unfamiliar activities instead of following brief directions provided by Ms. McCree.

Ms. McCree's writing whole group mini-lessons (15-20 minutes) usually consisted of direct instruction where children responded directly to the teacher and copied any teacher writing into their writing journals at their seats. Ms. McCree often used books or poems to model writing quarterly ELA standards skills. After mini-lessons children were given graphic organizers for pre-writing, or blank paper for pre-planning sketches

of their multimodal writing assignments. Children also worked to create writing pieces independently while Ms. McCree walked around working with children individually as they wrote. After making suggestions to each individual, Ms. McCree would announce the same suggestion to the class. When children finished their pieces she would call them over to a small group reading section where she read the story out loud and provided feedback. This writing process took place over the span of a week.

A summary of each teacher's instructional blocks, whole group mini-lesson practices, small group and independent student instructional practices, and materials used for instruction is provided in Table 2.

Table 2
Literacy Instructional Block Overview

	Ms. Gabe's Instructional Block	Ms. McCree's Instructional Block
Overview of structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One writing ELA CCSS whole group mini-lesson (10-15 minutes) followed by student writing time. • One reading ELA CCSS whole group mini-lesson (10-15 minutes) followed by Daily 5. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One reading CCSS whole group mini-lesson (15-20 minutes) followed by Daily 5. • One writing ELA CCSS whole group mini-lesson (15-20 minutes) followed by whole group writing time.
Overview of mini-lessons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read aloud by Ms. Gabe during reading mini-lesson. • Graphic organizer modeled by Ms. Gabe with assistance on adding detail from students during writing mini-lesson. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read aloud by Ms. McCree or teacher selected round robin reading during reading mini-lessons. • Ms. McCree scaffolds writing skills through models of multimodal stories, and directs student use of graphic organizers.
Overview of student work time (includes small groups,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student writing time involves Ms. Gabe and instructional assistant working with small groups for writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily 5 time with teacher working in small groups. CAFE is said to be used with individual but this is not observed. Children also read

Daily 5 rotations, and individual conferencing)	<p>support, and sometimes individually conferencing with students about writing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily 5 involves Ms. Gabe or instructional assistant working in small groups based on reading level of content strategy needs, or with students individually using CAFE. 	<p>with peer, read to self, use listening station at computer, or work on story or a response to text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. McCree walks around the room helping children one-on-one and then summarizing the help offered out loud to the class as a whole immediately following work with individual. <p>*Ms. McCree does not have an instructional assistant during the literacy block.</p>
Overview of materials for instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Picture books and chapter books of a variety of genres • Graphic organizers and written questions for responding to texts • Use of dictionaries • Use of art materials or drawings to help support writing • Computers used as an extension of texts and writing or drawing tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainly chapter books or short non-fiction selections for read alouds • Use of internet websites for stories and information • Use of www.youtube.com for stories • Graphic organizers for writing • Creative prompts for writing • Creative prompts for responding to text • Laminated question cards for responding to texts • Dictionaries and thesaurus presented by not seen in use

Data Collection

Data were collected in multiple forms: interviews, observations, and documents (See Table 1). Data collection occurred in two phases: the first phase of data collection occurring before the semester break and the second phase occurring after the winter break. I used the break for further refining my data analysis and reflection between the first and second phase. The description and purpose for each data type are further articulated in this section.

Table 3.
Forms of Data Collection

Participant	# of participants	Data sources	Time	Total time for participation by participant type	Question(s) the data helps to answer
Administrator	1	Interview(s)	30 min x 1 interview	0.5 hour	2) How are teachers implementing ELA CCSS into their literacy instruction?
Teachers	2	Observation(s)	45 min x 4 interviews 75 min x 9 number of observations	3 hours 11.25 hours	1) What do teachers report about implementing ELA CCSS in their literacy instruction? 2) How are teachers implementing

					<p>ELA CCSS into their literacy instruction?</p> <p>3) What instructional opportunities are created in the enacted literacy curriculum?</p>
Children	49	Observation(s)	75 min x 9 number of observations	11.25 hours	3) What instructional opportunities are created in the enacted literacy curriculum?
Documents	34	Documents pertaining to CCSS and literacy instruction, photographs of the classroom arrangement, materials, and environmental texts	N/A	Included in interviews and observations	<p>2) How are teachers implementing ELA CCSS into their literacy instruction?</p> <p>3) What instructional opportunities are created in the enacted literacy curriculum?</p>

Semi-structured Interviews

Interviews involved both the school principal and classroom teachers to represent varying perspectives about the implementation of ELA CCSS within the school. I interviewed the school administration to find out how the school's staff was educated about the ELA CCSS, and how staff members chose to address these standards (See Appendix A for semi-structured questions). The teacher interviews provided information concerning teacher understandings of ELA CCSS, explored how they prepared their literacy instruction and their thinking behind instruction, and noted how they reported ELA CCSS influences their instruction and student learning. The interviews provided a look into teacher literacy instruction activity (the teacher's triangle model in Figure 3) concerning how each teacher views both her/his own objective for the literacy activities and that of State and other local agents.

The interviews were semi-structured to elicit information concerning specific questions around instruction, learning opportunities, and ELA CCSS in the literacy curriculum. Semi-structured interviews were chosen to better enable me to provide a few guideposts towards better understanding the variety of players involved in the CHAT model. Interviews provided insight into the teacher's role in implementing ELA CCSS in the school and classroom communities, as well as opportunities for discussion of instruction and literacy activities as seen in enacted literacy curriculum during classroom observations. Semi-structured interviews provide just enough control to consider interviews comparative across context (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011). After observations began, the interview protocol included summarizing and reflecting activities of recent

literacy instruction observations. This protocol allowed for both parties to check understandings, ask questions, and comment on the recent activities. While each of the four interview protocols include similar greeting and reflections, the questions and purpose of each interview differed.

I conducted four interviews with the participating teachers in each teacher's classroom during their allotted planning time while the children were at specials (time selected by participants). The first teacher interview was informal, asking only for a description of the literacy block and how the teacher worked to meet State and local objectives in literacy curriculum prior to CCSS. The second semi-structured interview explored their thoughts about CCSS for ELA instruction in relation to the teacher's experiences and beliefs about literacy learning. A third semi-structured interview included questions about how the teachers learned about the CCSS and implementation, and how that process influenced the teachers' planning and instruction. The purpose of this interview was to examine how CCSS might influence the teacher's instructional literacy practices, the learning opportunities they created, and how implementing ELA CCSS could possibly influence how the teachers' plans. The fourth interview prompted teacher reflections on ELA CCSS implementation and how the reported implementation influenced their literacy instruction. Once observations began, each interview had allotted space for discussion about the previous observations. This space included opportunities for the teachers to provide feedback about comments and questions that arose concerning the observations. For a full list of the structured questions see Appendix A.

The first interview with the teachers provided context about the literacy instructional block and did not deal directly with ELA CCSS, therefore the second

interview which inquired about instruction and ELA took place two weeks after the first. The third and fourth interviews were about a month apart after the previous interviews. The purpose of a month's spacing between interviews was to give the teacher more experience in implementing ELA CCSS. I also did not collect data the week prior to, or the first few days following, the school's winter break. These weeks are very hectic and sometimes stressful days for teachers and students. These days were used for the purpose of analysis of the first phase of data collection. The period for analysis, along with ongoing analysis as I transcribed interviews, helped to inform interviews in the second phase.

Observations

Observations occurred across a three month time span, with each classroom observed at least three times per month after the winter break, providing for a minimum of 9 classroom observations each, totaling a combined 18 observations. With two participating teachers, observations followed a rotating AAB/BBA schedule. For example, in one week of observations I observed the literacy instructional block of Ms. Gabe in two consecutive days, followed by one day of Ms. McCree. The following week I observed two consecutive days of Ms. McCree followed by an observation of Ms. Gabe. This observational schedule allowed for six weeks of observations with an equal number of AAB/BBA patterns. Weekly analysis occurred during the days in which I did not collect data. The ongoing analysis provided opportunities for coding, memos, and reflection, which helped to inform the next phase of observations. Observations were 75 minutes in length and occurred during each teacher's literacy instructional block.

My focus for observations aligned with the CHAT framework concerning subject interactions, activities, objects, tools, and negotiation of rules and roles in the classroom community which form the pattern of literacy activity systems (Kostogriz, 2000). Observational field notes included instructional contexts, teacher to child and child to child interactions, and the involvement of materials and texts by teacher and children. With a CHAT framework, the unit of analysis was the literacy activity, thus the observational focus was centered on engagement in literacy activities. Observed narratives were written to describe participants' verbal interactions, actions, and use of materials during literacy activities. Literacy activities occurred in: a) teacher to whole group, b) teacher to small group, c) teacher to individual child, d) children in small groups or partners, and e) individual children with materials.

Documents

Documents were collected to provide supplemental information for qualitative content analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Documents, unlike observations and interviews, are not produced for research purposes and are not dependent upon the researcher or the participants, making them an excellent addition for data triangulation (Merriam, 1998). Documentation of teachers' lesson plans, County rubrics, teacher assessments, and instructional materials were collected and analyzed when they referred to part of in-class discussions and activities or teacher interviews. Lesson plans, rubrics, and County and State ELA documents were photographed with permission from the teacher during interviews, and photos of materials and work samples from both the teacher and children were collected during observations. No children were photographed. These documents were collected to help understand how teachers and children were using

tools to meet objectives and what the objectives may be, and how their literacy instruction was influenced by school, County, and State requirements and materials.

Documents acted as extant texts to help provide information for both constant comparison and CHAT analysis. Charmaz (2006) indicates that extant texts help researchers in considering: a) the purpose of the text, b) the meaning of the text, c) where facts come from and whose facts count, d) how the text may affect actions, and e) what realities the text reveals. Considering these documents as tools, I used Charmaz's description of extant texts to help analyze this data. The following questions were asked of 34 collected documents:

1. Who produced text?
2. What is the purpose of the text?
3. How does its content support larger social, political, and historical interests?
4. What are the parameters of the information?
5. On what and whose facts does the information rest?
6. What information is omitted?
7. How is language used?
8. Who has access to facts and sources of the information?
9. Who is the intentional audience?
10. Who benefits from interpreting the information in a particular way?
11. How does the information affect participant(s) action?
12. What kind of comparisons can be made between texts? How are they similar?
How do they differ?

Trustworthiness and Credibility

To establish reliability, I documented and reported my rationale for choices I made relating to data collection and analysis (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011). Each step of the collection and analysis was written *in thick* thorough memos. I created a database to represent types of data, length of data and/or time of data collection in research process, and location of data collection, as recommended by Yin (2009) for reliability (Appendix B). Methods for collection and analysis remained consistent across classrooms.

To provide validity, or the attempt to which the quality of my research corresponds to the reality of the phenomenon, I had participating teachers read and respond to an analysis summary (Charmaz, 2006). In preparation for member checking discussions, I provided teachers with a two page summary of their individual analyses from past observations and interviews. The purpose of the member check summaries was to provide teachers an opportunity to offer feedback, ask questions, and respond to questions. Participants had more than two weeks' time to review (time included school's spring break). The teachers were asked if they would like to meet for a fifth time to discuss the summary and have the opportunity to ask questions or make comments. I offered to discuss the analyses in a face-to-face meeting, a phone call, Skype communication, or for them to send me written feedback. Both participants chose to read their analysis individually and then email me feedback. Each participant said that they found my summaries to be very accurate and that it felt very good to see all the things they had thought and seen during the implementation on paper. They agreed that I clearly portrayed what they had been saying in interviews and what I had seen in observations. I met with each teacher briefly to give her a gift card. During these informal meetings I

was told again how much they appreciated seeing these summaries because they felt they were good reflections of their practice.

To maintain trustworthiness in the use of activity theory analysis, I used Schoenfeld's (1992) standards for reporting investigation as suggested by Yamagata-Lynch in *Activity Systems Analysis Methods*. These standards include but are not limited to:

1. Establish the context and describing the issues the research will address;
2. Describe the rationale for my methodology;
3. Describe the method in such detail that is possible for readers to apply the described methods in their own research;
4. Provide a large enough body of data that allows readers to: a) apply their own analysis to test their own conclusions against that of the researcher, and b) use researcher's methods in their own research to compare and contrast results;
5. Offer discussion pertaining to the reliability, scope, and limitations of the method used for study, and situations in which it may be profitably used.

To represent literacy-related activities from multiple dimensions and therein provide a richer context, I combined observation, interviews, and documents to triangulate the data (Atkinson & Coffee, 2002). Triangulation comes from the military naval sciences that meant using multiple reference points to locate an object's exact position that transformed into a research concept that allows for multiple means of data collection to work together within one methodology. Triangulation provided multiple points of data that informed my understanding of teacher literacy instruction.

Data Analysis

Data underwent two forms of qualitative analyses. Charmaz's (2006) grounded theory constant comparative method provided the first round of analysis for the administrative interview, teacher interviews, classroom observations, and documents. Only constant comparative analysis was required to answer research questions one and two, focused on teachers' perceptions of ELA CCSS implementation and how the teachers were implementing the ELA CCSS into literacy planning and instruction. Narratives from grounded theory constant comparative analysis that best illustrated categories were selected for Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) analysis to answer research question three concerning literacy learning opportunities provided in the enacted curriculum (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010).

CHAT research is founded on an interpretation of human interaction as related to an object, and therefore compliments research concerning educational objectives (Lee, 2011). Yamagata-Lynch (2010) suggests using bounded systems across contexts for CHAT analysis because analyzing bounded systems involves "the examination of self-sustained systems that are difficult to remove from the context" and allows an investigator to use methods of collection and analysis that "treat goal directed actions, object oriented actions, and activity settings as separate yet highly interrelated bounded systems" (p. 79).

I used 3rd generation CHAT analysis to examine how instructional opportunities influence children's learning opportunities, and how this affects the shared 3rd objective in the 3rd space created by the merging of the two activities (teacher and children). While data from the community, roles, artifacts, and rules influence the activity, the focus of

analysis was on the teacher's object of activity and how her object was transformed by its encounter with the students' objects to form the third object. This meeting of objects, or spaces, is where Gutierrez claims the real opportunities for instruction to promote learning occurs. The data were analyzed and represented by the two combined activity models. The CHAT analysis was structured after Yamagata-Lynch's model steps of activity analysis.

Iterative Nature of Analysis: Multiple Phases

Table 4 presents the research questions in relation to data collection and analysis methods, a detailed description of methods of analysis follows.

Table 4.
Data Analysis Table

Research Question	Type of Analysis	How Data is Analyzed to Answer Question	Steps for Analysis
1) What do teachers report about implementing ELA CCSS in their literacy instruction?	Constant Comparative	Constant Comparative analysis of teacher interviews helped to refine and manage data that specifically pertained to how teachers reported their responses to ELA CCSS implementation. Findings from question one's constant comparative analysis helped to iteratively inform selection of narratives and the CHAT analysis for question three.	Process of Constant Comparative Analysis: 1) Data from all interviews were chronologically ordered, summarized, and open coded. 2) Meaningful units were identified. 3) Data from all categories were identified and revised iteratively with subsequent coding and peer debriefing.
2) How are teachers implementing ELA CCSS into the literacy instruction?	Constant Comparative Activity Theory Analysis	Constant Comparative analysis of teacher and administrative interviews, observations, and extant texts was used to help define how teacher's developing knowledge of ELA CCSS, and how teachers incorporated ELACCSS into planning and instruction.	Process of Constant Comparative Analysis: 1) Summarize all interviews 2) Read and open code interviews and observations, analyze extant texts 3) Chronologically

		<p>Findings from question two's constant comparative analysis helped to iteratively inform selection of narratives and the CHAT analysis for question three.</p>	<p>order all interview and extended field notes from observations 4) Code all interviews 5) Code all observations 6) Code all documents. 7) Create categories for interviews, observations, and documents. 8) Use categories to help provide information for CHAT narrative selection and analysis of observed activities</p>
<p>3) What instructional opportunities are created in the enacted literacy curriculum?</p>	<p>Constant Comparative Activity Theory Analysis</p>	<p>Constant Comparative analysis of teachers' and administrative interviews, observations, and extant texts defined teachers' developing knowledge of ELA CCSS, and how teachers incorporated ELACSS into planning and instruction.</p> <p>Activity theory analysis provided an examination of selected vignettes that represent prime examples of categories that indicate relationship of data to instructional opportunities in the enacted literacy curriculum. Analysis from the 3rd generation CHAT model provided analysis of the activity from perspectives of both the teacher and children.</p>	<p>Process of Constant Comparative Analysis: 1) Summarize all interviews 2) Read and open code interviews and observations, analyze extant texts 3) Chronologically order all interview and extended field notes from observations 4) Code all interviews 5) Code all observations 6) Code all documents. 7) Create categories for interviews, observations, and documents. 8) Use categories to help provide information for CHAT narrative selection and analysis of observed activities.</p> <p>CHAT Analysis: 1) Examine data after</p>

			<p>constant comparison and identify the stories within the data.</p> <p>2) Write narratives that in thick description so the reader will understand participant experiences.</p> <p>3) Use narratives to draft initial activity system mode</p> <p>4) Comparing the narrative to the activity system to look for discrepancies or information that needs further attention.</p> <p>5) Solidify final versions of narrative and activity system</p>
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Constant comparison analysis was an integral part in answering all three research questions. Cross case analysis provided the opportunity to compare and contrast data from the two teachers in both what they “said” and what they “did” in regards to the ELA CCSS and their literacy instruction. The teachers had many commonalities in their perceptions of the standards and their implementation of the CCSS into their literacy instruction. The results from questions 1 and 2 were influential in informing the activities selected and questions asked of the activity in the CHAT analysis for question 3. Although answers to questions 1 and 2 helped to inform analysis for question 3, data collection and analysis for these two forms of analysis were concurrent. I did not collect

and analyze data from interviews and observations to answer questions 1 and 2 before considering question 3. During data collection and analysis, my third question remained present informing these processes. I wished to better understand the activities as I observed them from information gathered in past observations rather than make sense of the activities after data collection was finished and questions 1 and 2 answered. I believed it was important to examine my data for answering question 3 throughout data collection in the same iterative style I did for questions 1 and 2. During coding for constant comparison, I also coded for the key questions within CHAT (e.g. what are the formal and informal rules seen in this observation or noted in this interview). However, I did not complete a full CHAT analysis of activities until after constant comparison analysis, as results from constant comparison analysis were needed for activity selection.

Grounded Theory Constant Comparison of Interviews and Observations

To respond to Research Questions 1 and 2 concerning teachers' perceptions and implementation of the ELA CCSS, I used constant comparative analysis (Charmaz, 2006). As the analysis of data within grounded theory methods happens from the moment one first transcribes and reads data and lasts through the data collection (Merriam, 1998), my analysis began by taking notes and transcripts from interviews, observations, and documents from each classroom. I carefully read each observation and interview and created open codes that focused on action words to describe as objectively as possible what was happening in the data. I recorded my thoughts and ideas in comment bubbles beside the data in word files. I converted these word files to PDF documents for later analysis in ATLAS.ti; this conversion included comments and open codes which were used in the next steps of analysis. Weekly I created reflective memos from my initial

notes and open coding to help me define my ideas and begin considering tentative analytic categories (Charmaz, 2006, p. 3). Memo writing is described by Charmaz (2006) as a way for researchers to take a moment to analyze their ideas about the codes and emerging categories from their data. It helped to provide increased abstraction about how I was collecting and analyzing data.

I began data analysis after interviewing the school administrator and the initial teacher interviews as these took place within the same week. The administrative interview analysis aided in my understanding of the cultural context of this school. Early analyses of the interviews helped me to situate myself as a participant observer within the cultural context for the literacy instruction specific to each classroom and helped inform upcoming classroom observations. Once observations began, I conducted iterative data collection and analyses from classroom observations, interviews, and documents. This data analysis involved open coding and creating analytic memos to inform how I conducted further data collection. For example after observing each class at least twice I re-read the observations, coding what I saw happening in the data. In Ms. McCree's class I used codes such as: "teacher asks," "student answers," "teacher evaluates," and "provides answer" in whole and small group conversations. This data consisted of very quick back-and-forth rhythm during teacher led activities. In my weekly memo I wrote,

She [Ms. McCree] did whole group for half an hour with the Smartboard story. That whole thing was calling out the story, giving them the cues, providing some answers, and doing IRE with students about the story. Even when the students wrote main idea and details it was a whole group teacher led activity in which the teacher's unspoken message was "here's the answer, write it down" quickly. (December 15th Memo)

Rereading this memo made me think, “I have noticed some discussions during activities in Ms. Gabe’s room to be teacher directed as well, but not to this extent and not carried out in this manner.” Afterward this memo, I documented as much verbatim conversation as possible from both teachers and students during observations, choosing to focus on capturing as much detail about smaller sections of conversations. I continued to open code using action words to describe. Later I noted this concept in my memo became a subcategory for ELA instruction because of the value of teacher scripts, or repeated patterns of discourse, in informing activity analysis and the discovered third space (Gutierrez, 1993).

Coding occurred in multiple phases: 1) initial line-by-line open coding of actions and language, 2) initial coding based upon emerging themes within the open codes that were reflective of my research questions 3) selective focused coding which helped to organize and synthesize the multiple initial codes into subcategories, and 4) coding to determine categories from sub-category codes (Charmaz, 2006). I describe each phase of analysis.

Phase one: open coding. Memos and open codes were created and compared across contexts and data types. For interviews, I created a note summarizing each turn taken. If multiple topics appeared within a turn, I created a separate note for each topic. During open coding of both interviews and observations, I recorded reflective notes about activities and discussions occurring in interviews and observations to offer support in allowing me to stop to jot down new ideas, provide places for reflection beyond the initial coding, define more clearly the categories, and think about how the codes and later categories differ or relate (Charmaz, 2006).

Open coding helped me construct questions about things observed that I could ask about in my next interview. For example during Ms. Gabe's fourth observation I noticed a discrepancy during open coding between what Ms. Gabe was giving as directions for a practice reading assessment to two small groups and what her instructional assistant was giving to another small group for the same question. The next observation Ms. Gabe went over the same question as review and the same discrepancy occurred then as well just within her own description of the question. In my memo for the week I recorded,

I noticed that the first question in the practice assessment asked them to "wonder" about the title. What does it make you wonder is not the same thing as make a prediction about the story. What if they do not wonder anything? I heard the assistant teacher asking the children to read the title and make a prediction about the story, which is what the question really seems to want them to do and what the standard really wants them to do. If one teacher is saying one thing and another is just asking them to wonder by directly reading the questions, then how will you get results that can be comparable?

In my next interview with Ms. Gabe, who is on the formative literacy assessment team that created this practice assessment, I asked her several questions about the assessment. I asked if all teachers in the County had access to this practice assessment, if so how did they receive access, were they mandated to give it, and if they did give the practice assessment was there a protocol for giving it? I explained the difference I noted between her directions and those of the assistant. I also asked about why the assessment team chose that specific wording. Information from this data and reflection helped in creating subcategories about contextual influences on lesson planning and assessment practices. Reflection from initial coding of observations and interviews was important in not only allowing me to work through the iterative process of data collection, but additionally

aided my understanding of the reciprocal relationship of interviews and observations informing each other to answer how the teachers were implementing the ELA CCSS.

Phase two: Initial codes. Next I created initial codes. I did this by reading through my data, writing down words or phrases within my comments that I noted as reoccurring throughout the data. I gave these reoccurring topics assigned names and colors to begin my initial coding (e.g. teacher perception of literacy learning was dark pink). I copied and pasted data with similar codes onto a new Word document grouped by color and code names. For instance, every time the teacher mentioned literacy lesson planning with her grade level, I grouped the data with others that had similar codes into “grade level lesson planning”. Once I had established my initial codes after the first month’s data collection, I converted Word documents to PDFs to ensure that all comments would be included. I then entered the PDF files into ATLAS.ti, a software program for data analysis. For all data collected after the winter holiday break, I wrote comments in Word and then converted the text to PDFs and coded them using ATLAS.ti. With the use of ATLAS.ti I was able to more easily bring forth coded data and manipulate it into varying groups to see larger patterns. The ease of naming, renaming, adding, removing, and creating notes of the data was valuable in later creation of selective codes and categories.

Phase three: Selective coding. For selective coding the initially coded data were compared for similarities, areas of overlap, and contrasting characteristics, and put into subcategories with the qualitative data analysis software ATLAS.ti using methods recommended by Friese (2012). With ATLAS.ti I pulled all the data with initial codes concerning types of ELA instruction and grouped the codes by their similarities. For example, questioning whether or not a text was fiction or non-fiction was a common

literacy instructional practice for both teachers and was consistent within each case. I gave each code a name with the common larger selective code of practices (ex. Practice_genquestioning). I created several broad headings that served as subcategories that became code families. These family headings included *planning*, *practices*, *activities*, *assessment*, *accommodations*, *ELLs*, *context*, and *teachers' perceptions*. I found that I placed most of the interview data in planning, assessment, context, and teachers' perceptions of ELA while observation data fell under the categories of activities, practices, or accommodation.

Phase four: Developing categories. I compared each subcategory to other subcategories, and codes within subcategory against other codes in other subcategories. These were compared to check for overlap. Subcategories that overlapped were combined into one larger category. Subcategories from selective coding that spanned all categories were themes across the data. For example, assessment and accommodations were seen in planning, practices, and activities and also described in teacher perception.

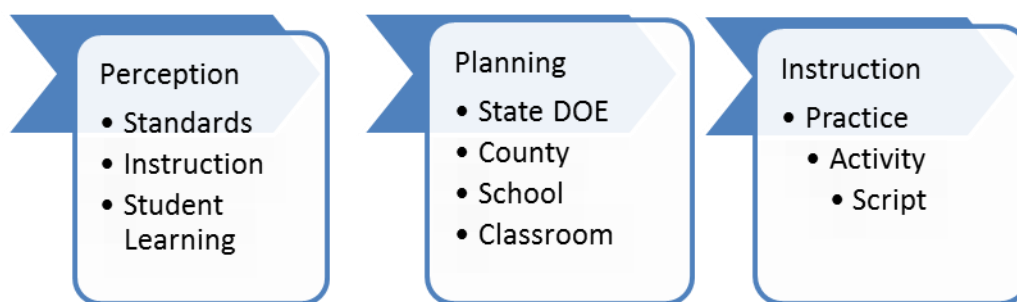


Figure 3. Category Diagram

I reviewed data quotations in each of these categories to see if they might fit into the newly created larger categories. Subcategories found within all categories became themes. These categories contained subcategories from data that fit within the larger category but did not overlap and merge (See Figure 4 for categories and subcategories). Data from initial subcategories in selective coding were combined in a new document and coded under the larger umbrella as well as new subcategories. Other subcategories became subtopics under larger categories and subcategories (e.g., data concerning ELLs fell under teacher accommodations and accommodations later became a subcategory for “practices”).

After organizing the data by category with subcategories, I was able to look more clearly at the how the pieces fit together within a category. For example, assessment was not its own category but a theme that ran across the main categories of teacher perceptions, teacher planning, and teacher instruction. Having clarified the categories I refined subcategories and developed subtopics by reorganizing the data into these final family codes that were the categories I discuss in Chapters 4-6. I also noted commonalities and differences among data within each category both within and across cases. For example when activities were more prevalent, I understood which practices were most dominant in the classrooms.

I peer debriefed with a former colleague from my Master’s degree program at the University of Tennessee who has since gone on to obtain her Ph.D. in Early Childhood Education and also used grounded theory in her dissertation. We discussed the structure of my coding, my decisions about coding, and I studied her coding methods from her dissertation and present research. I also debriefed with another doctoral student in my

program using grounded theory methods in her research. We had informal discussions about what I saw happening within my data for one or both teachers. We discussed methods for coding from our third qualitative class together and about the trustworthiness of reporting. For debriefing of my analysis methods using ATLAS.ti, I consulted with another doctoral student who provides assistance with this software in my department. Debriefing aided my thinking during initial coding and my iterative data collection. Debriefing discussions were also beneficial creating dominant categories from focused codes. I diagramed dominant categories and defined the properties of each subcategory with the use of ATLAS.ti. to examine the fit of sub-categories within larger categories (Charmaz, 2006, p. 124). Once categories were defined, data that best illustrated these categories were selected for a more in-depth CHAT analysis. Only observational data could undergo CHAT analysis, but data from interviews and document analysis were used as supporting information in examining subjects, objects, tools, community rules, and subjects' roles within literacy activities.

CHAT Analysis of Activities

Grounded Theory constant comparative methods is the suggested method for identifying narratives that best represent what is happening within the data to perform activity theory analysis (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). I followed constant comparison methods by Charmaz (2006) to provide an analytic procedure for examining and making sense of the data. The categories I derived addressed research questions one and two and informed CHAT analysis. To address the third research question about which instructional opportunities teachers provide students in the enacted literacy curriculum with the new ELA standards, I selected specific narratives for CHAT analysis.

Phase one: Data collection and preliminary CHAT analyses. During interviews and observations I hand-wrote detailed field notes then typed the same day into expanded field notes. My notes focused on individual and collective involvement in literacy activities, participant interactions and language, use of artifacts, and verbalized or observed objective(s) and products (Charmaz, 2006; Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). In other words, I focused my observational eye and field notes on literacy activities and tried to include as much description as possible from the beginning of the activity to the end, creating as clear a record of the activity event as possible. Notes and memos were also created for collected extant texts and their use as concrete artifacts. I often had questions about how teachers used texts to develop lessons or in activities. My questions about extant texts were often answered in the following interview or the next time I saw the text used during observations.

I began selectively coding data mid-way through data collection. I labeled activities within ATLAS.ti and created codes for within activity that pertained to activity theory analysis components. I analyzed the data concerning activities from observed instruction by asking questions of the data based on my theoretical CHAT framework (See Table 5).

Table 5.

CHAT Questions Asked of Data

What activities occur? Do they focus on ELA standards?

What is the objective of the activity? What ELA standards may be involved in the objective? What objectives not related to ELA are involved?

Are there any practices routinely used for ELA planning or instruction?

What context frames the activity of discussion (both local and larger political/social)?

What teacher perceptions may inform use of artifacts and creation of roles and rules within activity (taken from interview data that was undergoing constant comparison)

What scaffolding and mediation were occurring?

How are artifacts used in activities? Concrete or conceptual?

What are the spoken and unspoken rules of the activity?

What are the roles of the subjects in the activity and whose script mediates actions and objectives?

What products arise from activity to represent a finished activity objective? How is this product assessed related to ELA standards?

How does the teacher plan for ELA standard activity? This was connected to data from interviews and helped to explain the teacher's role in the activity which might not be seen through observation and helps place activity within context.

What is the teacher perception? This explains subject's view of the activity, community, and objective that is not revealed in observation.

I created and defined CHAT based codes in Table 4 for examining the activities within the observational data.

Table 1
Defined CHAT Codes

ELA activity

An ELA activity was defined as an event in which the children performed a task with the final objective of the task being a product or process related to one or more ELA standard(s).

ELA practice

An ELA practice was defined as a procedure or activity that occurred repeatedly and became a classroom cultural standard of behaving or doing and is related to one or more ELA standard(s). An example of an ELA practice would be asking key questions of the text when reading with a group, a peer, or to self, a practice connected to first grade's ELACC1RL1 and second grade's ELACC2RL1.

Object/objective

I initially coded for only activity objectives that were provided by the teacher. In the later stages of analysis when specific activities were selected, I created a new code for student objectives within the activity. This decision was based on Gutierrez's description of script and counter script in which the children can have an alternate understanding of the objective, or create an entirely new objective for the activity.

Rules

The rules of the activity were coded based on what the teacher stated or implied about her expectations for the children's behavior and action. During focused coding, this included the children's responses to the rules, and rules they created for themselves within the activity.

Roles

I created the roles code to describe in one word the divisions of labor amongst individuals within the activity. The responsibilities that individuals were to carry out within the activity were all coded as roles. These roles, or divisions of labor, underwent analysis specific to activity and individual in the CHAT analysis of selected activities.

Artifacts

To help define and code artifacts, I used Cole's (1996) definition of artifacts: (1) actual objects, (2) modes of actions (e.g. beliefs and traditions), and (3) things that are not directly practical, such as perceptions to examine modes of action. I analyzed how the actions of the teachers and actions of the students helped define the classroom culture and its role as a mediating artifact (Clifford, 1986). I coded artifacts observed during instructional activities as either concrete tools for mediation or conceptual or psychological tools. To help guide my coding scheme for second and third tier artifacts, I focused codes for non-concrete artifacts as including human interactions that make visible modes of actions such as beliefs, traditions, and perceptions (Cole, 1996). Interview data from constant comparison analysis helped inform possible teacher perceptions being implemented during activity and used to mediate instruction, as well as comments about perceptions that were stated directly to me during observations (e.g.

“they always follow the model at first” was regarded as the perception that children need models for support).

Context

This code became a term to define the social, political, historical, and cultural context in which the activities occurred. This included events that were described by participants occurring both in and outside the classroom or seen in observations.

Cultural contexts involved the stated beliefs and repeatedly demonstrated practices of the teacher, as well as the behaviors of the students, seen across time and activities.

Social and political contexts occurred in classroom level, grade level, school level, county level, and state level.

Teacher perceptions

Teacher perceptions of student literacy learning, ELA standards, and ELA instruction

This coding helped me to reflect on how I viewed and recorded activities within the classroom: Was I seeing something in one class’s activities that were not in the other? If I was able to make some generalizations about types of activities and interactions within an activity, could I observe an activity that ran counter to these generalizations? For activities I recorded in field notes, I also labeled which ELA standard the activity addressed or if an ELA standard was left unidentified. If no ELA standard was noted, I asked the teacher for the corresponding standard. Teachers provided evidence of objectives from the County rubrics which I photographed as extant texts. These notes provided documentation of which standards were covered most frequently by activities within and across cases.

Phase two: Activity system analysis. Yamagata-Lynch suggests using a triangle diagram model to represent the activity system during analysis and for reporting purposes. Each part of the activity system should be labeled within the diagram with narrative descriptions to relate activities and individual parts of diagram to the larger whole of the triangle activity system.

To analyze the data using CHAT analysis, one must develop a systematic approach for understanding individual activity in relation to context and how the two play upon each other (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). Yamagata-Lynch begins drafting activity systems models by identifying categories that fit into the subject, artifact, object, rule, community, and division of labor (role) elements seen during selective coding (p. 75). Activity systems models rely on thick descriptive narratives which researchers identify from code and category examination. After a narrative is selected, the examination of codes and categories from constant comparison help to create and finalize the activity systems model. The narrative and activity system model are co-dependent upon each other for CHAT analysis and will be presented together for the reader.

To analyze an activity narrative and construct an activity model I adapted two models suggested by Yamagata-Lynch (2010) for translating activity systems: 1) Mwanza's 2002 eight step model (p. 55) and 2) Yamagata-Lynch and Smaldino's 2007 activity systems model (p.60).

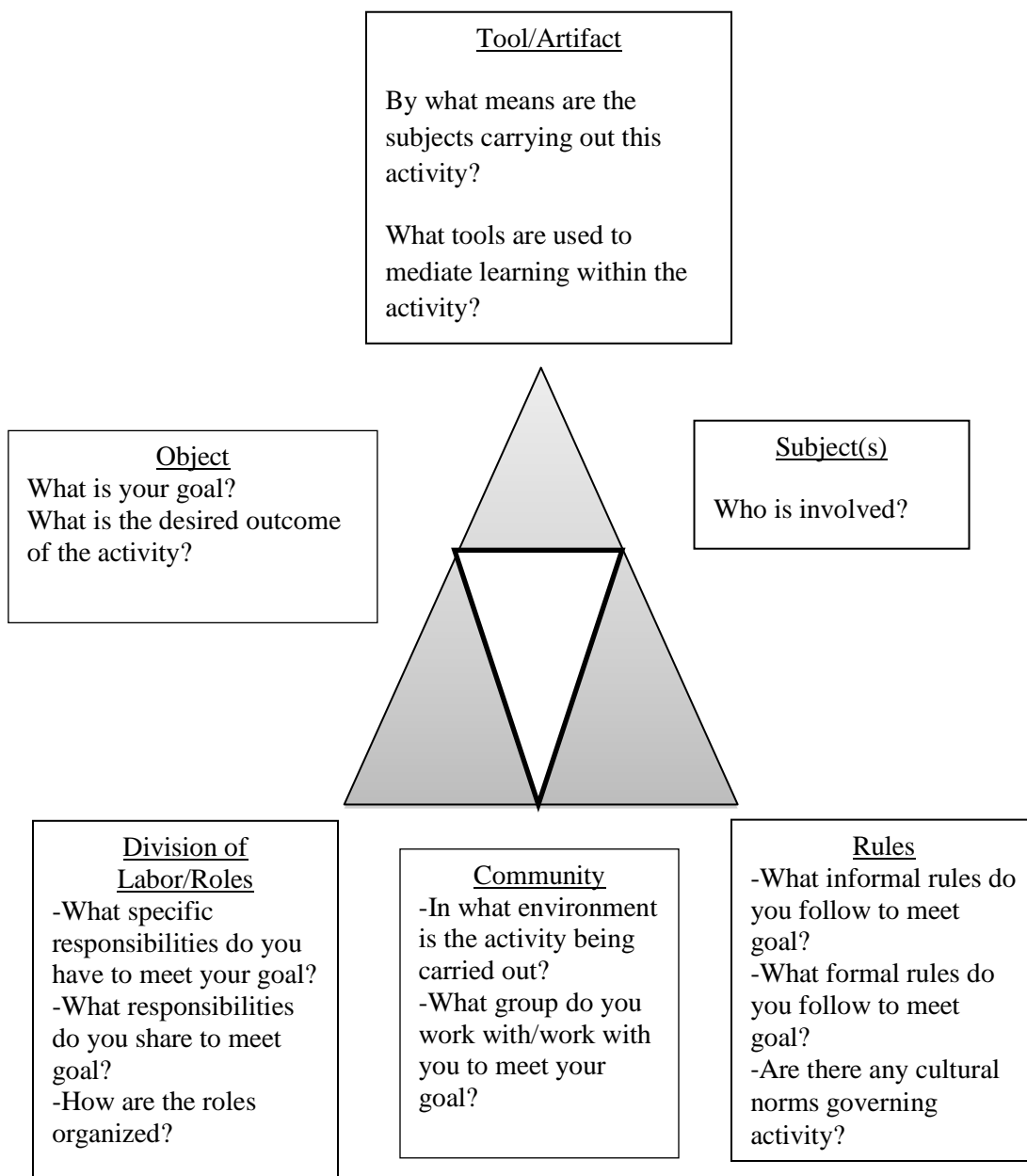


Figure 4. Adapted Activity Systems Model

The fourth step of CHAT analysis involves comparing the narrative to the activity system to look for discrepancies or information that needs further attention. Yamagata-Lynch compares this continual checking between the two as reliving the experience but within the specific framework outlined by the question and activity. The last steps involve solidifying final versions of narrative and activity systems, and checking for trustworthiness with participants before reporting findings.

Phase three: Activity scripts. While activity models provide a structured visual for conceptualizing the relationship between the players, context, and artifacts of activities, the power of these models is inextricably connected to the narratives that inform these models (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). I analyzed multiple activity systems for activities observed in the two classrooms. During my CHAT analysis of these narratives, I wrote many reflections on how strongly the teachers' instructional scripts influenced the rules and roles of the participants and how these influences were key in determining the third object of the merger of teacher and children's activity systems. The teachers' instructional scripts and their decision to include or dismiss children's counter scripts during the activity determined whether or not a Third Space was created which influenced the third object. Gutierrez (2008) proposes this concept in her work by connecting Third Space to Engeström's activity theory. She describes Third Space as involving collective and individual sense-making through "new forms of activity, stimulated by unresolved tensions or dilemmas that can lead to rich cycles" (p.152). The tensions noted within the scripts either broke and led to a new Third Space and influenced the third objective or submitted to the teacher dominated script leaving the third object as nearly identical to the teacher's original object. To be able to examine the

tensions within the activity that lead to the third object, I analyzed the scripts within the activity.

Following Gutierrez's (1993) script analysis, I analyzed the patterns of interaction within activity. Gutierrez suggests that these scripts orient participants' actions within activity, making the analysis of these scripts ideal for my understanding of the rules and roles created within activity. I examined how teacher's managed the discourse across multiple activities to understand the types of teacher scripts used in literacy instruction. Gutierrez named three types of instructional scripts: 1) recitation, 2) responsive, and 3) responsive-collaborative. The three types of instructional scripts are outlined in the following diagram from Gutierrez (1993).

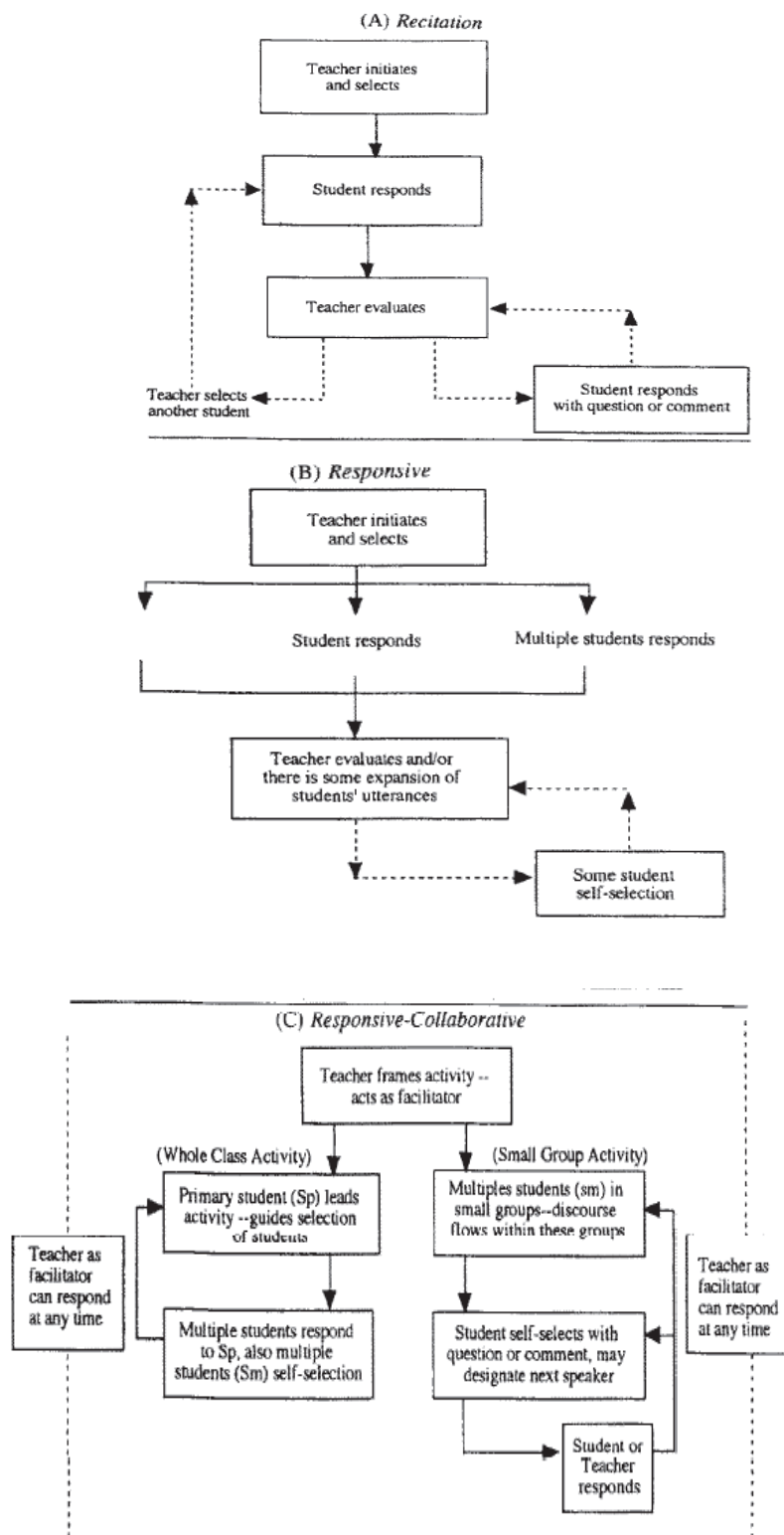


Figure 5. Gutierrez's Script Types (1993)

I coded activities within the data for teacher and student turn taking. Teacher turns were primarily the initiation of questions, responses to student responses (whether evaluation or follow-up extension), or described steps for following a process. Questions were coded as either closed or open with closed requesting a specific “correct answer” from students, and open questions allowing for a range of responses from students. Student responses were coded as either responding to teacher script or providing a counter script. Teacher responses to children’s counter script were coded as “denying” or “including” the counter script. Activity scripts were then compared to Gutierrez’s script types. The most illustrative examples of each teacher’s script type were chosen for discussion.

CHAPTER 4

TEACHER REPORTS OF IMPLEMENTING ELA CCSS

In this chapter I present findings to address the first research question: What do teachers report about implementing ELA CCSS in their literacy instruction (For standards see Appendixes C and D)? Chapter five will address how two teachers are implementing the ELA CCSS into their literacy instruction (question 2), and Chapter six describes observed ELA CCSS implementation in the enacted literacy curriculum of two classrooms (question 3).

Chapter four sets the compares and contrasts the two participating teachers' perceptions of the requirements and assessments related to the ELA CCSS, their literacy instruction with the ELA CCSS, and the children's literacy learning with the ELA standards. I use the term "teacher perceptions" because in asking the teachers to report on the standards and their implementation, the teachers responded with personal perceptions. As participants gained experience teaching the ELA standards, their perceptions did not remain static. Member checking helped to provide credibility in my understanding of perceptions concerning the ELA standards and instruction.

Teacher Perceptions of ELA Standards

I asked the two participants to report about the ELA CCSS at the beginning and end of my data collection to see if their perceptions of the standards and the ways in which the standards were assessed had altered throughout the year as they implemented. Each interview yielded slightly different comments and details, but the overriding

message from both teachers remained similar. The following sections address the similarities and differences in the teachers' perceptions.

The ELA CCSS: It's Just *More, More, More*

When I first asked Ms. Gabe what she thought about the ELA CCSS, she laughed softly and said, "They are just more." Over the course of the interviews, I found this one comment summarized both her and Ms. McCree's perceptions of the standards quite well.

More depth and rigor. Ms. Gabe referred not only to quantity, but more specifically the quality of the standards. Ms. Gabe and Ms. McCree considered the CCSS to have increased depth and rigor from the previous standards. Ms. Gabe suggested that they require more critical and higher level thinking from the students and teacher instruction that helps children learn how to do so.

There are new standards that are higher standards that we were not used to doing before, such as theme. So there are standards that are more difficult and more rigorous. Even the differences in those basic standards, the expectations with those basic standards [are] more elaborate. And then to this year and how it has just jumped up... For example, what we were doing today. Just basic story elements. In the past they would just have to tell us the character, the setting, the beginning middle end. But now in order for them to achieve a "four" [on the rubric] they have to not only tell you the characters in the story, but they have to be able to describe them. Really describe them. And I am not talking about how they look, but I mean having to really be able to describe a character trait. And be able to infer that. There's a lot more inference and application in just that standard itself. So that, that's a big change. So it is just pushing their thinking higher. (interview 2)

- ELACC1RL3: Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.
- ELACC1RL7: Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.

For Ms. McCree, the “so much more” referred mainly to the complexity of the ELA standards. She believed that the standards demand higher levels of questioning and deeper levels of thinking that required her students to go “outside of the box,” and produce more than multiple choice responses to text.

ELA to me was just more. It was just more. We always did main idea, we always did that. But it was deeper levels of things; it was higher levels of questioning. They would have to do things like be able to do a lot more inferring, which is very hard. A lot of inferring, we had a little of it, but this is like A LOT higher level. Like they have to be able to compare and contrast and infer. Compare and contrast is another one. Again we touched on it, but now they have to write papers. (interview 2)

- ELACC2RL7: Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.

Ms. McCree even considered there to be a notable difference in difficulty levels of the academic vocabulary of the ELA standards, stating it was “higher vocabulary, much more difficult vocabulary. And they [students] have to use them.” The children sometimes found the academic vocabulary and language of the assessments confusing because the assessments used the specific wording of the standards. On more than one occasion I observed Ms. McCree discussing inferring and showing evidence, and explaining how those sound like big complicated words but are easy to understand. She defined inferring as using what you know in your head to make meaning with what you see in the text, and compared showing evidence to a detective who finds proof in the stories. Yet multiple times when children worked independently they began furrowing their brows, quietly asking other children at their group, and finally sending a brave representative to ask Ms. McCree what those words meant again. Having witnessed her repeatedly cover these

same concepts and observed children struggle to comprehend the vocabulary, I can understand why Ms. McCree felt the vocabulary was “much higher and more difficult” for the children.

- ELACC2RI4: Determine the meanings of words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 2 topic or subject area.
- ELACC2L4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 2 reading and content, choosing flexibly from an array of strategies.

The academic vocabulary of the complex standards were not the only difficult vocabulary to which Ms. McCree referred. Her statement also included the vocabulary from the ELA units that were provided by the State, which the children encountered later in assessments. She noted these as being quite challenging for the children. Word banks from the DOE were given for each quarter. Ms. McCree often used them as required “weekly words” for their writing or word work station in addition to weekly spelling words. During one observation in which the children were about to transition from reading to writing, Ms. McCree picked up the DOE list and began to ask children the definitions of the given vocabulary list. The children did not know at least half of the words on the list, so Ms. McCree provided the definitions or examples like the one seen below.

Ms. McCree: What does humble mean?

Geelie: Means you are the only person who can have this.

Brandon: Kind of wise and smart

Ms. McCree provides an example about not wanting to brag: “Like if you are a fast runner in PE you don’t brag about it. If someone says something you just say thanks. You are humble.” (observation 6)

After reading from the list, Ms. McCree told the children there would be a copied and pasted list of those words in their agendas and reminded them that she wanted to see them using these words in their writing; something she said is an assessment requirement.

Ms. McCree also spoke specifically about the increase in rigor for what written products children were supposed to be able to produce.

So we, if we are doing it in ELA, they are then taking it over into the writing. So when we read two things we may discuss them and compare and contrast but then we have to go put it into words in paragraph form. And their punctuation has to be dead on and they have to you know how to write a paragraph. And what is a detail? Are you using adjectives in your writing? Are you using your thesaurus? Like we would always teach kids that, but now literally they have to be able to use the thesaurus. It used to be more just dictionary skills, to do abc order, do encyclopedia, dictionary. But now it is like thesaurus. Applying that vocabulary—wanna see that vocabulary in their writing. They are scored on that. (interview 2)

- ELACC2L1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

The increase in rigor and complexity were noted across reading and writing skills, and evident in student assessments.

More assessing. As seen in the words of Ms. McCree, the ways in which the standards asked teachers to assess had changed. There were far more ways to assess, and assessments were supposed to be as rigorous as the standards themselves. Ms. McCree commented that the assessment practices were so frequent that they kept a data binder at her table for frequent assessment of children's ability to exhibit mastery of ELA CCSS skills.

Ms. Gabe also noted how much more frequently she assessed than with any prior literacy curriculum. She mentioned that by asking students higher order thinking

questions more frequently, they were required to produce higher quantities of responses in greater depth. Scoring and assessing children's mastery of the standards is another area of increase that Ms. Gabe noted since implementing the ELA CCSS.

I think there are more standards but I think that they are so difficult now in rigor that we feel we are having to constantly assess them and reteach and assess. It, it's a big process now. And they are time-consuming assessments. We feel like we are doing a lot more assessing now than we ever have in the past... They all have to be assessed. So whether it be a paper pencil assessment or just a checklist, I have to have documentation that I have assessed every single one of these standards. (interview 1)

Having to constantly develop assessments and then find time to assess the children on each standard had been a trying task for Ms. Gabe and Ms. McCree.

More cross-curricular in nature. The increase in focus on the ELA standards spanned across the day into all content areas, especially Social Studies and Science. Both teachers believed the *Reading Informational* standards (See Appendixes C and D) required ELA CCSS integration throughout the day in all content areas. Ms. Gabe provided an example of how she worked to accomplish this,

I mean for example in social studies, we always have our historical figures and we talk about the character trait of them—perseverance and so forth. So that really connects to what we are doing in other places, so it is very easy for me to teach my social studies within my reading block. To really teach them (social studies objectives). So I am doing a lot more of that than I did in the past. I mean all day long I am teaching these standards wherever they fit. I mean if something that fits in science that is a reading informational standard, then I'm teaching it in science. (interview 2)

Ms. McCree also believed that the CCSS were far more cross-curricular in nature which influenced her instruction and in turn student learning and performance. The integral component about the standards that she considered to be different from previous curricula was the “big push for more non-fiction.” She said her use of non-fiction was more

frequent compared to previous years. She thought children were having a harder adjustment to being asked a lot more informational recall questions about detail and main idea from non-fiction pieces. In the past recall questions were more often to be seen on a science or social studies exam than a literacy assessment, but now Ms. McCree tried to blend her social studies and science into her literacy block.

The ELA CCSS: Perceived Challenges

While Ms. Gabe and Ms. McCree both supported the ELA CCSS and viewed the increase in rigor to be what children needed to be better literacy learners, they also found that some aspects of the ELA CCSS were quite challenging. The teachers agreed on only one major challenge—not enough focus on foundational literacy skills. The agreed upon challenge is described, followed by a description of individual challenges each teacher believed the ELA CCSS presented.

Too few foundational skills. Both teachers approved of the increase towards children's critical thinking and comprehension skills, but they wanted the ELA CCSS to focus more on foundational reading skills. As primary grade teachers they felt it was their responsibility to provide children with phonological skills to improve their decoding and fluency. Ms. Gabe stated,

I feel like there's not enough weight in first grade on those early standards, those reading foundational standards. There's very few of them in first grade on our common core and to me that really should be the highest weight, is the reading foundational. By reading foundational I mean, I believe there's only like 4 or 5 in first grade, things like sight words, fluency, um their independent reading level where I feel like those have to be really mastered first before they can tell you story elements, theme. You know because all of those standards that I mentioned are supposed to be on an independently read book. So I think going forward, you know some changes that I will make is I will just quarter one be teaching reading

foundational and the other ones will just have to take a back seat until, you know I think my personal beliefs are that I appreciate the standards, but I feel like for me it is going to have to be rearranged a little bit to make it work for the kids. (interview 2)

Ms. McCree was in complete agreement with Ms. Gabe, saying the standards have stepped too far away from phonics and focused largely on vocabulary and comprehension skills.

I think that there's not a whole lot of phonics in it. ... They (the standards) do address it in here; it will say "While you are reading this passage make sure they are aware of all the adjectives." That is not enough! So I don't feel like it addresses the phonics and the grammar as much as it needs to at this age. (observation 2)

One of the first things she said she noticed after becoming a second grade teacher was that children at that age are highly variable in their reading abilities. The standards, in her opinion, were not weighted so that teachers spent enough time working on decoding and problem solving to help improve fluency.

In first grade there are four *Reading Foundational* standards, but these standards have a total of fifteen sub-standards (See Appendix C). In second grade there are two *Reading Foundational* standards and nine sub-standards. These standards include fluency but not sight words, and focus on specific phonological awareness and phonics based skills. The fluency requirements simply convey that children need to be reading independently and on grade level with self-correcting skills demonstrated. Ms. Gabe did not believe the current phonics program used by the school was effective in helping students meet these standards and was helping administration select a new phonics program for the next year that would better fit for the County requirements.

Ms. Gabe and the troublesome language standards. Ms. Gabe wished the standards focused more on early reading and writing skills and less on the conventions of language standards. She described her experiences trying to overcome the struggle to include all of the language standards.

I do feel like there is too much to teach. There's too much. Especially the language standards. Way too much. Waaaay too much language! I don't have a problem with the reading literary [literature standards]. I don't have a problem with the reading informational [standards]. But I am not pleased with the language. I think it is the conventions. And it is just too much. They, it is too much, they can't remember it. It is overwhelming. And the grammar! They just, they just can't remember the verbiage of it. I mean they can't remember the word "singular" or "adjective." Prepositions! In first grade? I mean really? I mean, they are not intellectually "there" for it. (interview 3)

She considered the language standards a challenge to teach and for children to grasp, but she found them especially difficult for her students who came from homes in which English is not the primary language. She planned instruction to address this issue:

I know culturally some of the background knowledge is not there with some of these things that we are talking about and teaching them. So I do feel like there has to be a lot of pre-teaching before the standard is taught, especially with some of the vocabulary standards, and especially with some of the grammar and usage. I mean that is really a lot of experience and hearing those kinds of things within your language. So I feel like we are having to do a lot of pre-teaching with those kids to get them where they need to be. (interview 2)

- ELACC1L1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

I observed her teaching in small groups to work with specific students on the language standards and writing standards, as well as pairing students who were dual language learners with a peer considered proficient in English and the ELA standards. The way she planned her writing block incorporated multiple opportunities for peers to consult and edit together.

Ms. Gabe addressed some of her concerns about the language standards with administration and the literacy coordinator for the County. She wanted to develop a plan for gradual inclusion of language standards and adjustments for assessment of these standards.

I feel like it needs to be more piece by piece. Maybe by the end of the year. Maybe let's introduce a little bit as we go, and by the end of the year let's do the last part of it and if they don't get it, they don't get it. Cause next year it is going to be there too. (observation 4)

She believed the standards must be implemented in a reasonable time frame and quantity so that they are not overwhelming to teachers and students.

She said the County's requirement that the children accomplish all of the ELA standards on independently read grade-level texts made it far more difficult for her children who were still considered "approaching grade level" and who did not have the language structure and vocabulary background knowledge (notably her dual language learners). She believed that because her students were from higher income and literacy rich homes, they were able to adapt more easily to this independently read requirement; however, she worried about this requirement for students who do not have homes that are as literacy rich and children who have lower oral vocabulary skills coming into first grade. She wondered: if her students were having such a difficult time remembering all the language concepts, vocabulary, and grammar rules, what was it like for students considered "at-risk" for literacy development?

Ms. McCree's struggles with standards' structure. Ms. McCree found the depth and rigor of the standards to be challenging, but believed they are a step in the right direction to where students needed to be. Despite heading in the right directions, Ms.

McCree confided that there were some challenges to having to teach the ELA standards. Her largest challenge was the structure of the standards. She found the structure inflexible, confusing, and difficult to explain.

Ms. McCree stated that it could be difficult to teach children to read and comprehend when they were at such varying levels, and the structure of the standards did not allow for a lot of flexibility and differentiation for literacy instruction. She said each instructional quarter had too many complex standards to even begin to go back and reteach. She commented on reteaching, “the tricky part is finding the time because Common Core just like takes up all your time.” She stated that each of the County’s power standards had so many smaller standards umbrellaed underneath each one and all had to be appropriately assessed by County-made assessments and rubrics, that there was too much to cover in such a short span of time. She stated, “It is just crazy trying to fit in all in!” So much so that she struggled in finding chunks of time to pull children for differentiated support.

I don’t think I am doing that (differentiating) as much. I think my reading groups have turned into Common Core instead of strategizing and things of that nature. And somehow I am going to have to fit that in. I don’t know how I am going to structure that and what it will look like, but it has to be done. (interview 4)

The structure of the standards themselves she said could be very confusing to explain. As a representative who must teach colleagues and families about the CCSS, she claimed that understanding the concepts of “powered standards” and defining things like “craft and structure” was difficult. The term Power Standards, developed by Dr. Doug Reeves of the [Center for Leadership and Learning](#), is defined as a prioritized set of State Standards and expectations critical for student success

(<http://www.ccsuvt.org/curriculum-instruction-and-assessment/curriculum/power-standards>). The County followed this model for determining which standards were priorities.

Ms. McCree was stressed about the responsibility of explaining the standards and what they meant to instruction and student achievement because she found them to be complex and confusing, and wanted to do right by the community, the parents, and the students in explaining the change in curriculum and its effects on student education.

Our first (parent) conference was right when this came out in the first quarter. And we were terrified. We were terrified! ...They (parents) look at that (points to report card), they look at that and go “What’s that? What’s craft and structure?” Yeah well, craft and structure is how they structure a piece. The way they are saying it. It is all very confusing. And I’m not going to be able to verbalize it to you. I know it when I look at this (looks at her papers). Craft and structure is how they are creating something. ...So we are sitting here with these parents and it has gotten to the point where they just go “Okay.”... And we hope they trust us. I mean that’s what it comes down to. So this year has been very, very scary. (interview 2)

When coupled with County rubrics, the standards were difficult for Ms. McCree to learn and explain. She predicted this learning process would be lengthy and that their comfort level in explaining these standards and student achievement will improve with time and understanding.

For Ms. McCree the ELA standards brought with them overwhelming amounts of pressure. “I don’t leave school before 5 or 5:30 every day. I take work home every day. It’s overwhelming you know? This is crazy right now. You know? It is changed.”

Summary of Teachers’ Perceptions of ELA Standards

Both Ms. Gabe and Ms. McCree perceived the new ELA CCSS standards to provide levels of depth and rigor not experienced before in previous literacy standards. They are highly encouraged by the high levels of thinking that they see their students achieving with the implementation of these standards. They each commented on their students' abilities to ask questions of the text as well as answer text-based questions. Their concept of the ELA standards as "more" is complex in and of itself for it refers not only to quantity but quality, complexity, use, and assessment implications.

Due to their quantity and quality, the ELA CCSS could be challenging to implement. The teachers expressed concerns about how to teach and assess them all quarterly. With so much to fit in each quarter, there were also large concerns about how to meet the students where they were and give them what they needed while teaching the multitude of highly complex standards, therein constructing the belief that the ELA standards were difficult to differentiate with today's diverse student body. When it comes to balance, both the first and second grade teachers had concerns about the amount of weight placed on foundational literacy skills that help children decode and comprehend, or as Ms. McCree stated, "They have stepped too far away from phonics."

Despite the extra responsibilities in and outside of the classroom the CCSS have brought to these two teachers, they remain hopeful. There were added pressures due to their new roles as school professional development leaders who worked to help the school implement the CCSS for which they received no extra pay or compensation time. Yet both teachers had a positive outlook about the ELA standards. Ms. Gabe commented,

I think it is going to be a good change once we are all settled into it. I think any change is hard. I think, you know, but I think over all it is a good

change once we all fully understand them and know how to implement these the best way in our classroom. (interview 2)

Ms. McCree is also very hopeful about the CCSS. She stated that she is very impressed so far with what the children have been able to do since the implementation of these ELA standards. She is eager to see their scores once PARCC comes out, and even further down the line how they do with graduation and college success in comparison to students who have gone k-12 before the creation of the CCSS.

Teacher Perceptions of ELA Instruction

I asked both teachers whether or not they perceived changes in their literacy instruction and planning since the ELA CCSS implementation, and about their perceived challenges and successes. The following sections discuss the similarities and the differences of teacher perceptions concerning ELA instruction, and closes with their perceptions about moving forward with the ELA CCSS.

Promoting Higher Levels of Thinking

Ms. Gabe believed the new standards asked more from the children, and in response her instruction was “definitely pushing them to a higher level (of thinking)” to attain the types of student products required. She created activities to diagram the character or write short responses about the character’s personality traits based on how the character was described by the author. I observed her using these activities on multiple occasions, like during the children’s character study of Tacky the Penguin, a character series created by Helen Lester. In February, she used this same character study with non-fiction texts about the United States Presidents. Ms. Gabe provided the deeper

character analyses as an example of just one of the ways in which she believed she has adapted her literacy instruction to address the more complex ELA standards.

Ms. Gabe also noticed a difference in the conversations and depth of discourse with her students. She accredited this to an almost scripted use of higher level thinking questions around the ELA standards provided by the school's literacy support specialist. She said that by implementing more purposeful and complex standards, she pushed the children to higher and deeper levels of thinking.

I think that it does push them to a higher level. It is making them better readers, and making them more interested in reading. More than just the basic "read a book". It is making them dig deeper into reading. (interview 3)

She said the ELA standards required her to be more cognizant of what she was asking of children and what she asked children to be able to produce.

Ms. McCree indicated that she spent less time on foundational skills and fluency and far more time on deeper-level questioning and vocabulary comprehension. The children were reading more complex texts, especially with the increase in non-fiction texts, and she found that there was a lot of vocabulary with which her students were not familiar. She took special note to stop for comprehension and vocabulary checks along the way in both small group and whole group instruction, which she thought was important for all students but most especially for her ELL students. Not only was she stopping more often to ask questions, but the questions themselves were "higher on the Bloom's taxonomy scale." She described her small group discussions as "deeply analyzing story elements." She attributed the change to her training and professional development resources from the County and the school's "literacy guru." A document

analysis of these questions revealed that all questions were related to skills essential to the ELA standards and required children to use the text as evidence for their thinking.

Ms. McCree described the change in her instructional questioning,

So I had to go through predicting, fiction or non-fiction, which is a huge push this year. Which I will be honest and say I wasn't pushing before this year. So now I will say fiction or non-fiction and now we always talk about things like table of chapters, look over that. Let me check. So I am more methodical when I go through a book with the kids now. That is something that is different. I am kicking it out and going slower. I am hitting vocabulary more. I am asking more cause and effects and inferential questions and things. I wouldn't say I wasn't good at it. I just don't think I paid as much attention to it. I still think that my kids are doing great that have gone on but I can't wait to see how they do with this. (interview 3)

Ms. Gabe also noticed an increase in her use of non-fiction texts. She commented that prior to implementation of the CCSS she only *thought* she knew how to integrate ELA across content, but after implementing the new standards she *really* knew how.

I think the non-fiction I understand better. Because the focus was so much on fiction in the past. Like on things ... like comparing, like this that we did today, like comparing characters and then comparing two texts and comparing what you see in a photograph and what you see in text. All these different things, really, you can kind of all do in one. I kind of see a bigger picture now, instead of that having to be three separate things. I am kind of seeing how you can integrate all of this together. I am also understanding how I can integrate this with my Social Studies and Science, to make my life easier. I mean I don't completely get it, but I think I can see how I can get that in the younger grades too. (interview 4)

Like Ms. McCree, Ms. Gabe noted an increase in vocabulary instruction practices. Most notably, she created opportunities for her second language students to work with her on vocabulary and explicit comprehension strategies, and created instructional opportunities for them to work with supporting peers.

Increase Assessment Practices

Literacy instruction focused on promoting children's thinking and actions around the standards, particularly to the ways in which the standards would be assessed. This included instruction which focused on how students should successfully navigate the assessment processes. Ms. Gabe described something that I would have termed as "an assessment take-over," because what Ms. Gabe described was a continuous process of crafting and implementing new formative assessments that took up large amounts of planning and instructional time. The children's writing was centered on being able to score a four on the County rubric even though it was not specifically addressed that way to the children. Ms. Gabe showed me the rubric and explained her connections during my observations.

Ms. Gabe described assessing the ELA standards as "more than ever" she had assessed before. She administered larger numbers of assessments and that took up considerable planning and instructional time. Between County assessments and her grade level team informal assessments, she felt that she was constantly assessing the children. At least five of my nine observations involved some type of formal assessment. During our third interview (after the students second quarterly assessment), she confided,

I feel like my kids know a lot of the material. I feel like when it is time for them to put it down, the transfer on paper, it is something that developmentally, I don't feel like a lot of them are ready for.

Due to this realization from the assessment data, Ms. Gabe planned to change her instructional practices to rely less on oral discussions, and encourage children to write their responses to ELA standards-based questions more frequently. In the last few observations I noted her small groups doing more short answer written activities. Data from assessments were used to guide instruction practices.

Ms. McCree claimed that the focus on learning to teach the standards and creating assessments to measure student mastery during the first year of ELA CCSS implementation had been “crazy” and “overwhelming.” Ms. McCree’s students were used to their teacher asking for evidence. All observations provided examples of teacher language asking for evidence, describing how to find evidence, supporting their answer, asking “how do you know?” or “what makes you say that?” during teacher to child interactions around text. During literacy instruction, Ms. McCree stated what she was looking for her students to produce. She thought that her clarity for introducing instructional objectives had improved with the implementation of the ELA standards. During observations I heard her tell students what the standards were asking for and in what ways the County was looking to assess them, using words like “the standard says” and “the assessment is looking for” to help her students key in on the objectives of the literacy activities in which they participated. Though test prep was important, and I observed it in four of the nine observations, she stated she tried hard in her instruction not to teach to the test.

Adaptation and Differentiation within CCSS

Ms. Gabe and Ms. McCree did not believe there were any major changes to the structure of the literacy block after implementing the ELA standards. The first and second grade teachers at Tiger Creek Elementary completed a professional development book study of the *Two Sister’s Daily 5* and *CAFE* management and strategy systems for literacy instruction (www.thedailycafe.com). The two grade levels kept these systems in place but modified the programs to reflect objectives from the ELA CCSS. The Daily 5 is structured into five activity segments of student activity. It manages student movement

and activity within the five segments. The five segments include: 1) read-to-self activity, 2) read-to-peer activity, 3) word work activity, 4) writing activity, and 5) a listening activity (a computer station activity in both classrooms). While these stations stayed the same, as in previous years, the structured activities within them changed to reflect the new ELA standards.

Each teacher stated that differentiation was needed to help promote student success with the ELA CCSS. While each teacher agreed that it was difficult to find time and ways to differentiate for their diverse students, each teacher took a different approach in their instruction for addressing this concern. Ms. Gabe noted that because of how she addressed her concern for differentiation opportunities there was an increase in her differentiation practices in her ELA instruction, while Ms. McCree noted she had increased whole group supports but had drastically decreased purposefully creating different instructional activities for individuals or groups of individuals.

Ms. Gabe noticed that she had to be more purposeful about differentiating her instruction and creating time, opportunities, and activities to help students master the new and more rigorous standards. During one lesson about author's purpose she stopped to ponder out loud to the instructional assistant, "Wow! This is really hard. I showed them examples of fiction and non-fiction books yesterday. But they don't get the kinds of fiction." Since the children were having difficulty with abstract thinking, she said needed to adapt her instruction to be more explicit with lots of modeling,

There has to be a lot of pre-teaching before the standard is taught. Especially with some of the vocabulary standards, and especially with some of the grammar and usage... A lot of modeling. You have to really think about those kids when you are planning instruction. (interview 2)

She included more small need-based groups and individual learning opportunities to provide more scaffolding and modeling for complex standards and objectives.

I identified their need, and I do pull strategy groups. . . . I do one on one conferencing with the kids and the strategy groups. When I pull those kids individually and strategies (groups), that's what I'm honing in on more of the differentiated things. (interview 1)

She constructed strategy groups based on assessment data that consisted of children who needed to work on a specific standard. During these strategy groups, Ms. Gabe focused her conversation and activities around that specific standard.

Ms. McCree was concerned about her lack of differentiation of instruction since she began ELA implementation.

I still don't like the differentiation. That's still my bugaboo. I feel like I need to learn how to differentiate more because they are not giving it to me. They are giving me "this is what you teach" and it is not reality. You've got somewhat English speaking and non-English speaking. So I feel like the differentiation was just very much lacking in Common Core in this county. And I think this is something that I would have to improve on. (interview 4)

Ms. McCree had prided herself on being a teacher who differentiated for her students, but now struggled to find time to do.

Ms. McCree contributed another change in her instructional practices to be the main factor of why she has so little time to differentiate—the addition of the twice daily ELA mini-lessons.

I normally do a mini-lesson that is common-core driven, and then I go into my reading (or writing) groups and that is a little different. It changes my planning. I like it and I don't, because it takes away from my reading groups. Because by the time I have taught a mini lesson and we clean it all up and we move, we have lost 20 minutes, and I don't mean lost. It sounds terrible to say... it really takes away, but I think it is effective. I think they

are learning that. Taking that to the writing and the reading group, but it does kind of get them all together. And we talk about. (interview 3)

Ms. McCree found the two 15-minute (plus transition) mini-lessons took up much more of her time than her previous whole group instruction. She had considered her instruction to be influenced by whole language and children received more instruction in small needs based groups. Now that the ELA mini-lessons take up almost 40 minutes of her 90 minute block, she noticed the loss of time in which she used to meet with needs based groups and differentiate her instruction for her 27 students. During large time frames for whole group instruction, Ms. McCree said she focused on ELA concepts and vocabulary and worked through them more slowly and purposefully than whole group instruction in past years.

Though she was not able to meet with needs based groups as she would like, Ms. McCree regularly met with at least two groups during her reading block. The ways in which she interacted with these groups during their small group instructional time she found to be quite different than in previous years,

And I always met with two reading groups at a time, but I think how I direct my reading groups is different. The kinds of questions I am asking is higher level. I stop a lot more when I am reading. I found I have to. (interview 3)

Changes to Come

After discussing perceived changes, successes, and challenges, during the last interview each teacher reflected on the influence of the ELA CCSS on the year's literacy instruction. They talked about their perceptions of their instruction now and what it might be like moving forward.

Initially Ms. Gabe was concerned about creating quality ELA instruction to assure student mastery, “It is hard for me to feel uncertain about what I am doing and how I’m doing it.” Ms. Gabe claimed that the first year of implementation was exceptionally hard because she was still thinking about what the standards are asking for and what that will mean for instruction. She had spent much of the year grappling with teaching the ELA standards correctly and creating new assessments to help teachers know if the children were understanding the new curriculum.

Ms. Gabe said that the implementation year was a particular struggle because even the most experienced teachers felt like novices again and that, with time, teachers would adapt to the change and instruction would be far improved with the new standards.

I imagine that it will be particularly hard the first couple of years where they haven’t had the, the years to adapt. Like when you have a new program and it takes a while to get used to it and when you are just starting... No doubt about it. It has been a struggling year for everybody involved. But I think it is going to be a good change once we are all settled into it. I think any change is hard. I think, you know, but I think over all it is a good change once we all fully understand them and know how to implement these the best way in our classroom. But I think, it is going to be a struggle for a little while till we get through this year. (interview 2)

Ms. Gabe expressed the belief that once teachers gained comfort with teaching the standards, they would be more confident in their abilities and that would lead to the incorporation of new and old instructional strategies. Like Ms. McCree, she believed in time teachers would incorporate more of what they knew was successful in the past for teaching children how to read and write and would use these strategies in ways that would support the ELA CCSS. She also believed that she would not only adapt to the standards, but act as an agent of change and adapt the standards to meet her needs and the

needs of her students, “I appreciate the standards, but I feel like for me it is going to have to be rearranged a little bit to make it work for the kids.”

Ms. McCree reflected on the influence of the County, her school, and the grade level on her literacy instruction. During the implementation year her instruction focused on teaching requirements seen in County assessments and using uniform lesson plans with the rest of the second grade team with which she had input. While understanding the benefit of co-planning, she commented that she had lost a lot of the freedom to teach. She believed that some of the things which made her a unique teacher had been lost with the implementation of the new ELA standards because she did fewer of what she saw as fun and engaging lessons from past years and more that were planned by colleagues or influenced by implementing parts of the DOE unit lessons.

We are all teaching the same material at the same time. I think the negative issue is that you lose a little of uniqueness, and I have kind of prided myself as sort of having my own niche and doing my own things my own way. And I feel like I lost a little of that this year... So it (teaching the ELA standards) has made me be a better teacher in some ways, but I think I have lost a little of my uniqueness. (interview 4)

Due to Ms. McCree’s lack of familiarity with the standards and the ever-developing assessments, she described the year’s ELA instruction as “disjointed a lot of the time.” This lack of efficacy was frustrating and stressful for Ms. McCree. Like Ms. Gabe, Ms. McCree was a self-proclaimed perfectionist who worried about providing high quality instruction centered on the new standards. Ms. McCree was nervous during implementation about “doing it right,” even the first time around. She knew there was a learning curve but she did not think that is fair to her students, their parents, and the community. She described facing the parents in the first few parent conferences as nerve

wracking because she had to explain to families who were used to seeing their children receive much higher scores that the standards had changed and that the children were still approaching grade level mastery. “I do not want to let them down,” she explained to me in an interview, and went on to say how she considered student mastery of the ELA as her responsibility and her short-coming if they did not succeed this first year.

She felt “choked” and “overwhelmed” by the sheer amount of change and uncertainty the new standards brought in their first year of implementation. She said about the year, “it is just crazy right now,” but maybe when the students go all the way through, start in kindergarten, and work their way up and understand the structure and this deeper way of thinking, maybe then it will be easier.

With time Ms. McCree predicted she would be comfortable with the new standards and put back into her instruction the fun types of lessons that she felt made her effective and unique. Ms. McCree looked forward to having teaching experience with these new standards under her belt, and bringing in some things to her literacy instruction that she said she had to leave behind during the implementation year,

Some of my favorite things I didn't get to do. And I am hoping that I will figure out how to mix it all together...So I am hoping now that my comfort level will go up next year, I can do what has worked and add in the more fun stuff. The things that I think are more engaging for the kids, maybe than I did. So I have to learn how to put it all together. (interview 4)

She confided that having to implement the entire CCSS in year one made for a very stressful year. Ms. McCree hoped that once the year was over and the standards were covered all the way through with assessments waiting to be reused instead of created that things would be easier next year. She also believed that in time teachers would have the

comfort and flexibility to work their own individual magic into their instruction. She was hopeful they would not feel so much anxiety the second year as they would have no more large packages of standards to learn and implement. Having one year of “crazy” may have been better than two years of overwhelming fresh starts with a new curriculum.

Maybe that will be the silver lining at some point. We kind of dove in, but maybe next year. And I, this is my prediction; they are going to be watching us. Our county, our county is just a very affluent county anyways, so I think they are going to be looking at us and what worked and they will be using us as a tool. (interview 4)

Summary of Teacher Perceptions of ELA Instruction

There were several common themes seen in the comments of Ms. Gabe and Ms. McCree concerning their thoughts about their own literacy instruction during the first year of CCSS implementation. First, they both noted what they perceived as positive changes in their literacy instruction due to rigor of standards. Second, each of them noted the increase in formative student literacy assessment practices, expressing concerns about the amount of time it took to create and implement new assessments to match the new standards and how much instructional time that involved. Third, they were both concerned about differentiation in their ELA instruction and how to accommodate such complex standards to meet the needs of their diverse students, though they addressed this concern in very different ways. Ms. Gabe believed that accommodation of ELA instruction was necessary and felt empowered to differentiate as needed, while Ms. McCree looked externally for direction for her ELA instruction as she was concerned about fully implementing the ELA CCSS with as much fidelity as possible. Lastly, they each expressed a sense of relief about completing the first year of implementation and claimed that they look forward to teaching the ELA CCSS with a more solid

understanding of its content and requirements. They believed the change was incredibly difficult but that after the initial years of transition that it would prove to be a positive change for their instruction and for student learning.

Teacher Perceptions of Student Learning: They're Like Chameleons

During the first interview teachers were asked about their beliefs about how their literacy instruction best aided children's literacy learning. They were also asked questions about how they felt the ELA standards served their diverse student population and what they noticed about their students' literacy learning since the ELA implementation.

Teacher responses generally linked to standard objectives and teacher literacy instruction. The following sections compare Ms. Gabe and Ms. McCree's perceptions of children's literacy learning and describe their perceptions about student learning within the ELA CCSS literacy curriculum.

Perceptions of Children's Literacy Learning

While each teacher described a philosophy of children's literacy learning that is similar to the whole language approach, each highlighted different aspects of the approach concerning what children need and what their instruction provided for literacy learning.

Ms. Gabe's perceptions of literacy learning. Ms. Gabe believed that children become better readers and writers through frequent opportunities to engage in authentic reading and writing. She stated that she did not believe in asking students to complete worksheets copied from a workbook or read from basal readers. Instead in her classroom,

one would see children reading on the floor, in chairs, to self or peers, and crafting individual stories through their writing.

How Ms. Gabe perceived successful literacy learning influenced how she believed students should approach the standards and their objectives. This belief is demonstrated in her description of how the children are best learning the standards through having opportunities to apply them directly to their own reading and writing practices.

I think that and if I just sent the kids out to do centers at their desks, they are not going to master these standards. I think kids truly authentically reading and working on standards through things like a little main idea hand, through an “ask and answer” check for understand book mark. These are all standards that I think we are authentically using them instead of just giving the kids a worksheet and reading a passage and reading and answering them. (interview 1)

As an experienced first grade teacher, Ms. Gabe had the opportunity to learn a lot about first graders’ interests and abilities. She believed in the importance of teaching literacy foundational skills that focus on decoding as well as building children’s oral language skills to promote literacy comprehension abilities. For those students whose home language was not English, she provided an increased amount of small group and one-on-one time to help build vocabulary and grammatical knowledge using shared texts. She thought that children benefit from modeling reading and writing processes,

Especially a second language if they are really not hearing it at home. So there is no exposure. So you can’t just say “what sounds right?” because they may not hear it. You have to really show them a lot of that. (interview 2)

She told me during the next observation, “They all copy the model” with a wink, and later begin to explore their own reading and writing abilities.

Ms. McCree's perceptions of children's literacy learning. First and foremost Ms. McCree believed student learning should be fun. This is best expressed in her own words, "The motto in my class is that they learn by accident." She stated that her kindergarten teaching experience influenced her desire to have hands-on and engaging activities aligned with the ELA CCSS. Observed examples of this belief may be seen in literacy activities that connected to the persuasive writing standard by having students: evaluate Super Bowl commercials for their persuasive abilities, learn to market cereal box creations which required both informational and persuasive writing skills, and create advertisements for a new kind of candy.

She said that one of the most important aspects of her instruction for children's literacy learning was that she created real-life learning opportunities for her students to experience the standards and show their mastery of the standards in multimodal ways.

So I try to make everything relevant to their lives. Everything. We might have this discussion that might take ten minutes but at least they know why they are learning it... And I will say, if you ever want to go to *Justice* and buy an outfit, don't you need to know how much it costs? (interview 1)

Surprise Growth

Ms. Gabe and Ms. McCree worried that the standards had not focused enough on foundational reading skills centered on decoding and fluency, and when it came time for the Fountas and Pinnell (2008) midyear assessment that involved a running record followed by comprehension questions, they were concerned that their students would not do as well as students prior to ELA CCSS implementation. However, both teachers were pleasantly surprised by the results. The following interview excerpt reveals Ms. Gabe's reaction to the assessment results.

I thought they were not going to grow as much as they had in the past, but I really did have a lot of gains. I mean everybody you know jumped up at least two levels. I mean some of them three or four. And I have some kids two are levels N's and L's and I was really really pleasantly surprised. Um. (laughs) I mean that honestly. Because, and I think it is because of this questioning. I mean it is so high level that um, and I thought I was doing it before. But now! It is so deliberate. It is so deliberate and it is, I feel like even though I thought I was doing just by natural talking to the kids, now it is so much more scripted because it is here in front of me. So it has pushed me to really push the kids. So now it is, it is just showing in what they are doing. (interview 3)

Ms. Gabe's perception about her students' fluency, accuracy, and comprehension changed based on how quickly her students were able to move across reading levels from the beginning of the year to the semester break. Even her lowest readers moved up two levels, and several students targeted for extra support were now measuring as "reading on grade level." She also noticed a marked improvement in their comprehension scores which she attributed to how she used questioning in an almost scripted manner to align with the ELA standards.

Like Ms. Gabe, Ms. McCree commented that her students' assessment results surpassed her expectations. After the Fountas and Pinnell assessment at the midpoint, she believed the students were reading fluently and answering comprehension questions far better than she predicted. She was nervous about how the students would do on the County's CCSS implementation assessment that was given as a surprise in February, but the day she received the results she proudly showed them to me. The majority of the class was proficient, only a question or two from being proficient, or beyond proficient. Only three children scored lower than 80% proficiency on the ELA assessment. She found that, similar to her classroom assessments, her English learners struggled the most with the comprehension questions which she attributes to the increase in complexity of the text

vocabulary. Even though several children were just a point or two away from proficiency, they were still considered to be “approaching proficiency.” Ms. McCree said this concept was hard for children and parents in their community to accept because they were used to lower standards and higher scores. Ms. McCree believed that the children showed a lot of growth over the first two thirds of the academic year and that they were adapting well to the new standards and instruction.

Student Behaviors

Ms. Gabe and Ms. McCree perceived the standards and standards-based instruction as having influenced the children’s learning and literacy behaviors. When asked about change in the children’s behaviors when working without the teacher, Ms. Gabe commented that they were using graphic organizers more easily after teacher modeling and small-group guided practice. She found that each time she introduced a new genre or purpose for writing the students initially struggled, but after one week of teacher modeling and guided support, the children were capable of using graphic organizers and then constructing written texts with very little teacher support.

The other day when I did persuasive writing with them. It is like pulling teeth honestly to get it out of them. But then today, I just walked around the room today and monitored and everyone one of them just filled it (the organizer). They knew what to do. (interview 3)

Another change in student behavior that surprised Ms. Gabe was the shift in children’s individual book choices. After incorporating so much more non-fiction in her instruction across content on a consistent basis, Ms. Gabe saw the children select more non-fiction than previous classes.

I find that they are choosing non-fiction. Which is, I never thought. I always thought they would be kind of like, well I knew the boys might but, but the girls are picking non-fiction books now too. I keep a bucket and I switch out with the non-fiction depending on what we are studying. And they. That is what they choose. (interview 3)

She found informational texts that related to the books that she read in class and was pleased to see children selecting from those books more frequently than others. The best example of this change in what she thought of as children's typical book selection came one day when she looked up to find two boys engrossed in reading and conversation about a non-fiction text about the Titanic.

Ms. McCree found the changes to be harder on her than her students, who she said had taken to the new standards and the new way of doing things almost immediately. "They are very adaptable," she stated, "they are like chameleons." She found that with the ELA standards her children were "learning in a deeper way," thinking "more outside of the box," and becoming "more independent." She attributed this to her methodical use of higher level thinking questions. Overall she has noticed a difference in the children's ability to both answer and ask higher order thinking questions. She was impressed by the children's ability to internalize what they do with her in small group and use it as they read to a peer.

I think when they read to each other they are more cognizant of the vocabulary and "do you know what the word is?" And they will ask "do you need help?" and "do you need a minute?" (interview 3)

She also noticed how they remind each other to use resources like dictionaries and the thesaurus.

Ms. McCree's credited her students as being more meta-cognitive about their own literacy as they read and wrote texts. She said that instead of reading quickly through an

unfamiliar passage, they were much more likely to stop and talk about a word that they didn't know, ask a friend, or get a dictionary. She also noted that since she focused discussion so much more on characters, their traits, how they influence the story, and that the children were reporting more interest in the characters. They spent more time in their group discussions talking to each other about characters. She even asked them, "Are you looking at the book differently?" and some responded, "I look at the characters more." She credited the habit of analyzing characters to her frequent attention to character analysis during instruction.

Summary of Teacher Perceptions of Student Learning

Ms. Gabe and Ms. McCree had much in common when it came to their perception of their students' literacy learning with the ELA standards. Both believed that their students learned best through instruction that was engaging, and each teacher created instructional opportunities supported by their individual beliefs. Ms. Gabe's classroom involved children participating in daily reading and writing activities that focused on the ELA standards because she believed that children learn best by using the standards in real life literacy experiences. Ms. McCree's class frequently engaged in activities that required them to be creative in their writing and reading because she believed that children learn better when they are having fun.

The teachers described children as exhibiting new behaviors from those previously observed by children in those grade levels. Each agreed that their children had been successful with the new standards. Introducing new standards was a challenge and required a lot of planning for support, but overall the children's reading and writing

scores, and levels of independence gave the teachers hope that they are on the right path with their instruction.

CHAPTER 5

TEACHER IMPLEMENTATION OF ELA CCSS

To answer Research Question 2 about how the ELA CCSS are implemented I had to first understand the many nested levels of contextual influences related to the ELA standards and implementation. Through constant comparative analysis of the interview and observation data, I discovered that teacher planning was important to ELA implementation. The teachers rarely spoke of implementing the ELA standards into their literacy instruction without discussing the many factors that influenced it. They mentioned these influences during interviews and often provided copies of plans or materials used for planning during observations. The planning for implementation and instruction included (but was not limited to):

- Professional development trainings
- Working in collaboration with other educators to learn how to implement ELA standards into lessons
- Making meaning of the ELA CCSS curriculum and requirements
- Creating lesson plans and activities reflective of the standards and standard assessments
- Creating formative student assessments
- Gathering resources and other curricular guides
- Reflecting on student mastery of formative and summative assessments to inform future planning

Reflecting on my initial analysis of documents and teacher comments about planning and the influences of their plans on the enacted literacy curriculum made me wonder: How

were factors beyond the actual standards influencing the teachers' implementation of the ELA CCSS and their literacy instruction? Planning was very much a socially constructed process. Because the standards were so new, teachers could no longer rely on old lesson plans and were not familiar enough with the new standards to plan on their own.

Additionally, the school and district administrators strongly encouraged collaborative planning. These social factors influenced their planning, instruction, and the enacted classroom, similar to research from Garcia (2011) and Lee (2011) that states social reproductions and stakeholder expectations permeates the implementation of new curricula and the enacted curriculum.

In this chapter I present findings concerning the influences of the nested matrices of the educational system on the teachers' implementation of the ELA CCSS in their literacy instruction planning. I do use the well-known industrial model of production as a metaphor for our country's educational system (Au, 2011; Leland & Kasten, 2002; Robinson, 2010; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). The industrial model from Bobbit and Taylor has long influenced the US educational system and curricula. Our country's educational system has mimicked the field of industry by using scientifically based evidence for creating management of structure within an organization, an idea from the late and post industrial revolution. Since Bobbit's introduction of the factory production model in the early 1900's (Tyack & Cuban, 1995), the US educational system has been a replica of Taylor's manufacturing industry—producing a common product by turning out educated students from schools (Leland & Kasten, 2002).

As part of the industrial metaphor, our country can also be viewed as an example of the classic top-down control agency model. Our nation's educational system still

operates on Bobbit's Industrial Model, with children progressing through the system and exiting as finished college and career ready products, containing a certain set of standards-based skills. Each year the system provides a required set of skills for children to master to progress to the next stage, building a continuum upon the previously learned skills. The CCSS provide a more nationalized standardization for the process (Shannon, 2013). The integral workings of a factory to design and produce a product are used as a metaphor for describing the influence of the many levels of the educational "or factory" system on the enacted literacy curriculum during the ELA CCSS implementation.

In the following sections I explain how the implementation of the ELA CCSS into literacy instruction was influenced by the State (commercially owned factory), the County (factory management), the grade level teams (assembly line stations), and the individual teachers (end of line assemblers).

The Factory: State's Influence

I refer to the State as a commercially owned factory because the State CCSS is "owned" by many stakeholders, and it is the stakeholders who have the power to decide on the products made within the factory (in this case the standards and skills taught within the State). The most obvious and notable influence of the State on the teachers' literacy instruction was its decision to adopt the CCSS (products) and the PARCC assessments (testing of product specifications). If the State had not adopted these standards, then the literacy curriculum would not have changed. Additionally, the State's adoption of the PARCC changed how assessments were designed and implemented. A discussion of CCSS assessment influence on planning and instruction was a theme throughout the data.

DOE units (model prototypes). The State Department of Education constructed quarterly units of instruction to serve as models for teachers within the State. Ms. Gabe and Ms. McCree both described these four nine-week unit lessons as somewhat scripted. Each unit focused on specific ELA objectives across the reading and writing blocks. For example, if in the reading block one discussed the author's purpose to be "to persuade," then in the writing block the objective would be to teach "persuasive writing." The descriptions of State units were nearly identical across grades. Each unit had a main text that was to be used throughout the quarter. All standards in the unit could be taught through the use of this text. In addition to the main text, other supplemental texts adjusted or extended readings to support the standards. Websites and videos were also listed as resources for instruction of the listed standards. The State provided so many resources for instructional planning that Ms. McCree described it as "more than you would even need" and that she would never have been able to fit all of the resources into her planning and instruction.

Neither teacher chose to follow directly the State's scripted model lessons. Ms. McCree described the lessons as "laid out" in such detail that they directed how many days, and how many minutes of each day, the materials should be used. The units also recommended specific vocabulary to use in connection to the texts. Ms. McCree explained that the units provided specific vocabulary words for use in planning instruction because these were "words we expect to see again, applying these vocabulary words and using them in their papers. And knowing and using them correctly." The lessons from the State may not have contained literal scripts for teachers to read while conducting lessons, but they did provide the materials, the activities, the exact time

frames for use, and the specific vocabulary for teaching and requirements for student writing.

Ms. McCree claimed that her grade level team decided to pick and choose from the State's unit lessons and corresponding materials and modify as necessary. She said it would be impossible to fit all of the DOE plans into the quarter. They initially chose from these lessons and materials because as a grade level they were anxious about implementing the CCSS correctly.

We didn't have to use that unit. We just happened to like it. And we all said at this point we needed a crutch. This is so new to us. I'm sorry but we are not all about someone feeding us that, but at this point we felt like we had to. (interview 2)

In the final interview, Ms. McCree expressed feelings of discomfort about the use of prepackaged lessons, but uncertainty of teaching the new standards motivated her to use these lessons in whole or in part.

I think we have all been so nervous that we have just tried to get through it. I am not one, I am not a scripted person. So taking this State based lesson that somebody else made is not something I enjoy doing. It is nothing I want to do. And even, even with that, I pick and choose. Which none of us are like that, but we felt the need to be so we were hitting it. (interview 4)

After the second quarter, Ms. McCree and the other second grade teachers felt more comfortable with their knowledge of the standards, required student products, and planning for ELA instruction. They were satisfied with their students' County quarterly assessment scores and became even more selective of the State lessons and materials while beginning to incorporate new and previously used lessons into their planning for ELA instruction:

You know moving forward, we are not really using those units. We picked and chose what we liked and what worked for us and what was available book wise. And then we just went by the rubric and taught it that way. (interview 4)

Meanwhile, from the beginning of the school year, Ms. Gabe was more likely to use her own plans (not from State units) in literacy planning, and include some select pieces of the State's unit plans and resources as supplements. The summer before school started she looked at the State units for literacy instruction and purchased all of the texts and related materials for the first unit. After only a few weeks of following plans from the units, she decided to use the units as supplemental and not a framework for her lessons.

This quarter the big writing standard is persuasive [writing]. Okay so in the State units, they gave some great book suggestions like *Arthur's Pet Business* and *I Wanna Iguana*. But they are four and half weeks' worth of lessons. You know literature connections. Everything. That all tie into those books. So I am probably going to use those books to help me with persuasive writing. Now am I going to stand up in front of my class for four and a half weeks and teach *Arthur's Pet Business*? You know a full week everything with it? Probably not. I will use it to help, you know, as a good model for a persuasive and I probably might do a little problem and solution, character, setting. Every day I will probably take a little piece of it, but I am not going to, you know, give my kids a worksheet on every single part of it. No. (interview 3)

While the State DOE unit plans were never fully implemented into either teacher's planning, the plans and preselected materials were evident in each teacher's planned instruction to varying degrees throughout the year. Ms. Gabe and Ms. McCree both reported that they felt that different grade levels seemed to have differing levels of commitment to the State unit plans, just as they agreed that second grade relied on the units more than first grade. The influence of State created units altered the ways in which the CCSS were implemented by altering the ways the teachers planned from the previous years.

Process Simulation: State standards influence process for planning. The State's chosen standards not only influenced *what* teachers planned for literacy instruction, it also changed *how* teachers planned their literacy block structure. The ELA mini-lessons were important structural elements to planning and instruction. These ELA mini-lessons consisted of introducing and modeling an ELA standard objective at the beginning of both reading and writing periods, and were followed by student practice in independent activities.

Mini-lessons became more important to both teachers. Ms. Gabe was familiar with using mini-lessons to work on desired skills, but with the increase in skills required in the ELA standards, she planned for more mini-lessons each day than in the past. She said:

In the in past I probably would have just taught lessons. Like lessons on "a, an, and the." But you know every time we are reading a book and we find an "a, an, and the" we point it out. We write it on the board. We talk about the rule. It is a lot more experienced based learning with the kids now because a little lesson is not going to do it. (interview 2)

Alternately, Ms. McCree was not as accustomed to planning for frequent mini-lessons and was not sure how to restructure her time to accommodate two 15-minute mini-lessons within her hour-long literacy block. Previously she planned for a small whole group lesson, small group instruction based on strategy or reading level, and specific activities to work with children who were struggling with specific concepts. After implementation she planned daily whole group mini-lessons for both reading and writing.

Now what is happening is that now we are doing these mini-lessons that we are calling that our Common Core time, and you see me do that. Take fifteen to twenty minutes to hit something that meets common core standards and then I go into reading groups where I am still hitting, hence

the little you know scavenger hunt. You know, we are trying to find things that are Common Core. (interview 4)

Product inspection: State standards influence informal assessments. Tiger Creek was one of many schools in the State that adapted and created formative assessments to match the new State standards. Teachers were revamping their previous assessment practices to mimic summative assessments like the State adopted PARCC. This included modifying old assessments and creating new ways of assessing the ELA CCSS both formally and informally. While each teacher commented about having to rewrite questions from past assessments and modify more formal assessment practices to match PARCC formatting, they also described a change in how they informally assessed students to monitor their progress with the new standards.

The most common formative assessment used in both classrooms was the partner component to Daily 5, called CAFE. CAFE stands for Comprehension, Accuracy, Fluency and Expanding Vocabulary and was developed to promote student comprehension. These four areas were adapted so that they linked to the ELA standards. CAFE was used to work with individual students on their reading and writing.

Ms. Gabe used CAFE strategies with children as she pulled them aside to read her a text or their own writing in one-on-one conferences. She matched the child to a strategy and then modeled it with the child before encouraging the child to use the strategy as s/he read individually. While Ms. McCree permitted me to browse her CAFE binder in which she kept strategy sheets for each child based on their instructional needs, I never saw her implement these strategies or work with individual children during the literacy block.

The ways in which the two teachers planned to informally assess student mastery of each standard frequent changes as they added new means for assessment. Ms. Gabe and Ms. McCree created standard checklists. They planned to assess children on the multiple ELA standards through observation as well as through children's formal written assessments. These informal assessments included the list of standards the State had named as the focus standards for the nine week quarter running down the left hand side of the paper and the children's names across the top of the sheet. The teachers put check marks in the corresponding grid and made notes of the activities in which the child showed mastery of the skill. Ms. Gabe described their thinking behind this new informal assessment process to monitor mastery of the standards,

There is so much that you have to assess. I feel like we are trying, we are trying to overcome that. I mean now I've got these checklists. We are getting smarter with it. Now we have developed these little checklists that I am using during my reading groups. So see like today I was checking off if they could make connections and I put the standards in them. So like when it comes down to, I don't necessarily have, I have some more observations. So I don't necessarily have to have everything pencil paper. (interview 3)

Ms. McCree moved to this system after attempting report cards for the first quarter. She planned to have at least five to six opportunities to observe every standard during her small group time to be able to create grades for the quarterly report cards in addition to written assessments.

While State standards influence teacher planning for structure, lessons, and formative assessments, the County's adaption of the State standards and assessment rubrics have a much larger influence on the content of the teachers' planning.

Factory Management: County's Influence

I refer to the County as factory management because it was up to the individual counties to see to the State's (factory's) implementation of CCSS (product) design. Like factory management, the County saw to the education, or training, of employees, and needed resources for ELA instruction. The County played a vital role in the implementation of the State's adoption of the CCSS by providing needed information about the standards, specific mandates for standards implementation, and additional requirements to "tailor the plans" to local standards.

Product training: County's "roll out" of the standards. Ms. McCree described the County as an affluent one that sought to be "a leader" in the state. She predicted that because the County administrators decided to implement the CCSS across all content areas at once, other counties in the State would be watching to see if they succeeded and using what they did as a model. The "roll out" of the standards began a year before the CCSS were to be officially implemented. In 2011 principals across the county were asked to send two representatives for ELA and Math CCSS trainings to represent the primary and intermediate grades. Thus four teachers considered respected leaders in their schools were chosen from Tiger Creek. Ms. Gabe was one of the two K-2 literacy representatives and Ms. McCree was one of the two K-2 math representatives. These representatives were expected to attend the two-year County training of the Common Core and bring information back to their respective schools to train the faculty and staff. The school's literacy support specialist also attended Common Core trainings at the county and state level. The principal referred to the school's literacy specialist as the "literacy guru" whose job it was to attend trainings and then provide support for all the grade levels as

well as teach a few hours each day. All other teachers attended after school training sessions from their four CCSS representatives who attended County training, attended cross county grade level trainings for teacher in-service, and had the opportunity to attend scheduled CCSS focused seminars by County. They could also blog CCSS discussions and questions on the County's Safari Montage online system.

Ms. Gabe and Ms. McCree began attending trainings in 2011 and were given access to the County's version of the CCSS. They both claimed that seeing the standards before the official implementation gave them a head start on preparing to change their curriculum. Ms. Gabe confided, "I feel fortunate that I've been through all of this training because I feel more prepared but I think about the average teacher who hasn't had those opportunities (and) how difficult that would be." Ms. McCree expressed the same sentiment but also recognized the added pressure put upon selected school representatives. She stated, "you are expected to come back and redeliver it to everybody that they know what they are doing. Because you are teaching them and you are not so sure that you are understanding.... That's a lot of pressure." (interview 3)

The County hired Steven Ventura to provide teachers training on how to implement the CCSS. Steven Ventura, former elementary, middle, and high school teacher, as well as administrator and superintendent, is now a Senior Professional Associate for the Leadership and Learning Center who travels across country training school systems on CCSS implementation (<http://www.leadandlearn.com/about-us/steve-ventura>). The Leadership and Learning Center is a division of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Ventura's role in CCSS training is to help educators identify essential questions within Common Core State Standards and create and succeed in making assessments for

the new standards. The end goal is to help teachers implement standards appropriately to achieve success on local and State assessments. Ms. Gabe described the training,

He, (Steven Ventura) gave us a big overview of what it [CCSS] is. And we kind of talked about it. So that happened first. Then, I would go back every two months last year. It was quite a long process, we were given the standards... and we prioritized them. We created our power standards from that. (interview 2)

Ms. Gabe and Ms. McCree defined powering the County standards as a way of putting the standards in a hierarchical order with one broad overarching standard encompassing smaller standards to help teachers understand how to structure their planning. Ms. Gabe defined power standards as.

What you feel like is the most important thing for the children to learn. It is kind of your umbrella standard, so underneath that power standard there might be other standards that will fit within it. It is the higher, the more rigorous standards that you feel like are necessary in that grade for them learn. So we found what we believe as our power standards. Then we had giant chart paper. Um, chart paper and all the grade levels wrote their power standards and then we looked at how that aligned with all the grade levels to make sure that nothing was missed. So if it was missed one year then it was going to be hit in second grade and so forth. (interview 2)

Team training: Collaborative “unwrapping” of the standards. After the County and selected teacher representatives powered the standards and created the essential questions that would guide instruction, they then took this back to their individual schools and helped teachers “unwrap” the standards. Unwrapping involved looking at the power standards and essential questions and understanding how the other standards fit inside the power standards and how they would be implemented into instruction together based on the County’s mapping of these standards. Each school had professional development before and after school sessions to practice this unwrapping by and across grade levels. Administration helped to focus these trainings by having teachers ask, “What is this

standard? What does it mean? What will it mean for our students? What will we be asking them to produce?” Then the County provided opportunities for grade levels across schools to unwrap and learn together during professional development days. The principal described this process,

We have, out the 20 elementary schools, we are clustered into groups. So we have 5 other schools that are part of our team. And you know what we've done is offer teachers to, whether it be offer teachers after school, and some during the school day as well, we are saying we are all doing the same thing. Let's get together. Let's talk about it. We don't want to recreate the wheel. Instead of six great minds let's have 30 great minds who are first great teachers who have all areas of expertise all different parts ELA whether it is phonics reading strategies—all of those. And building our county as a whole, each school is also doing these pieces but really sharing the wealth among schools. (administrative interview)

To develop a shared understanding of the standards with other teachers in the same grade level was a strategy used by the County to help teachers feel that they were “all in this together.” While appreciated, Ms. Gabe and Ms. McCree found it was the school level planning, leadership teams, and County online communication that were the most helpful forms of collaboration.

Product and employee evaluations: County assessment and teacher planning. The Learning and Leadership Center also provided the selected teachers with assessment manuals and provided professional development instructing teachers on how to create student assessments. One teacher per grade level was sent to the common formative assessment training the County sponsored. Both of the teachers participating in this study were selected as grade level representatives. Ms. Gabe described the training process,

We were taught how to create rigorous common assessments. So we have a book that we were given. Kind of a manual with some guidelines and we went through and we created assessments, just sample assessments just to

kind of make sure we were meeting differing criteria. There are a lot of criteria with assessments that have changed. (interview 2)

Assessments, even at the school level, needed to reflect the CCSS and the upcoming PARCC. The principal shared her excitement that they were no longer testing children in the typical multiple choice format, but allowing for fill-in-the-blank and short-answer responses. The Leadership and Learning Center provided the County representatives with examples of PARCC questions and the new do's and don'ts of assessment writing. Ms. McCree said bringing the new ways to assess back to the school and training teachers how to rewrite their tests was more complex than she originally thought.

They trained us how to write a test question. So they said don't re-invent the wheel, take the ones that we've had and tweak them. We had trouble rewriting a test, going wow this is harder than we thought. These people use negatives. People do things they are not supposed to do, so they are telling us. (interview 2)

Each teacher at the school level was provided a data binder with information about making assessments and using assessment data to help drive instruction. But teachers did not rely on their own assessments for data. The County created an "assessment team" of selected teachers from each grade level to create formative assessments. Ms. Gabe was asked by the County to participate on the County's first grade assessment team. Ms. McCree was not on the County assessment team and expressed some frustrations at how often times the second grade assessments did not follow the assessment rules that were provided by the training and that teachers were asked to follow when creating their own assessments.

I observed children taking a County practice reading assessment a County writing assessment in first grade. The first grade practice test was read to three groups. The highest group had the directions for each section read aloud to them by the teacher and

then completed each section independently. The middle and lower level ability groups had the section directions read to them and questions from each section read to them. The questions were read aloud due to the high number of children with IEP's or who were in the RtI process. They did not have the test passages read aloud. Ms. Gabe read to the highest and lowest groups and the instructional assistant read to the mid-level group. I noted during the County reading assessment that there were instances in which the instructional assistant would reread the questions and alter them slightly. For example the test item read, "When you read the title of this story, what does it make you wonder?" and the instructional assistant reread it as, "When you read the title of this story, what do you predict?"

In second grade I observed two practice reading assessments meant to prepare students for the County assessment. Ms. McCree went through each section of the practice test explaining the directions and explaining how to go about answering the questions. During the test she informed children where they needed to be looking to find answers, sometimes pointing to specific paragraphs. In the second practice test she went through each question with the group, asking them how to answer it and discussing the correct responses.

These observations made me question the fidelity of giving the County assessments. Was there a set protocol for giving the assessment? Were these known to all staff? How was the protocol provided to the staff? I asked these questions of Ms. Gabe since she is on the County assessment team. She responded that each assessment has a teacher guide for giving the test and that there are webinars and models posted online.

The teacher guide informed those who gave the test what questions were acceptable to ask. She said that these materials were all available for every grade level.

The County also created an impromptu CCSS assessment for second and third grade students to “see how implementation of the standards was going.” Teachers were informed about this CCSS assessment and its purpose two weeks before the test was given. Ms. McCree commented that this surprise assessment made her very nervous. She asked what the data were for and who would see it. She was told that it was for the County to see how successful the students were at ELA standards mastery and to see what areas needed to be strengthened. She was told no one other than the teachers, principals, and County officials would see it. It was not for the parents or the State. The data from this County assessment had significant effects on Ms. McCree’s grade level planning.

The County assessments, in all their many formats, had a large impact on teacher planning and instruction in the literacy block. The County required quarterly assessments along with the additional CCSS assessment for second and third graders, and the reading and writing rubrics for each grade level. I found that these assessments led to teachers not only fulfilling County reading or writing assessments, but they also spent much time planning preparation activities for upcoming County assessments.

“Up to code”: Quarterly assessment preparation. In first grade, five of nine observations included instruction periods containing more than a quarter hour in length in which Ms. Gabe was involved in administering a County assessment or having students complete practice County assessments. In Ms. Gabe’s classroom the entire week prior to

the writing exam was planned as a practice assessment week. Ms. Gabe informed me during my observation that she had planned the week to be an exact replica of how the County assessment would go the following week. She showed me County assessment plans and then her plans for the week. They were identical save for the required text. I also noted that Ms. Gabe spent more than one class period reviewing assessments with children. The week after the second quarter reading assessment, I observed an entire reading block which consisted of nothing but a mini lesson in which Ms. Gabe said, “We are going to talk about the best way to answer the questions,” and went through the first section of the County assessment walking them through the process of how to reach the correct responses. The large group then broke into smaller groups in which the teacher and instructional assistant worked on helping children go back and correctly answer questions they missed on the County assessment.

In second grade, four of nine observations involved Ms. McCree administering a County assessment or assessment that mimicked that of the County. Two entire reading periods in Ms. McCree’s classroom were observed to be whole group lessons on test prep the weeks before the actual assessments. Ms. McCree gave me copies of the practice assessments and the upcoming County quarterly assessment; they were nearly identical.

County quarterly assessments were influential on teacher literacy planning and instruction. Yet the County supplied rubrics for writing, speaking and listening, and other ELA standards seemed to have an influence on the daily lessons, instruction, and student products.

Monitoring Specs: County rubrics and teacher planning. The County made the decisions to implement all the standards in one school year, additionally modifying some of the State standard requirements by making them higher in rigor. Thus first grade students in this county face expectations higher than the State's CCSS, a fact which did not go unnoticed by the teachers. Ms. Gabe described the increase in rigor to the adapted County first grade standards, "In this county we are the only ones that are, well that I know of, maybe somebody else, but we have added 'independently read' to all of the standards." Regardless of type (informational or literature), children must be able to meet the standards on an independently read text. The County used the Fountas and Pinnell (2008; www.heinemann.com/fountasandpinnell/BAS2_overview.aspx) leveling system, so the appropriate Fountas and Pinnell level for each grade was the requirement for all County assessments.

Often the increase in rigor cannot be seen in the actual County standard itself, but in the County-created assessment rubrics. On more than one occasion the teachers shared with me a requirement for student mastery which I looked up in the State and County standards but was unable to discover the origins. When each teacher was asked which ELA standard stated this requirement, the County rubric was displayed. An example of rubric specific requirements not stated within a standard is that of the essential questions for first grade. Second grade ELA standards specifically state the essential "W questions" are to be asked, but the first grade standards do not. I noted in observations that children in first grade were filling out "W question" graphic organizers and answering these specific questions in small group. I asked Ms. Gabe if her grade level team decided those were the essential questions to be asked for first grade, and she responded that the County

had decided for them based on the second grade requirements. That is why one may see them listed as rubric requirements for first grade but not on the State ELA standards.

Both Ms. Gabe and Ms. McCree relied heavily upon the County rubrics for planning. Ms. McCree said that her second grade team used the rubrics in planning “to the point of obsession.” When asked about how she planned for her ELA block, Ms. McCree replied “like this” and put the rubric in front of her and mimicked looking from paper to paper saying “okay, check, check” to make sure that she had covered everything in the rubric in her plans. She also stated that when conducting parent conferences she did so with the rubric in hand.

Ms. Gabe often pulled out her rubric during observations and showed me the rubric requirement she was meeting in the lesson I was observing. She knew I often tried to match what I was seeing with the corresponding standard, and instead of looking at the standards she focused on the rubrics for how the County dictated that mastery of the standards would be assessed. Ms. Gabe became critical of the use of rubrics to plan instruction and assess every standard every quarter to supply a grade for every area on the County report cards. She said that “assessing all the standards all the time” was just too much. It was overwhelming for both her and the students, specifically due to the quantity and complexity of the language standards that required mastery of language and conventions of writing. She shared her frustrations concerning the rubrics for language assessment,

I actually talked to our County coordinator about this yesterday and I said this needs to change on our rubric next year. I feel like it needs to be more piece by piece by piece. Maybe by the end of the year. Maybe let's introduce a little bit as we go, and by the end of the year let's do the last

part of it and if they don't get it, they don't get it. Cause next year it is going to be there too. And I feel like we are throwing all that language at them and there is nothing happening. They are just not getting it. Because it is too much. It is just too big. (interview 4)

Though the County provided quarterly assessments and rubrics for daily grading, the teachers were told that when providing a grade for the students they should not average the students' scores. Like Ms. Gabe and Ms. McCree, teachers needed alternative ways of assessing student mastery of skills. At the end of the quarter as teachers filled out report cards, both said they were informed by the County to "go with their gut" on student mastery for report cards. They each shared this with me individually during a different interview cycle and laughed out loud as they said it. They did not feel that the parents of the community, who had high expectations for their children and the school, would be satisfied with a "go with your gut" reporting system. They relied on averages from rubrics, mastery checklists, and other pencil and paper assessments.

Tech support: County infrastructure supports planning. The County supplied Safari Montage as a digital media management and distribution system (Evans, 2012). This enabled access to County assessments, teacher documents, webinars, and blogs. Teachers could preview the assessments and directions for administering them. Teachers could upload documents such as teaching materials, lessons, assessments, and digital resources. Ms. Gabe was on the literacy assessment team, which was built to restructure formative assessments to match ELA CCSS, and stated the practice assessments were uploaded to the website as well. Teachers could also blog together about relevant topics within the County. These blogs allowed for discussion between classroom teachers and County officials. Ms. McCree said that many teachers blogged questions to the County and the County responded often in the blog or via mass emails if it pertained to the

County as a whole. She stated that the County's replies were not always timely, and some questions did not receive responses, but as a whole there was a response to teacher inquiries.

The resources for support declined in number as the year progressed. Ms. McCree, who said that initially there were more resources than one would needed, commented on the reduction of planning and assessment support documents for implementing ELA CCSS from the County since the beginning of the school year. Most materials were supplied originally by the selected teacher representatives, but as the teachers went back to their regular positions during the school year, the amount of support dwindled since the teachers' roles were voluntary and unsupported by school compensation hours or pay.

There were times during the implementation year in which the County's system and infrastructure could not support administrative and faculty needs. Assessment and quarterly pacing guides were not always released online on the predicted dates. In one instance when the pacing guides for the quarterly planning were two weeks late in arriving, Ms. McCree stated her grade level team "just went on our gut instinct and what we knew how to do. And that's just what we did. We just kind of went on the fly." She said they thought it was possible since they still had access to the County quarterly rubrics. Other problems include the infrastructure's lack of strength to support such a large number of frequent users. Ms. McCree described the issues she had experienced with the infrastructure failure,

They have had some glitches, you know some glitches from Safari and we have had some trouble pulling it up. Because all of our things are in one area and one place to go to and that, that's Safari. We have been trained to pull it up and how to play list it through the County. And what I think

happens is that it just explodes with so many people pulling it up, and it just, it crashes. (interview 3)

Though the teachers relied heavily on County support for instructional planning, materials, and assessments, the County was not their only means of planning support. School level support, mainly at the team grade level, also influenced the teachers' literacy instruction planning and how they implemented the ELA CCSS into their instruction. The next section describes the role that grade level team played in individual teacher planning for literacy instruction.

The Assembly Line: Grade Level Team Influence

I refer to the grade level teams as the individual assembly lines within the factory because, like an assembly line, each team is responsible for bringing together the pieces of a product to construct a finished piece that is itself part of a greater product. Like the assembly line, each grade level had to understand their role in assembling literacy instruction from a specified set of requirements given by the County and State. This section discusses the similarities and differences across grade levels.

Refining production: Across grade level influences. One similarity between Ms. Gabe and Ms. McCree included the school's literacy support specialist support and professional development. The grade level teams met with her once monthly to address grade level specific ELA CCSS information she received from the County, State, and other professional development the school provided her. Ms. McCree and Ms. Gabe accredited several planned activities and literacy resources to the literacy specialist and agreed with the principal that their school specialist was an invaluable resource who worked hard to help support individual grade levels.

Other similarities across grade levels were the shared functions of the teams. These functions included deciding what the standards asked of the students, focusing literacy plans around the power standards and essential questions, and sharing ideas and resources to help children master these standards. Grade levels met a minimum of once per week, twice if needed, to discuss the ELA standards and plan literacy instruction. During this time the teams would “break apart” the rubrics and County standards to make sure everyone had a common understanding of the objectives and what the children were going to need to demonstrate or produce. This time often included creating written assessments as “check in” points to monitor mastery before the end of quarter County assessments. Both grade levels created their own assessments but would also often use assessments found on the County’s site or on other recommended sites that support the CCSS and adapt them to fit the needs of their school and grade level.

While individual grade levels shared similar functions, differences in the roles and level of decision making for planning existed between the two grades. Ms. Gabe and Ms. McCree experienced multiple differences in their grade level experiences and the influence participation in grade level planning had on their literacy instruction planning.

Station one: First grade team. The first grade team planning can be described as group planning based on objectives. Ms. Gabe shared,

We do plan as a team because as you can see there’s so much that really has to be incorporated...I’m the grade level chairperson so I will usually put out there ‘this week let’s talk about reading informational standards on main idea.’ And some people will bring a resource and we’ll collaborate ideas and how we are teaching that in our classroom. ... a big part of it is discussing with colleagues and getting ideas and feedback. And then really digging apart these rubrics and these standards. (interview 1)

While planning may be seen as a group effort, the first grade teachers still “pick and choose” from what others brought to the table. Teachers shared ideas and experiences, using each other as sounding boards and as sources of information. They developed ideas for instruction together, but they also maintained individual planning for their specific classrooms. When asked about how she planned for small groups during reading and writing instruction she commented,

I come up with those on my own... There are resources that I do have available to me. I have them provided by my literacy coach. As a team, um but the planning, and we do sometimes share resources. You know, for example, if I check out a set of leveled readers and I will come up with the questions and things I am doing with them, I will share them with people around me and my team. So, but we don't really plan it together.
(interview 3)

The first grade team focused on understanding of the ELA standards and student products during their team planning time. They also spent time constructing small formative assessments as checkpoints for student comprehension. Ms. Gabe said that the team has created mini-assessments for each and every standard, not just the power standards. While these mini-assessments were informative, it was also time consuming for both teachers to plan and students to take assessments, as Ms. Gabe stated, there were now more ELA standards in first grade. Ms. Gabe did not believe it was practical to assess large numbers of standards individually and practice she did not plan to continue the practice.

I come from a team of a lot of teachers who are used to having an assessment for every single standard. It is just not working. And it is, it's just killing us. We just can't do that. It is too much. I can't. I've been fighting it all year, and I don't want to do it. (interview 4)

Station two: Second grade team. Ms. McCree's second grade team met at least once a week, but Ms. McCree stated, "Every Tuesday we get together to really plan but we always meet at least one more time, and on the second day we may do assessments."

She described second grade planning as "divide and conquer."

What we do to divide and conquer is that we will split up the planning. So there's 5 of us, well there's 6 doing ELA, some people work on ELA that week. The other person works on math. The other person works on science. And then we kind of all get together and share what we've come up with. But we all sit with the rubric in front of us and make sure that we're hitting it all. (interview 1)

Many decisions about planning literacy instruction and activities were made at the grade level. They shared all of their plans and provided each other copies of everything by using a shared drive.

Like the first grade team, the second grade team worked to create assessments that provided feedback on student mastery. I observed these assessments most often during the weeks prior to County quarterly assessments. The second grade team found a website called Readworks.org that supported ELA standards and provided assessments similar to that of the County quarterly assessments. Readworks.org is a non-profit organization that offers units, lessons, and assessments that aligned to grade level specific State-based common core standards. A document analysis of a Readworks' assessment given during a second grade observation compared to a second grade County quarterly assessment revealed that they were similar in length, structure, question types, and text genre. Ms. McCree said the group's time was better spent finding new assessments or adapting assessment resources instead of creating new ones, "We put so many hours in (re)writing assessments and making sure not only are they matching [County requirements], because

again they are not all matching. So we take it upon ourselves maybe not to reinvent the wheel.”

Ms. McCree noted that there were many benefits to team planning for literacy instruction within grade level. Teachers were able to create a shared understanding of the CCSS and the objectives required. Students received similar instruction and assessment data was used for planning. The team planned a special CCSS-focused, 45-minute Response to Intervention (RtI) time in the afternoons that was not part of the literacy block that I observed but is part of the school’s structured schedule. The school adapted this 45-minute block of time so that every grade had RtI time for students to leave the classroom for special services while those who remained received extra support in areas of difficulty. Ms. Gabe did not discuss her RtI time. However, in second grade, Ms. McCree reported that each teacher taught a different lesson for specific standards in which the second grade students had performed poorly according to quarterly or practice assessments. Children who had performed poorly on particular standards were sent to a teacher’s classroom where they would participate in a specific lesson focused on that/those standards. The County provided a “surprise” CCSS implementation check on student mastery of the standards. When the second grade team received the scores to the CCSS assessment and compared students and classrooms based on proficiency of standards, they discovered that each class (as a whole) had similar strengths and areas of needed growth. Though Ms. McCree and the other second grade teachers were pleasantly surprised at the rate of student success, they restructured their RtI time completely to be different than the first two-thirds of the year because of this one time County “surprise” CCSS assessment. Each second grade teacher would take an area in which the grade

level as a whole needed improvement and created lessons for that daily forty-five minute block. Each teacher's class focused on different standards and children would again be grouped based on need as seen in this one piece of data.

End of Line Assembler: Classroom Level

I refer to the individual teachers and their classrooms as the end of line assemblers because it is the assembler's job to make sure that all the individual pieces have come together for that particular station's assembly line. The end of line assembler is also responsible for making sure that products pass basic inspection, similar to how teachers are responsible for making sure children are able to pass assessments that show they are ready to be promoted to the next grade (assembly unit).

Station one assembler: Ms. Gabe. While Ms. Gabe worked with the first-grade team to create mini-lessons, assessments, and activities for literacy, most of the planning, resources, and activities for her small group instruction (consisting of both "leveled" and "strategy" instructional groups) were a result of her individual planning. Ms. Gabe used County, grade-level, and informal assessments to help her plan for her small groups. Ms. Gabe kept a data binder of formative assessments for her class that ranged from running records to informal checklists for standards. She said that how often she used running records depended on each child. Even though she was only required to assess students three times a year, she might assess those who were behind grade level once or twice a month. She used the CAFE program to create one-on-one opportunities for children to read to her and to discuss the comprehension strategy that she assigns. She monitored

their progress and decided if they should move on to another strategy. She described the process for planning her strategy-based groups,

So while I'm pulling my either guided reading groups or I also do strategy groups based on, the c-, the standards showed based on my comprehension kids, accuracy kids, kids that need fluency work, or kids that I'm really working on expanding their vocabulary. So I identified their need, and I do pull strategy groups and at other groups it is leveled guided reading groups based on their Fountas and Pinnell level. (interview 1)

She also used a checklist to determine what standards students have already mastered.

Using these multiple means of diagnostic tools, she assigned children with specific needs to temporary strategy groups. For these groups she created activities designed to help students with their targeted objectives from the ELA standards.

Ms. Gabe's differentiation of strategies for individuals and strategies for groups of children is just one of the ways in which she differentiated based on classroom needs. Her class had more students with IEP's or who are involved in the RtI process beyond Tier 1 than the other first grade classes. Therefore, she believed she created more opportunities in her planning for instruction and assessment to differentiate than others in her grade level. She said,

That assessment (the quarterly assessment) was technically designed to be a whole group assessment. You know I shouldn't have to be doing it in little ones (small groups), but I happen to have a unique situation in here with my class that I can't do that. (interview 4)

However, she could only do this for her ELA block, and for a small period of time in her Math block. She did not have instructional assistants during science and social studies. She asked the principal if the early primary grades could do away with these science and social studies time periods and incorporate those topics directly into a longer ELA block when there are instructional assistants. Ms. Gabe explained her thinking,

It is all inter-related. I mean it really is. I mean I feel like they need support with the scientific method. They need support with that. That is more difficult sometimes than the things we are requiring of them in ELA. (interview 3)

Without instructional assistants during social studies and science, Ms. Gabe had difficulty meeting the required IEPs. To accommodate for this need, Ms. Gabe planned for her assistants to work with specific students on social studies and science readings and assessments during her ELA block.

Furthermore, Ms. Gabe accommodated her students by administering formal assessments in small groups. She broke the class into groups and provided different levels of support for the assessment depending on her students' needs depending on individual IEP, 504, and RtI plans. She also believed that the assessments were too lengthy for her students, especially earlier in the year. Ms. Gabe believed that children at the beginning of first grade are not prepared to sit through a multipage exam. She commented that she would break her assessments apart to give it in pieces over time as they cover content in a way that made sense to her students. By the end of the year she predicted most children should be able to take the assessment as designed in one sitting, especially if they did not have an IEP or were involved in RtI.

Ms. Gabe planned these accommodations based on her knowledge of what she considered effective teaching (giving children experience with authentic texts) and her knowledge of her students' needs. Her thinking was influenced by her efforts to improve her planning and instruction. She created her own professional development through attending seminars beyond those offered by the County, such as the Metro-RESA

Common Core training, a tour and seminar at the Ron Clark Academy in Atlanta, and summer professional development reading of her choice.

Station two assembler: Ms. McCree's classroom planning. Despite Ms. McCree's feelings of uniformity in her planning and instruction, I noted areas of planning that involved Ms. McCree's individual choices for her instruction and her students. Most of Ms. McCree's classroom planning was driven by the standards and child assessment data. She stated,

We [our grade level team] used these rubrics to obsession to make sure that we were following it. I think in looking at interim tests that we gave, I feel like I've gotten the standards to some degree. And I need to go over it (child CCSS assessment data) with a fine tooth and figure it out.
(interview 4)

She also collected data from practice assessments and County ELA assessments which helped her understand on which standards to focus. She targeted these focus areas for mini-lesson instruction. She thought that while planning lessons to meet her class needs was effective, doing two mini-lessons daily took away from her ability to work with individual students and small groups of students who needed specific skills as evidenced from the assessment data. She stated that mini-lessons might be effective but not everyone needed the same mini-lesson. She relied on the grade level's RtI time to meet the objectives for individuals. She planned to spend the upcoming summer finding ways to structure time to allow for strategy groups and implementing lessons that were effective in previous years,

Over the summer maybe I will dive into maybe some of the things that I didn't touch to pull in for next year to hit the weak points... The things that I think are more engaging for the kids, maybe than I did. So I have to learn how to put it all together. ... I just really need to have a small group where I can have way more intense work with them, and I just feel like I

did not do that this year. And I don't know if it is a failure as much as I just couldn't fit it. And I am definitely going to fit it in next year.
(interview 4)

Small group time was the most differentiated. I only observed Ms. McCree work with students in their leveled reading groups which were assigned based on the children's Fountas and Pinnell assessed reading levels. Ms. McCree used different levels of texts for these groups, but also used different levels of questioning. She used a laminated list of questions divided in complexity based on reading level. She stated,

These are the reading levels and it tells you what to ask. So it gives you ideas of what they might need at this level. What level questions fit them...I know some teachers who don't use them at all and I know some of us who use them all the time. You might just like it. I just like it. It kind of keeps me honest. (interview 3)

Ms. McCree relied on the leveled question sheet in addition to other resource cards that ask questions that are specific to the ELA standards. She used them regularly with her leveled reading groups to consistently and methodically create opportunities for children to think about texts in ways that related to the skills the standards writers expect children to produce.

Many of the resources and activities the children worked on individually and in pairs during their Daily 5 time were found by Ms. McCree online. Several activities she credited to Pinterest. On multiple occasions I observed her telling students to put aside the familiar word work or writing activities and try the new activities she had planned. The children were sometimes hesitant to try new activities they did not understand very well. This use of artifacts will be discussed in detail in Chapter Six.

Ms. McCree's literacy lessons were teacher directed but flexible. She maintained focus on the ELA standards, even while adapting lessons during implementation to

increase student engagement. If the events of the day did not allow her to work through her plans, she would immediately adapt the plan for the day and spontaneously create activities linked to ELA standards to fit within the time frame allotted. For example, one day there were tornado warnings and the children were in the hall for over half an hour that morning, completely disrupting her literacy block. When they returned to the classroom, Ms. McCree adapted the mini-lesson on character trait and *Daily 5* time into a full lesson related to the day's ELA standards that involved students practicing the skills individually. On another day the children were struggling with vocabulary words, and Ms. McCree stopped her lesson to cover the County's list of vocabulary words for the quarter and talk about incorporating these in their writing.

Ms. McCree's beliefs about learning through fun engagement with literacy activities and texts influenced her planning and instruction. She spent time finding and selecting resources online for the literacy block. She took advantage of the County's online blogs and resources to help plan the literacy block. In addition she sought out materials and lessons found on Pinterest and other online forums. I observed the incorporation of these activities in the *Daily 5*. She also purchased several resource manuals and lesson packets designed to meet the specific grade-level objectives in the ELA CCSS. She used these frequently in her leveled reading and writing groups.

Product Report: Summary

While each teacher was ultimately responsible for crafting lessons that provide effective instructional practice that resulted in the student mastery of the ELA standards, many factors from both in and outside of the classroom influenced literacy planning and

ELA implementation. State and local educational policies had a large influence over the literacy curriculum. The teachers adapted their literacy planning and instruction to match the ELA CCSS and additional modifications and assessments of the ELA standards provided by the County. The County provided teacher led professional development opportunities for implementing the CCSS, and the teachers worked collaboratively in the County and schools at grade level to correctly implement the new ELA standards into their instruction. While the State and County provided ELA CCSS instructional units and materials and the pressure to use these plans may vary from community to community, it was ultimately up to the teachers to make judicious use of these resources and plans.

Ms. Gabe and Ms. McCree each planned to meet the needs of students based on their knowledge and beliefs about children's literacy learning, effective instruction, and their perceptions of the standards. Both incorporated materials and activities from the State and County as well as those they sought individually. Both created their own professional learning opportunities. The results of their individual approaches to planning and teaching based on the same curriculum are seen within their day-to-day instruction. The next chapter discusses the enacted curriculum created by each teacher as seen through literacy practices and activities anchored within the ELA CCSS.

CHAPTER 6

INSTRUCTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN LITERACY CURRICULUM

To address the third research question concerning instructional opportunities teachers offered to students in the literacy curriculum, I conducted a series of nine classroom observations over three months. I examined literacy instruction using grounded theory's constant comparison analysis, which revealed three main categories: (1) teacher practices, (2) ELA activities, and (3) instructional scripts. These three categories are interrelated as teacher practices are made up of patterns of ELA activities and instructional scripts, and instructional scripts are patterns of interaction and discourse seen across activities and practices. I analyzed narrative samples from each of these three categories using suggested procedures from Yamagata-Lynch's (2010) CHAT analysis. Using a CHAT perspective, I examined the instructional opportunities being offered to students in the literacy curriculum. CHAT provides a lens for examining "what" instructional opportunities are being offered, "how" are teachers offering them, and "to whom" are they being offered. In this chapter, I describe the three main categories and discuss the CHAT analysis.

Teacher Practices

I define a *teacher practice* as a collection of repeated events that (a) were (or became) a cultural standard of behaving or doing and (b) are related to one or more ELA standard(s). The definition is based in cultural-historical framework and informed by Clifford's (1986) description of how modes of action become cultural norms. Practices are, therefore, activities that have become an accepted routine of a group that has expanded beyond the originally set boundaries of an individual activity (Engeström,

1999). Asking key questions of the text when reading with a group, a peer, or to self, a practice connected to first grade's ELACC1RL1 and second grade's ELACC2RL, is an example of an activity that has transcended to an expansive ELA practice.

This section describes the observed instructional practices in Ms. Gabe's first grade and Ms. McCree's second grade literacy instruction blocks. These instructional practices are activities that had expanded into daily routines. Ms. Gabe and Ms. McCree's instruction practices remained focused on ELA standard objectives. Classroom practices were similar in structure and object due to State, County, and school influences, yet the instructional approaches to these practices differed by teacher.

In the following sections, I compare and contrast common ELA-standards-based practices that were routine in both classrooms: 1) providing ELA mini-lessons, 2) incorporating non-fiction texts, 3) pairing standards across content areas, 4) use of graphic organizers, 5) inferring with texts, and 6) assessing student mastery.

The ELA Mini-Lesson

ELA mini-lessons were routine instructional activities that Ms. Gabe and Ms. McCree practiced twice daily as part of the reading and writing block. These mini-lessons provided an opportunity for the teacher to introduce the day's objective, processes that they wished the children to follow, and desired student products. Mini-lessons most often started with teacher discussion about the objective of standard, modeling of expected behavior for this standard, and then whole group discussion of the expected behavior with possible student practice.

Ms. Gabe's mini-lessons. Ms. Gabe reliably provided ELA mini-lessons that were approximately 15 minutes long and allowed for teacher-student and student-student

discussions about the ELA objective(s). Ms. Gabe explicitly modeled a process and asked for student feedback and discussion before asking the students to carry out the same process independently or in partners. The following vignette is an example of a typical mini-lesson for the writing block. The mini-lesson was intended to improve the students understanding of how a preplanning tool (Four Square organizer) should be used to help craft an organized opinion piece of writing. The mini-lesson covered the following first grade *Production and Distribution of Writing* standards:

- ELACC1W1: Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or the name of the book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply a reason for the opinion, and provide some sense of closure).
- ELACC1W5: With guidance and support from adults, focus on a topic, respond to questions and suggestions from peers, and add details to strengthen writing as needed.
- ELACC1W5a: May include oral or written prewriting (graphic organizers).

The children were gathered on the front carpet as Ms. Gabe sat in a small chair with her Four Square organizer to her left and her written opinion piece written on large pad paper on her right.

Ms. Gabe (GB): I am going to read the story and I want you to listen.

Robert: Ms, Gabe you spelled house wrong.

GB: Yes, I probably have a lot of errors. This is my rough draft, my sloppy copy. So there will be mistakes and I will need to edit. But today I am focused on writing my story. Tomorrow we will talk about edits.

GB reads her paper.

Children shout out the errors after she reads.

GB: Wait! I want to hear my smilies first! What did you like about my story?

She calls on three of four children who share something they like about her words or what she said. GB asks them if she followed her story plan from her Four Square. They all agree she did.

GB: I see you noticed some errors too. Turn to a partner and share anything you need to edit.

Children all immediately start sharing with their partners. GB congratulates them on their ideas and good partner talk behaviors. She restates some of the errors they mentioned, such as: punctuation, spelling, and lack of transition words. The children return to their seats and work on their graphic organizers. When it is complete they transition to writing their opinion piece. (observation 3)

The following day I observed Ms. Gabe lead a mini-lesson on how to edit and revise, then provide time for students to proofread and edit their opinion pieces with a peer. Ms. Gabe often used mini-lessons to model the process and products related to ELA standards and then provided time for students to work collaboratively on these standards.

Ms. McCree's Mini-Lessons. Ms. McCree's mini-lessons most often involved teacher directed instruction and student evaluation, or teacher direction, student individual practice, and teacher evaluation. During my nine observations I did not see Ms. McCree construct or share an originally written story. Instead Ms. McCree scaffolded ELA standards during mini-lessons by outlining authors' use language and story elements within children's picture books, focusing more on product than process. Ms. McCree's mini-lessons often took place with the children in their seats ready for individual practice of the mini-lesson ELA objective, possibly because there were 27 students in her class. She displayed available digitally texts on the Smartboard while children remained in their seats. During read alouds of hard-copy texts, the children would squeeze on to the carpet for listening and discussion. The following vignette (observation 3) demonstrates a mini-lesson in which Ms. McCree used an author's work to help improve students' descriptive writing and is somewhat comparable to Ms. Gabe's mini-lesson related to the *Production and Distribution of Writing* standards.

Ms. McCree (MC): I am going to do a lesson to make your writing better. I picked the author of Junie B. Jones, Barbara Park, to read. I picked her because she is really good at helping you see something with her words, without using a picture. I am going to read a sentence. I want you to close your eyes and see what she tells us in her sentence.

MC reads: “She reached into a little bag and pulled out a sparkling crown with jewels.”

MC: I want you to draw what you saw when I read that sentence.

Reads it twice more.

MC: Good, some of you are drawing just what I said. I see crowns. I see hands grabbing, reaching. I don’t see jewels.

Allison: I made jewels on mine!

MC gives the students a short sentence with only one or two details.

MC asks students if it is easy to draw.

Tara: No, because it doesn’t make sense because the girl woke up and saw the tree and you are not sleeping right in front of the tree, so it didn’t make sense to draw it.

MC: Well, did I give enough details for you to draw the picture?

Class: No.

MC gives a few sentences about waking up Christmas morning and going down stairs to see the dog tearing into the packages under the Christmas tree and smelling coffee in the air.

They draw what they visualize based on what they hear.

MC tells them the point is to give the reader enough details that they can have a good picture in their heads and to help them connect to experiences from their lives so that they will want to keep reading what you wrote. If you don’t give enough details they cannot connect to it and see it. Then they may not want to read it.

Similar to Ms. Gabe, Ms. McCree used a text as a model for writing. She also clearly stated that the objective of the mini-lesson was to add detail to writing so that it was engaging to the reader. This mini-lesson covered the following ELA standards:

- ELACC2W3: Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.
- ELACC2W5: With guidance and support from adults and peers, focus on a topic and strengthen writing as needed by revising and editing.

Ms. McCree's mini-lessons focused teacher–student interactions and teacher evaluation of student responses to questions within lesson.

I observed both teachers teaching mini-lessons that were framed by the ELA standards in both reading and writing. While activities within each teacher's practice may have differing use of artifacts and differing roles for students and rules for participation, the ELA standards were consistently the central object for teacher instruction and student products. The next section discusses how Ms. Gabe and Ms. McCree implemented new non-fiction standards into their instructional practices.

Incorporating non-fiction texts. Each teacher was aware of what they called the “non-fiction push” of informational texts into the curriculum. Ms. Gabe and Ms. McCree explained that in the past they frequently incorporated non-fiction text into their instruction but not as purposefully or methodically as with the new informational standards. Both teachers made a practice of increasing the incorporation of non-fiction texts weekly, if not daily, into their instruction.

Ms. Gabe's incorporation of non-fiction. Ms. Gabe was observed including informational text into either her whole group or small group readings on a daily basis. She used each as an independent text not related to texts used in other parts of the literacy lessons. Each time a text was read Ms. Gabe asked if it was fiction or non-fiction and what was the author's purpose for writing the text as seen in the following vignette (observation 7) of a level based small group lesson:

Ms. Gabe presents the book *Animals in Hiding* and asks the group why they think it has that title.

Jenna: They don't wanna die?

Jacob: Maybe when predators come they wanna find a color they can camouflage with.

GB: Do you know what that means? Camouflage (She asks Alex and Jenna.)

They were both silent, so she tells them it is about being near a color that is close to their own color and blending in so that other animals can't find them.

GB: What kind of book do you think this is? Fiction or non-fiction?

Group: Nonfiction.

GB: Why do you say that?

Alex: It has real pictures.

GB: Jenna, what's the difference between fiction and nonfiction besides that it has real photographs and fiction has drawings?

GB: Photographs are true and pictures are make believe.

GB: Alex can you give another reason?

Alex: These are real nonfiction pictures.

GB: Okay. Yes, why might the author be writing this nonfiction?

Ms. Gabe then helped Alex and Jenna to connect the author's purpose in writing an informational text to qualities of an informational text and other attributes of non-fiction. They then reviewed if these informational qualities were part of the book they were reading.

The standards most frequently incorporated into Ms. Gabe's literacy instruction for non-fiction texts were:

- ELACC1RI2: Identify the main topic and retell key details of a text
- ELACC1RI1: Ask and answer questions about key details in a text
- ELACC1RI6: Distinguish between information provided by pictures or other illustrations and information provided by the words in a text.

Overall, Ms. Gabe used non-fiction texts in class more frequently for both whole and small group than Ms. McCree. Her use of non-fiction was not to support or counter the fiction, but merely another genre of books in literacy studies.

Ms. McCree's incorporation of non-fiction. Ms. McCree frequently used paired fiction and non-fiction text to cover ELA objectives. For example with the second grade standards,

- ELACC2RL1: Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
- ELACC2RI2: Identify the main topic of a multi-paragraph text as well as the focus of specific paragraphs within the text.

Ms. McCree created instructional opportunities for children to find the main idea of a page, a paragraph, or a full text across genres. She frequently used a fiction and an informational piece to cover ELACC2RI9: Compare and contrast the most important points presented by two texts on the same topic. The two texts, while different in genre, would frequently convey the same type of information. This purposeful pairing addressed multiple literature and informational reading standards at once. In fact, four of the nine reading instruction observations involved using a fiction and non-fiction texts within the same lesson on the same day to address multiple standards. In two of the four times I observed this specific pairing practice, she used a fiction and information piece about winter holidays across the world, and for the last two paired fiction and non-fiction texts to show they could be used to achieve the same author's purpose. For example, Ms. McCree used a fictional poem about pandas written from the panda's point of view and an informational excerpt from a magazine to show how authors can provide information about a subject matter in both genres.

Whether non-fiction was incorporated independently from other texts or in conjunction with another text, non-fiction instructional practices were observed frequently and with more regularity as reported by the teachers. This increase of nonfiction in instruction provides children constant exposure to fiction and non-fiction texts with opportunities to explore, discuss, and model both structure both genres.

Same objectives across reading and writing. Among the similarities between Ms. Gabe and Ms. McCree, the two teacher's literacy blocks seemed to follow similar topics in reading and writing simultaneously. This was most likely because both were following the County's quarterly pacing guide which required all grades to address topics with similar standards. For example, the second quarter was about persuasive or opinion texts. So each grade focused their reading and writing periods on those standards. Ms. Gabe commented that "what I work on in reading I work on in writing." This was true of Ms. McCree as well. Therefore part of their instructional practice was to have one power standard direct their entire literacy block for nine weeks. An example of a power standard is:

- ELACC1W1: Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or the name of the book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply a reason for the opinion, and provide some sense of closure.

Coordination of reading and writing objectives was most often accomplished by having students write a response to literature.

Ms. Gabe's reading/writing overlap. Ms. Gabe frequently created writing activities that were related to a text read to the whole class. For example, Ms. Gabe read the book *I Wanna Iguana* by Karen Kaufman Orloff (2004). She focused on the author's use of facts and opinions to persuade the parents in the story to buy an iguana. In response to this book, Ms. Gabe asked the children what pet they believed the main character of the book should have. During the week Ms. Gabe used books like *I Wanna Iguana* and *Arthur's Pet Business* to teach about persuasive writing and the use of facts and opinions to be supporting details to the main idea of what one wanted. Then the

children all wrote a letter to the child in the story *I Wanna Iguana* pretending to be one of his parents and trying to persuade him to choose another type of pet (Figure 7).

The children used the first grade Four Square graphic organizer (Figure 8) as modeled each week by Ms. Gabe, except for assessments, to meet the County rubric requirements (Figure 9) for an opinion piece.

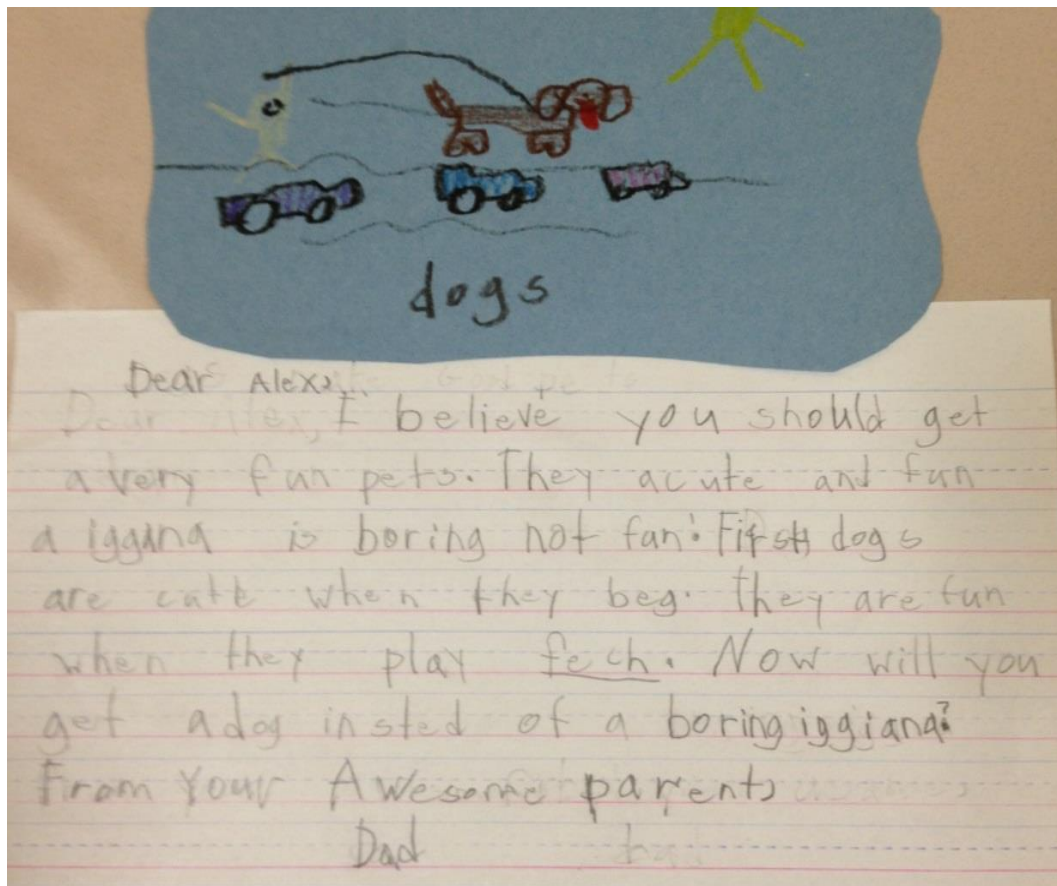


Figure 6. 1st Grade Persuasive Writing Sample

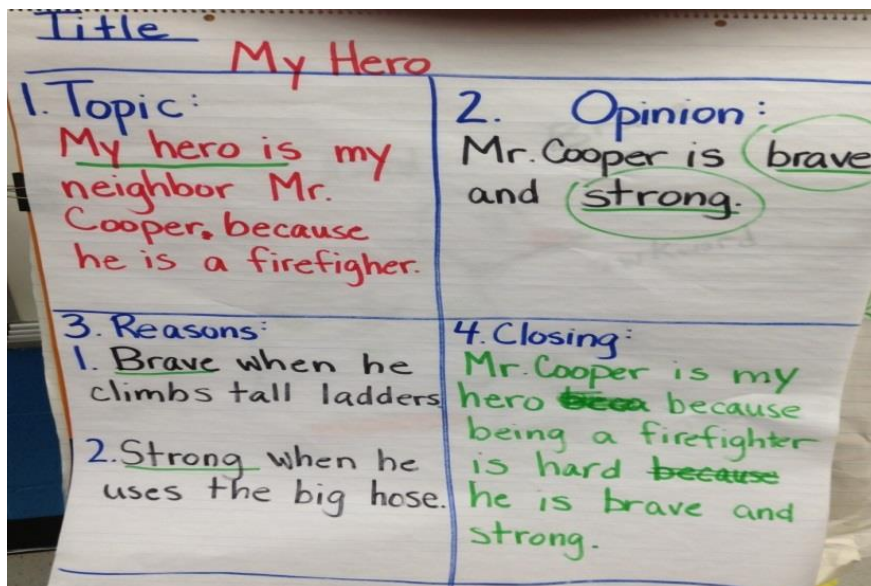


Figure 7. 1st Grade Teacher Four Square Model.

Writing				
Text Types and Purposes				
Standard	4	3	2	1
ELACC1W1: Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or the name of the book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply a reason for the opinion, and provide some sense of closure.	Writes opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or the name of the book they are writing about, states an opinion, supplies more than one reason for the opinion, and provides some sense of closure all of the time.	Writes opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or the name of the book they are writing about, states an opinion, supplies more than one reason for the opinion, and provides some sense of closure most of the time.	Writes opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or the name of the book they are writing about, states an opinion, supplies more than one reason for the opinion, and provides some sense of closure some of the time.	Writes opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or the name of the book they are writing about, states an opinion, supplies more than one reason for the opinion, and provides some sense of closure a limited amount of the time.
Production and Distribution of Writing				
ELACC1W5: With guidance and support from adults, focus on a topic, respond to questions and suggestions from peers, and add details to strengthen writing as needed. a. May include oral or written prewriting (graphic organizers).	Identify and focus on a topic; responds to questions and suggestions from peers; may include oral or pre-written graphic organizers. All of the time.	Identify and focus on a topic; responds to questions and suggestions from peers; may include oral or pre-written graphic organizers. Most of the time.	Identify and focus on a topic; responds to questions and suggestions from peers; may include oral or pre-written graphic organizers. Some of the time.	Identify and focus on a topic; responds to questions and suggestions from peers; may include oral or pre-written graphic organizers. A limited amount of the time.

Figure 8. 1st Grade Writing Rubric

Ms. McCree's reading/writing overlap. In second grade, Ms. McCree often used a variety of text types to teach a particular standard, offering multimodal opportunities to work with text. She gave her class persuasive texts such as magazine articles about why people should get more sleep, fiction pieces about why children should receive more recess time, and super bowl commercials with a persuasive qualities checklist. Like Ms. Gabe, Ms. McCree practiced using the power standard to teach smaller standards such as supporting the main idea of what you wanted with supporting details and facts about why you should have it.

Ms. McCree used the previous night's Super Bowl commercials as guiding texts for creating a persuasive piece. The children were very engaged and called out the name of the advertisement they wanted to see for the next commercial. Afterwards they picked on commercial to evaluate using a checklist (Figure 10).

Name _____ Date _____	
We are learning to be able to identify what makes an effective advert	
Name of product	Who would buy it?
How do they try to persuade you to buy it? Tick: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With pictures <input type="checkbox"/> With words <input type="checkbox"/> With music <input type="checkbox"/> With questions <input type="checkbox"/> With jokes <input type="checkbox"/> With catchphrases <input type="checkbox"/> With jingles <input type="checkbox"/> 	Do you think it is a good advert? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Why? _____
What words do they use to sell the product?	

Figure 9. 2nd Grade Persuasive Check List

In writing she had her children design a new type of candy and asked them to create an ad to try to sell their new candy. First the children did a “mock up” of the ad on regular paper and then after using the same checklist to evaluate, they created a large ad on construction paper as their final draft. These ads would be displayed in the hall like billboards. The children used the persuasive checklist as a tool to guide their own ad.

Pre-writing and the graphic organizer. Another example of an instructional ELA practice, the use of pre-writing tools was designed to help children organize their writing. Though the use of a pre-writing tool for writing is not a State CCSS, the County adapted the writing standard to create ELACC1W5.a: May include oral or written prewriting (graphic organizers). In addition to the County’s assessment rubrics stating that children may use a pre-writing tool for writing, the official quarterly County writing assessment required students to use a pre-writing tool.

The pre-writing and writing of one piece would take place across a week. The length of the children’s pre-writing varied by teacher, with first grade taking longer to work from pre-writing of a piece to the beginning of writing the piece. In either class, going through the entire writing process from pre-writing to final draft would take up to two weeks, but because this was such a time consuming process, each teacher stated only around three final drafts were required per a quarter. The types of pre-writing activities also varied across classrooms.

Ms. Gabe’s pre-writing practices. In all of the writing instruction I observed in first grade, I never saw the children create a piece of writing without first completing a graphic organizer. The graphic organizers were a requirement for the County writing assessment rubric (Figure 8). The Four Square graphic organizer was provided by the

County in LLC training for student use (See Figure 9). Regardless of the topic or genre they were writing, the children were familiar with the organizer through repeated use.

The children were so accustomed to using the Four Square graphic organizer before beginning to write a piece of any kind that once I observed their inability to even copy a sentence of their choice from the board down onto a blank sheet of journal paper without one. The children's reliance on a graphic organizer to begin the writing process is illustrated in the following vignette (observation 8).

After reading *Hey Little Ant*, Ms. Gabe (GB) asks the children who are sitting on the front carpet to go back to *their* seats without talking and pull out their writer's notebooks and open to the next clean page. She writes two sentences on the board "Yes, I would squish the ant." and "No, I would not squish the ant." She tells them to write the one down that they would choose.

A few children begin to shout out "What about our Four Square?" or "We don't have a Four Square yet."

Michael and a few other boys gets out of their chairs, Michael tells her that he can't write his story yet because he does not have the graphic organizer.

GB tells them to go sit down and tells the class they don't need one for this and they should just write down "Yes, I would squish the ant." or "No, I wouldn't squish the ant." They just need to choose the one they would do and write it down.

Nina asks GB how to spell squish but then sees it is on the board and copies it onto her paper. She then asks GB if she needs to write the reason she choose that option. GB tells her to wait a moment.

Erica gets up and asks GB if she needs to write the "because" part of her response. GB tells her not yet.

Isabella has already written the "because" statement on her paper after it says she would not squish the ant. Alley tells her that she was not supposed to write anything more, just copy one of the sentences on the board. Isabella erases back to the, "I would not squish the ant" and adds a period.

GB: Now give me two reasons on your paper that you would or would not squish the ant. Your own reasons. I want your own reasons you would or wouldn't. And do not say because he is nice or because he is little or cute. Give me some good reasons that you would or would not squish him.

Title: <u>Hey little Ant</u>	
1. Topic: I believe you should not squish the ant, little boy.	2. Opinion: I do not want to squish the ant because it is part of nature and I would not want him to squish me.
3. Reasons: 1. It is part of nature and you can't squish nature. How little boy? 2. If I were the ant and the ant was me I would not want him to squish me, would you?	4. Closing: I believe you should not squish the ant. Do you now want to squish him? I hope not.

Figure 10. 1st Grade Student Four Square Organizer

The children were supposed to copy one chosen sentence, but the majority of the class hesitated and questioned Ms. Gabe. The students seemed unsure about writing it down because it was not in their Four Square organizer. The next day the children transferred this information into their graphic organizers (Figure 11) and added a closing before writing the story. Thus, they had written the same pre-writing twice, simply coping ideas from one piece of paper to another.

In some instances the Four Square organizer did not fit well with the genre and writing requirements. I asked Ms. Gabe about the misfit and she informed me that she would pretend box two and three were just one extended box with the same objectives when grading and that she accommodated her use of assessing the children's use of the tool rather than adapting the tool itself. Box one requires the topic, box two requires the opinion, and box three requires reasons for the opinion, yet in this example one is able to see how the topic sentence, teacher provided, is the opinion, and the opinion box and reason box are both full of reasons for his opinion. This mismatch of formatting was confusing to the children who frequently asked for help. Other writing pieces fit better

with the organizer, such as the “My Hero” stories that had an opinion about someone being a hero, stated what personality trait made him/her heroic, and then gave supporting details for this opinion.

Ms. McCree’s pre-writing practices. In Ms. McCree’s class, her second graders were exposed to a variety of pre-writing tools and graphic organizers and were expected to plan for writing during weekly writing practice. Ms. McCree’s pre-writing tools depended on the type of text she wished her students to write. For example in the earlier description of creating persuasive ads the children’s pre-writing was to draw mock ups of their ad. For a piece of writing that required the children to tell about a friend, showing the reader the friend’s personality and character traits, Ms. McCree asked them to construct a t-chart in which they listed a trait on the left side and on the corresponding side of the chart they listed an action which demonstrated this trait.

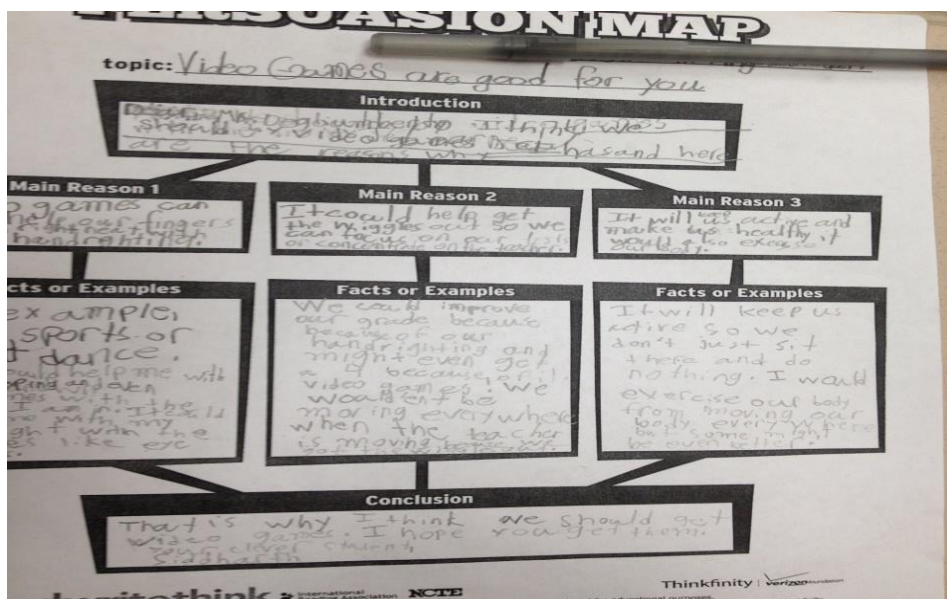


Figure 11. 2nd Grade Student Graphic Organizer

For a formal persuasive writing assignment Ms. McCree gave them a graphic organizer for persuasive writing to lay out a clear path of reasoning as to why the principal should allow video gaming as part of classroom instruction (Figure 12).

While Ms. Gabe used a familiar graphic organizer that was provided by the County for each writing assignment, Ms. McCree adapted her pre-writing tool based on the writing assignment. Children from both classes had the opportunity to think through their writing piece and create an outline before beginning to write their draft.

Making inferences. Under the heading *Integration of Knowledge and Ideas*, the following standards require students to make inferences about pictures and text:

- ELACC1RL7: Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.
- ELACC1RI7: Use illustrations and details in a text to describe its key ideas.
- ELACC2RL7: Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.

The teachers choose to approach these standards by creating an instructional practice that required the children to look at the title of a text, and the illustrations on the cover of the book if available, to predict what a book will be about. This was done both in whole group and small group settings in both classrooms. The teachers introduced the texts by reading aloud the title and showing subsequent illustrations of photos with the title. Then each teacher asked the children to predict what the book would be about and often asked them to infer from the book's cover whether the text was fiction or non-fiction. The following vignette (observation 4) of a second grade leveled reading group provides an example how they practiced making inferences.

Ms.McCree (MC): What is the title, Sam?

Sam names the title.

MC: Who is the author? Yes, Sam?

Sam names the author.

MC: The book is published by Yearly. Look at the front of the book, is this fiction or non-fiction?

The front of the book has a drawing of two boys standing next to each other in jeans and overalls. The oldest, or larger of the two boys, is giving the smaller one bunny ears. They are smiling.

Alicia says it is non-fiction.

MC asks Alicia what non-fiction is.

Alicia tells her that it means it is real. It is about someone's life.

MC: And you think this is non-fiction? Are you maybe mixed up?

Alicia: No, I think it is about the lives of these boys.

C: Okay, so you think this is a true story about these two people?

Bryce: I think it is a fiction because it is a made up story about these two boys.

The scene on the cover could very easily be something realistic-two brothers or friends taking a picture together. The only indication that it may be fiction is that it is drawn and not a photograph. The title is only one word: *Soup*.

MC asks the group to make a prediction about what the book will be about based on the cover.

Bryce and Sam make predictions about what they think the book is going to be about. The only thing in common is that it has two boys and there is soup in it. Otherwise the predictions are about selling soup or about traveling places to taste soup. Alicia does not predict. MC does not ask her to.

The vignette (above) demonstrates a common instructional practice of the teacher asking the student to make an inference and prediction about the book based on the title and an image. Often students' predictions were often inaccurate and vague, based on just the title.

In first grade, sometimes the teachers quickly showed the pictures inside the text to help inform their predictions, like in this leveled small group reading (observation 6):

The second group has three children and is reading *Super FireFighters*.

Ms. Gabe asks them to do a picture walk. They children quickly flip through the pages and close the book. Jenna says it is a fiction book.

There are cartoon alligators in yellow fire suits ring in a fire truck.

Jacob: I think this book is about alligators, but they do a really good job.

GB to Jenna: Why is it called *Super Firefighters*?

Jenna: (silence)

GB: Look at the title and the picture.

Jenna: Alligators are firefighters.

To build the children's inferring and prediction skills, during the group read Ms. Gabe frequently stopped to remark on the events of the story in relation to the children's predictions. She also stopped multiple times to discuss story elements while reading aloud. I did not observe Ms. McCree revisit the children's predictions during the group reading. Instead Ms. McCree consistently used her ELA standards cards provided by the school literacy specialist to stop and check the children's comprehension, doing so throughout the story in a question, respond, evaluate format. All children did not get to respond to these questions as she often covered multiple cards within two to three pages of text. Inferring about genre, setting, and character traits were always included in her selected cards for questioning. Inferring based on image and text was a practice rooted in the ELA standards both teachers shared.

Assessment practices. Assessment was a common theme throughout the data that appeared in teacher perception, teacher planning, and teacher instructional practices. Assessments played an important and time-consuming role in both teachers' literacy instruction. As noted in Chapter 4, half of my observations of each classroom involved some type of formal assessment. And the teachers constantly performed informal assessments. From the following vignettes one may see that each teacher provided instructional practices that relate to children building process skills for taking assessments. Though Ms. Gabe worked through the process after an assessment in whole group, small groups, and individually while Ms. McCree preferred to work through the

process as they took the exam as a whole group, one thing is clear, standards-based assessments held an influencing role over ELA instructional practices in both classrooms.

Ms. Gabe's assessment practices. In the first grade class, I observed students preparing for an assessment through activities that were designed to directly mimic the upcoming County assessments. Additionally, I saw the teacher guiding children through their latest formal literacy assessment and helping them work through the test questions that they missed to try to understand how to get the correct answer and learn more about the concept covered by that test item.

For example, in the following vignette taken from observation five, Ms. Gabe and her assistant examined a formal practice assessment with their students.

1st Grade ELA Quarter 3 Practice Assessment

Name: _____ Date: _____

Reading Literature and Language Part 1 (RL & L)

CCGPS	ELACC1RL3	ELACC1RL7
ELACC1RL1	ELACC1RL5 d	ELACC1L4 b, c

Bother Messy, Brother Neat

1. (IRL1) When you read the title **Bother Messy, Brother Neat**, what does it make you wonder? Write using complete sentences.

I wonder...

Bother Messy, Brother Neat Level H

Pablo was messy. He liked to draw whenever he could. Nico was neat. He liked to organize whenever he could.

When their sister Maria was born, the boys had to share a room. "I'm not sharing a room with that slob," Nico said. "How can I do it when everything is clean?" Pablo asked. "Find a way to work it out," their mother said.

"The closet is too clean out there," Pablo said. The closet was too dark at night so Pablo r

Figure 12. 1st Grade Practice Test

Ms. Gabe seats the children on the carpet and shows them the first page of the practice assessment they did yesterday. She tells them that they are going to talk about the best way to answer the questions. She says that when they go into small groups there are going to go over their answers and work on making correct responses to questions.

Ms. Gabe and the instructional assistant indicate to each other that a lot of work needs to be done. She begins the lesson with a think aloud series of questions to connect the students to her thoughts.

GB: When it says wonder, what is wonder? That is the same thing as what does the title tell you? What would the title let you predict? What does the part “write in whole sentences mean”? It means to write the whole idea. Not just part of it. So here I could write, “I wonder if one of the boys is messy and one is neat.” When you read a story without pictures you have to be careful when you read it. What are some strategies you could use to help you read it?

Janet: Clap it out to figure out the syllables.

Tyler: Stretch it out.

Angela: Chunk it out.

Zach: You can pause that part and read the rest and then come back and see.

GB: Yes you could skip that word and come back and see what makes sense.

Jenna: sound it out

GB: Yes, so you have lots of ways to figure out words. You have to read it carefully.

GB reads the next test question about why the title is called *Brother Neat Brother Messy*

Jacob: Because Nico is neat and Pablo is messy.

GB: And what are they to each other?

Jacob: Not friends, enemies.

GB: That’s true, but how do they know each other?

Jacob: They are brothers.

Ms. Gabe incorporates teaching practices that focused on helping the students to be successful on their literacy assessments. She carefully walks them through the assessment directions and scaffolded the process of how one would go about answering the assessment questions. She focused on how to pull information from the story to find the correct answers. Ms. Gabe also used this assessment-based practice to work with students individually as well as whole and small groups. The following vignette is an example of

her scaffolding a student's understanding of an ELA standard and assessment processes (observation 9).

Ms. Gabe has Janet, and bilingual student, come read to her. Janet is rereading a passage from a test. GB goes over the questions at the bottom with Janet.

GB: When you look for an answer in the passage you need to underline the answer in the text. Did you underline anything? No. Remember you have to show evidence from the reading. Why did you pick that answer?

Janet points to a part of the text.

GB: You have to find out what it is mostly about, what did they talk most about?

Janet: (silence)

GB: Narrow it down to what they talked about. Which one did they talk about (points to the answer options)?

Janet points to two.

GB: Good, now ask yourself, which one did it talk about the most? There are a lot details about what?

What are all the details about?

Janet points to the right answer.

Each child also received a monthly running record and beginning, mid-point, and endpoint Fountas and Pinnell assessments (2008). In between these more formal assessments Ms. Gabe had the children complete graphic organizers (for example, see Figure 14).

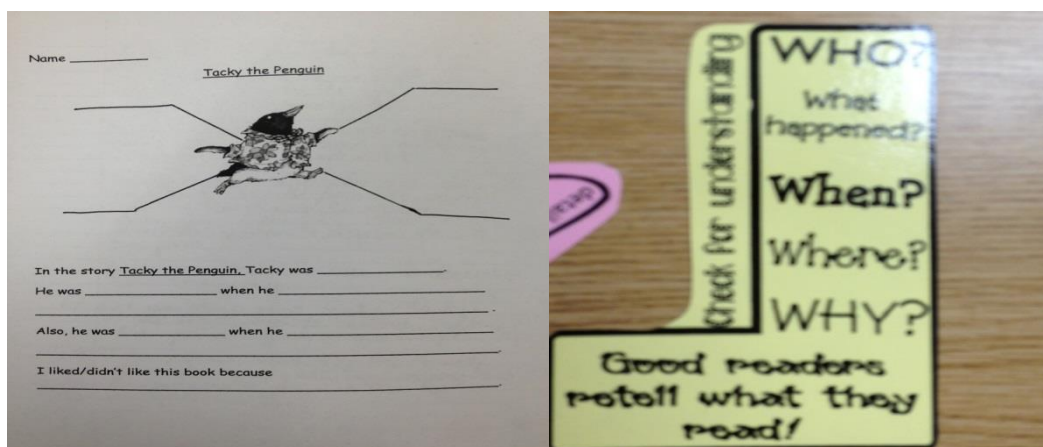


Figure 13. 1st Grade Daily Assessment Tools

Ms. McCree's assessment practices. Ms. McCree also created instructional practices that focused on assessment. Like Ms. Gabe, Ms. McCree routinely incorporated instructional activities that prepared the students for the County's quarterly literacy assessments. Ms. McCree also helped her students to understand just how one should answer the test items. Unlike Ms. Gabe, Ms. McCree did this during practice exams. She walked around the room during the exams monitoring children's answers. When she saw a child struggling to mark the correct answer she addressed the problem with the student and often began explaining the strategy for answering the question aloud to the whole class while all the children are working, whether they were on that question or not. The children then tried to quickly find the question to which she was referring and listened or wrote while she is speaking. She made announcements ranging from every 30 seconds to every two minutes, but no large chunks of time passed without her commenting aloud to the group. Since she did this continuously throughout practice test, the room was filled with the sound of children flipping pages back and forth. Ms. McCree claimed that she gave specific directions as to "how" to answer the questions, not what the answers are, but "how" to answer them. Below is excerpt from observation five that illustrates this assessment practice.

Ms. McCree talks aloud to the class often while they are silently working. She seems to be making comments about the work that she sees on children's papers. However children are on different parts of the test so when she addresses one child's work it may not be where the other children are working.

MC: You write the steps just like the pumpkin (previous assessment with information on pumpkins).

MC: Don't forget to look back in the story.

MC: She's (pointing to Laurel working on the test) writing complete sentences, writing a complete sentence is always a good idea.

MC: Write what you think busy as a bee means. You've heard that phrase and now you have read about bees. Why do you think people say busy as bees?

MC: Process of elimination, narrow it down.

MC: Don't forget the title! The last page wants the title.

MC: On number 5 it says "What is bees wax. What is it made from?"

That's two questions. So how many answers should you give?

Class: Two.

MC: (To Bryce) "Let me see this. What is this? Where are you getting number one? (She turns his paper to the first page to the section that corresponds to question number one, where he should be copying from, and points to it.)

Differences in teacher practices. While Ms. Gabe and Ms. McCree shared similar practices, their practices differed in several ways. One of the most notable differences in their teaching practices was their approach to literacy instruction. Both teachers incorporated approaches to learning in which interactions and activities were directed by the teachers, keeping instructional practices carefully aligned to the ELA standards. Yet artifact use, interactions and roles among participants, and rules for participation differed across classrooms. Objectives for instruction were similar, while teachers' pathways to each objective varied. I also perceived differences in the ways in which they offered student support in their instructional practices. Though the teachers covered the same over all ELA standards, each teacher accommodated and adapted instruction in different ways to support student mastery of these standards.

Approach to instruction. Ms. Gabe's instructional practices remained focused on the ELA standards but often included conversations and ideas prompted by the children, gradually connecting their thoughts back to the ELA standard at hand. Ms. McCree's instructional practices also focused on ELA standards but rarely veered from her objective for the conversation or activity, only briefly commenting on children's responses if she felt they were in line with her directed conversation. Ms. Gabe practiced

guided discussion which led to a gradual release of the responsibilities of the activities to the students allowing them to share ideas with partners, add information to her writing, and work independently or in groups with minimal teacher input but scaffolded support as needed. Most communication followed an Initiate-Respond-Follow-up pattern (IRF; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975), though children did sometimes self-initiate discussion. Whereas Ms. McCree's practices included teacher directed support throughout the activities, stopping the group as a whole often to provide new rules for the activity or things that she would like them to add. Other than read-to partner time, the children rarely worked together to discuss ideas or complete projects. All communication went from teacher to child back to teacher in an Initiate-Respond-Evaluate (IRE; Cazden, 1988) pattern unless the teacher removed herself from the activity to tend to other matters.

I refer to these as instructional practices because within the nine observations of each teacher's literacy instruction, the teachers' approaches to instruction were consistent across content and over time. The instructional scripts were consistent, with few observed counter examples of their described scripts. Therefore it was an instructional practice for Ms. Gabe to lead with direct instruction and gradually release (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983) with scaffolding as needed, and it was an instructional practice for Ms. McCree to lead with direct instruction, assign a task, and continue to direct the task largely through whole group scaffolding as the children worked independently.

Student support. In both classes students received support from their teachers, but the level and type of support varied by class. I define student support as any scaffolding or assistance from the teacher intended to help improve a student's understanding.

Largely Ms. Gabe's practice for support was creating small needs-based strategy groups that were composed of children who struggled with specific standards from the latest formal literacy assessments. These strategy groups were offered teacher support through planned discussion and activities. She furthered the support offered by transitioning to one-on-one support via student-teacher conferences. These were offered both sporadically as well as through planned sessions recorded in her lesson book. One observed example of this practice occurred in a small planned strategy group consisting of students who had not mastered "main idea and detail" on the last assessment. These children read a book together with the teacher, finding the main idea and supporting details on each page. They also performed an activity in which each took an unread page, read it silently, and then wrote the main idea and at least one supporting detail on a piece of paper to share with the group. Ms. Gabe noted during this small group lesson that Jenna was still struggling with this concept. She asked Jenna to stay and informed her that she was going to schedule a time for just the two of them to work together on main idea and detail the next day. She then recorded Jenna's name in her planner as tomorrow's student conference during the reading period.

Ms. Gabe additionally provided support during whole group time. During whole group lessons she led discussions by inviting student responses and explicitly verbalizing links between their thoughts and the lesson objectives. Ms. Gabe rarely evaluated and moved on or provided the correct answer. Ms. Gabe provided additional planned support by pairing specific students together to work on activities collaboratively. She said she found this extremely helpful for her students whose home language not English. She also

explained that she tried to pair students who had similar interests or cultural backgrounds (e.g. two children from India work together on a Diwali winter holiday project).

Ms. McCree had many more bilingual speakers in her classroom (almost three times as many), and her class was reading books of greater length and with higher level vocabulary; therefore, Ms. McCree spent more time supporting students' vocabulary knowledge. During reading instruction, Ms. McCree stopped often to highlight at least one to two words or phrases on every page and tell its meaning to the children. When children all had a copy of the text, Ms. McCree provided highlighters so that they could highlight key words and phrases as they read. She encouraged students to highlight words and phrases on their individual assessments as well; however, the children varied in their ability to use the highlighter, ranging from highlighting the whole text to highlighting only a few words. Texts were read aloud by the Ms. McCree or the children in whole group and small groups. She regularly questioned vocabulary and story events, providing the meaning and answers with the students as a group. If one child did not know the answer Ms. McCree sometimes called on one or two more children before stating the correct response. She also regularly provided the answer after the first response. For activities and assessments that were completed individually, she often walked children through each step of an activity from beginning to end asking questioning students about the process they were to follow. She evaluated and provided feedback to their responses. Ms. McCree had an established practice of taking individual support to the whole group level, making comments to individuals and then announcing the suggestion to the class as a whole.

When meeting with small groups, Ms. McCree's practice for student support was to read questions from ELA cards. These laminated cards, supplied by the school's literacy support specialist, provided questions that addressed each ELA standard for literature and informational texts. As previously mentioned in chapter 4, Ms. McCree believed that reading from these cards helped her to focus her questioning on the standards and "keep her honest." Discussion during small group was usually framed by these cards and focused on children's ability to infer with texts, predict, and identify story elements such as setting and plot. Discussions followed an IRE cycle, with Ms. McCree providing support for the ELA standard concepts and directing the students' thinking towards a correct answer. In the vignette below (observation one), Ms. McCree asked a question from the ELA standards question cards, allowed for one, or on occasion two, children to respond, and then moved to the next question.

They have a star that lights up when you push it. It is a predicting star that they push when they share a "bright idea." She calls him Peter Predictor. This is the only time I observe her using Peter. She asks if anyone wants to make a prediction about the book based on the title.

Ms. McCree: We need to make predictions.

Simon tries to tell her what he thinks will happen but as he speaks she talks over him to two boys at another table telling them that she wants them to use a quieter voice.

Simon looks at her and waits. She did not hear his prediction,

Simon pushes the star anyway.

MC: Who else has a prediction?

Laurel: About a bully who tries to hurt this boy? (points to the boy on the cover)

MC: Don't look at the words (she has not read title to the group yet). Who thinks this is fiction?

They all raise their hands.

During small group time she also tried to provide whole group support to those working individually. She would often get the leveled reading group started and then call out to

the class, or leave the group, to offer a student support while the small group managed itself. The only time that I did not observe this practice of shifting frequently from small group to whole group support was during her meetings with her highest level reading group. Only once in the three meetings I observed did she call out or leave the group. During all other reading groups Ms. McCree stopped her interactions with the group 5-14 times to go support a child's engagement or understanding with an activity that was outside of the small group. Ms. McCree's attention to supporting students in both small group and her whole group simultaneously is recorded in the following vignette from observation nine.

The children have been working in a small leveled reading group on a scavenger hunt to find different types of parts of speech. Rue has sat quietly throughout the group, not speaking to teacher or peers. He has copied the few examples the group has done together, but the ones he must do on his own sit blank.

Ms. McCree: Rue, have you found one? Look on p. 21. (Rue has written the word "nervously" on his page).

MC tells Larry he has already done three, and "that's great." MC calls out above the heads of her group to children working on the laptops.

MC: Rue, you just wrote the word. You need to write the whole sentence. MC originally told the children to record the word, not the sentence. Rue has not gone back to change his answer after MC corrected the directions several minutes after beginning the activity. MC talks over the group across the room to Bryce telling him she likes his pink headphones.

MC: Rue do you not understand the directions? What word do you have?

Rue: Nervously.

MC: Can you not find the sentence? Well find a new one on p. 21.

This is the page where the rest of the group found and copied adverbs after she found it for them and pointed out the page number.

MC talks to Eric and Savannah about whether or not two things make a collective noun. She tells them yes because it does not define how large the collection would have to be, and maybe a pair is big enough.

MC tells a girl at another table she is doing a good job on her independent activity. She tells Eric and Savannah to find a good verb that the class should learn.

MC tells a girl at another table she needs to focus.

MC asks Michael if he is doing okay with his.

Rue still only has the word nervously on his paper.

Several minutes later, MC helps Rue find his page and copy the sentence.

As seen in this example, Ms. McCree attempted to keep students in the whole group engaged while providing support to the small group, and giving individual support to a student who is struggling to begin in the small group. Ms. McCree most often provided individual support to children who had started their work but who had reached a barrier in their work, or offered to evaluate the work children who were finished and provide suggestions. For children who had nothing written or had not started on the activity Ms. McCree generally waited until they had something to discuss or used another child's writing as a model and returned to the child later. These children would sometimes sit for up to 15 minutes before starting, as seen with Rue.

Another way that Ms. McCree supported her students through her instructional practices was her use of multimodal literacies. This was especially helpful to her large number of dual language learners and her students with IEP's. Children were regularly exposed to a variety texts that are presented through traditional texts such as books articles and magazines, video texts, popular culture as text (super bowl commercials, bill board posters, board game design, and package design), and games as text (video and board games). Ms. Gabe also provided video, graphic organizers, and images as text, but not as a consistent part of her instructional practice.

Summary of teacher practices. The instructional practices of both teachers have a strong foundation in the ELA standards. It was common practice to use the same standard objective across the literacy block in both their reading and their writing instruction. Frequent instruction focusing on assessment of literacy standards was also a practice seen across classrooms. While County requirements such as standards and assessments

influenced much of teacher practices, teachers differed in the instructional practices which involve the use of activities, scripts, and artifacts to meet student needs (see Table 6).

Table 6.

Comparison of Instructional Practices

Ms. Gabe's Literacy Instruction Practice Descriptors	Ms. McCree's Literacy Instruction Practice Descriptors
ELA standards focus	ELA standards focus
ELA mini-lessons	ELA mini-lessons
Using same objectives in reading and writing	Using same objectives in reading and writing
Assessment focused	Assessment focused
Daily 5 and CAFE activities	Daily 5 and CAFE activities
Asking for evidence	Asking for evidence
Predicting and inferring	Predicting and inferring
Leveled/Strategy reading groups	Leveled reading groups
High levels of teacher support through scaffolding and gradual release of responsibilities in activities	High levels of ongoing teacher support in directing process and questioning concepts throughout activity
Open-ended and IRF questioning styles	IRE questioning style
Highly structured use of pre-writing	Adaptive use of pre-tools

tools	Multimodal ways of creating text
Model writing process frequently	genres
Collaborative work among students	Focus on vocabulary comprehension
Conferencing with individual students	

The following section of this chapter presents examples and discussion about specific activities viewed within these practices to better illustrate the instruction provided in the enacted literacy curriculum.

ELA Activities

I define an *ELA activity* as an event in which the children performed a task with the final objective of the task being a product or process related to one or more ELA standard(s). Since this study did not provide for individual interviews of students' experiences, the analysis for their participation in the activity is limited to what was observed, whereas teacher participation in the activity is augmented by information teacher interviews and is, therefore, the focus of this section.

The previous section on teachers' instructional practices provided examples of types of literacy activities that occurred so frequently they became habit. For example, teacher read alouds, mini-lesson activities, and assessment activities occurred with such regularity that they became cultural norms of instructional practice. I include description of activities with and without teacher interaction; however all activities I report about were part of the teacher's planned instruction. Children could have participated in an activity alone, with peers, or with a teacher.

To better communicate the instructional opportunities provided by the teachers during activities, this section highlights a few specific literacy activities from the aforementioned literacy instruction practices and represents them through Engeström's third generation CHAT model. The discussion of the findings from the activity analysis focuses on the teacher within the activity, though student participation within the activity was also analyzed. These models represent:

- a) Subject(s) - individuals involved in the activity
- b) Object(s) - goals or desired outcomes from activity
- c) Artifacts - concrete and conceptual tools for mediation
- d) Division of labor/Role of subject(s) - the specific responsibilities of the subject(s) within activity
- e) Rules - the spoken and none spoken expectations for subject(s) within activity; cultural norms or governing properties within activity
- f) Community - environments that influences the activity

The following activities were selected from narratives within observation notes.

Activities considered characteristic of each classroom were described as ELA instructional practices.

Teacher-led Reading Activities

The two teachers engaged in both small group and whole group reading activities daily. I provide an example of each activity. Ms. Gabe's activity is a small group reading activity with a group of students specifically selected to work on an ELA standard with which they are experiencing difficulties. In Ms. McCree's activity she addresses a challenging standard through a whole group read aloud mini-lesson. These activities were

specifically chosen because they portray the described practices of each teacher in the previous section, and are accurate representation of activities within each classroom.

Ms. Gabe's small group reading activity. The following activity from observation six is an example of teacher ELA standards-based leveled reading groups in which Ms. Gabe scaffolded instruction to reach the lesson's objectives.

Ms. Gabe is working with a small leveled reading group. She has the rest of the group read silently, as she listens to Mark and then Jason quietly read aloud to her one at a time. When Jason is reading, she stops him to tell him that when he sees a question mark he is supposed to change his voice to make it sound like it is a question. Jason rereads the sentence with a higher voice and change of pitch at the end.

GB stops the group's reading and asks what happened in the story.

GB: Nina?

Nina: He wanted doom.

GB: And what did doom mean?

Nina: Scary, to scare people.

GB: Is it working?

Jason: No, no one is scared.

GB: When he dropped the (indiscernible) down between the two girls they just stepped on it instead of being afraid. On page 16 there is a picture.

What is the difference between what is in the picture and the words?

Sanjay: There is no words to go with the picture in the book.

GB: I don't know what that means.

Jason: No captions.

GB: Oh, no captions? What kinds of books usually have captions with the pictures?

Sanjay: Non-fiction.

GB: Right, there may be no captions because this is fiction.

Nina: I think Harry is upset.

GB: I was about to ask how the character is feeling. What from the book shows he is upset?

Nina: Because in the words it says, "Cute! You think it is cute?" and you can see his face in the picture. He is upset.

GB: Great. We have to stop here, but I would like you to keep reading either to self or with a partner. And before you go I would like you to make a prediction. Will Harry scare anybody?

A few children say yes and a few say no.

GB: Well I am going to give you sticky note, and I want you to write down your prediction.

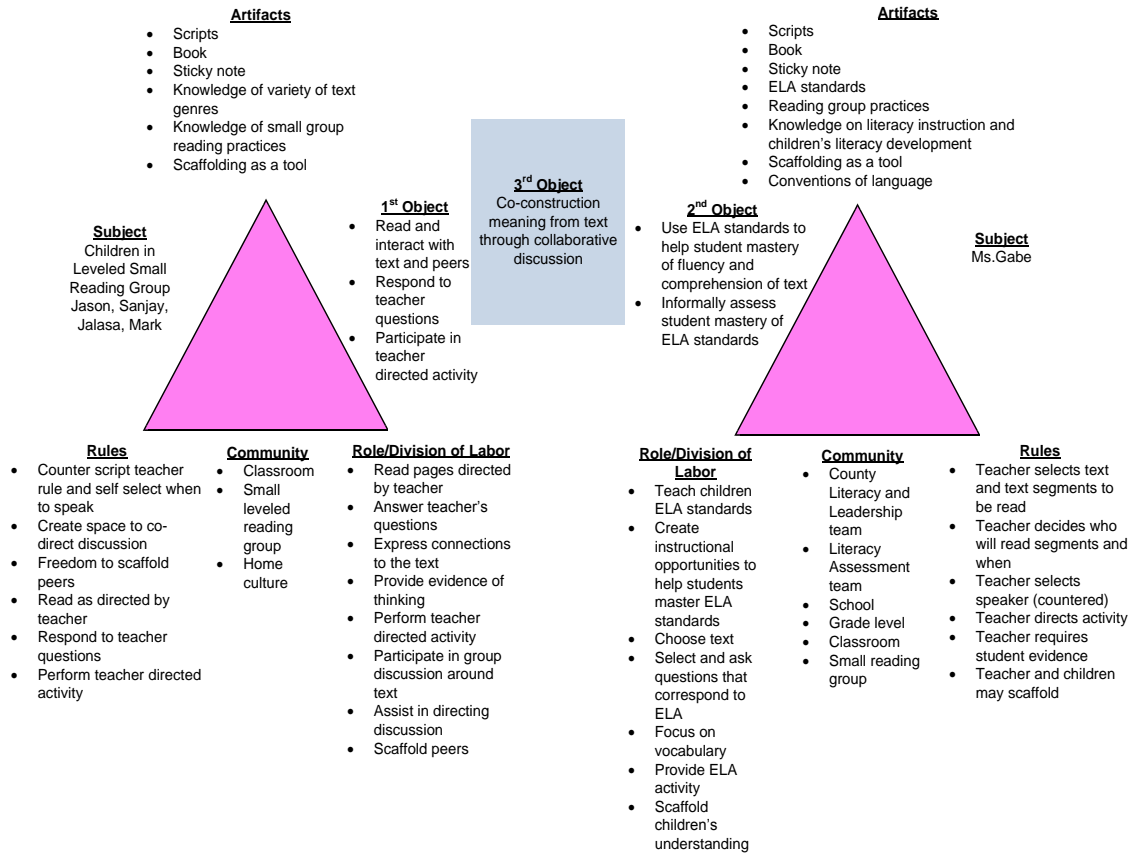


Figure 14. Ms. Gabe's Small Group Activity Model

A CHAT analysis of this activity reveals how the teacher's ELA-focused object is adapted to make space for the children's connections to the text, giving way to the creation a third objective, or third space (Gutierrez), in which a collaboratively mediated understanding of the plot of the story and complex vocabulary occurs. While Ms. Gabe provided the directions for the activities, she also created opportunities in which the children's scripts were accepted into her discussion. This is seen when a child brought up captions when Ms. Gabe was trying to discuss another standard concerning similarities and differences between pictures and text. Instead of redirecting back to her question and object, she followed the children's script about captions to discuss non-fiction texts. This flexibility of activity rules leads to the collaborative third objective. For example she

allowed children to self-select when they wish to talk after initially calling children to answer. The children and teacher used the cultural norms of their reading group to enter into a flexible and dynamic group meaning making process. Teacher knowledge about the ELA standards and the children's literacy development are conceptual tools used to create rules and object for the activity. The teacher object was influenced by the educational and classroom communities to which she belonged. The activity was differentiated for this group, yet highly directed towards following County ELA standards:

- ELACC1RI1: Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
- ELACC1RL2: Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.
- ELACC1RL3: Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.

With student mastery of these standards acting as part of the teacher object, use of her conceptual artifacts drove her use concrete artifacts to create interaction between the students, herself, and the text. Her belief that children develop literacy skills best by practicing them with authentic texts influenced how she guided student interaction with the text and activity. She asked them to read and make a prediction that they will record. Ms. Gabe created discussion that scaffolded group understanding, but she also opened up the discussion to allow for children to scaffold one another, taking on the roles of both director and mediator.

The students' experiences with the rules of small group activities, their roles in the activity, their knowledge about interacting with a text from local and home

communities informed their understandings of their roles, artifact use, and rules the activity all influenced the students' activity object. Their objective also influenced how they worked within the community following rules to fulfill a role that used known artifacts. The reciprocal is true that their perceptions of their roles within the activities influenced their use of artifacts and constructed object.

Ms. McCree's mini-lesson. The following activity, from observation seven, is an example of an ELA standards-based mini-lesson that was typical of Ms. McCree's IRE discourse style.

Ms. McCree is about to read a book from the Amelia Bedelia series by Peggy Parrish to the whole class on the carpet in the front of the room (except for her ESOL student who worked on the computer). They are gathered around her rocking chair. Before she begins reading she tells the class a little bit about Amelia Bedelia books, that Amelia Bedelia is a maid for a wealthy family and she is always messing up her chores. Ms. McCree says that she likes the character, and she thinks she is nice but that she doesn't always understand things and often makes bad choices.

MC: I want you to notice one thing, she takes everything literally. What does literally mean?

Allison: They do it all the time.

MC: Um, that's kind of close. Sam?

Sam: Like, like. For example, if Mr. Rogers says "Let's hit the road" then Amelia Bedelia would hit the road with her fist maybe.

MC: Right, like when I say to you, "You're killing me." Are you really killing me? No, you're driving me nuts.

MC reads the story.

A girl up front laughs and says "Oh, yeah!" in response to a line from the story.

MC tells her they don't need comments.

MC points out that Amelia Bedelia doesn't do as she is asked because she takes things literally. She reminds them to look for evidence about her personality traits.

In one scene from the book, Amelia Bedelia is supposed to go stake the beans. Children laugh when she applies meat steak to the beans, but Sam raises his hand and says, "What does stake the beans actually mean? What are you supposed to do?"

MC explains that it means you are supposed to support the beans with sticks driven into the ground.

MC: So the boss has told her what to do, and she didn't do that. Is the boss going to be happy?

Class: No.

MC: So has anyone seen a trait for her yet?

Sandeep: She doesn't get things.

MC: How could you say that?

Laurel: She doesn't understand?

MC: Yes. She is easily confused. We could call her confused.

As MC reads she uses her voice and body to act out the different characters. Laurel is beside her and copying her movements.

MC tells her to stop interrupting or she will have to move.

This activity remained teacher-directed throughout, with the teacher taking on the role of knowledge giver and evaluator and the students as passive receivers. She even provides the plot and character traits before reading. Therefore the third object, or outcome, that occurred with interaction the two activity systems is highly reflective of the teacher's original object in which the teacher directs the mini lesson on character trait and focuses on vocabulary. Figure 16 (below) demonstrates the CHAT analysis of the activity.

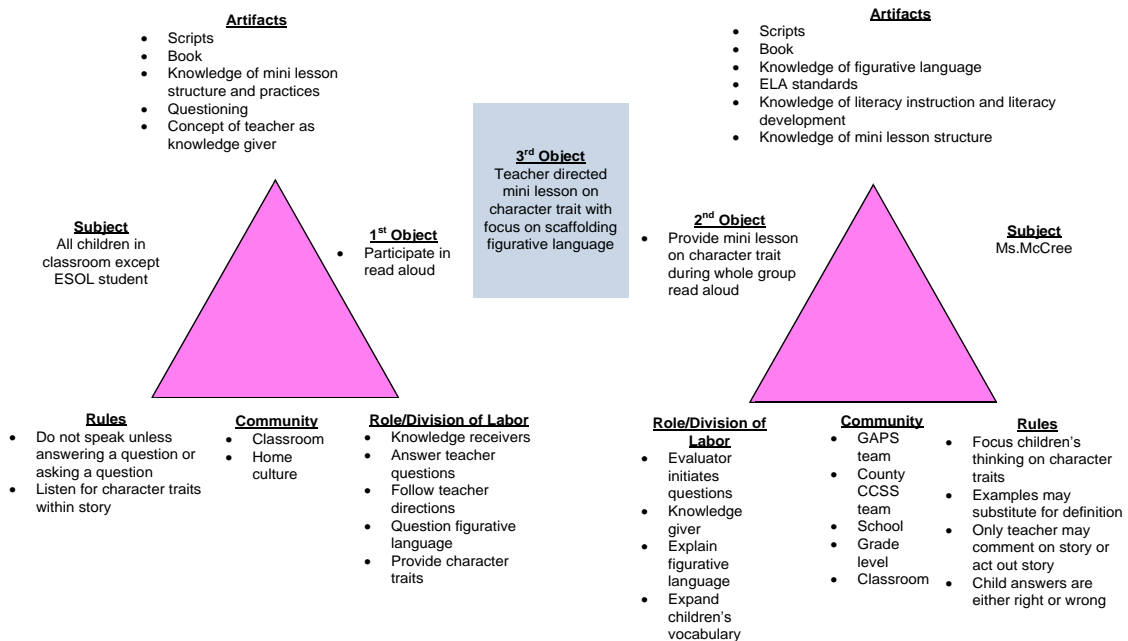


Figure 15. Ms. McCree's Mini-lesson Activity Model

The ways in which Ms. McCree used her artifacts to reach her objective are influenced by the rules and responsibilities within the communities to which she belonged, as well as her perceived her role within the activity. The figurative language component, which was introduced by the teacher as a proposed scaffold, was accepted as an object by students who went along with the teacher script, relying on the teacher to support their understanding of figurative language. Attempts by children to increase their participant role was evaluated and monitored by the teacher. With the roles and rules provided by the teacher and accepted by the children, the group's individual and combined objective. These perceptions of roles and rules also influenced how participants used artifacts and drew on cultural knowledge from classroom experiences with few opportunities for other home and local cultures unless it related directly to the teacher's objective.

Assessment activities. I chose two assessment activities, one from each teacher, due to the very different assessment structures each teacher provided. In Ms. Gabe's activity the students and teacher are reviewing a practice assessment the students completed the previous day. Ms. Gabe knew who had mastered which skills and was addressing the widely missed questions based on specific ELA standards in a whole class mini-lesson before breaking into differentiated instruction in small groups to further review the test. In Ms. McCree's activity the students and teacher are completing a practice assessment together. Ms. McCree explained the rules and directions of the assessment as well as provided steps for how to complete the assessment.

Ms. Gabe's practice assessment activity. The following activity is extracted from expanded observation five field notes.

Ms. Gabe has the entire class sitting on the carpet up front with the ELA County practice test, which she helped to design on the literacy assessment team, on the overhead projector. She has called them together and told them that she is going to show them how to choose the best answers on the test. They have just spent several minutes determining if a passage is fiction or nonfiction. It is a realistic fiction passage. The second question the teacher focuses on is that of setting, which is a multiple choice question. I observed the setting question to be quite tricky for these novice test takers because all three of the answers are correct. They can choose inside, in a bedroom, or in a house. The setting is in fact inside a bedroom in a house.

She tells them about choosing the BEST answer, but the question does not state to “find the best answer,” merely select the correct answer. She says the bedroom is the best answer because it is the most accurate. She rereads the passage. Then she asks the students to describe the setting in a sentence. She asks them to close their eyes and think back about the story and how the setting was described. When they open their eyes she has them share with their partners. Then she asks for some details.

Nina: Because Pablo was messy his room is mess and because Nico was neat his room is neat.

GB: But in this story they are sharing one room. What does this room look like?

Allie: If Pablo would have picked up his stuff Nico wouldn't have been stepping on it. GB: Oh so Pablo had toys all over the floor on his side of the room? Wow I can really picture that. (writes that down on the board). And on the other side, what did it look like?

Prakash: Nico was always organized.

GB: Oh! So Nico kept his side organized? That's an adjective I can use. The other side was always neat and organized. (She writes that on the board).

She dismisses the children into three groups. One group will work with the instructional assistant on correcting test questions, another group will do the same with Ms. Gabe, and a larger third group will start the Daily 5.

Figure 17 (below) demonstrates a CHAT analysis of this activity.

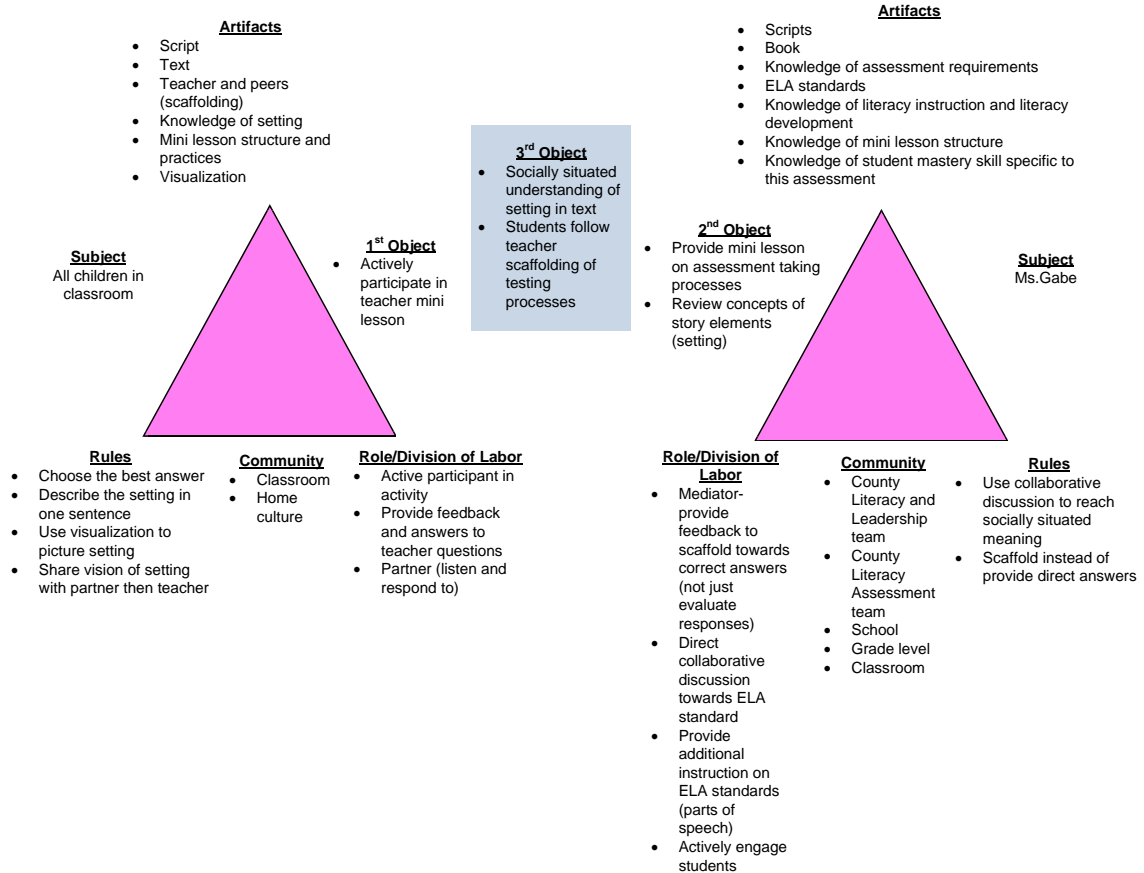


Figure 16. Ms. Gabe's Assessment-based Mini-lesson Activity Model

The teacher object of this activity was twofold in that the children had already taken the practice assessment and the teacher wished to improve both the students' test taking processes as well as their understanding about the story elements that were most commonly missed in the assessments, such as setting. The assessment itself is an artifact that has been manipulated by the children who are answering the questions, and that is used by the teacher as a form of evaluation of skill mastery. The communities to which the teacher belonged were very important to this activity, as she herself was a member of the team who designed this assessment. In a later interview, I asked if she would like to change anything after giving and reviewing the assessment, and she said the rigor and

complexity were necessary for an assessment nearing the end of the year. She perceived missed test items to be lack of teacher instruction or student understanding. Her responsibilities within the communities and individual classroom reinforce the commitment to her activity objectives. The rules and roles of her students are influenced by the mediation she is able to provide with her known artifacts (e.g., knowledge of test and knowledge of student literacy development), and the use of these mediated artifacts was influenced by how students followed rules and performed their roles within the activity.

Ms. McCree's practice assessment activity. The following activity was extracted from expanded observation nine field notes.

Ms. McCree is giving a practice test in preparation for the County's ELA quarterly assessment. The grade level found this test on readworks.org and believed it to be an excellent match in format to previous quarterly assessments. Ms. McCree reads and interprets the directions to the entire class, with the exception of her ESOL student who is at a computer. The first two boxes are for them to write the author's purpose for each of the two passages. She told them there should be two sentences, but does not explain there should be one sentence in each box to state the author's purpose.

Before the children have time to think about and write the author's purpose in the first box, she asks a question.

MC: Do you think in the first one, it may be to write it in a rhyme way? A first person way? A more fun way? They are similar but there are differences. Be sure to make that clear in the author's purpose.

The children write an author's purpose in the story boxes. Some of the children have copied her. For example, Larry first box reads, "tell about pandas in a fun way" and in the second box, "Tell about pandas in a real way."

Others have not copied her and have not connected with her idea. Laurel first box reads, "If someone found a panda and took care of it, they'd know what to do."

MC asks the children if they are finished with number one. Most don't answer and some nod, though more than half the class has not completed it and are still writing.

MC moves on to number two and says they can go back if they are not finished with the first one.

MC asks the class what it means to only be in one of the texts.
 Mary Anne: It would only be in that story and it wouldn't be in the other one.
 MC: How could you figure that out?
 Naiyla: Read the topic sentences?
 Allison: Reread them to see what the second one is missing.
 MC: Yes, you could even skim it. What does that mean?
 Bryce: Run your pencil over the stories.
 MC: Not quite it, Let's practice.
 Kerra: Wait! I have one.
 Before the class has had a chance to look over the stories again Kerra shares a sentence about the panda having red brown fur in the morning light that is in poem but is not in the second story.

 MC: Let's check the other story. Is it there? (four seconds) No. Well it wants it exactly, so write those words specifically. You have *got got got* (hops up and down; italics indicate stressed words) to, if it says show evidence, you have got to write it *exactly*. What it says in the text. We had problems with that on the last test. You can't make some of it up.

Figure 18 (below) provides the CHAT analysis model for this narrative.

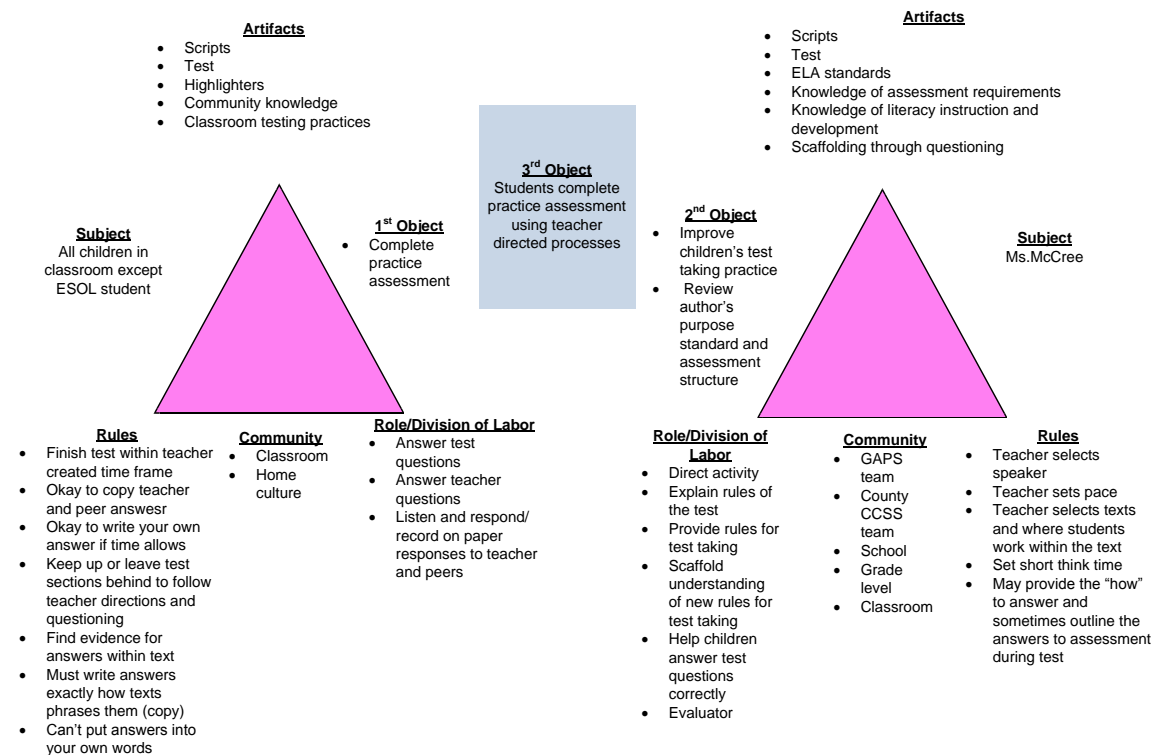


Figure 17. Ms. McCree's Whole Group Practice Assessment Activity Model

The object for this activity is clearly grounded in improving student assessment processes and outcomes. The larger and local CCSS standards based community influenced this activity's objective, rules, and roles, which were in turn reflected back into the community. How the teacher interpreted the community's values and expectations for successful implementation and student success with ELA standards, and how she perceived her contributing role within the community had influence over the rules and roles she creates for the activity. The teacher's perception of her role as director and evaluator influenced her additional role as one who scaffolds the children's understanding of the rules of test taking. Conversations with Ms. McCree informed that she saw it as her role to teach the children "how to answer" the question right up to the point of giving the answer, but not providing the answer precisely. Because this was a practice assessment, its purpose is to prepare the students for the actual assessment, so providing and scaffolding rules for taking the assessment was vital. The children used the teacher and her knowledge to mediate the activity, but not all students followed this script, as some counter script with their own responses that are evaluated as incorrect based on the rule that answers must be evidenced from text.

Summary of Activities

Objects. For the purposes of this study, and to answer my question concerning what instructional opportunities are created in the enacted literacy curriculum, I have focused the results of my CHAT analysis on the teachers' initial objects as well as the joint objects that were created when the students interacted with the activity. These activities sometimes had outcomes or products that were described in the joint objective.

The most notable characteristics of the activity objects were that they were all connected ELA standards and they were all influenced greatly by the individual teacher's roles for herself and her students, rules created by her (sometimes in response to student counter script), and use of artifacts within the activity. The teachers' perceptions of community influence discussed in the Chapter Four help to provide a lens for viewing how these two teachers created lessons that led to such differing rules, roles, and artifact use during very similar types of activities.

While Ms. Gabe created a script that allowed room for the students' scripts, Ms. McCree more often imposed the teacher script upon the activity. These scripts influenced the roles the students undertook and what rules were created within the activity. Therefore Ms. Gabe's third object tended to be a collaborative goal, while Ms. McCree's third object remained very similar to the teacher's initial object before beginning the activity. More findings from the analysis of teachers' scripts are discussed in the next section.

Rules and roles/division of labor. The rules for each activity differed, but similarities occurred within cases. Ms. Gabe's rules tended to allow for more student interaction and peer scaffolding. This created flexible roles for both the teacher and students, in which the teacher may take on a more directive role while children listened and responded, and at other times the teacher's role was to listen and respond to students in a way that connected their responses to the ELA objective. Ms. McCree's rules did not allow for much interaction between teacher and student except for students to respond to a question or ask a question. An unspoken rule that I noted across all observations was that the children never addressed each other, always comments were made directly to Ms.

McCree. In response, the children's roles were more passive as the receivers of teacher knowledge and evaluation.

Community. Due to the differences in student roles across each classroom, the classroom communities also differed. Ms. Gabe's classroom worked collaboratively but under the direction of the teacher, and with frequent but limited amounts of time working individually. In Ms. McCree's classroom the community worked almost entirely as individuals. I never observed students working together beyond reading to a partner, though once an activity involved children finding sentences within a book, and they were allowed to copy each other's sentences. Student work was often a model for the other students, but most frequently the student work was presented by Ms. McCree and not the student. Each teacher is also part of different educational communities as described in the findings from the first question concerning ELA implementation. These experiences in the differing communities naturally affect their levels of knowledge and concepts, seen here as mediating artifacts.

Artifacts. I followed Clifford's (1986) definition for artifacts that includes cultural norms and concepts. Each individual classroom and indeed differing groups of children experienced different classroom norms, some to the extent in which the teacher constructed new roles and rules for activities has seen with Ms. McCree's higher and lower reading groups. The teacher and children were able to use local and content specific norms as artifacts to mediate their actions within the activities. As language is considered a mediating artifact (Vygotsky, 1978), I also included the ways in which language was used as an artifact. Scripts are also expected language and social interaction patterns which direct and mediate learning (Gutierrez, 1993). For instance teachers and

students may have used language to extend or redirect another's thought through scaffolding, and that scaffolding through language use acted as a tool to mediate understanding.

Teachers came to each activity with their cultural and content knowledge about literacy instruction and literacy development. The teachers used these concepts of knowledge to guide student learning within the activity. Teachers' beliefs and perceptions play a role in how they construct the rules, roles, and objects of an activity. Artifact use, like object, had reciprocal relationships with all other components of the activity model. The knowledge gained from being part of differing communities across a life span, a teacher's beliefs about literacy development and instruction, a teacher's knowledge of the standards, and a teacher's role with the local school and county communities are all conceptual artifacts that mediated both the experience of the teacher and students.

The use of the artifacts in each classroom was similar when the artifacts were concrete but differing when conceptual. Ms. Gabe's instructional activities were influenced by her belief that children should have personal experiences discussing and working with texts, while Ms. McCree's activities were more reflective of her belief that children needed to have fun their literacy practices and her concerns about being held accountable on State and County assessments. Her activities were either direct instruction about standards or individual activities designed to be creative and have fun while staying very focused on teacher provided rules and requirements. Conceptual norms for practice were influential on the materials and rules for materials used in activities.

Concrete artifacts involved objects used to mediate or manipulate student learning. For instance, each classroom had leveled books separated by genre for student

use. Each classroom used worksheets, though Ms. Gabe's were often a graphic organizer and Ms. McCree's were in question and answer format. Ms. McCree also tended to use more video and manipulatives than Ms. Gabe, providing more student interaction with multimodal artifacts during activities. Children also chose activities from a variety of artifacts, like sticker stories in Ms. Gabe's room where each child chose three stickers and used those in order to develop a story, or popcorn writing in Ms. McCree's classroom where children choose a few characters and a setting from a popcorn bucket to write a story.

However there were artifacts that mediated student literacy learning during individual work time in the Daily 5, which often included rules that the children did not understand. The most notable examples of this were the activities Ms. McCree planned for the Daily five such as secret agent words and spell and sum, two activities that substituted letters for symbols or numbers. The children did not understand how to change the alphabet code for another and then solve a problem. Another Daily 5 activity that used a confusing artifact was the self-menu in Ms. McCree's classroom. Difficulties with the activity and its artifact due to student misunderstanding of the activity's rules may be seen in the following vignette (observation 2).

Naliya is writing on something called a self-menu. I ask her to tell me about what she is doing.

Naliyah: Here is the menu. It tells you what an appetizer is and what I want to have. See? (points to grilled cheese which she has written on the blank lines under appetizer)

Me: Wow, that looks good (points to her written food choices). Why are you going to make a menu?

Naliya: Because I just finished read to self and now I'm moving on to something else.

Me: Neat. So is the menu on your rotation or is it something you chose?

Naliya: I chose it.

Naliya goes back to reading her menu. I am looking at the menu. The menu is about setting and characters and story problems. Not food. She seems to realize this too at about the same time though she never looked up at me. She quickly erases the food on the back that she has written. She is supposed to read the front and then flip over on the back to fill out the menu of a setting, characters, etc. She is now writing on the front of the paper in the very small spaces between the small text. It seems too hard for her to read what she is supposed to do on the front and then flip over to the back b/c she tried but kept flipping back and forth and settled for writing on the front. For character she writes her name. For setting she writes "at school". Just then Ms. McCree comes by.

MC: What book did you read Naliya for your menu?

Naliya looks confused.

MC: What book did you read sweetie?

Naliya points to the self-read book on the desk.

MC: Great! That's a good book.

Ms. McCree looks at me and says "I love this menu. I got it online. It is a fun way to review a story because it compares story elements to food and a full meal"

Naliya looks at me. She starts to erase yet again.

Ms. McCree rings the bell and tells them it is time to work on their games.

Naliya puts the menu away.

Teacher understandings of rules for the activity were not always identical to the students' understanding of the rules. Sometimes the students decided to counter with their own rules, changing the object of the activity when they did not understand, as seen above.

How teachers used conceptual artifacts to mediate activities involves the ways in which their perceptions informed how they viewed the roles of the participants and the rules for participation. The way Ms. Gabe approached planning and instruction of literacy activities could be seen as more subjective in nature, while Ms. McCree's approach to planning and instruction of literacy activities was more objectivist. For more information about teacher perception, please see the following chapter.

Instructional Scripts

I define *instructional scripts* as repeated patterns of interaction and discourse (Gutierrez, 1993). Teachers use these scripts of expected language and social interaction

patterns to construct literacy learning opportunities through literacy-focused activities (Gutierrez, 1993). Instructional scripts often reflect the transcendent script of the dominant accepted knowledge of the local and/or larger culture and society (Gutierrez et al., 1995). Educational policy surrounding ELA CCSS as well as State, County, and other local policies seemed to create a sense of urgency to cover set objectives as listed by the standards, leaving little to no room to stray off course. The instructional scripts are also influenced by the teacher's own cultural norms and beliefs about literacy learning and literacy development.

The instructional scripts in this study were notably influenced by the educational policy surrounding ELA CCSS as well as State, County, and other local mandates. Teachers mediated instruction through their own scripts, or repeated patterns of interaction and discourse. While both teachers came to each activity with the belief that the ELA standards should be the directing focus or objective for the activity, each teacher created differing types of scripts to reach the same objectives. Each teacher demonstrated different types of scripts both across classrooms and within classrooms, as teachers may use a variety of scripts to accomplish different activities and objects (Pacheco, 2010).

Ms. Gabe's instructional scripts. Ms. Gabe's instructional scripts remained object-oriented with the teacher acting as director and mediator, but were flexible in nature to include the children's counter scripts, providing for Third Space opportunities. Ms. Gabe's activities involved patterns of interaction in which children interjected scripts that were received and extended to relate to the teacher's script. Ms. Gabe's activity scripts also allowed for students to act as mediators within the script, providing scaffolding for their peers as well as the teacher.

Ms. Gabe's class scripts involved discourse patterns of IRF, but the feedback was generally an extension or a connection towards the objective which frequently resulted in opportunities for an open Third Space as seen the following vignette (observation 3).

Ms. Gabe helps Jamie, fill out pre planning Four Square organizer.

GB: Who is your hero? (T) I-O

Jamie: My dad. (S) R

GB: Okay, why is he your hero? (T) R/I-Ex

Jamie: Because he is a doctor. (S) R

GB: He is? I didn't know that! Where is he a doctor? (T) F/I-E

Jamie: At the hospital? (S) R

GB: Really? Which hospital? (T) F/I-Ex

Jamie: Silence (S) R

GB: Okay, as a doctor what are 2 character traits he has, as a doctor, that make him your hero? (F) I-O

Jamie: Silence (S) R

GB: See our list? Helpful, brave, nice-friendly, caring, strong, smart, and clever. Which two of those do you think he is as a doctor? (T) I-O

Jamie: Friendly? (S) R

GB: Okay. He is a friendly dr. What else about him? (T) F/I-O

Jamie: Silence. (S) R

Tyler: (Has paused in his writing and has been listening to Jamie and GB)

He is smart? He is a doctor so he has to be smart? (S) I-O

GB: (Looks at Tyler) Oh, wow! Thank you for sharing your good idea with us, Tyler. (T) F

GB: (Turning to Jamie) Jamie, do you think your dad is smart because he is a doctor? (T) I-C

Jamie: Nods. (S) R

GB: Tyler go get some smartbeads for sharing your good idea. Okay

Jamie, what are the two character traits for your dad as a hero? (T) F/I-C

Jamie: Friendly and brave. (S) R

GB: Brave? You didn't say brave. You said he was friendly and agreed he was smart. So let's write down a reason why he is those two things as a doctor. (T) F/I

GB turns to help another child.

Jamie writes friendly and smart on the second box of the pre-writing tool but does not go to the third box to explain why he is friendly and smart.

(S) R

GB listens to another child read his closing and offers some constructive comments about forming a closing before turning back to Jamie.

GB: (To Jamie) Okay now write a reason why your dad is friendly and smart. Why is he friendly

as a doctor? What does he does as a doctor that is friendly? Write it here.

(Points to the 3rd square of the organizer) (T) F/I-O

*(S)=Student, (T)=Teacher, F=Feedback, I-O=Initiate with open ended prompt, I-C=Initiate with a closed ended prompt, I-Ex=Initiate a prompt to extend student response

While Ms. Gabe's discourses during whole group and small group instructional activities tended to follow and Initiate Respond Feedback (IRF) pattern, Ms. Gabe's feedback was not of the evaluative nature. Ms. Gabe's discourse practice was to take the students response and extend it to build towards the objective of the activity or to encourage more thinking and an extended response from the students. Ms. Gabe also practiced selecting students but accepted student scripts throughout the activity even if interjected so that some of the speakers were self-selected. Ms. Gabe accepted children's attempts to initiate conversation and responded by accepting the child's proposed script. Ms. Gabe's initiating prompts also tended to be open ended and allowed for multiple responses rather than a right or wrong answer. Ms. Gabe also utilized ideas from her students to direct the discourse.

Ms. Gabe allowed for opportunities in which children prompted questions and designated topics they wished to speak about during the activity. As long as she could align the conversation in some way with the ELA standard objective, Ms. Gabe was flexible in allowing her students room and opportunity to speak and build off one another rather than build off of her prompts.

GB: We are going to be thinking about how these two texts are the same or how they are different. Let's talk about how they are the same. (T) I-O

Lee: They are both about presidents. (S) R

GB: Both are the same topic! The presidents. That's their biggest thing that is similar. (T) F

Jacob: Is Barack Obama dead? (S) I

GB: What do you think? If he is our President now, is he dead?

Jacob shakes his head no.

GB: No? Keep that idea in your head. (Later in the lesson Ms. Gabe helps Jacob connect being dead as a similarity to another child's comments on dead presidents on money) (T) I-O

*(S)=Student, (T)=Teacher, F=Feedback, I-O=Initiate with open ended prompt, I-

C=Initiate with a closed ended prompt, I-Ex=Initiate a prompt to extend student response

In the above vignette (observation 9), Ms. Gabe broke away from her teacher script about similarities to respond to the student's script about President Obama. This created a Third Space opportunity where teacher and student scripts combined to form a new mutual understanding about Presidents who are still alive and how Presidents on money are deceased. Like this example, in multiple conversations throughout the results section Ms. Gabe tended to extend and respond to student responses rather than evaluate. It was her practice to use the students' responses in her explanations and include it in her writing models. Frequently Ms. Gabe and the teachers would jointly create lists, writing samples, definitions, and ideas for story elements collaboratively. As a result the instructional scripts practiced most often by Ms. Gabe were responsive and responsive/collaborative depending on the activity (Gutierrez, 1993).

Ms. McCree's instructional scripts. Ms. McCree's teacher script remained object oriented and teacher-centered throughout instructional activities in whole and small group settings. Ms. McCree's activities involved patterns of interaction in which children's interjected counter scripts were not allowed other than to ask clarifying questions. Ms. McCree's activity scripts teacher centered and teacher directed in that most questions and initiated discussion occurred from the teacher and all student responses were directed to the teacher and evaluated. If a child did not provide the correct response, Ms. McCree often called on the next child or gave the answer herself.

The class is comparing and contrasting two winter holidays. (observation 2)

MC: They are all more alike than I thought. Get out writer's notebook. Let's write Kwanzaa and Main idea. Good, you are already getting busy. We are going to needs these for our what? (T) I-C

Class: Venn Diagrams. (S) R

MC: Kevin what's the main idea? (T) I-C

Kevin: (silence) (S) R

MC: (waits five seconds) You don't know...that's okay. Anybody else? Larry? (T) E/I-C

Larry: The main detail. (S) R

MC: Okay, well you could say the main detail. It is the main idea of the story-what all the ideas are about. Who celebrates this? (T) E/I-C

Class: African Americans (S) R

MC: Yes, it is an African American holiday. Who wants to give me one detail? Remember you can write down whatever you want. (T) E/I-O

Marcy: The middle candle is black to represent the people's beautiful black skin. (S) R

MC: That's a great detail! Can I make a suggestion? Can we say what those candles are first? It is a what? (T) E/I-C

Class: Kinara (S) R

MC: Yes. They have a kinara candle holder with seven candles (writes this detail on the board, but does not write Marcy's). What colors are the candles? (T) E/I-Ex

*(S)=Student, (T)=Teacher, F=Feedback, I-O=Initiate with open ended prompt, I-

C=Initiate with a closed ended prompt, I-Ex=Initiate a prompt to extend student response

The discourse patterns that occurred within literacy activities in Ms. Ms.Cree's class involved teacher dominated interaction patterns. Discourse often involved patterns of Initiate Respond Evaluate (IRE), providing few extensions or connections to student responses beyond having the student evaluate their own answer by asking them to extend their response to the part of the text that informed it. The "how do you know" evidencing of the children's responses did not encourage or invite students to provide knowledge from their home culture or intertextual connections. At times when students did not provide the correct response Ms. McCree provided the correct answer like when Larry was confused between main detail and main idea. Ms. McCree also created unspoken

rules during her instructional script when she evaluated student responses and then changed them to responses she preferred.

The instructional scripts created by Ms. McCree frequently dominated activities and student scripts were not included in the activity discussion. Two vignettes provide examples of this unspoken rule being constructed by the teacher script, the first is in the Amelia Bedelia (seen in the activity models section) discussion when the teacher used her own vocabulary and the second in the previous vignette where Ms. McCree wanted to talk about the meaning of the candle colors and not children's perception of the color's significance.

There were exceptions when another script type occurred. The two boys Ms. McCree described to be incredibly bright, Bryce and Sam, had entirely different script patterns with Ms. McCree in which they interjected ideas and topics of discussion, additional questions, and were given prompts and longer periods of time to extend their thinking. In Ms. McCree's class the script depended on *who* the subjects of the activity were.

She has pulled 5 children, those in her highest leveled reading group, over to the small table and hands out the book *Fluffy and Baron*. She tells them they will go on a picture walk

MC: See the dog and the duck? Look at the dog. He is looking at the duck. What does it look like he is thinking? (T) I-O

Allison: He is curious about the duck. (S) R

MC: What makes you think they are curious? (T) I-O

Allison: Because the dog's head is down and kind of sideways. (S) R

MC: So is he happy or upset by his body language? (T) I-C

The group does not respond. (S) R

MC: What is the setting? (T) I-C

Sandeep: They are in the woods. (S) R

MC: How can you tell? (T) I-O

Group: There are trees. (S) R

MC: And squirrels. Turn the page, cover the words. What season is this? (T) F/I-C

Amatee: Winter (points to the winter picture on the next page-the 3rd one out of the 2 pages) (S) R

MC: (points to the first picture of summer) You think this looks like winter? (T) I-C

Group: No, not winter. Spring? (S) R

Amayee: (Looks unsure at the teacher and then back to the first picture.) (S) R

MC: Let's look at the next page. (T) I

Groups moves to next page. (S) R

Bryce: I have a prediction. (T) I

MC: You do? What is it? (T) F/I-O

Bryce: The duck is going to go with the other ducks and leave the dog. (S) R

MC: Yeah he may do that. (T) F

MC then highlights the different kinds of ducks.

MC: A mallard has the green head and these brown ones are the females.

MC: What about Fluffy (the white duck)? What is she? A swan? A goose? (T) I-C

Sam: It is not a swan. A swan has black near its eyes. (S) R

T: How do you know that? (T) I-O

Sam: I've seen them in real life. (S) R

T: You have? You are drawing on your experiences with real life to make a connection with the story. If you have never had a dog or a duck, would it be easy? (T) F/I-C

Group: No. (S) R

Amayee: This dog is a German Shepherd. (S) I

MC does not respond.

*(S)=Student, (T)=Teacher, F=Feedback, I-O=Initiate with open ended prompt, I-

C=Initiate with a closed ended prompt, I-Ex=Initiate a prompt to extend student

response

The above vignette (observation 2) portrays the difference in script based on the subject involved in the activity and how the subject influenced participant rules. Some subjects were given space to initiate discourse and their contributions were typically accepted and brought into the group activity by the teacher while other children's comments went by without being incorporated as seen in the following selected narrative.

The second leveled reading group of the day came back to Ms. McCree at the reading table and they will be reading a Beverly Clearly book about Henry.

Marcy asks the teacher if they are going to use the props from the prop basket. (S) I-C

MC does not respond to her. Ms. McCree tells them that they are going to read a chapter book and she asks them what is on the back of the book. (T) I-C

MC: What is it they would look at if they were at the store and interested in buying the book? (T) I-C

Caitrin: It tells about the book and (then is cut off by C talking over her). (S) R

MC: (talking over Caitrin) Right, the back of the book tells about the story and that you can check it to see if they want to read the book or not.

(Group does not read the summary as MC continues) (T) I-Ex

MC asks them to predict based on the cover. (T) I-O

Each girl predicts based on the title and the pictures except for Marcy. She is last. MC turns to her. Marcy is poised, ready to answer her prediction, body forward and mouth open. (S) R

MC: Marcy is this fiction or non-fiction? (T) I-C

Marcy closes her mouth and then opens it again to tell MC she thinks it is fiction. (S) R

MC asks them to scavenger hunt for the publication date. (T) I-C

Marcy finds it and shares the year. (S) R

MC agrees and points to the publication page and then asks the group to tell the purpose of the table of contents. (T) E/I-C

*(S)=Student, (T)=Teacher, F=Feedback, I-O=Initiate with open ended prompt, I-

C=Initiate with a closed ended prompt, I-Ex=Initiate a prompt to extend student response

This selected narrative from observation four, similar to previous selections, exemplifies Ms. McCree's intent to cover teacher based objectives, namely text features which is an ELA standard for informational texts (ELACC2RI5: Know and use various text features {e.g., captions, bold print, subheadings, glossaries, indexes, electronic menus, icons} to locate key facts or information in a text efficiently) during literacy instructional activities. Ms. McCree exhibited a recitation script as she sticks firmly to the teacher agenda with her brisk pace of questioning, focuses on recall questions which have right or wrong answers, ignores some children's attempts to self-select a new subtopic or time to speak, and even cuts in to children's responses to elaborate the answer to the question which she posed.

Summary of teacher ELA scripts. While Ms. Gabe and Ms. McCree each felt the pressures of implementing the new ELA standards well and created teacher driven activities that focused on ELA objectives, the scripts they created during these activities greatly differed. Ms. Gabe created responsive and responsive/collaborative scripts during whole and small group literacy instruction activities while Ms. McCree's whole and small group activities used namely recitation scripts. The differences in types of script influenced the rules created for the participants and the roles offered, initiated, accepted, or denied. The scripts ultimately contributed to the third object created by the interaction of teacher and student activity systems.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study is to examine how teachers implemented the ELA CCSS within their daily enacted literacy curricula. This study describes how two primary grade teachers in one suburban school: (a) perceived the ELA CCSS and their influence on instruction and the enacted curricula; (b) adapted and aligned literacy instruction and the daily literacy curriculum to respond to implementation of the CCSS; and (c) created instruction and literacy learning opportunities influenced by ELA CCSS.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section presents a summary of the research question findings regarding teacher perceptions, implementation, and instruction of the ELA standards. The second section of the chapter discusses the findings in relation to the fields of literacy instruction and curriculum policy. Limitations and implications of the study are presented in each section.

Summary of Findings

Research Question 1: What do teachers report about implementing ELA CCSS in their literacy instruction?

To answer question 1, I first discuss the teachers' overall perceptions of the standards, for how teachers perceive the standards may influence their "buy

in” to teaching them. Next I discuss the teachers’ perceptions of change in their instruction due to standards implementation—the good and the bad.

Overall perception of standards. Ms. Gabe and Ms. McCree reported that the ELA CCSS were so “much more” than any previously experienced standards. Only Ms. Gabe reported a notable increase in the number of standards, but both teachers stated the ELA standards were far more complex and rigorous than previous State and County standards, one of the marked goals of the CCSS Initiative (Common Core State Standard Initiative, 2010). They perceived the standards as rooted in “higher level thinking,” requiring children to critically exam a text as well as its relation to other written pieces from a variety of genres. Both teachers reported changing their instruction to provide support and opportunities for children to critically analyze a text, its characters, and other story elements. Ms. McCree saw the standards as “moving the children’s thinking outside the box.” As highlighted in the *CCSS Publisher’s Criteria*, each teacher found that the standards required an increase in inter-textual practices across genre, content, and modes of text. They believed the ELA standards required this of their instruction. They perceived that students needed to be able to produce both oral and written feedback on the similarities and differences between reading selections as well as between print and image.

The two teachers also agreed that the standards required not only more intentional and explicit literacy planning and instruction, but also more purposeful and dynamic formative literacy assessments. They stated that they wanted formative assessments to reflect the students’ higher order processing. They

adapted existing assessments to allow for written responses and graphic representations of student understanding. The teachers found assessment to be overwhelming as they recreated or found new assessments for the expanse of new standards, and looked forward to starting a year in which they had materials and assessments in hand.

The teachers suggested that new assessments associated with the CCSS required higher levels of thinking from students and higher quality student products. Teachers reported that formative and summative assessments from the County, school, and classroom levels required students to be able to respond in a variety of formats. These requirements were regarded as more strenuous than any previously experienced. Similar to Bole (2004), the teachers designed classroom assessments to mimic high-stakes tests. Bole states that before NCLB, teachers reported using more alternative and varied forms of assessment but in the era of high stakes testing for teacher accountability, teachers have relied on assessment practices that closely match the high-stakes testing formats. This study implies that this phenomenon has not changed; it is simply the format of the testing which has been altered.

Perceptions of change. As the principal stated, the new CCSS assessments are asking for more than just multiple-choice responses, and the formative and summative assessments reflected this change. The teachers worried as the children struggled to correctly complete graphic organizers and diagrams, respond to short answer prompts, and construct pieces of writing that met the new ELA standard rubrics. While both teachers reported marked student improvement over

time as the children became accustomed to the new assessments, they were still not reporting student grades as highly as in years past. Ms. McCree said that teaching in what she described as “an affluent area school” had accustomed teachers, parents, and students to receiving relatively high grades. Ms. Gabe even pondered what it would be like assessing children with these standards who were from “a different demographic” (implying not from families as highly educated), because even 30 years after *A Nation at Risk* there are still notable achievement gaps (Hrabowski, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2006).

Each teacher shared how nervous she was at the end of the first quarter of the ELA implementation when each had to talk to parents about the new standards and student grades. Teachers were given the responsibility of explaining the new standards and how the standards would be assessed. They did so with standards and rubrics in hand to show parents documentation of their grading and student requirements. Similarly, Shanahan (2013) believes that results from CCSS summative assessments will be startling for parents, educators, and policy makers alike, as the educational system and students adapt to the new forms of assessment.

The two participating teachers were not only responsible for interpreting the standards for their own instruction and parent conferences, but were two of the four school leadership representatives for K-2 CCSS training. They had a responsibility to deliver CCSS content from the County to their school’s primary grade faculty. In addition to delivering information about the State CCSS, the two teachers had to deliver information about how to use “power standards” for

instruction and assessment, which involved a hierarchical order for connecting and organizing the standards for instructional purposes. While both teachers admitted that attending the country training the year prior to the CCSS implementation was highly valuable for their own understanding of the “standards roll out,” they both felt pressure to act as the professional development providers that would influence half the faculty’s understanding and instruction of the CCSS. They both believed this to be no small task as the structure of the standards was seen as complex and slightly confusing even prior to “powering” the standards’ structure. This issue has been recognized as recent research indicates the need to “scale up” the ways in which professional development is presented to be able to prepare educators for teaching the CCSS (Hirsh, 2012; Marrongelle, Sztajn, & Smith, 2013; Shanahan, 2013). Suggestions include state-wide and inter-state forms of professional development sharing through telecommunications and pairing with professional organizations for increased support.

Positive perceptions of change. In addition to agreement about the general complexity and rigor of the standards, the two teachers agreed about two more important aspects. First, like many other educators, they perceived the standards to be more highly focused on non-fiction texts, allowing for more cross-content instructional practices (Gerwetz, 2012; Robelen, 2012; Yatvin, 2012). Running counter to the national concern over the loss of opportunities to use fiction (Gerwetz, 2012), these two teachers saw the increase in non-fiction texts as an increase in instructional possibilities. They perceived the ELA informational standards as designed to span across the day in all subject areas. They believed it

to be easier to implement social studies and science into their literacy block and literacy into other content areas. Both teachers stated that they had incorporated literacy across content in the past but not to the high degree of purposeful inclusion since implementing the CCSS. They accredited the ease of content inclusion to the *Reading Informational* standards of the CCSS, and both teachers expressed a genuine pleasure in teaching literacy this way.

Second, both teachers enjoyed the increase of non-fiction instruction. Likewise, Maloch and Bomer (2013) remind educators that there are a variety of genres within informational texts which have been widely ignored in instruction, and through implementation of the *Reading Informational* standards both teachers reported developing an awareness about the ways in which they used informational texts in their instruction and becoming more skilled at creating cross-curricular instructional opportunities. Teachers from this study are in agreement with findings by Heitin (2013) that state that educators across the country are exploring innovative ways to teach the new common-core literacy standards, by using the standards to create interdisciplinary thematic units across content areas.

Challenges to change. Both teachers noted that too many standards focused on language, and not enough focused on foundational literacy standards to improve beginning readers' skills. The first grade standards included 15 Reading Foundational and 23 Language standards, and second grade included 9 Reading Foundational and 21 Language standards. Ms. Gabe and Ms. McCree both stated that they had struggling readers in their class who needed more focus

on decoding and word work before tackling the more complex language and comprehension standards. They believed that both fluency and comprehension are important, but the standards focused more on comprehension than fluency, leaving them with little time to work on student fluency. While there is a common myth that the CCSS have broken from decoding and fluency, the standards themselves require an emphasis of both (Shanahan, 2012). Farr (2011) comments on the lack of decoding and fluency standards in the ELA CCSS,

The new standards lists are focused on reading as a thinking process and not as merely decoding. In fact, the standards themselves never mention decoding. That does not mean decoding skills should not be taught. It just means that decoding is not the goal. (p.3)

Hiebert and Pearson (2012) also state that decoding and word recognition, while part of the CCSS, are not the definition for foundational skills in the CCSS.

Part of the difficulty with the language standards, described by the teachers, was the high level of vocabulary the children were required to learn and use. Ms. Gabe said that children had difficulty understanding the language standards and with the vocabulary of the standards. Ms. McCree concurred with this opinion, saying not only was the “language of the standards” hard for her students to grasp, but the vocabulary included in the DOE units and suggested resources was very challenging. The two believed the recommended texts for instructional use contained difficult vocabulary for a student population that included so many ELLs and children who were still approaching grade level. They found they had to stop often in their instruction to explain a vocabulary

word from the reading or to remind students of the meaning and required actions of ELA standard language, such as “inference.”

Ms. McCree and Ms. Gabe also mentioned the difficulties some teachers, including Ms. McCree, were having in explaining the structure and the meaning of the CCSS and the new assessment structures and changes to the parents. Ms. McCree reported this to be difficult because the teachers were still learning about the standards themselves when they were supposed to seem as though they knew what they were doing when they explained it to the parents. She also reported that parents just had to “trust” the teachers because parents were so uninformed about the new standards and assessments. This fosters a sense of dependency of the parents on the teachers and devalues parents taking on active roles as agents for their children’s education. The teachers were just as dependent on the county and other stakeholders to inform them about the CCSS and assessments, as there was reported agency of teachers taking on any professional learning about the CCSS outside of County trainings.

Additionally, Ms. Gabe and Ms. McCree became wary of becoming “too scripted to the ELA standards.” They perceived that their ELA directed discourse helped them to be more intentional about what questions they asked the children and allowed for greater critical thinking as part of daily instruction, but considered this practice too scripted. They did not desire to follow scripts and were uncomfortable with their instruction being scripted, yet they believed that the kinds of questioning, activities, and assessments were beneficial for their student’s literacy learning.

Findings from this study provide insight about how teachers perceive the ELA standards, prepare and implement the ELA CCSS in their literacy instruction, and what instructional opportunities are provided to students. Triangulated data from observations, interviews, and artifacts helped to describe the ways in which the ELA CCSS is enacted in the elementary classrooms. However, this study was limited to three months during the first year of CCSS implementation. Studies that span longer periods of time and follow CCSS implementation as it progresses are needed to provide more in depth understanding of the influences of the ELA CCSS on teacher instruction and literacy learning opportunities.

Summary of Research Question 1. On the whole, Ms. Gabe and Ms. McCree liked the ELA CCSS and the changes the Standards brought to instruction and student learning. They stated that their instructional practices would continue to improve with time and a better understanding of the standards, and that children would become accustomed to this “deeper way of thinking” and doing. Over time they believed students would become accustomed to the expectations of the standards. They hoped to see these changes result in higher student standardized test scores on the PARCC. They believed that implementing these standards was a step “in the right direction.”

Research Question 2: How are teachers implementing ELA CCSS into their literacy instruction?

As predicted by Maloch & Bomer (2012), the implementation of the ELA CCSS was influenced by a variety of contextual levels ranging from the national standards documents, State DOE guidelines for implementation and assessment, local county guidelines and assessments, school-level supports such as the literacy instructional coach, grade level lesson plans, and classroom communities. These local interpretations of the CCSS from the County and other local communities provided important direction for policy implementation (Coburn, 2001). When asked about ELA CCSS implementation, the teachers naturally started to discuss how they learned about the standards and how they created lesson plans to incorporate the standards into their literacy instruction. Therefore, as the teachers described the County as their leader in ELA CCSS implementation, I begin this discussion with the influence of the County. I describe each contextually framed influence in the order that teachers naturally spoke the most about. I listed the influence of the teachers and individual classrooms on implementation last, as they are end of the line for implementation.

County influence on implementation. Both teachers began by describing their understanding of the ELA standards based on what they had learned from the County at the 2011-2012 CCSS leadership team trainings. Only Ms. Gabe attended any CCSS training outside of the County trainings; a local metro area training. Neither had attended state or regional trainings. When asked about readings or union participation, they stated they were members of the State teacher's union but had no additional learning of the CCSS outside of local training. When asked specifically about reading for professional development for

CCSS, Ms. Gabe said she read books on leadership materials, and Ms. McCree shared student workbooks for CCSS. So most of what both teachers understood about the CCSS and its implementation came from the County.

The County hired the LLC to conduct trainings for the selected leadership teachers, who would then bring the information back to each school. Therefore while schools received multiple hours of CCSS trainings, the information was limited to the LLC and the teachers' peer mentoring. At the County-wide trainings, both teachers were taught how to interpret the standards and piece the standards together in a logical way that created chunks of similar standards—what they called “powering the standards.” This “powering” made connections between the standards and organized them in a way that made sense to both teachers. Both teachers participated in the powering of the standards at the County training, and while Ms. Gabe was confident with the powering of the first grade standards, Ms. McCree stated that there were too many smaller (more specific) standards within some power standards and other power standards that were given smaller linked standards that did not fit well. She said that sometimes the more detailed standards were put with the power standard that fit best even though it was not a great fit.

The County also provided rubrics, formative, and summative assessments that were influential in directing the teacher's instruction and standards implementation. Similar to Hoffman's (2005) study in which teachers shifted instruction to include more testing practice for students, these teachers often planned literacy instruction while referring directly to the rubrics to make sure

they had covered instruction pertaining to everything the students would be asked to do to by the County rubrics and other assessments.

The influence of assessment and data-driven practices was a theme throughout the findings of this study. County assessments (modeled after PARCC) influenced teacher instructional literacy practices, activities, and scripts. The two classrooms involved in this case study were situated in the primary grades and were not mandated to take State standardized tests. Studies are needed to further examine the influence of PARCC and Smarter Balance assessments on literacy instruction and student literacy learning in the intermediate grades because, as Au (2007, p.258) suggests, the curriculum is “highly dependent on the structures of the tests.”

The majority of their understandings of the CCSS and its implementation came from the County and the school’s literacy specialist who had attended some state and regional CCSS related conferences. These understandings were framed by the County. Coburn (2006) states that frames are similar to making a case for, or defending, certain actions. In this case the County put forth a frame for CCSS implementation that was accepted by both classroom teachers. By the end of the first year, Ms. Gabe began to present her own counter frames for the pacing of the standards throughout the quarters, but neither teacher stated any questions or objections to the implementation or assessments of the standards as posed by the County.

State influence on implementation. Teacher planning and instruction were also influenced by materials and unit lesson plans that were suggested by the State DOE. These suggested lessons and other digital resources could be accessed electronically on the DOE's website. The DOE unit lesson plans were presented as models for ELA instruction. Ms. McCree stated that "they did not have to use them" but they felt that initially they needed the support. Ms. Gabe and Ms. McCree originally planned to follow these unit lessons to become acquainted with the ELA standards, instruction, and student products. Some of the DOE-suggested text materials were provided by the County or schools, and while Ms. McCree said the school had been "working really hard to get books," both teachers stated that they had to purchase several of the materials for instructional use. Ms. Gabe soon discovered that she did not like the pacing and restrictions of following the scripted lessons and began to pick and choose from the available resources, occasionally adapting a lesson plan. Ms. McCree and her grade level team followed the DOE units more closely for the first half of the year, but became highly selective of lessons and materials after the holiday break as they felt more comfortable in their implementation.

Grade level influence on implementation. For schools to successfully achieve CCSS implementation, Riddele (2013) has listed school collaboration as among the top five essential for achievement, teachers should learn together, from one another, and engage in high-level instructional conversations. Likewise, in this study, each teacher planned a portion of her literacy instruction with her grade level team. The grade level teams met once a week, more if needed, and

brainstormed lessons, activities, and formative assessments as they followed the County's pacing guide for covering standards in their quarterly timeframes. While the first grade team planning was a collaboration in which each teacher selected what she liked for instruction and then created her own additional plan, the second grade team planned as a group effort. Each teacher in second grade took portions of the daily instruction that were seen as her strong points and developed lesson plans that aligned with the ELA standards and County rubrics. Ms. McCree said that these could be modified or added to for her classroom, but often felt as though it was like using "cookie cutter" lessons for instruction because it was like everyone else's.

Classroom level influence on implementation. While the CCSS may be seen as an attempt at a nationally unified curriculum (Cuban, 2012), past research tells us not to overlook the role of the individual teacher on educational policy and curriculum implementation (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 1992; Datnow & Castellano, 2000; Powell, 1996; Prawat, 1992; Remillard & Bryans, 2004). Both teachers took into account the needs of their individual classrooms and students. Of the first grade classes, Ms. Gabe had the largest number of children with IEP's or upper RtI tier plans for support, in addition to students whose primary language was other than English. Ms. Gabe accommodated her ELA instruction by providing lots of small group and individual needs-based support lessons and conferencing opportunities. She also conducted frequent formative assessments to monitor student mastery of standards. Ms. McCree had a high number of bilingual speakers and included multimodal literacy learning opportunities in her ELA

instruction. She also stopped frequently in her lessons to ask children questions based on the ELA standards and focus on academic or complex vocabulary. The concern for helping English Language Learners master the ELA CCSS is high (Swigard, 2012). The CCSS requires that teachers provide their ELLs with the tools they need to be successful with the standards. As Swigard (2012) describes, teachers have a huge scope of what needs to be done to help ELLs access the standards, but are overwhelmed by trying to discern the “how” of daily instructional strategies.

Summary of Research Question 2. As Coburn (2001) states, formal and informal structures and alliances shape the ways in which policy influences classroom. The structures of the County, State, and school influenced how the ELA CCSS moved from policy to the individual teacher plans for literacy instruction. Instructional planning within itself involves “a complex, simultaneous juggling” of much information about policies, school contexts, children, and subject matter, school practices, and policies (McCutcheon, 1980, p.20). The teachers ELA instruction was influenced by the State’s adoption of the CCSS and the PARCC. They also created lesson plans which were influenced by the State’s DOE unit and material recommendations. The County influenced how the teachers defined the ELA standards, how and when they should be incorporated into ELA instruction, what students should be expected to do in relation to the standards, as well as how student mastery of the ELA standards should be assessed. The school encouraged the grade levels to collaborate and form a shared understanding of the standards and standards-based instruction. Together with the

school's literacy specialist, the grade levels developed literacy instruction plans with certain grades providing more uniformity in their literacy instruction than others. Last, the implementation of the ELA standards was interpreted and incorporated by the individual classroom teacher who worked to teach the standards in a way that would best fit the needs of her class. Bigham and Ray (2012) remind us, that despite standardized curricula and regardless of political pressures, "educators must never forget that they have been trained and are typically the most knowledgeable individuals in their community about pedagogy, curriculum, instruction, and assessment" (p.9).

Research Question 3: What instructional opportunities are created in the enacted literacy curriculum?

The instructional practices and learning opportunities provided to the children in the enacted curriculum are reflective of teachers' perceptions about policy, curriculum, and instructional beliefs (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 1992; Powell, 1996; Prawat, 1992). When teachers apply their own beliefs and individual innovations to ELA CCSS instruction, opportunities arise for "productive tensions" (Veresov, 2010). These tensions in this study were described as where the teacher object met with the object of the larger educational system in implementing the CCSS. What is produced by the "productive tension" between teacher and system objects is the third object of the enacted classroom, which portrays how teachers individually implemented the ELA CCSS into their literacy instruction.

Ms. Gabe and Ms. McCree were observed 9 times across three months in 75-minute blocks of literacy instruction time. The purpose of the observations was to examine and describe the literacy learning opportunities provided in each teacher's literacy instruction. Information from teacher interviews helped to inform observed instruction. The two teachers were observed providing literacy instruction that consistently supported the ELA CCSS and County requirements. All lessons and student related activities were framed by ELA standards. Each teacher clearly stated the ELA objective during the lesson and provided detailed direction as to what behaviors were expected of their students. Students in both classrooms were familiar with the structure of the literacy block and the classroom norms for teacher instructional practices.

ELA practices. There were many literacy instructional practices that were consistent across both classrooms. Both teachers provided two 15 to 20 minute ELA focused mini-lessons daily that promoted student familiarity with a particular ELA standard and the necessary processes for meeting the standard. The teacher would scaffold student understanding of ELA concepts and ask students to implement them in their reading and writing activities. The Daily 5 management system was used in both grade levels and each teacher crafted activities for the Daily 5 that were meant to specifically promote ELA standards, such as "ask and answer questions of the text" when reading to self or reading to a partner. Ms. Gabe supplied graphic organizers and question cards related to ELA standards to help with these activities while Ms. McCree provided question and activity cards that directed student behaviors towards ELA standard skills. Both

teachers also required evidenced-based answers from their students. When answering questions (orally and written) the children provided evidence from the text (or picture as text) to support their thinking (Berkin, 2012). The proponents of the CCSS believe that children who can produce evidenced based responses will be better analytical thinkers and more prepared for college and career readiness (Bomer & Malock, 2011). Whether or not directly copying text from a passage to support one's thought, as seen in Ms. McCree's practices, will prepare children for college and future careers remains to be seen.

Another similarity in classroom instructional practices was the frequent use of non-fiction texts to meet standards requirements. Both teachers stated that their inclusion of non-fiction had notably increased and that it was more strategically planned to meet multiple standards across content (Gerwetz, 2012). This modification to purposefully include more non-fiction was noted by each teacher as an enjoyable improvement to their instructional practices. While Ms. Gabe used informational texts frequently in whole group, small group, and individual reads, Ms. McCree was observed using informational texts most often during whole group reads, pairing them with fictional texts. I was not able to observe Ms. McCree using an informational book for small group readings. Children in both classrooms were asked at the introduction of each text to infer whether or not the text was fiction or nonfiction. Inferring and predicting based on pictures and titles was also seen daily as teachers introduced new texts. Children were asked to infer and improve their "beyond the text" thinking in both fiction and non-fiction reads. Though each teacher used a different approach to

instruction of non-fiction texts, each teacher provided opportunities to regularly work with non-fiction texts as supported by the *Literary and Informational* standards.

In both classrooms standards could be linked across practices that occurred during the literacy block; in other words, during reading and writing both teachers focused instruction and children's work on similar objectives from the ELA standards. If the children were learning about writing persuasive pieces in their writing block, then during their reading block the teachers would provide instruction about a book that included persuasive elements so that "what we teach in reading is what we teach in writing" to help link the two. This practice is highly encouraged by the CCSS as reading and writing are inextricably connected (Clay, 1982; Ehri, 2000; Gerwetz, 2012).

As part of their writing instruction, both teachers included pre-writing activities for the students as they began new pieces. Pre-writing activities are supported by the ELA standards and required of the County assessment rubrics. Ms. Gabe used the County's Four Square graphic organizer in all of the observations to provide familiarity and consistency for all writing genres. Ms. McCree differed the type of pre-writing tools to best meet the needs of the writing genre and activity. Though the children in first and second grade received differing pre-writing tools, both grades participated in pre-writing writing activities before beginning each piece. While research supports that graphic organizers support children's understanding of story elements and writing of a variety of genres, discussion around the story and student crafted pre-writing

applications are also seen as highly influential (Barrett-Mynes, Moran, & Tegano, 2010; Brown, 2011; Held, 2010). Pre-writing can be most effective when paired with teacher feedback, peer discussion, and high quality shared writing opportunities (Held, 2010). I observed Ms. Gabe creating opportunities for shared writing, peer feedback, and individual conferencing with students about their writing. However, Ms. Gabe's reliance on a highly structured graphic organizer to match the County's writing rubric exactly is indicative Bol's (2004) description of teachers using writing rubrics as a way for children to "fill in the slots" in writing for points to achieve higher scores on writing assessments.

Instructional opportunities. Instructional activities and teacher instructional scripts from each classroom were framed by the ELA CCSS, furthering Black's (2007) finding that teachers' classroom instructional cultures are influenced by outside political factors. However, past research indicates that even with similar curricula teachers will offer students differing types of instructional opportunities based on their own beliefs and perceptions (Powell, 1996; Remillard & Bryan, 2004). While the teachers in this study had similar curriculum objectives and instructional practices, they offered students different individual activities and instructional scripts (Pacheco, 2010). Ms. Gabe believed children learned literacy best through participating in activities with authentic texts and her students frequently participated in activities that required them to respond orally and in writing to texts in small groups, partnerships, and individually with frequent teacher scaffolding (Maniates, & Mahiri, 2011). Ms. McCree believed children learned literacy best through fun and engaging

activities that promoted the use of ELA skills, and her students frequently participated in multimodal reading and writing activities that embraced popular culture (Kissel, 2011). The type of activity varied across classes, as well as the rules, roles, and use of artifacts that were incorporated in the activity. Ms. Gabe's class activities tended to have more flexible student roles and rules for engaging in the activity that allowed for collaborative meaning making when Third Space opportunities arose, while the teacher's role fluctuated between director and mediator (John, 2009). Ms. Mc.Cree's activities tended to have static rules and roles that were dictated by the teacher. Ms. McCree's role remained the director of the activity, focusing on the teacher objective throughout (Pacheco, 2010). This resulted in differing teacher scripts during ELA activities, with Ms. Gabe creating receptive-collaborative scripts that allowed for turn taking between teacher and child initiation of discussion, and Ms. McCree created recitational scripts which consisted mainly of teacher directed questioning and evaluating (Gutierrez, 1993). The differences in activities and scripts influenced the type of literacy learning opportunities provided to students in each class.

Analyzing instructional activities through CHAT provides descriptive and consistent methods for portraying literacy learning opportunities in the enacted curriculum. Three types of analysis were used to describe teacher practices, activities, and scripts of instructional discourse patterns. CHAT is highly dependent on narratives selected through constant comparative methods of analysis to compare activities within and across cases. Research on the influence of educational policy, curriculum, and high-stakes assessments should include

more than quantitative surveys and qualitative narratives (Dooley & Assaf, 2009). Future qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods studies, such as Coburn's (2006) frame analysis, may more accurately portray the broad spectrum of teacher CCSS implementation.

Educational policy gives no great amount of attention to teacher scripts and classroom discourse, providing only one Common Core standard that addresses discussion (Maloch & Bomer, 2012). It is the discussion within activities that has the power to include or deny children meaning making opportunities, which over time creates patterns of instructional scripts (Gutierrez, 1993). Teacher scripts are linked by Gutierrez (2008) to CHAT analysis because they help to inform the patterns of interactions across activities over time within a given context. Further analysis of scripts is needed to see how scripts influence ELA implementation. Due to the restraints of this study, I was unable to use audio or video recordings for thorough discourse analysis. It is important to understand how different types of discourses and practices are used to develop enacted literacy curricula (Gromyko & Maurice, 2000). Further studies of how teachers create instructional scripts in the enacted curriculum are needed to learn more about instructional opportunities framed by the CCSS.

Summary of Research Question 3. Though each teacher had very similar curricular objectives from the standardized ELA CCSS, the instructional opportunities offered in the two classes were markedly different (Pacheco, 2010). While the ELA CCSS framed most of the teaching practices, each practice was carried out differently based on the teacher. Ms. Gabe's practices followed a

receptive-collaborative script while Ms. McCree's followed recitation scripts. The differing activities and scripts provided children with different roles and rules for participation, leading to different meaning making opportunities.

From Policy to Practice: Implications of ELA CCSS Implementation

This study adds to the small body of literature concerning policy's effect on the ground level of education in which teachers interpret and implement educational policy as individuals and within professional communities (Coburn, 2001). If educational policy were the key to improving America's educational system and student international ranking, then why did enacting NCLB not have all children reading on grade level (Shannon, 2013)? Perhaps it is because the contexts in which education occurs is as powerful, if not more so, as policy and deserves as much attention (Dooley & Assaf, 2009; Kober, Renter, & Stark, 2012). While this study highlights some of these contextual influences on policy, there are limitations in which to consider. The study took place in consecutive primary grades in the same district at the same school. This allowed for a more thorough description of the cultural historical context for studying ELA CCSS implementation. The context of the study was also beneficial for understanding the differences in curricular enactment at the individual classroom level with teachers and students as agents of influence. More field studies of ELA CCSS implementation are needed in a variety of contexts, including classrooms in a variety of grade levels, schools, districts, states, and cultural communities.

Standards are designed to be an "ideal" set of instruction. They are influenced by the federal, state, and local governments, as well as organized

interest groups such as the Gates Foundation and other various individuals who have stake in curriculum instruction (Elmore & Sykes, 1992). Curricula are social constructs for instruction that support and are supported by educational policies and the CCSS (Shannon, 2013). Teachers across the nation are experiencing this phenomenon of developing shared understanding and instructional practices for implementing the CCSS (Phillips & Hughes, 2012). Similarly, the two teachers in this study were encouraged to work collaboratively with other primary grade teachers in the school and county to implement the ELA CCSS. The administration commented that this collaboration allowed teachers to draw on expertise and experiences of one another to improve each other's understanding and instruction of the CCSS. Grade level teams worked in communities to develop shared goals with the assistance of the instructional specialist to examine their teaching and student performance.

Yet from the ideal to the actualized, standards and curriculum are interpreted by each person that interacts with them at every stage. Policy and prescribed curricula are translated by those within the network of its enactment (Edwards, 2011). While teaching is influenced by societal and institutional contexts, it is also dependent upon the individual teacher's understanding of the policy and instructional practices (Fisher, 2012). The County and school in this study provided ongoing professional development and planning time to allow teachers to work collaboratively to form a shared understanding of the CCSS and what they would mean for teachers' ELA instruction. Despite these attempts to standardize curriculum understanding and instruction, the ways in which teachers

carried out their individual instructional practices still varied, which in turn provided children with differing instructional opportunities to access the same curriculum (Pacheco, 2010).

History has shown that when given prescribed curriculum scripts, teachers will create an enacted curriculum that better aligns with their teaching philosophies and beliefs about student learning (Remillard & Bryans, 2004). Teachers have differing levels of “buy in” or fidelity to the curriculum that may change over time with gained experience within the curriculum (Datnow & Castellano, 2000; Smagorinsky et al., 2002). In this study it is seen that Ms. McCree has greater levels of acquiescence in the beginning of the year by more strictly adhering to choice unit lesson plans and resources from the State, County, and grade level, but became more accommodating with her lessons as she experienced higher levels of comfort with her ELA instruction (Smagorinsky et al., 2002). Ms. Gabe more frequently accommodated her ELA instructions from the first few weeks of implementation, and by the last third of the year, had moved to outright resistance when it came to following some grade level, school, and County requisites and recommendations by dropping assessments, asking administration for changes in instructional blocks and quarterly assessments, and talking to the County instructional director about changing the pacing (Smagorinsky et al., 2002).

The ways in which the teachers shaped their instructional practices, learning activities, and classroom scripts to align with the ELA CCSS differed based on teacher beliefs as well as their teaching environment (Au, 2007).

Though Ms. Gabe noted difficulty in finding time and providing support across ability levels for her diverse students, she purposefully reflected on ways to differentiate her instruction based on student needs. She consciously made decisions about creating small group learning opportunities and one-on-one conferences to best fit individual needs. The type of instructional activity, artifacts used, and object of the lesson varied in Ms. Gabe's practices based on her monitoring of student skill mastery of the ELA standards. She believed this to be the most effective way for her to provide support for helping struggling students and children with differing language backgrounds master the standards and standard assessments. She also adapted assessments by providing extra support to select groups of students, and by having her instructional assistant work with one or two students at a time. The students receiving additional support were either second language learners or children with IEP's for attention disorders. She stated that finding the time to provide extended support and additional learning opportunities for children who were not yet developmentally ready to take on certain standards was one of the most difficult aspects of implementing the more rigorous standards.

Ms. McCree jokingly called differentiating ELA instruction her "bugaboo" for the year because she too struggled to find time and space for providing support to specific children who struggled to show mastery of the ELA standards. Starting lesson plans and assessments from scratch, adapt DOE unit plans, or revamping previous ones, was incredibly time consuming. Ms. McCree reported she and her grade level teammates were just "trying to make it through"

the first year of implementation. Ms. McCree monitored student progress and addressed the areas which needed strengthening from the group as a whole in her ELA mini-lessons and small group instructions. During practice assessments Ms. McCree provided explicit directions and offered process support for answering questions both one-on-one and whole group. Ms. McCree's students received support on specific skills during the grade level's RtI time. Ms. McCree frequently used County and literacy specialist provided artifacts to help frame her small group instruction. Ms. McCree believed she was able to best support her large number ELL students and students who were still approaching grade level by providing instructional activities that were fun, engaging, and multimodal in nature.

Ms. McCree did differ her instruction for select students, though it was not effectively based in promoting children's capabilities. As noted in the scripts section, two children were allowed more opportunities to communicate and mediate activities during whole and small groups. Additionally, the one student in the ESOL program who spoke little English did not participate in whole or small group instruction. During observations she worked most often at the computer listening station, with phonics workbooks, or copying the words from a picture book. Only once did I see her join the group during a read aloud. Ms. McCree stated literacy instruction towards the ELA standards and assessments came namely from the ESOL teacher. Her instruction was therefore observed to be differentiated for some, but not all student, though differentiation was not directly related to teaching ELA standards.

The study is limited by its participants. Both participants were experienced veterans of their profession with multiple years' experience in their grade level. Teachers who are new to the profession or to the grade level may have very different experiences implementing the ELA standards. These teachers were also considered leaders in their school community and selected for County training to be the school's professional development providers. Teachers who had not attended County trainings may have differing understandings of the ELA standards and their implementation. The experiences and ELA implementation of these two teachers may be seen as unique, and provide a unique perspective of how two experienced and highly informed teachers perceived and implemented the standards. It is important to note that while these teachers remained positive, they each described challenges and struggles coinciding with feelings of stress, pressure, confusion, and uncertainty that were said to be overwhelming at times. If experienced professional leaders in their field experienced ELA implementation in this way, one may question how novice or less informed teachers may be experiencing CCSS implementation. More qualitative and quantitative studies are needed to better understand how teachers are experiencing and perceiving their experiences with CCSS implementation.

This study portrays the influence of the individual teacher on the enacted curriculum. Children from each class experienced similar types of instructional practices but differing learning opportunities through teacher activities and scripts. The ways in which teachers planned and implemented instruction was influenced by their beliefs and the degrees to which they would adapt their

implementation, instruction, and assessments of the standards based on these beliefs. Future research is needed to expand on the role of teacher perception and beliefs and how these influence ELA instruction. This study indicates that teachers experienced differing levels of pressure to conform to suggested implementation practices and constructs, implying that more studies are needed to examine teachers' perceptions of their own power to implement the ELA CCSS and create ELA instructional practices based on their beliefs about literacy instruction and children's literacy development (Thomas, 2013).

Nationally teachers are reporting that they feel less comfortable about teaching the ELA CCSS to children with disabilities or whose first language is not English (Education Research Center, 2013, p.23). Individual teachers are responsible for adapting ELA instruction and formative assessments to meet the needs of their classroom learners. Both classrooms in this study had children with IEP's who received minor accommodations for instruction and assessment and children with limited English proficiency. High levels of teacher accommodation of instruction may be needed for teachers to successfully help students with limited English proficiency access the ELA CCSS (Hakuta & Bunch, 2013; Swigard, 2012). Teachers in this study varied on their methods for providing tools for children to access the ELA CCSS, ranging from one-on-one conferencing to viewing literacy instruction as a responsibility of the ESOL teacher and providing phonics worksheets.

ELA CCSS instruction and "data-driven" decisions. The ELA CCSS are a set of curriculum standards that provide for "what" should be taught to America's

children given points of time, but not an informational source for “how” teachers should provide this set of knowledge (Pearson, 2013). Individual states, counties, schools, grade levels, and teachers have interpreted the meaning of the standards and the desired skills students must master alongside the “how” of the curriculum implementation. In this study the state provided lesson plans and resources for teachers to have an idea of the “how” to provide literacy instruction for the ELA standards. Teachers in this study had different reactions to suggested unit plans and resources, and therefore used them at differing levels of fidelity (Datnow & Castellano, 2000). The County created rubrics to provide more specific requirements for teachers to teach and assess student skill mastery, including pacing guides to inform teachers when to teach assess specific standards. They also provided trainings on data-driven practices to aid teachers in their planning process, and required teachers to keep data binders on student assessment performance.

Loeb (2013) calls “data-driven decision making” the mantra of recent educational reform. Data-driven practices are linked to better performance on standardized test scores, and the school and County considered the quarterly benchmark assessments to be important data points to prepare for future standardized tests (Zubrzycki, 2012). While data-driven practices have shown improvement to standardized test scores (Mandinach, 2012), they also create assessment-centered instruction that threatens to narrow and fragment curriculum to what is easily assessed rather than what is most important for learning (Assaf, 2012) and causes added teacher anxiety (Dunn, Airola, Lo, & Garrison, 2013). I

reiterate the question of Cole, Hulley, and Quarles (2009), does quantitative assessment data always have to drive the curriculum and instruction? What are the affordances and constraints of a data-driven education?

ELA assessment and literacy instruction. Prawat (1992) describes teachers' struggles to decide which should be a priority as searching for a balance of providing developmentally appropriate lessons to individuals and groups while being faithful to the curriculum obligations to which they are held accountable. Even though both were primary grade teachers, their instruction was influenced by the PARCC and the County ELA assessments. Each teacher tried to balance instructional decisions about their literacy practices between the pressures of new ELA standards and assessments with meeting the needs of the children (Assaf, 2008). Ms. Gabe worried that in first grade teachers had been so concerned about teaching the new standards that they had not stopped to take inventory of what the children needed, and struggled to find a balance between providing subject-centered and learner-centered instruction. Ms. McCree also reported feeling uncertain about how to cover such complex standards with children who still struggled with more basic skills, a concern similar to many teachers who question moving on to critical thinking skills before mastering the basic literacy components. Educational policy and high-stakes testing influence teachers' perception of their instruction and professional selves especially when they shoulder the accountability for student success on standardized assessments (Assaf, 2008). In second grade especially, Ms. McCree felt pressure to cover the standards despite individual levels of need due to preparing children for

standardized testing in third grade. Additionally she discovered midway through the school year that the County was mandating second graders take a CCSS assessment that would be given again when they started third grade.

These findings align with previous research which states that high-stakes testing climates create a distinct lack of time to provide reading intervention as part of daily instruction, as it is greatly influenced by standardized tests (Blanton, Wood, & Taylor, 2007). Standardized tests have long held influence over teachers' instructional practices (Bol, 2004; Coburn, 2001; Faulkner & Cook, 2006; Hoffman, 2005). Vogler (2006) found correlations between assessment factors influencing teachers' use of instructional practices and time spent on examination preparation. Though teachers in this study claimed they needed more time to work with struggling students on the complex language standards, both teachers dedicated time in at least half of the observations to whole-group assessment and assessment prep. In each class the levels of test taking support were quite high, with Ms. Gabe instructing children how to find the best answer and Ms. McCree telling them how to answer the questions. After seeing teachers provide so much support during assessments, like others, I questioned how children who receive daily accommodations for instruction and assessments will fare on the new CCSS standardized assessments (Thurlow & Quenemoen, 2012). Who will receive ELA assessment accommodations, and who will not? While the PARCC does have accommodations for hearing and physical impairments, such as automated text reading, scribe programs, and word prediction capabilities, the test itself is up to eight and a half hours with few accommodations in place for

children with attention deficits or limited English capabilities. These accommodations will only be offered for children with approved IEP documentation that match PARCC requirements. Ms. McCree and I discussed her concerns about the County's infrastructure. If it could not support the large number of teacher users without difficulties, how could it support an entire county population of third through fifth graders taking the PARCC assessment? The estimated cost for the 46 states to modify their systems and be capable of sustaining these CCSS assessments are between \$3 to \$12 billion for technology, resources, and professional development training (Shanahan, 2013). Nation-wide states and school systems ponder how they will have enough funding to support local infrastructure, technology, and tech support (Evans, 2012; Truesdale, 2013). In the May 2013 issue of *Education Week*, Davis described the "widespread technical failures and interruptions" of trial runs of the Spring 2013 state online testing as having "shaken the confidence of educators and policymakers" and raised additional "serious concerns" about schools' technological readiness for PARCC and Smarter Balance. Multiple state and local systems are withdrawing from their agreements to participate in PARCC and Smarter Balance assessments due to needed infrastructure, technology, and support (Shanahan, 2013).

Several states are threatening to withdraw from CCSS and testing agreements because states that have already adapted State standardized tests to mimic PARCC and Smarter Balance indicate significantly lower student achievement data. PARCC and Smarter Balance offer item types and methods for scoring that are more rigorous than previous assessments (Ujifusa, 2012). In 2012,

a few states adapted their standardized tests to mimic the CCSS assessment and student proficiency rates dropped by 40-54% from the previous year (Shanahan, 2013). Florida was the most notable case, going from above 80% to only 28% student proficiency (Shanahan, 2013). Evidence of this drastic shift in measured proficiency may be seen within this study due to the higher rigor in standards and standards assessment. Teachers were concerned about reporting to parents that their children were not yet proficient at the beginning and midway points of the year, where in the past most of their students were proficient to exceeding much earlier in the year. They believed that it was going to take some adjustment on the parts of the teachers, parents, and school system to understand that it was just going to take children “longer to get there” than it had before because of the rigor of the standards and assessments. Shanahan (2013) mentions these adjustments for expectations as necessary for states that use State tests to promote, hold back, or graduate students. Changes must occur in these policies. In the meantime, like Ms. Gabe and Ms. McCree, teachers must find the most effective way to provide instruction that will result in student success in mastering the ELA standards.

Implementing ELA CCSS and standards-based literacy practices. This study was based on my desire to know “What will one see in the enacted literacy curriculum when one walks into a classroom in which the ELA CCSS have been implemented?” What will the teacher be doing? What will the children be doing? How might it differ with the ELA CCSS than with previous literacy curricula? Many have questioned if there would be a difference in the way teachers presented instruction after CCSS adoption (Rebora, 2013). I believed that the best

way to study the classroom literacy culture was by examining the activities in which the teachers and students participated (Engeström, 1999). Informed by observations and teacher interviews, I noted common literacy instructional practices across cases that were framed by ELA standards (e.g. ELA mini-lessons, ELA assessment focused activities, cross curricular activities linking of ELA standards). This reiterates findings from previous research which provide that extended and local environments play a role in the implementation of curriculum and policy in the enacted literacy curriculum (Garcia, 2011; Lee, 2011).

Even more drastically than the State, the County requirements and curricular mandates influenced the teacher's literacy instruction, illustrating that mandated curricula changes as teachers conform to stakeholder expectations (Lee, 2011). Observed literacy instructional practices, which teachers stated were created to fulfill ELA requirements, made it apparent that cultural and social reproductions influence even newly implemented curricula (Garcia, 2011; Shannon, 2013). Yet I also observed that each individual teacher's interpretation and implementation influenced the types of literacy activities provided, student learning opportunities offered, and levels of student support given (Au, 2007; Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 1992; Powell, 1996; Prawat, 1992).

Standards-based reforms may generate tensions between new and old instructional practices (Garcia, 2011). The response to this tension is where new practices are made. Sometimes external pressures to conform to curriculum may run counter to teacher beliefs (Datnow, & Castellano, 2000). When the activity system of the educational system and the activity system of the teacher meet,

tensions may define how teachers respond to the intermingling of their own objects and the objects of the larger system. These tensions can determine the outcome of the third object, which may be observed in how teachers implement the curriculum through instruction (Engeström, 1995; Veresov, 2010).

Similar Policy Context, Different Outcomes

In this study, two primary grade teachers in the same community, at the same school, using similar State and County curriculum standards, using similar instructional practices, provided different literacy learning opportunities in their enacted literacy curriculum. Curriculum and policy are interpreted by the individual, which influences the enacted curriculum in each classroom (Shannon, 2005). Teachers base these interpretations on their own individual beliefs (Powell, 1996) and funds of knowledge (Moll, 1992). Even when teachers have similar beliefs about curriculum and instruction, individual contexts have influence over the enacted literacy curriculum (Dooley & Assaf, 2009). Ms. Gabe's experience as a school literacy support teacher prior to returning to first grade, the differences in her professional development, being on the literacy assessment panel, and how her grade level functioned were possible contextual differences that influenced her instruction. Additionally, in second grade Ms. McCree felt more pressure to prepare students for the next year's State standardized assessment and had the added pressure of being in the only primary grade level to undergo CCSS testing as mandated by the County. Teachers who are responsible for preparing their students for high stakes tests create a classroom curriculum that is driven by

assessments and center on teacher-focused instructional methods (Faulkner & Cook, 2006).

Ms. Gabe's activities were collaborative in nature and relied on teacher and student scripts to engage students in socially constructed meaning making opportunities. Ms. McCree's activities were more teacher directed with teacher to child interaction and evaluation. Ms. Gabe's activities were more traditional in their format, while Ms. McCree's activities focused on developing multiple literacies (Gertwetz, 2012). The activities were similar in object but differed in artifact use, rules, and student roles. These activities were observed over time to help develop concepts of the teacher's educational scripts.

Ms. Gabe's instructional activities were framed by receptive-collaborative scripts. The children initiated comments and were allowed space within the discourse. Ms. Gabe used children's comments to extend meaning making opportunities with follow up statements and connections to the overall ELA standard objective (John, 2009). It is suggested that by asking follow up questions the teacher is creating conditions that resemble assessments (John, 2009). While Ms. Gabe frequently asked follow up questions related to ELA standards, she also included children's scripts in the literacy activities. Working collaboratively in activities help children frame tasks and mediate self-regulation of ELA skills and behaviors (Blanton, Wood, & Taylor, 2007). Both teachers aimed to provide instruction that would guide students to ask and answer questions based on the ELA standards in their own independent practices.

Ms. McCree's instruction was often teacher-centered, and her instructional activities were framed by recitational scripts of teacher-dominated conversation and IRE patterns. Children's comments were evaluated based on the ELA standard objective and discourse was directed towards the next step in the teacher object without providing space for extension of student script (Burns & Myhill, 2004). This type of script lends to students taking up more passive roles (Speizman, Wilson, & Smetana, 2011) while scripts that follow up on student responses build or expand upon student comments can be stimulating and used as a means to collaboratively construct meaning (Burns & Myhill, 2004). Ms. McCree's scripts often provided explicit whole group instruction to model desired student behaviors framed by the ELA CCSS, a strategy which benefits struggling readers (Taylor et al., 2009). Teachers today work within a heavily accountable teaching culture in which instruction is highly objectives based, fast-pasted, and teacher directed. This culture often leads to children experiencing more whole class instruction with discourse patterns that are mainly teacher questions with little time to respond or extend their thinking (Burns & Myhill, 2004, p.47). This socio-culturally framed study is a descriptive portrayal of how educational policy influences the enacted literacy curriculum in the individual classroom, specific to the first year of implementation of the CCSS. In conclusion, it is a limited portrayal of ELA CCSS implementation at the ground level. Yet findings from this study begin to paint a picture of how the curriculum and assessment adoption have vastly influence teachers' literacy instructional practices. As stated by Ms.

McCree, the effects of the adoption of the CCSS in 46 states on teaching practices and student learning remain to be seen.

Conclusion

This study contributes to the paucity of cultural-historically framed research on how educational policy influences the literacy learning opportunities in the enacted curriculum (Johnson 2003; Moje, 2004; Pacheco, 2012). Results from this study indicate that educational policy, nested levels of context, and specifically the individual teacher influence the literacy learning opportunities presented in the enacted curriculum. Further studies are needed to learn more about the phenomenon of the ELA CCSS's influence on teacher instruction and student literacy learning.

The current study showcases many issues concerning societal and cultural influences on the implementation of the CCSS and the enacted curriculum (Garcia, 2011; Lee, 2011). It also highlights the role of individual teachers as curriculum makers through specific learning opportunities provided in each classroom (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992). The two teachers in this study are both veteran teachers and highly trained on the CCSS in comparison to their peer counterparts. One is left to ponder how might the implementation of the CCSS differ with novice teachers, teachers who have not been given as much information and support, and teachers who work in different settings with different classroom demographics? What factors influence how teachers perceive the CCSS and their instruction after standards implementation? Was it the difference in Ms. Gabe's training and experiences with the ELA professional development and assessment team that empowered her to approach the principal and the County's literacy director to push for change? Was it her epistemological beliefs about children's learning and

development? Did she feel less pressure since she was not being formally assessed by the County for CCSS implementation progress, and her students were not about to transition into a testing grade? In other words, what motivates teacher agency towards being curriculum makers as they implement the standardized CCSS? Will teachers' sense of agency differ after the PARCC and Smarter Balanced assessments begin in the 2014-2015 school year? How will the enacted curriculum and day-to-day learning opportunities differ after the assessments are released? As seen in the current study, parents are ill informed to handle changes in the curriculum; much less the change in the way critical standardized assessments will affect children's proficiency scores and the consequences possible proficiency decline (Shanahan, 2013). With families and the public dependency on educators, as they are being asked to "trust us" when it comes to their children's education, will educators prepare families for the shift in testing scores? Will educators be prepared for this shift in testing? In depth studies are needed to answer these questions and more in this time of "national standardized change" in our country's educational system.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Semi-Structured Protocols

Title: Investigating Teacher Instruction or literacy learning activities based upon the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards

Qualitative Interview Protocol

Introduction: Interviews will take place in the offices or classrooms of participants. After greetings and pleasantries, a brief description of the purpose of the research will begin the interviews. This will be followed by a basic summary of any past interviews and observations. Time will be allowed for teachers to comment or clarify. Next the participant will be asked if there are any questions before we proceed.

Research Purpose: The purpose of this research is to develop an understanding of how teachers implement ELA CCSS into their literacy learning instruction.

Interview Questions: Each set of interview questions is subject to modification based on the responses of participant feedback. Participants may receive probing questions to encourage them to share more about each protocol. Member checks will occur in the third interview, and participants will be given the opportunity to respond orally or in written format.

Administrator Questions:

- 1) Could you describe any aspects of ELA Common Core State Standards that are similar to past Georgia State Standards?
- 2) (If administrator responds with similarities from question one) If you believe there are some similarities between previous standards and the new ELA CCSS, could you comment on how these similarities may help teachers transition into ELA CCSS implementation?
- 3) How have staff at your school prepared for the ELA Common Core State Standards?
- 4) What kinds of future plans might be used for helping your staff to address ELA CCSS ?

Teacher Interview One: (Informal Interview with Teachers thanking them for participating and asking about their literacy block and literacy practices before I observe)

1. Could you please tell me about your literacy block? What does that (time frame) look like?
2. Tell me about how you plan your literacy block to meet current objectives.
3. What kinds of literacy activities do you include in your instruction?
4. What aspects of your instruction do you think are helpful for the development of young children's literacy skills?

Formal Interviews after observations began.

Teacher Interview Two:

- 1) Tell me about the opportunities you have had to examine the Common Core State Standards for English Language Instruction.
- 2) How do the ELA CCSS compare to previous literacy standards?
- 3) In what ways do you think that they are different?
- 4) What are your personal thoughts about the Common Core State Standards for English Language instruction?
- 5) How do the ELA CCSS fit with your beliefs about literacy learning?
- 6) What are your thoughts about the new ELA CCSS meeting the needs of students with diverse cultures and languages?

Questions for interview three and four were adapted based on the responses from participants in interviews one and two, as well as activities noted in classroom observations.

Teacher Interview Three:

- 1) What aspects of your literacy block have stayed the same after ELA CCSS implementation?
- 2) As you work more with the ELA CCSS, what changes do you see in your planning and instruction due to the formal upcoming change to ELA CCSS?
- 3) What do you notice about the use of ELA CCSS and student learning in your literacy block?
- 4) Could you describe a success or a challenge that may have affected your thoughts about implementing ELA CCSS in your literacy block?

Teacher Interview Four:

- 1) As you move further into the first year's implementation of ELA CCSS, how are you feeling about implementing the CCSS in your literacy block?
- 2) Could you describe any thing(s) about your literacy block with the CCSS implementations that you are excited about either from this year or looking forward to next year? What aspects about implementation of CCSS in literacy do you have concerns or questions about?

- 3) Could you describe any modifications you may be considering for your ELA instruction next year?

- 4) Looking at my observation notes, I am noticing “XXXXXXXXXX” and would like you to take a look at my discussion of the activity I have seen taking place during the reading block. Your input around these observations would be very enlightening. If I leave this with you, would you provide feedback? There are several options for doing this. If you want to just write your thoughts right on this copy and send them to me that is great. If you prefer to, discuss it in person, we can schedule another short chat. Or, you can call me and we can talk on the phone. If you have any questions I want to answer them.

APPENDIX B

Data Collection Management Table

Type	Date and time	Subject(s)	Location	Length	Notes
Teacher Interview 1	December 6 th , 2012 10:10-10:43	GB	GB's back table in her room, door closed	33 minutes	
Teacher Interview 1	December 6 th , 2012 11:05-11:43	MC	CC's back table in her room, door closed	38 minutes	
Administration Interview	December 7 th 2:45-3:10 pm	AD	In chairs facing each other in her office, doors closed	25 minutes	Originally scheduled for the Dec. 4 th before my interview with the teachers but she had to reschedule due to her coming down with the flu
Teacher Observation 1	December 11, 2012 9:30-10:45 a.m.	MC	Her classroom	75 minutes	
Teacher Observation 2	December 12, 2012 9:30-10:45	MC	Her classroom	75 minutes	
Teacher Observation 1	December 13, 2012 8:30-9:45	GB	Her classroom	75 minutes	
Teacher Interview 2	December 19, 2012 (10:10-10:37)	GB	Her classroom	27 minutes	
Teacher Interview 2	December 19, 2012 (11:00-	MC	Her classroom	35 minutes	

	11:35)				
Teacher Observation 2	January 8, 2013 (8:30-9:45)	GB	Her classroom	75 minutes	
Teacher Observation 3	January 9, 2013 (8:30-9:45)	GB	Her classroom	75 minutes	
Teacher Observation 3	January 10, 2013 9:30-10:45	MC	Her classroom	75 minutes	
Teacher Interview 3	January 23, 2013 (10:05-10:42)	GB	Her classroom	37 minutes	
Teacher Interview 3	January 23, 2013 (11:05-11:39)	MC	Her classroom	34 minutes	
Teacher Observation 4	January 24, 2013 (9:30-10:45)	MC	Her classroom	75 minutes	This was a make up for the week that I was absent. It was supposed to be a full make up week of 2 for CC and 1 for Gb but there were illnesses and school closings, so only CC was observed once.
Teacher Observation 4	January 29, 2013 (8:30-9:48)	GB	Her classroom	79 minutes	
Teacher Observation 5	January 30, 2013 (8:30-9:45)	GB	Her classroom	75 minutes	
Teacher Observation 5	January 31, 2013 (9:35-10:50)	MC	Her classroom	75 minutes	
Teacher Observation 6	February 5, 2013	MC	Her classroom		

	(9:30-10:45)				
Teacher Observation 7	February 7, 2013 (9:30-10:45)	MC	Her classroom	75 minutes	
Teacher Observation 6	February 8, 2013 (8:30-9:45)	GB	Her classroom	75 minutes	
Teacher Interview 4	February 13, 2013 (10:10-10:35)	GB	Her classroom	25 minutes	
Teacher Interview 4	February 13, 2013 (11:05-11:36)	MC	Her classroom	26 minutes	
Teacher Observation 7	February 19, 2013 (8:30-9:45)	GB	Her classroom	75 minutes	
Teacher Observation 8	February 20, 2013 (8:30-9:45)	GB	Her classroom	75 minutes	
Teacher Observation 8	February 21, 2013 (9:30-10:45)	MC	Her classroom	75 minutes	
Teacher Observation 9	February 26, 2013 (8:30-9:45)	GB	Her classroom	75 minutes	
Teacher Observation 9	February 27, 2013 (9:30-10:45)	MC	Her classroom	75 minutes	

APPENDIX C

First Grade County English Language Arts Common Core Standards

READING LITERARY (RL)	READING INFORMATIONAL (RI)
➤ Key Ideas and Details	➤ Key Ideas and Details
ELACC1RL1: Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.	ELACC1RI1: Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
ELACC1RL2: Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.	ELACC1RI2: Identify the main topic and retell key details of a text.
ELACC1RL3: Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.	ELACC1RI3: Describe the connection between two individuals, events, ideas, or pieces of information in a text.
➤ Craft and Structure	➤ Craft and Structure
ELACC1RL4: Identify words and phrases in stories or poems that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses.	ELACC1RI4: Ask and answer questions to help determine or clarify the meaning of words and phrases in a text.
ELACC1RL5: Explain major differences between books that tell stories and books that give information, drawing on a wide reading of a range of text types.	ELACC1RI5: Know and use various text features (e.g., headings, tables of content, glossaries, electronic menus, icons) to locate key facts or information in a text.
ELACC1RL6: Identify who is telling the story at various points in a text.	ELACC1RI6: Distinguish between information provided by pictures or other illustrations and information provided by the words in a text.
➤ Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	➤ Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
ELACC1RL7: Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.	ELACC1RI7: Use illustrations and details in a text to describe its key ideas.
ELACC1RL8: (Not applicable to literature)	ELACC1RI8: Identify the reasons an author gives to support points in a text.
ELACC1RL9: Compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in stories.	ELACC1RI9: Identify basic similarities in and differences between two texts on the same topic (e.g., in illustrations, descriptions, or procedures).
➤ Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity	➤ Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity
ELACC1RL10: With prompting and support, read prose and poetry of appropriate complexity for grade 1.	ELACC1RI10: With prompting and support, read informational texts appropriately complex for grade 1.

READING FOUNDATIONAL (RF)
➤ Print Concepts
ELACC1RF1: Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print.
a. Recognize the distinguishing features of a sentence (e.g., first word, capitalization, ending punctuation).
➤ Phonological Awareness
ELACC1RF2: Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes).
a. Distinguish long from short vowel sounds in spoken single-syllable words.
b. Orally produce single-syllable words by blending sounds (phonemes), including consonant blends.
c. Isolate and pronounce initial, medial vowel, and final sounds (phonemes) in spoken single-syllable words.
d. Segment spoken single-syllable words into their complete sequence of individual sounds (phonemes).
➤ Phonics and Word Recognition
ELACC1RF3: Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.
a. Know the spelling-sound correspondences for common consonant digraphs.
b. Decode regularly spelled one-syllable words.
c. Know final -e and common vowel team conventions for representing long vowel sounds.
d. Use knowledge that every syllable must have a vowel sound to determine the number of syllables in a printed word.
e. Decode two-syllable words following basic patterns by breaking the words into syllables.
f. Read words with inflectional endings.
g. Recognize and read grade-appropriate irregularly spelled words.
➤ Fluency
ELACC1RF4: Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.
a. Read on-level text with purpose and understanding.
b. Read on-level text orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings.
c. Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.

WRITING (W)
➤ Text Types and Purposes
ELACC1W1: Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or the name of the book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply a reason for the opinion, and provide some sense of closure.
ELACC1W2: Write informative/ explanatory texts in which they name a topic, supply some facts about the topic, and provide some sense of closure.
ELACC1W3: Write narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide some sense of closure.
➤ Production and Distribution of Writing
ELACC1W4: <i>(Begins in grade 3)</i>
ELACC1W5: With guidance and support from adults, focus on a topic, respond to questions and suggestions from peers, and add details to strengthen writing as needed.
a. May include oral or written prewriting (graphic organizers).
ELACC1W6: With guidance and support from adults, use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.
➤ Research to Build and Present Knowledge
ELACC1W7: Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., exploring a number of “how-to” books on a given topic and use them to write a sequence of instructions).
ELACC1W8: With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.
ELACC1W9: <i>(Begins in grade 4)</i>
➤ Range of Writing
ELACC1W10: <i>(Begins in grade 3)</i>

SPEAKING AND LISTENING (SL)
➤ Comprehension and Collaboration
ELACC1SL1: Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 1 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
a. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).
b. Build on others’ talk in conversations by responding to the comments of others through multiple exchanges.
c. Ask questions to clear up any confusion about the topics and texts under discussion.
ELACC1SL2: Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.
ELACC1SL3: Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to gather additional information or clarify something that is not understood.
➤ Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas
ELACC1SL4: Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly.
ELACC1SL5: Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.
ELACC1SL6: Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation. (See grade 1 Language standards 1 and 3 for specific expectations.)

APPENDIX D

Second Grade County English Language Arts Common Core State Standards

READING LITERARY (RL)	READING INFORMATIONAL (RI)
➤ Key Ideas and Details	➤ Key Ideas and Details
ELACC2RL1: Ask and answer such questions as <i>who, what, where, when, why,</i> and <i>how</i> to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.	ELACC2RI1: Ask and answer such questions as <i>who, what, where, when, why,</i> and <i>how</i> to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
ELACC2RL2: Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.	ELACC2RI2: Identify the main topic of a multi-paragraph text as well as the focus of specific paragraphs within the text.
ELACC2RL3: Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.	ELACC2RI3: Describe the connection between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text.
➤ Craft and Structure	➤ Craft and Structure
ELACC2RL4: Describe how words and phrases (e.g., regular beats, alliteration, rhymes, repeated lines) supply rhythm and meaning in a story, poem, or song.	ELACC2RI4: Determine the meanings of words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 2 topic or subject area.
ELACC2RL5: Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.	ELACC2RI5: Know and use various text features (e.g., captions, bold print, subheadings, glossaries, indexes, electronic menus, icons) to locate key facts or information in a text efficiently.
ELACC2RL6: Acknowledge differences in the points of view of characters, including by speaking in a different voice for each character when reading dialogue aloud.	ELACC2RI6: Identify the main purpose of a text, including what the author wants to answer, explain, or describe.
➤ Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	➤ Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
ELACC2RL7: Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.	ELACC2RI7: Explain how specific images (e.g., a diagram showing how a machine works) contribute to and clarify a text.
ELACC2RL8: (Not applicable to literature)	ELACC2RI8: Describe how reasons support specific points the author makes in a text.
ELACC2RL9: Compare and contrast two or more versions of the same story (e.g., Cinderella stories) by different authors or from different cultures.	ELACC2RI9: Compare and contrast the most important points presented by two texts on the same topic.
➤ Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity	➤ Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity
ELACC2RL10: By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories and poetry, in the grades 2-3 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.	ELACC2RI10: By the end of the year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, in the grades 2-3 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

READING FOUNDATIONAL (RF)
➤ Print Concepts
Kindergarten and 1 st grade only
➤ Phonological Awareness
Kindergarten and 1 st grade only
➤ Phonics and Word Recognition
ELACC2RF3: Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.
a. Distinguish long and short vowels when reading regularly spelled one-syllable words.
b. Know spelling-sound correspondences for additional common vowel teams.
c. Decode regularly spelled two-syllable words with long vowels.
d. Decode words with common prefixes and suffixes.
e. Identify words with inconsistent but common spelling-sound correspondences.
f. Recognize and read grade-appropriate irregularly spelled words.
➤ Fluency
ELACC2RF4: Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.
a. Read on-level text with purpose and understanding.
b. Read on-level text orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings.
c. Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.

WRITING (W)
➤ Text Types and Purposes
ELACC2W1: Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words (e.g., because, and, also) to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section.
ELACC2W2: Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.
ELACC2W3: Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.
➤ Production and Distribution of Writing
ELACC2W4: <i>(Begins in grade 3)</i>
ELACC2W5: With guidance and support from adults and peers, focus on a topic and strengthen writing as needed by revising and editing.
a. May include prewriting.
ELACC2W6: With guidance and support from adults, use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.
➤ Research to Build and Present Knowledge
ELACC2W7: Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., read a number of books on a single topic to produce a report; record science observations).
ELACC2W8: Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.
ELACC2W9: <i>(Begins in grade 4)</i>
➤ Range of Writing
ELACC2W10: <i>(Begins in grade 3)</i>

SPEAKING AND LISTENING (SL)
➤ Comprehension and Collaboration
ELACC2SL1: Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about <i>grade 2 topics and texts</i> with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
a. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., <i>gaining the floor in respectful ways, listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion</i>).
b. Build on others' talk in conversations by linking their comments to the remarks of others.
c. Ask for clarification and further explanation as needed about the topics and texts under discussion.
ELACC2SL2: Recount or describe key ideas or details from written texts read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.
ELACC2SL3: Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to clarify comprehension, gather additional information, or deepen understanding of a topic or issue.
➤ Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas
ELACC2SL4: Tell a story or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking audibly in coherent sentences.
ELACC2SL5: Create audio recordings of stories or poems; add drawings or other visual displays to stories or recounts of experiences when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.
ELACC2SL6: Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation in order to provide requested detail or clarification. (See grade 2 Language standards 1 and 3 for specific expectations.)

APPENDIX E

Gutierrez's Script Types Constructed in Activity (1993)

Script Types Constructed in Activity		
Recitation	Responsive	Responsive/Collaborative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strict T initiation, S response, T evaluation (IRE) discourse pattern; tightly bounded activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More relaxed IRE discourse sequence with more S responses occurring between T initiation and evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boundaries of activity and discourse are significantly relaxed with more S responses between and within T-S initiations and evaluations; also S responses may build on previous responses (chained) and contribute to the construction of shared knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strict adherence to T's selection of S speakers (S must raise their hands to bid for access to the floor) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaker selection is primarily T designated, but there are some instances of S selection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T frames and facilitates the activity and can respond at any time but keeps utterances and intervention to a minimum; S either self-select, or select other S, minimal T selection of S
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little or no acknowledgment of Ss' self-selections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some T acknowledgment and expansion of S utterances (T-selected and self-selected) into lesson discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More instances of T's acknowledgment of Ss' topic expansions, as well as T and other S incorporation of these expansions into the ongoing lessons discussion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High frequency of T generated subtopics for discussion; T sanctions or ignores S attempts to introduce other subtopics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some T utilization of S generated subtopics in discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More instances of T and S negotiation of ongoing subtopics of discussion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S responses tend to be short (one word/phrase): T does not encourage elaborated response and there is minimal expansion of Ss' responses by T 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S responses tend to be longer and T offers some encouragement for S to elaborate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S responses tend to be significantly longer, chained utterances
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T initiates test-like questions for which there is generally only one correct answer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T initiates questions for which there are several correct answers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • T and S initiate questions for which there are no specific correct answers, as well as questions that are constructed from previous S responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicates implied goal is to contribute specific "right" answers to questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implied goal is a combination of getting the correct answer and/or developing shared understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implied goal is an emphasis on developing shared knowledge with T, but still includes some preference for correct information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denotes minimal opportunities for all class members to participate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denotes increased opportunities for more S (30–50%) to participate in discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denotes opportunity to involve the greatest number of class members (50–90%)

Note. T = teacher, S = students.