A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO PROFESSIONAL LEARNING:
DEVELOPING TEACHERS’ PEDAGOGICAL CONTENT KNOWLEDGE IN LITERACY

by

Jill M. Compello

An education leadership portfolio submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

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ABSTRACT

This portfolio represents a needs-based comprehensive professional learning (PL) initiative developed for a small independent school, serving a special population of students in grades 1-8. The faculty invited me to assess the school's current literacy materials and practices for alignment with Common Core State Standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). The results revealed significant gaps in alignment among literacy-related materials, current classroom literacy instruction, and CCSS (2010) requirements. This misalignment was problematic, because the school serves struggling readers who require grade-level instruction and research-based interventions to remediate gaps in achievement. Also, pre-service candidates from the local university are placed at the school to observe and learn literacy content and pedagogy, and the results suggested a potential disconnect between research-based best practices learned at the university and literacy instruction in the field. Although independent schools are not required to follow CCSS (2010), I identified multiple issues that suggest changes in literacy instruction and literacy-related materials are warranted.

To address these concerns, my improvement goal was to facilitate PL to strengthen reading-related teacher pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) by introducing a systematic approach to research-based reading instruction, aligned to CCSS (2010), emphasizing required instructional shifts. To achieve the goal, I identified several PL objectives (e.g., determine school PL needs, develop matching
I customized PL to meet school needs using information provided by faculty, collected during classroom observations, and observed through examination of instructional materials. I considered the school’s unique organizational needs (e.g., university affiliation, independent school norms, placement of student teachers), range of grades (1-8), student needs, and teacher characteristics. I researched best practices in reading instruction and PL for teachers. Taken together, these data informed a comprehensive approach constructed around the principles that PL: 1) should reflect school needs, 2) should build teachers’ content knowledge, 3) should include modeling of evidence-based pedagogy for the teaching of reading, and 4) should provide opportunities and tools for teachers to try out ideas, receive supportive feedback, and reflect on content and pedagogy.

Knowing that change in teacher practice requires time and support, I recommend the school seek ongoing literacy PL and develop a school-wide plan for literacy instruction that considers aligning literacy materials and instructional approaches to CCSS (2010), a school-wide approach to grade-level literacy instruction, targeted interventions, evidence-based strategy instruction, and utilizing CCSS (2010) Anchor Standards to guide planning. If CCSS (2010) are not adopted, I suggest creating a clear scope and sequence in literacy instruction school-wide by establishing vertically aligned grade-level expectations. I recommend the school examine current accountability policies and develop a systematic school-wide approach to: 1) student assessment, aligned with best practices in collecting and
organizing data to provide evidence of student growth, inform classroom instruction, target interventions, and monitor progress, and 2) teacher evaluation, implementing classroom observation protocols to ensure quality instruction and provide evidence of teacher effectiveness.
Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

In 2009, a group of governors, members of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), led a state-level initiative in response to a national crisis in education created by years of poor test scores (National Center for Education Statistics, 2007), the growing number of students required to enroll in remedial classes upon entering college (National Governors Association, 2008), and complaints from dissatisfied employers. The governors argued that in order for their constituents to compete in a global market, students must exit high school better prepared to enter college or begin a career. In an unprecedented national educational reform effort, CCSSO called on a group of educators, members of higher education, and other experts to develop comprehensive national academic standards. This effort resulted in a set of rigorous K-12 academic standards, The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy Instruction in History/ Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010).

CCSS (2010) delivers a stair-step progression of challenging K-12 exit standards to ensure high school graduates can meet college demands and employers' expectations. The design allows educators, parents, and students to use the standards as a tool to monitor the learning trajectory at one grade level, or across grades, and to determine whether student learning is on track, compared to others in the same grade,
across the nation. Conversely, it can guide stakeholders in identifying potential gaps in instruction. The standards provide a set of benchmarks that identify “what” each student should know, by the end of each grade level, thereby helping to ensure all students exit high school "college- and career-ready."

The states’ decision to adopt CCSS (2010) was voluntary. Prior to making a commitment states weighed current test data, indicating large numbers of students were not currently achieving at a satisfactory level, with the task of enacting even more rigorous standards, requiring higher student achievement. States could consider the instructional shifts required by CCSS (2010) and the decisions that would need to be made at the local level for implementation including methodologies, curriculum, and teacher training. Traditionally, in the field of education, changes are more suggestions than mandates, and slow to take effect (Duncan, 2012; Goertz, Floden, & O'Day, 1996; Thompson, 1993). In stark contrast, a sense of urgency accompanied the development and swift rollout of the CCSS (2010). States could earn Race to The Top (RttT) federal funding incentives, if they adopted the CCSS (2010), published in June 2010, by August 2, 2010 (http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/executive-summary.pdf). RttT was a competitive federal grant program established to “encourage and reward” implementation of educational reform efforts at the state level in four areas, including adopting common standards (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

In order to receive those federal funds, the public school systems and public educators in states opting to adopt CCSS (2010) were required to follow state-level educational directives, such as implementing CCSS (2010) and maintaining state licensing requirements, including ongoing teacher training in the knowledge, skills,
and attitude needed to increase student achievement and improve teacher performance. Public school districts were faced with an extraordinarily short turn-around time and the monumental task of preparing current in-service teachers to implement the mandated CCSS (2010). Districts utilized widely varying approaches to professional development (PD) to begin to prepare current classroom teachers with the pedagogical skills and content knowledge required to implement the standards. In these same states, the extensive policy decisions that govern public schools (e.g., implementing standards, hiring state-licensed teachers, providing teacher training) are not mandated for schools not funded by federal or state sources (e.g., private, independent, and religious schools) but instead are left to the discretion of each school. Accordingly, private, independent, and religious schools in states that adopted CCSS (2010) were not required to do so, or to provide teacher training.

The rush to implementation left little time to communicate with stakeholders about the standards or to prepare teachers with in-depth training. Public debate surrounding the standards began shortly after CCSS (2010) implementation, driven largely by uncertainty as to "why" and "how" the CCSS (2010) would be enacted, and assessed, as well as heated political debate over states' rights and whether this was a federal or state initiative (Pearson & Hiebert, 2013; Skinner, & Feder, 2014; U.S. Department of Education, 2009). At the same time as controversy surrounding CCSS (2010) increased, another educational issue gained attention. A highly publicized report on teacher preparation criticized many university teacher-preparation programs for insufficient preparation of pre-service candidates (National Council on Teacher Quality, 2013). Advocates called for close examination of pre-service teacher education programs to ensure candidates exited with the knowledge and experience
necessary to enter the teaching workplace. They demanded evidence of both the skills and dispositions required of teachers. Together, this largely negative teacher-prep review (National Council on Teacher Quality, 2013), and the higher academic bar set by CCSS (2010), served as a catalyst for many undergraduate education programs to redesign courses and expectations to ensure pre-service candidates could deliver the type of effective, research-based instruction that would be required for school-age students to achieve the standards.

In the period following adoption of CCSS (2010), public school districts struggled with implementation of the new standards that remained optional for private schools. At the same time schools and teachers grappled with the new requirements, universities were under increasing scrutiny to prepare pre-service candidates to teach new CCSS (2010) requirements. What follows is the examination of one private school’s journey to navigate university expectations of current teaching practices and pre-service teacher preparation in an environment where the CCSS (2010) had not yet been adopted.

**Problem Statement**

The independent school in this project, located in an East coast state that adopted CCSS (2010), is not bound by the same state policies that govern local public schools. Situated on a research university campus, it is a small private school serving children in first through eighth grade who experience mild learning differences. School policy decisions (e.g., implementing standards, curriculum choices, instructional approaches) are made autonomously by the school’s Director and teachers. Teachers received a brief overview on CCSS (2010), but the school did not adopt the controversial standards.
The school is uniquely positioned as an independent school because it is also a laboratory school, which is part of a university system, training pre-service teacher candidates. The school has long provided Elementary Teacher Education (ETE) candidates a convenient school setting to complete required field experiences, including classroom observations, methods course placement, and student teaching. University faculty in the School of Education (SOE) set stringent academic and fieldwork requirements to ensure ETE students receive high-quality teacher training. Coursework and fieldwork experiences are designed for pre-service candidates to develop sound instructional practices and pedagogical knowledge related to reading instruction, aligned to CCSS (2010), and to practice these in a supervised school setting. The school's faculty, most of whom are lead teachers and also clinical faculty at the University, serve as cooperating teachers to ETE pre-service teachers completing fieldwork requirements, which includes observing the cooperating teacher during literacy instruction as well as planning and delivering CCSS (2010) aligned literacy lessons. The school's lead teachers serve ETE students in a dual capacity. Within her own classroom, a lead teacher acts as the cooperating teacher for the ETE candidate. Then, this same lead teacher, as clinical faculty, conducts observations and provides feedback for a second pre-service candidate in another teacher’s classroom.

The students who attend the school have been identified with reading difficulties that previously affected their academic success. Research confirms students weakest in reading need the strongest instruction (Shanahan, Callison, Carriere, Duke, Pearson, Schatschneider, & Torgesen, 2010). To mediate students' reading deficiencies, teachers' knowledge about reading instruction (content) and knowledge of instructional methods (pedagogy) should reflect an understanding of
stages of reading development and knowledge of effective research-based practices in reading instruction to move students forward, along the continuum, and accelerate learning. To provide ETE students with clinical experiences that meet the expectations of the College of Education and Human Development (CEHD), the mentor teachers should have a working knowledge of CCSS (2010) and model effective literacy instructional practices in the classroom for pre-service candidates that reflect an integration of pedagogical knowledge (how to teach) and literacy content knowledge (what to teach) to encompass pedagogical content knowledge (PCK).

Shulman (1986) defines PCK for teachers, as a combination of both the knowledge of the content students must learn as well as pedagogical knowledge about how to teach. PCK requires teachers have strong content knowledge about what to teach, in conjunction with the pedagogical knowledge needed to deliver best practices effectively (Shulman, 1986). To help students meet the academic demands required by the standards, developing teacher PCK is an important target. Teachers must have strong knowledge of what must be taught in the domain of reading and writing as required by grade-level standards combined with knowledge of how to teach reading and writing. For example, they must understand the phonological and orthographic structure of words, the development of fluency, and the stages of literacy development (content). They must know which research-based strategies to choose, and how to deliver the content to students (pedagogy). Shulman (1986) argued teachers must have both components of PCK — content and teaching knowledge—to provide students with the strategies they will need to successfully engage with the content.
PCK is a type of knowledge unique to teachers. PCK develops over time, as teachers transform their understanding of subject matter into their ability to teach the content (Shulman, 1986). In order to gain PCK, pre-service teacher candidates rely on observing the cooperating teacher (in this instance clinical university faculty) deliver instruction in the classroom and on receiving feedback to develop teaching skill sets they will rely on in the future (Darling-Hammond, 2012). As clinical faculty preparing pre-service teachers for the classroom, it is critical the teachers serving in this capacity understand PCK, especially as studies indicate new teachers lack PCK (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1990; Gudmundsdottir & Shulman, 1987; Shulman, 1986).

Reading teachers and teachers who elect to serve in the role of mentor teachers to pre-service candidates, especially in a university lab school for struggling readers, might be expected to be well versed in research-based literacy practice and CCSS (2010) requirements. However, the school faculty had not participated in reading-related PD in recent years. Moreover, the school had not adopted CCSS (2010), and the school's faculty members are not required to meet state licensing guidelines for teachers (http://regulations.delaware.gov/AdminCode/title14/200/278.shtml). If teachers lack recent literacy training in reading development, effective research-based reading instruction, explicit and systematic approaches to instruction, and absent literacy standards or a vertically aligned literacy curriculum, then several things are likely. It might be difficult for teachers to determine if reading instruction adequately meets students’ developmental needs or to assign grade-level equivalents. Without an instructional road map (e.g., CCSS, 2010) and explicit instruction, then struggling readers in grades 1-8 might experience gaps in reading instruction. Equally problematic, pre-service candidates at the school might experience a disconnect
between the reading-related content and pedagogy learned in university classes and teacher practice observed in their field placements.

The school’s goal is to remediate student reading deficiencies and transition students back into other schools that may use CCSS (2010), within two to three years. To ensure students receive the reading instruction they will need to achieve this goal, teachers will need to deliver effective research-based literacy instruction, grounded in CCSS (2010). To accomplish this, and to model best practices and provide meaningful feedback to pre-service candidates placed in their classrooms, it is critical faculty demonstrate deep understanding of these topics. In fact, it was awareness of the lack of teacher training in these areas, and cognizance of a need to build knowledge in literacy matters, that prompted the Director and faculty to seek teacher training in literacy to increase their understanding of CCSS (2010) and best practices in research-based reading instruction.

There are two main approaches to delivering teacher training to help teachers gain knowledge and grow professionally: professional development (PD) and professional learning (PL). The two terms sound alike and share similar goals, but they differ in many ways. Often, due to budget and time constraints, teachers “receive” PD in short, one-time workshops, or meetings. In this approach, information is disseminated and teachers assume a passive role. It might not be surprising then that little is known about the effect of PD on teaching or student learning (Garet et al., 2001).

PL research on the other hand suggests teachers learn best when they actively engage in learning opportunities together with peers, in the school setting, over extended time, with coaching support in the classroom (Borko, 2004; Garet et al.,
Technology is frequently integrated into PL design, to make PL more interactive, convenient, and collaborative. Research on PD and teacher learning has led to a more evolved style of PL, focused on active teacher participation, and sustained over time. My Educational Leadership Portfolio (ELP) is grounded in PL methodology; however, I discuss both terms (e.g., PL, PD) throughout the ELP with usage determined by the context or research.

Addressing the Problem

I proposed developing my ELP to address the needs of the organization and to demonstrate leadership by designing, and implementing, a cohesive professional learning (PL) plan for the faculty and Director.

My focus was on strengthening teacher PCK in reading instruction by introducing the faculty to a school-wide systematic approach to reading instruction. The goal of PL was to develop teacher pedagogy by introducing research-based instructional methods in reading and to establish teacher understanding of the reading content required by CCSS (2010), and the three instructional shifts in literacy. These shifts emphasize the increased importance of regular practice with complex texts and academic vocabulary, reading and writing grounded in textual evidence, and building knowledge from the reading of informational and nonfiction texts. The Career Readiness Anchor Standards (CCR Anchor Standards) (2010) defined and framed the reading expectations across the grades.

This methodology included gathering and sharing information with stakeholders, collaborating to plan action steps, designing and delivering a series of interactive PL sessions, and developing opportunities for teachers to practice and receive feedback. PL was constructed around three core principles: 1) developing
teachers' literacy content knowledge, 2) expanding evidence-based pedagogy for the teaching of reading, and 3) creating opportunities and tools for professionals to learn, apply, and reflect on both the content and the pedagogy required for PCK. The school professionals and I, the professional developer, jointly considered the implications drawn by these three principles and the framework they provided when developing a school-wide, systematic approach to reading instruction.

In my ELP, I describe both the research and the needs of the stakeholders that informed the design and delivery of the initiative. To address teacher needs, I planned a comprehensive approach to PL grounded in three areas of research: reading, PL, and PCK. I hoped to introduce teachers to a range of literacy topics, components of research-based literacy instruction. Over the course of the PL, my goal was to build teacher knowledge about each literacy component and to draw explicit connections to how each of these practices, strong on their own, could be integrated into one systematic approach to reading instruction: a school-wide reading model, grounded in CCSS (2010).

Since teachers’ PCK develops over time (Shulman, 1986) and effective PL is delivered over time (Guskey & Yoon, 2009), the PL plan was designed to build teachers' knowledge of the research-based reading practices and related pedagogy, and expand teachers' understanding through a scaffolded approach to PL. The design included a series of knowledge-building sessions, small group follow-up meetings, coaching (e.g., classroom modeling, observation, feedback), teacher resources, and an online site to access and share materials. To guide the reader, the structure of the portfolio and an overview of the information found in each chapter follow.
Organization of ELP

My portfolio is organized into six chapters, followed by references and appendices. Chapter one introduces the complexities of the problem area. In chapter two, I further examine the problem that motivated my PL work. I describe the organizational context, discuss my role in addressing the problem, and introduce the overall improvement goals. Chapter three delineates the improvement strategies, including the action steps taken to assist the organization. In addition, I describe the improvement design and provide specific information about the steps of the process, resources, and time lines. In chapter four, I discuss the results of the improvement strategies. In chapter five, I reflect on my approach to meeting the improvement goals, including what I believe went well and what did not go well. I also offer my thoughts and recommendations about what next steps the school might consider for continued improvement efforts. In chapter six, I continue my reflection with a focus on my own leadership development, which aligns with the University’s conceptual framework for candidates in professional education programs. Finally, the appendices include the artifacts developed to implement the improvement plan.
Chapter 2

PROBLEM ADDRESSED

The University houses several learning centers that operate as laboratory schools for University faculty and students across various disciplines, including education, human development, psychology, nutrition, and physical therapy. Located on the University's Children’s Campus, the school is a specialized center, serving children in grades 1-8 with learning differences. By providing small class sizes and an individualized tutoring program, the school strives to help students experience school success. In collaboration with University faculty and the Office of Clinical Studies (OCS), approximately 200 University students come to this lab school setting each semester to volunteer, conduct research, and complete course requirements. University students observe, mentor, practice small group instruction, administer assessments, conduct research, student teach, complete graduate student internships, and work as graduate assistants.

Organizational Context

The school is both a laboratory school affiliated with the University and an independent school. It is a member of a state association of private, independent, and parochial schools and a member of an independent schools association representing 130 of the Greater Philadelphia region's private schools. Finally, it is a member of the International Association of Lab Schools (IALS).
**Student characteristics.** The school website provides information about curriculum, teacher qualifications, University affiliations, and the student population. Students are between the ages of 6-14 and described as of at least average intelligence but exhibit learning, attention, mild social/emotional, and/or mild behavioral issues that may affect their school success. The grade configuration is first through eighth grade. The school had 68 students enrolled for the school year 2014-2015. The enrollment profile has been similar for the past three years; no students are English language learners and none qualify for federal lunch subsidies because of low income.

Students who attend the school have struggled academically in traditional school settings. Some have received special education services in their previous school setting; some students did not participate in screening, and others were screened, but not found eligible to receive special education services. Upon admission, students receive psychological and educational assessments and a graduate student specializing in School Psychology writes a full report under the supervision of a University professor. Then the Director and staff members write an Accommodation Plan, noting the nature of the disability and possible adverse impact on academics.

The student body of the school lacks diversity. Table 1 provides information on students’ enrollment by race/ethnicity. The average racial minority enrollment is 16%, which is lower than the state average of 25%. The goal of the school is to "identify and ameliorate" areas of academic and behavioral need so that a child can return to a traditional school setting within two to three years. However, students may remain through grade eight.
Table 1  Students’ Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Number Enrolled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2  8th Grade Students Transitioning to High School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Private, Religious</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Charter</th>
<th>Boarding</th>
<th>Total of Grade 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 represents the type of high schools to which students have transitioned in recent years. Upon exiting 8th grade, 15% of the students attended public school over the past three years. The majority of students, 86%, entered a non-public school.

**Achievement data.** It is important to collect and analyze achievement data both before and after a school initiative, to determine if student academic gains result from the work. Typically, three types of assessments are administered and data is available to provide evidence of the progress a student is making: a summative measure (e.g., Terranova), interim assessments (e.g., Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills or DIBELS™), and formative assessments (e.g., progress monitoring, classroom assessments).
Students in grades 1-6 who participate in the school’s tutoring program for reading are administered DIBELS by tutors; however, the classroom teachers do not access these data to plan classroom reading instruction. Usually teachers rely on assessments to inform instruction and to target, or differentiate, instruction based on student needs, as evidenced by data. Assessment is also important for accountability purposes, to share information with parents, to measure the effectiveness of teacher instruction and to judge the effectiveness of the school overall (McKenna & Stahl, 2015).

The Terranova™ is a series of standardized achievement tests used in the United States to assess K-12 student achievement in reading, language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, vocabulary, spelling, and other areas. Since 2013, students in third through eighth grade at the school have taken the Common Core version of the Terranova (Third Edition). The assessment, administered to students in grades 3-8, measures students’ mastery of CCSS (2010) and includes multiple choice, constructed and extended constructed responses, and performance tasks. The publisher claims this version provides a valid and reliable measure of students’ performance “within the context of the Common Core” (http://www.ctb.com/ctb.com/control/ctbProductViewAction?productFamilyId=449&productId=38415&p=products).

Achievement data can be used to compare student academic growth with other students in the same grade across the state or nation; to students at the same grade level at the school; and to document the student's unique growth. The school might use the Terranova results for all these purposes, however the school places an emphasis on individual student achievement, and does not generate grade level
reports. The parents receive their child’s individual profile report, which details the progress the child is making towards mastery of specific standards and how the child ranks nationally in achieving CCSS (2010).

If assessment data, other than individual student reports, had been available, I would have examined these data over several years and included an analysis in the report. Currently, the school does not collect and organize assessment to triangulate data for an individual student, compare achievement in groups of students, or set learning goals. Without student assessment data, my goals for the PL initiative could focus only on the teachers.

**Teacher characteristics.** There are seven classroom teachers and one technology teacher. All of the teachers are Caucasian and one is male. All but one holds a master’s degree, and all hold regular and special education certification. The Director and five of the teachers are Clinical Faculty in the School of Education (SOE). As shown in Table 3, among the eight teachers, 25% have fewer than five years of teaching experience, 25% have more than 20 years, and the other 50% have teaching experience between 10 and 19 years.
Table 3Teachers’ Years of Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
<th>Gr. 1-2</th>
<th>Gr. 3</th>
<th>Gr. 4</th>
<th>Gr. 5</th>
<th>Gr. 6</th>
<th>Gr. 7</th>
<th>Gr. 8</th>
<th>Tech.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 above</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Six full-time classroom assistants are part of the staff. All are “certified” in an approach to literacy instruction from Reading Assist Institute (http://www.readingassist.org). Reading Assist is a multisensory approach to teaching reading. The Reading Assist Institute website provides information from the volunteer organization about training but the process and criteria for certification are not transparent. I could not locate any independent research on the program.

Teacher assistants at the school instruct individuals and small groups of students using a Multisensory Reading Tutoring (MSRT) program aligned to Reading Assist. This instruction is in addition to classroom reading instruction. During MSRT tutoring sessions, teaching assistants use a multisensory approach to teach decoding and other skills. Students progress at their own rate through the program. On the school's website, the MSRT program is described as follows:

In keeping with the programs on which it is based, MSRT takes a phonetic approach to reading instruction. What makes the approach unique is its multisensory focus. Letters that represent the single sounds of speech are presented to the students through the three major pathways into the brain: the ears, eyes and muscles. This linking process integrates the mouth position that forms the sound with the ears that hear it, with the eyes that see it, and the muscles that write it.
Through this integration, the stronger senses support the weaker ones. Students learn to read, write and spell simultaneously. Immediately the new phonogram is synthesized into words that carry meaning and these words are used in sentences and stories for comprehension. The student is asked to read or spell only what s/he has learned through the linkage procedure, thus ensuring success.

The MSRT tutors base instruction on assessments they administer, including DIBELS (https://dibels.uoregon.edu/). They do not plan instruction with classroom teachers. Table 4 indicates the majority of students at the school receive MSRT.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Gr. 1</th>
<th>Gr. 2</th>
<th>Gr. 3</th>
<th>Gr. 4</th>
<th>Gr. 5</th>
<th>Gr. 6</th>
<th>Gr. 7</th>
<th>Gr. 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students in Grade</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students in MSRT</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**School characteristics.** The school has one rule, “Be Kind,” and this philosophy is reflected in the school’s positive climate. The school offers a warm and inviting learning environment for the students and staff. The students are cooperative, well behaved, and engaged in the classroom. Students also receive services from University students, including a daily mentoring period and a student teacher or graduate intern in every classroom. Teaching assistants are frequently in the classroom, MSRT tutoring is available, and access to 1-1 technology is possible. The school enjoys the backing of a supportive group of interested parents. Teachers welcome the opportunity to collaborate and hold high expectations for student success. The desire to initiate a sustained PL experience originated from the Director and staff. The Director of the school is highly visible and engaged with parents, teachers, students, University students, University faculty, and members of the community. She
has been proactive in seeking assistance to align curriculum and practice to the CCSS (2010). Her actions as a leader support a school culture conducive to learning and professional growth. The majority of teachers expressed great interest in learning how to implement a standards-based approach to reading instruction. This interest was evident through their willingness to allow me to observe, interview, gather information, and present to them in small groups over several months. Unlike many organizations considering change, the school asked for assistance. The Director provided flexibility in the schedule to allow for scheduling of PL and was willing to provide coverage for peer observations. Resources were available from the University, and materials to support change could be purchased.

**School mission.** The mission statement reads as follows:

- To provide an enhanced and caring learning environment that fosters academic success for children with learning differences.

- To serve as a laboratory school for university students and faculty, while capitalizing on the unique opportunities and resources afforded by the location on the University campus.

- To prepare students to return to a mainstream environment, (generally) within 2-3 years.

- To serve as a model for technology in education.

- To serve as a research site, primarily in the area of learning differences.

**Curriculum.** Lower School (grades 1-5) uses a reading anthology for the literacy core curriculum. In the Upper School (grades 6-8), teachers choose novels and implement instruction with teacher-made or published supplements with an emphasis on grammar, spelling, and vocabulary. All classes participate in a reading incentive program, Accelerated Reader™ (AR)
(http://www.renaissance.com/products/accelerated-reader). The MSRT tutoring program is also part of the curriculum. Table 5 presents literacy curricula used in grades 1 to 8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Curriculum Material</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>Journeys Reading Program</td>
<td>Houghton Mifflin Harcourt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>Vocabulary Workshop</td>
<td>Sadlier-Oxford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>Grammar Workshop</td>
<td>Sadlier-Oxford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>Novels, self-selected by teachers</td>
<td>Varied</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The teachers use these curriculum materials but may supplement instruction with resources they find appropriate. Each teacher determines the scope and sequence of instruction at each grade level. For writing instruction, Upper School teachers use MyAccess.com (https://www.myaccess.com/myaccess/do/log), an online subscription with Vantage Learning. Upon examination, the site does not provide a writing curriculum but lists writing prompts for each grade level. 7th and 8th grade students respond to a teacher-selected prompt and submit electronically. In 6th grade, the teacher chooses to use the writing resources differently. The Upper School teachers may use the site at their discretion. I could not locate any independent research or review of the program.

**Technology.** Each classroom is equipped with a laptop computer for every student and an interactive whiteboard (SMART® Board). In addition, classroom sets of iPads® are available. Teachers may use these resources in the classroom. There was also a full-time technology teacher on the staff.
**Instruction.** I conducted classroom observations during the reading block, over several weeks, for eight visits. Instruction during the reading block was teacher-directed and whole group, using multiple copies of the same text. Research-based instructional practices were not evident during observations. For example, instead of students reading independently or engaging in shared reading practices I observed round-robin reading and teachers reading text to students. Ashe, Kuhn, and Walpole (2009) argue against round-robin reading. I did not observe students reading informational text during these visits. Teachers assigned and tested weekly lists of spelling and vocabulary words. Although computers are available at a 1-1 ratio, I only observed students using them once during reading class. During that time, students were typing answers to reading comprehension questions from a worksheet. I did not observe whiteboard use, except to list assignments or write information.

Discussions with faculty and examination of literacy materials confirmed that there is not an established scope and sequence for literacy instruction and teachers have autonomy in their approach to literacy instruction. At present, teachers do not have a common planning time, and they are not required to develop lesson plans for literacy instruction.

**Professional learning.** In 2014-2015, opportunities for teacher PD in the area of reading instruction had been limited to two presentations. Working in a different capacity, I presented one of these in 2014, a three-hour workshop on CCSS (2010). The school subscribes to Discovery Education, a company that promotes and sells digital texts and streaming services (http://www.discoveryeducation.com/). While I was working with the school in 2015, Discovery sponsored a three-day presentation
held at the University. Staff could attend one or two days and I attended with the teachers.

**Candidate's role.** I bring many years of experience in elementary and secondary schools, in both private and public settings. I have had the privilege of serving as a regular education teacher, special education teacher, reading specialist, educational diagnostician, and, for over ten years, I served as a school administrator. I understand, firsthand, the challenges that exist in school organizations, have led school-wide PL efforts, and have deep knowledge of the specialized learning needs of special education students. I hold certifications in systems of teacher observation and conducted classroom observations regularly for over ten years.

Since leaving the public school system and coming to work at the University six years ago, I have served as a literacy coach, developed and delivered literacy PL for schools, modeled in classrooms, collected and analyzed assessment data, and conducted numerous teacher observations. I received certification in The Classroom Assessment Scoring System™ (CLASS™) (http://curry.virginia.edu/research/centers/castl/class) and later coached teachers to become CLASS certified. I conducted “fidelity to implementation” observations, videotaped teachers, analyzed observations, debriefed about observations with University faculty, and submitted observations to an external evaluator. For the last five years, I have enjoyed teaching pre-service and in-service teachers in required literacy courses in SOE at the University. As a literacy instructor, I fully understand the literacy content ETE students learn over the series of required literacy courses, including theory, research-based instructional strategies, CCSS (2010) requirements, lesson planning, fieldwork requirements, and professional dispositions.
I believe my diverse professional experiences strengthened my ability to thoughtfully address the problem at the school. The knowledge I gained as a classroom teacher, reading specialist, coach, educational diagnostician, school administrator, college instructor, and doctoral candidate provided me with unique insight into meeting the needs of the organization. It was in the capacity of doctoral candidate that I first met the teachers and Director. I developed and facilitated an introductory presentation on CCSS (2010) for the Director and faculty.

I returned to the school in the fall of 2015 when the Director asked to meet to discuss a school curriculum issue, which led to a series of meetings with the Upper School teachers and later the Lower School teachers. My relationship with the faculty continued to develop, and I took on the role of literacy consultant. In that capacity I met often with teachers, visited classrooms, observed, and met frequently with the Director to discuss concerns, as well as ways to support teachers in learning about evidence-based reading instruction. During the process, I developed a trusting relationship with the Director and faculty members.

The focus of my work with the school related to my ELP developed collaboratively during this period through informal classroom observations, discussions, meetings, and through observations of the organizational structure of the school and the diverse academic needs presented by the students. The data I gathered led to formulating new questions and additional research on PL, PCK, reading strategy instruction, CCSS (2010), school-wide reading approaches, coaching, and pre-service candidates. This information, combined with my completed doctoral coursework, was the foundation for my PL proposal for my ELP work. I developed and implemented a comprehensive PL plan to support teachers in understanding the call of CCSS (2010),
the design of effective whole group reading instruction, and the application of evidence-based practices in reading instruction.

**Critical Factors**

Current instructional approaches at this school (e.g., whole class instruction, workbooks, lecture) are typical of other well-respected independent schools in the area. These private and independent schools normally follow a “traditional” approach to instruction that has served them well in preparing their student populations for college. Similarly, the faculties at these schools are not required to participate in ongoing PD required of public school teachers, or to follow the CCSS (2010).

Two factors distinguish this school from other area private schools and suggest that change for this organization might be warranted. First, it is part of a research-based university responsible for preparing future teachers with knowledge of reading content aligned to CCSS (2010) and pedagogical skills reflecting evidence-based methodologies. Lead teachers supervise ETE pre-service candidates because they are clinical faculty at the University. Therefore, an assumption might be made that their instructional methods align with the research-based practices pre-service teachers are learning in ETE and will be expected to practice in the field. Second, and critically important, the student population have been identified with learning problems in reading, and students are below grade level academically. Research suggests struggling readers need early, research-based interventions to prevent them from falling further behind (Gunn, Biglan, Smolkowski, & Ary, 2000; Jenkins, Peyton, Sanders, &Vadasy, 2004; Vadasy, Sanders, & Peyton, 2005; Vaughn et al., 2006). An implication might be drawn from the University affiliation and faculty characteristics (e.g., years of experience, educational level, clinical faculty status) that the curriculum
at the school is vertically aligned, and instruction is informed by assessment and systematically delivered through research-supported practices.

**Improvement Goal Context**

Current reading research and best practices in reading instruction support reading comprehension strategy instruction and school-wide systematic approaches to reading instruction aligned to grade-level standards or expectations, with recurrent opportunities to practice reading text at grade level. Although they were limited in duration and scope, observations I conducted at the school indicated that reading instruction did not reflect evidence-based recommendations (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Pressley, 2000; Walpole & McKenna, 2007). I did not observe instruction aligned to CCSS (2010) or to any other grade-level learning standards or a school-wide curriculum framework. Teachers selected the topics to teach during reading and the curriculum; a school-wide approach to reading instruction beyond the reading anthology was lacking, as were a scope and sequence in literacy skill instruction. Vertical articulation between grade levels for expected student outcomes was not evident.

There was a misalignment, then, between current reading practices at this school for struggling readers and research-supported approaches to literacy instruction. Further, there were potential inconsistencies between the approaches to research-based reading instruction pre-service candidates learn in ETE coursework and what was being observed, and practiced in the field. Therefore, I believed it was imperative to address the gap between teachers' current practices in reading instruction and research-based, systematic approaches to literacy instruction, aligned to CCSS (2010). This problem motivated my ELP work.
**Overall Improvement Goal**

The premise of my work was grounded in research that provided evidence supporting school-wide systematic approaches to reading instruction (Walpole & McKenna, 2007). Additionally, my work drew on CCSS (2010) grade-level benchmark goals, CCR Anchor Standards (2010) to guide planning, and approaches to meet the required instructional shifts. In addition to learning *what* to teach during reading instruction as required by grade-level standards (content), teachers must be able to combine reading knowledge with strategy instruction. They must know *how* to deliver the content to students (pedagogy). Shulman (1986) argued teachers must have both content and teaching knowledge (PCK) to provide students with the strategies they will need to successfully engage with the content. Therefore, in my ELP, I placed an emphasis on developing teacher PCK. Together, my understanding of research-supported reading instruction, CCSS (2010) requirements, and PCK research provided the foundation for developing an improvement initiative for teachers that also embodied current PL research.

My overall improvement goal was to expand teachers’ PCK in reading-related matters by introducing a school-wide, systematic approach to reading and comprehension strategy instruction, grounded in CCSS (2010), delivered through a theory-based, comprehensive approach to PL.
Chapter 3

IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

My rationale for the improvement strategies was grounded in a review of the literature, which revealed best practices in literacy instruction. I examined a body of research on comprehension strategy instruction and explored many literacy issues, including systematic approaches to literacy instruction, shared reading, close reading, informational text structure instruction, and vocabulary instruction. Finally, I selected strategies for this improvement initiative based on evidence from the literature and from examination of CCSS (2010) requirements and instructional shifts.

Overview of Approach

My goal was to develop and present to teachers a research-based, systematic approach to grade-level reading instruction that could be replicated in classrooms across the school during Tier 1 instruction (e.g., whole group, grade level). I located or developed resources designed to help teachers implement a systematic approach to standards-based literacy instruction and help students meet the rigorous demands of CCSS (2010). I focused on research-based reading comprehension strategy instruction and approaches to reading called for in CCSS (2010) (e.g., close reading) or supported by research (e.g., shared reading, interactive read aloud (IRA)). When developing the PL part of the initiative, I relied on Shulman’s seminal research on developing teacher PCK (1986). I also investigated PL literature to determine appropriate approaches to scaffold teachers’ learning of new information and practices.
I begin by providing a research-based overview of the reading and PL approaches I incorporated into my work: shared reading (SR), close reading (CR), comprehension strategy instruction, the IRA, and tiered reading instruction, followed by highlights of PCK and PL research.

**SR and CR.** SR is a generic term that describes systematic approaches to scaffold students through rereading of the same text. Originally developed to improve fluency for students reading below grade level, Fluency Oriented Reading Instruction (FORI) is also a comprehension intervention utilizing core (grade-level) reading material (Stahl & Heubach, 2005). Using FORI, teachers scaffold students during the rereading of the core selection multiple times over a week, moving from Day 1 teacher-led choral reading, to Day 2 repeated reading, Day 3 echo reading, to Day 4 partner reading. This approach was originally designed to increase fluency, a factor that influences reading comprehension (Schwaneflugel, Kuhn, Morris, Meisinger, Woo, Quirk, & Sevcik, 2009). Walpole and McKenna (2007) suggest a modified SR approach following the Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). Each student has a copy of the text or the text is projected. The teacher scaffolds students in multiple readings of the text, moving from choral reading, to reading in pairs, to independent reading (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). In this approach to SR, students can complete consecutively repeated readings in one instructional period or they can be extended over several days. Teachers do not have to follow the “one approach a day” model described in FORI (Walpole & McKenna, 2007).

One of the goals of CCSS (2010) is to develop students who are able to read complex text critically, demonstrate reasoning skills, and support claims with textual
evidence (Coleman & Pimentel, 2011). The umbrella term "close reading" is often used in this context. There is no absolute definition of CR offered in CCSS (2010) or steps provided to teach it. However, in the CCR Reading Anchor Standards (2010), the first standard, associated with Key Ideas and Details, calls for students to: "Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text" (http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/R/1/). Two of the instructional shifts in literacy advanced by CCSS (2010), Shifts 4 and 5, require student participation in evidence-based text discussions and writing from sources.

When calling on students to read complex text closely teachers will need to scaffold them through careful rereading of (short) difficult text selections to uncover meaning. To help students achieve CCR standards for Key Ideas and Details teachers should ask text-dependent questions and teach students how to support their answers with evidence, including direct quotes from the text. That does not mean there is only one correct answer; it means students support their argument with textual evidence. It is also important to note CR of text provides an opportunity to teach CCR standards associated with authors’ Craft and Structure as well as Integration of Knowledge and Ideas. Pearson (2013) suggests teachers develop routines to guide students through the CR process.

**Comprehension strategy instruction.** The goal of reading instruction is always for students to comprehend the text (Duke & Pearson, 2002; NICHHD, 2000; Pressley, 2000). Many factors can impact a student’s reading comprehension including decoding ability, fluency, motivation, the text, vocabulary, background knowledge, and knowledge of effective reading strategies (Duke & Pearson, 2002).
The purpose of strategy instruction is to teach students effective strategies they can transfer into independent practice when needed to gain comprehension. The National Reading Panel (2000) recommends teachers provide explicit instruction in six evidence-based comprehension strategies: comprehension monitoring, graphic organizers, question answering, question generation, story structure, and summarization. Instead of teaching one strategy at a time, in isolation, current recommendations suggest taking a coordinated approach to strategy instruction. This means grouping strategies together, to teach several (2-3) at a time (e.g. graphic organizer, story structure, summarization). Students can learn these strategies relatively quickly; however, it might take considerable time and practice for students to apply the strategies when reading independently (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Pressley, 2000; Walpole & McKenna, 2007).

Students can benefit from a structured approach to instruction, including modeling, think alouds, and explicit instruction (Block & Pressley, 2002; NICHHD, 2000). The GRR model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983) offers a scaffolded approach to strategy instruction. There is no evidence to suggest struggling readers need different comprehension strategy instruction than their peers. Research indicates, however, even without knowing the specific deficits, struggling readers need instruction that is more explicit and more scaffolded than typical peers (Pressley, 2000; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

IRA. Walpole and McKenna (2007) argue that all elementary teachers (including K-2) could confidently use the IRA model to teach comprehension strategy instruction. To meet the numerous CCSS (2010) standards, it is important to consider multiple instructional goals for the IRA. This means embedding combinations of
comprehension strategies into the IRA lesson and considering CCSS (2010) requirements.

An IRA is an opportunity to choose a more complex book with a higher Lexile level than the student would read at his grade level, to select books from different genres, and to model fluent and expressive reading (Walpole & McKenna, 2007). Providing instruction in text structure and the variations between the different genres helps to facilitate understanding. Children who struggle with comprehension are often less aware of genre and story structure variation (Duke & Roberts, 2010).

In the narrative IRA, students learn how to use story maps to organize the story structure and story elements. The story map helps students comprehend the story and understand the relationship between events; it is also a tool for retelling and summarizing (Walpole & McKenna, 2007). Expository text is considered harder to read than narrative due to the five possible text structures from which authors typically choose, the text features, and content-specific vocabulary (Williams, Nubla-Kung, Pollini, Stafford, Garcia, & Snyder, 2007; Williams, Stafford, Lauer, Hall, & Pollini, 2009). To address these problematic aspects of informational texts, the IRA provides an opportunity to teach students each text structure and a matching graphic organizer, as well as how to use a graphic organizer to monitor understanding (Duke, 2004).

Vocabulary is closely associated with reading comprehension (NICHHD, 2000), and CCSS (2010) emphasizes the importance of building vocabulary. The IRA provides an opportunity to expose students to the rich vocabulary found only in books. Research supports a variety of instructional strategies (e.g., vocabulary protocols, pre-teaching vocab, wide-reading) to teach vocabulary (Bauman & Kame’enui, 2004; Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002; Blachowicz & Fisher, 2000; NICHHD, 2000).
Several effective strategies for vocabulary instruction are integrated in the IRA (Walpole & McKenna, 2007).

In the IRA, teachers follow the GRR model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983) to scaffold students during instruction and provide modeling using think alouds. By thinking aloud when applying a strategy, the teacher makes public the "invisible thinking" good readers use and models how good readers approach text and apply comprehension strategies while reading; this is especially helpful for a struggling reader.

**Tiered instruction.** Walpole and McKenna (2007) argue a tiered approach to reading instruction provides an instructional model that can be implemented school-wide. The model also delivers a structure that supports differentiated instruction. During the reading block, teachers deliver Tier 1 (e.g., whole group, grade level) instruction by using a shared reading approach and an IRA. Later in the block, assessment informs Tier 2 (e.g., small group, instructional level) instruction. In Tier 3, students needing further intervention (as evidenced by assessment data) receive additional support outside the classroom or from a teacher coming into the room (Walpole & McKenna, 2007). In my work with the school, I adopted the instructional approach advocated by Walpole and McKenna (2007) for Tier I instruction to develop a school-wide systematic approach to grade-level reading instruction, aligned with CCSS (2010).

**PCK.** PCK for teachers has been defined as a combination of content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. PCK requires teachers have strong knowledge about what to teach in conjunction with the pedagogical knowledge needed to deliver best practices effectively (Shulman, 1986). To help students meet the
academic demands required by the standards, teacher PCK is an important target. Teachers must have strong content knowledge in the domain of reading and writing, combined with knowledge of how to teach reading and writing. They must have a toolbox of approaches and know which one, or combination, to use when. They must also understand stages of learning and how curriculum can accelerate learning. To plan instruction, teachers must have a firm grasp of the standards for the particular grade level they teach, as well as knowledge of the vertical articulation between grades. The CCSS (2010) standards follow a stair-step progression: each grade builds on the one before. Teachers should become familiar with literacy standards at their grade level, the grade that precedes it, and the one that follows, and use this information to determine whether students are on a trajectory of learning that aligns with the required outcomes. Best practices in literacy instruction also require using assessment data to inform planning and design reading interventions.

**Professional learning.** Research on PD has concluded that teachers need time to develop, understand, discuss, and then practice new knowledge (Desmione, Porter, Garet, Yoon, & Birman, 2002). In order to move beyond “professional development” to support teachers’ “professional learning,” the approach to PD must move beyond a one-stop workshop or meeting that is delivered in an hour, a day, or even a few days. In the traditional “sit and get” workshop approach to PD, the teachers’ role is passive; they sit and listen to information delivered to them and leave with handouts they may never use. Ball and Forzani (2011) described this long time approach to PD (e.g., one-time workshops, conferences) as “style shows.” Research indicates this approach is unlikely to lead to teacher change (Hawley & Valli, 1999).
Researchers have focused on other features of PL activities associated with PCK and examined the types of materials teachers use while learning, the coherence of the learning activity to their daily work, and what pedagogy and knowledge those teachers engage in while learning effectively (Desimone, et al., 2002, Hawley & Valli, 1999; Putnam & Borko, 2000). Desimone et al. (2002) argued teacher learning is more effective when teachers from the same school participate in the learning experience together. Guskey (2000) argued the number of contact hours provided over a longer period is typically associated with the effectiveness of the PL effort. School leaders should consider including PL as part of a school-wide organizational plan to achieve academic success for all students by expanding teachers’ knowledge and skills, providing collaborative opportunities and feedback, and including measures of PL accountability (Kisa & Correnti, 2015; Leithwood, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004).

Researchers have also considered how teachers construct knowledge from the situated perspective, which considers the learning environment (Borko, Jacobs, & Koellner, 2010). Based on this perspective, in the context of this project, each teacher is a learner, nested within an autonomous school, an active laboratory school, and part of a research university. Borko (2004) argued these multiple contexts have to be considered, to understand how teachers learn. Consequently, each individual teacher-learner, as well as the social system in which the PL takes place, must be reviewed.

Project Design

The PL design focused on developing a school-wide approach to grade-level reading instruction, the Enhanced Grade-Level Reading Instructional Model, to align reading instruction with CCSS (2010). I developed literacy components to enhance
existing core reading materials in grades 1-8, and in PL teachers learned how the model might provide a coherent framework for literacy instruction, across the grades, during the whole group portion of the reading block. I based the school-wide reading instructional model on a tiered approach to literacy instruction advocated by Walpole and McKenna (2007).

I proposed increasing teachers’ PCK in reading instruction by scaffolding the teachers during the stages of PL, moving from knowledge acquisition into application, as evidenced by classroom practice. I facilitated a series of knowledge-building PL sessions for the whole faculty, following the GRR model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). To enhance understanding and reinforce the content presented in whole group sessions, I reviewed the concepts with teachers during small group follow-up where we engaged in discussion and activities related to the knowledge-building presentation. To support teachers I moved beyond presenting information, to providing instructional coaching. The coaching component included modeling in the classroom and gathering feedback, providing lesson plan exemplars, observing teacher implementation, and providing feedback. In an effort to further build teacher knowledge, ensure access to instructional resources, and increase opportunities for review and collaboration, I developed an online Canvas site to provide teachers “anytime access” to PL materials.

I constructed PL to reflect a comprehensive and cohesive approach. Each of these components—the knowledge-building sessions, follow-up meetings, teacher resources, coaching, and the online site—was part of a recursive PL process designed to systematically build teacher PCK. I incorporated research-based best practices, implemented PL over an extended period, at the school—where faculty could learn
together—often embedding PL into the school day. I facilitated PL to build teachers’ knowledge of literacy and pedagogy, in an effort to enhance teachers’ PCK.

**Summary of the Approach**

To move the school forward, I introduced a systematic approach to enhanced grade-level reading instruction. Each component of the PL plan for the school informed the next.

I started by constructing four white papers that evolved from a review of literature to provide an empirical research foundation (Artifacts A, B, C, D). From the literature, I determined the first step in designing a school-wide approach was to analyze the existing material. I facilitated a text analysis of existing core material with faculty and wrote a summary document (Artifact E). To supplement the gaps presented in the core material I used the knowledge gained from the analysis, and Walpole and McKenna's (2007) recommended approach to whole group reading instruction (e.g., shared reading of core reading material, IRA) to inform the Enhanced Grade-Level Reading Instructional Model. I developed a Shared Reading Model (SRM) (Artifact F) and an IRA model (Artifact G), framed by the CCR Anchor Standards (2010), to strengthen the existing core material. To guide teachers in understanding and delivering instruction using a school-wide enhanced grade-level approach, I wrote four “How-To” guides (Artifacts D, H, I, J). I also developed eight IRA lesson plan exemplars (Artifact K) as a model for teachers to implement the IRA. I supported teachers by providing instructional coaching and I developed an IRA coaching log (Artifact L) to observe and provide feedback. Additionally, I created an online Canvas site, (Artifact M), to share resources with teachers.
Action Steps and Timeline

I followed a series of steps to develop a comprehensive approach to PL. I began with the research reviewed in the white papers: Professional Learning: Moving beyond Scented Markers, Artifact A, Comprehension Strategy Instruction, Artifact B, Reinventing the Read-Aloud, Artifact C, and How to Teach Informational Text Structure, Artifact D. These four white papers provided the empirical rationale for the design of the PL initiative and information to build teacher PCK.

In early March 2015, I led the staff in text analysis of the current core reading material for grades K-5, using the EQuIP rubric, a text analysis tool from Achieve the Core (Achieve the Core, 2012). I developed a summary document detailing the Journeys ©2012 text-analysis results (Artifact E). Based on gaps revealed through the text analysis, I located two existing literacy models developed by Walpole and McKenna (2007), an approach to shared reading and an IRA, to use during Tier 1 whole group instruction.

I made small changes to both models, aligning the IRA model (Artifact G) to the CCR Anchor Standards (2010) and including scripted language to teach students to inference. The IRA plan called for teachers to use a brief video clip to incorporate technology and build background knowledge. I embedded GRR in the lesson plan exemplar (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983) to guide teachers to systematically and explicitly model multiple comprehension reading strategies (Artifacts B, G, K). The SRM (Artifact F), also framed by CCR Anchor Standards (2010), provided a model for teachers to use a shared approach to reading the existing core material and to teach students how to read closely. Taken together, these two models, SRM and the IRA (Artifacts F, G), in conjunction with the existing reading material, comprised an
Enhanced Grade-Level Reading Instructional Model, grounded in research, aligned with CCSS (2010).

The Enhanced Grade-Level Reading Instructional Model was the focus of several knowledge-building PL sessions for faculty, presented in March of 2015. During the sessions, I introduced the idea that SRM might also be used as a systematic approach to CR. Teachers practiced CR and completed text-based reading responses requiring textual evidence, an exit activity designed to demonstrate understanding. I also designed and implemented knowledge-building sessions to introduce the IRA model (Artifact G) to teachers. These presentations helped to develop teachers’ content knowledge of CR and the IRA model as well as pedagogical knowledge of the systematic approach to instruction and instructional strategies embedded within the models (Artifacts F, G).

These sessions were followed up in smaller division meetings (Upper School, Lower School) to facilitate expanding teacher understanding, through discussion and activities linked to the knowledge-building sessions. In these groups, we examined potential texts for IRAs and discussed the books in light of information presented in the knowledge-building sessions, the CCSS (2010) reading requirements, and instructional shifts. Teachers looked up Lexile levels of texts to see where they fell in relation to their grade level and considered informational texts to include more texts in that genre. We reached consensus on which books would make good read-alouds and I developed plans for these books. I conducted a trial for the IRA model by piloting a lesson plan format in late March 2015. After making revisions, I continued trials of the IRA model in classrooms with the revised lesson plan exemplar and wrote eight IRA lesson plan exemplars (Artifact K).
To enhance teacher PCK, I created a series of four “How-To” guides (Artifacts D, H, I, J) to provide details on how to plan and deliver instruction. Topics included planning for an IRA (Artifact G), choosing and teaching vocabulary using a vocabulary protocol (Artifact H), engaging students in CR (Artifacts I, J), and teaching informational text structure (Artifact D). I presented these to the faculty in March, April, and May of 2015.

I included instructional coaching in the comprehensive PL plan to support teachers during the implementation process. In an effort to scaffold teachers toward the goal of implementing the IRA and build teacher PCK, I modeled the IRA and strategy instruction in each teacher's classroom followed by a debriefing session. I then scheduled times to observe teachers implement the IRA, provided the lesson plan exemplar (Artifact K) and prepared each book with the corresponding language from the lesson plan exemplar, so teachers knew where to stop to deliver comprehension strategy instruction. Finally, I observed each teacher implement the IRA model. During the observation I completed a coaching feedback log form (Artifact L).

To further increase opportunities to develop PCK, I created a school Canvas site, the online learning management system available through the University (Artifact M). Knowing that a teacher’s time is at a premium, I developed an online "teaching toolbox" to support and extend teachers' learning in a format that could be easily accessed “24-7.” The toolbox included presentation materials I developed for my ELP, professional readings, and other instructional resources related to the knowledge-building sessions. The site also provided a place for teachers to engage with each other, as well as archive and share materials. On May 19, 2015 in a knowledge-
building PL session, I modeled for the teachers how to use Canvas and invited them share materials (Artifact M).
Chapter 4

EFFICACY OF IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

During the collaborative text analysis activity, the teachers used the EQuIP rubric (Achieve the Core, 2012) and CCSS (2010) to determine the alignment between Journeys ©2012 core reading curriculum and CCSS (2010) to identify any gaps. The results of this step in the initiative provided evidence of gaps in the core material, which guided me in constructing an Enhanced Grade-Level Reading Instructional Model and provided evidence that teachers understood the CCSS (2010) requirements for literacy instruction. The analysis process and discussion also revealed that the teachers understood that by itself, Journeys ©2012 did not fully align with CCSS (2010), and they recognized a need to enhance the existing core material.

PL Sessions

I observed teachers during PL sessions and noted that teachers consistently took part in the activities, providing evidence of teacher engagement. Teachers demonstrated a grasp of the literacy topics, as evidenced through the peer discussions and accurate completion of activities (e.g., finding Lexile levels, identifying text structure, writing vocabulary protocols). At the end of each session, teachers engaged in an exit strategy that provided evidence of individual understanding. Teacher attendance at the sessions was consistently high. The Director attended each of the knowledge-building sessions, and I debriefed with her following the sessions to cross-verify my observations.
Modeling and Implementation

I debriefed with each teacher after they observed me teach in their classroom. I asked what "stood out for them" about the comprehension strategy instruction and evidence-based instructional routines in the lesson, the level of student participation, and if they had any questions. In these 1-1 sessions, the teachers were able to identify comprehension strategies and instructional routines embedded in the lesson, the alignment with CCR Anchor Standards (2010), and explain the places in the lesson I utilized GRR (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983) to scaffold students. Feedback from teachers during these meetings indicated the modeling stage of the initiative was successful; teachers closely observed the modeling, as evidenced from my observations of them while I modeled, and from the information shared in the debriefing. The debriefing meetings provided me an opportunity to monitor teacher knowledge of the literacy content integrated into the lesson, as well as teacher understanding of GRR (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983) and how strategy instruction was delivered.

To ensure fidelity to the plan, I observed each teacher implement the IRA plan using the coaching feedback log (Artifact L). The coaching feedback log also allowed me to provide each teacher with specific feedback about instructional delivery during implementation. I designed the Coaching Feedback Log (Artifact L) with seven items, aligned with the seven components of the IRA lesson plan (Artifact K). I used this fidelity measure when I observed each teacher during IRA implementation. I collected data from the observations to monitor fidelity to implementation. I calculated each individual’s fidelity of implementation data by counting the number of items adhered to during the lesson /7 total items. During these observations, each teacher achieved 7/7 items for 100% fidelity of implementation.
(http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/fid/cresource/q3/p10/fid_10_link_calcfidelity/#content). From my analysis of the IRA lesson observation data, I determined the school faculty implemented the IRA protocol as it was intended, with fidelity.

In my ELP proposal, I hypothesized that a collaborative and comprehensive approach to PL would result in building teachers' PCK. My interactions and observations from PL sessions, modeling in the classrooms, and during teacher implementation indicated the teachers gained content knowledge of literacy-related matters and CCSS (2010) requirements. When provided lesson plan exemplars (Artifact K) and materials, each teacher successfully implemented CCSS (2010) aligned literacy lessons, demonstrating an understanding of information presented in PL through transfer into classroom practice. After careful consideration, I offer these qualitative examples as evidence of teacher understanding of the content related information I presented during the PL sessions. Teacher attendance, successful participation in activities and exit strategies, feedback I gathered after I modeled, and teacher implementation and feedback meetings confirmed teachers understood the content of PL presentations. Together, this body of qualitative data, which indicated each teacher participated fully in the sessions, successfully completed PL activities, and implemented the literacy lesson plan model in the classroom with fidelity, suggests the teachers were gaining literacy content knowledge during the systematic approach to PL. However, I do not have any quantitative measures to substantiate the claim that content knowledge increased. It is also very important to note that content knowledge is only one component of PCK.
What I Do Not Know

My claim of teacher understanding of content is based on the quantitative data from the lesson observations and from qualitative data from PL. There are limitations to my claim, however. I did not measure teachers’ knowledge of literacy with a test or survey prior to my work. This type of measure might have provided quantitative data measuring an increase in teacher content knowledge. Even with this type of data, it would still be difficult to conclude my hypothesis that the ELP contributed to an increase in teacher PCK. Based on the data, I inferred the systematic approach to PL developed for the ELP contributed to an increase in teacher understanding in content (what to teach), this does mean this knowledge transferred into classroom practice (how to teach). Both the elements of content and pedagogy comprise teacher PCK and I was not able to measure pedagogy. Therefore, I cannot claim my ELP work increased PCK. In fact, researchers have found PCK difficult to measure (Baumert, Kunter, Blum, Brunner, Voss, Jordan, & Tsai, 2010; Grossman & McDonald, 2008). Although work in PCK has spanned twenty-five years researchers disagree on the subdomains of successful teachers knowledge and the relationships between them (Ball, Thames, & Phelps, 2008; Park & Oliver, 2008). There is little large-scale data on PCK and researchers agree more work in this area is needed to clarify the PCK construct and provide empirical support (Ball et al., 2008; Hill, Ball & Schilling, 2008).

There is quite a bit I do not know about the effects of my efforts. After I observed one teacher implement the IRA lesson during scheduled implementation, using the IRA plan and book I supplied, he used the lesson plan template to write his own lesson for a novel his class was reading. Although this was not required, he shared the plan with me and asked for my feedback. I collaborated with him to make
a few changes, and he asked me to observe him teach it in his classroom. By developing his own lesson plan and asking for feedback, I felt this teacher might continue to practice the IRA. However, the teachers were not required to make lesson plans. Therefore, I do not know the other teachers' ability to transfer the knowledge they appeared to gain during PL (e.g., Lexile level, genre, vocabulary choice) into instruction with grade-appropriate learning goals that reflect an alignment between what the teacher wants the students to learn, and what students need to learn, according to CCSS (2010).

I do not have evidence that the teachers implemented the SRM. I did not observe teachers implement this as part of the initiative. While I let teachers know I would model the SRM in their classroom, or observe them, no teachers invited me to do so.

During a knowledge-building session, I modeled for the teachers how to use the Canvas site and we all accessed it. On the school site, I explored modules in the Teacher Toolbox with the teachers, had them locate resources on the site, and gave them time to explore some of the links on their own. I also demonstrated how they could utilize Canvas to share resources with each other. I asked each teacher to upload one resource to share in the next week. However, only two teachers shared resources.

The course analytics offer “page views” (e.g., user viewed a page) and “actions taken” (e.g., shared or downloaded material). Table 6 displays page views and actions taken with 69% of the page views occurring during two PL sessions*. When considering this data however, it is important to note that currently Canvas “analytics does not measure activity on mobile devices”
Therefore, if teachers accessed Canvas using a mobile device it would not be recorded as a page view. In addition, teachers were not required to use the Canvas site.

**Table 6  School Canvas Site Analytics**

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<th>Actions Taken</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
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Chapter 5

REFLECTIONS ON IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS

Over the PL process, I partially achieved the goal of building teacher knowledge about reading instruction—what it should look like across the school—by introducing the faculty to a systematic approach to whole group (Tier 1) reading instruction, grounded in research, and aligned to CCSS (2010).

The comprehensive PL design was grounded in literature. Guskey (2000) argues the number of contact hours, over a longer period, is typically associated with the effectiveness of the PL effort. Guskey & Yoon (2009) reviewed the findings of a large synthesis on effective PL research and reported that time was a critical factor, and "those initiatives that showed positive effects included 30 or more contact hours" (p. 495). In addition, the effective PL initiatives "focused on content or pedagogy or both" (p. 495). Over several months, I conducted PL focused on both these essential elements of effective teaching, and exceeded the 30 hours suggested for transfer. Desimone et al. (2002) argues PD is more effective in affecting teacher learning and teacher practice if teachers from the same school participate in the learning experience together. The teachers and the Director participated in PL together, at the school, in both whole group and small group settings. I coached teachers throughout the process, modeled in their classrooms, and developed opportunities for them to collaborate with each other and with me. Coaching during implementation may strengthen teachers' ability to integrate content and pedagogical knowledge and fortify the transfer of learning into classroom practice (Desimone, 2011).
The teachers were attentive during the text-analysis process and collaborated in pairs, and then as a group, to analyze the core material. Learning about the IRA model also went particularly well. Teachers actively engaged in activities during PL sessions related to the IRA components. Teachers were interested in learning about text complexity and finding Lexile levels, learning about Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary instruction, and incorporating informational text into the classroom using an IRA. They were very interested in observing the model in the classroom. A summary of the coaching logs showed that each teacher followed the scripted IRA lesson plan exemplar (Artifact L) and conducted the read-aloud following GRR (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). What I do not know, though, is if teachers will transfer knowledge into continued practice. In fact, I considered the lack of planning currently required of teachers as making it unlikely that an approach requiring quite a bit of planning would be readily adopted, especially considering teacher autonomy and current lack of accountability (e.g., standards, systematic assessment, teacher observations).

Organizational Context and Change

To develop a comprehensive PL plan to meet the needs of the school I immersed myself in the school culture. The faculty welcomed me as I spent time collecting data over a few months before enacting the PL. During that time, I met frequently with the Director, the technology teacher, and secretary; met both one-on-one and in small groups with teachers; and attended faculty meetings (facilitated by the Director) with paraprofessionals, teachers, and the school psychologist. I examined literacy materials and online programs in use, I observed each teacher during the reading instructional block, and I collected student work samples. In addition, I informally visited classes almost daily where University student teachers
were at work. I also saw frequent parent and visitor interactions with the Director, secretary, and teachers. At the same time, I considered research and the teachers’ needs to plan PL.

In my initial meetings, the faculty members were enthusiastic about gaining knowledge of CCSS (2010) and checking the alignment of core material with the standards. I believe the staff was interested in learning about topics; however, that does not necessarily mean they participated in PL with the intent to change practice. I frequently heard the term "private school" used in a way that suggested this status provided immunity from change.

In my very first meeting with a small group of four teachers, I learned there was not a prescribed literacy curriculum or scope and sequence for grade-level exit requirements. Each teacher might use different literacy materials. They had the autonomy to decide what materials to order and what literacy content to teach. The teachers did not know the content taught in the grade below or above their grade level. We talked about what teachers consider the "grade-level literacy curriculum." They agreed that without a written guide, it was difficult to determine the content taught at each grade level. I learned teachers had not previously discussed which literature they used as core reading material, or the Lexile level of the books, and currently all core literacy selections read were fiction. One teacher mentioned the students in her class were all "on grade-level" in reading. I asked, "All? How do you know?" She believed this to be true not from assessment but based on a book students were reading in class that was a "book for X graders."

In the area of assessment, paraprofessionals administered DIBELS to students through sixth grade. Although they might use these data in some capacity to tutor, the
teachers did not. Terranova testing takes place over a period of days at the end of each year, but the school only requests individual student scores. A copy is available in each student’s folder in the office. However, class reports and reports measuring annual progress are not ordered. Therefore, I was not able to use assessment data to inform the PL work. It is important to note the teachers did not view the differences in curriculum materials, lack of a prescribed scope and sequence, vertical articulation, or lack of assessment data as problematic. They indicated they enjoyed the independence this afforded.

The teachers had not participated in any specific reading-related PL in many years. As a result, the information I presented was new in its entirety to the faculty. I realized it might be overwhelming for teachers to learn new information, try out ideas, and consider changing practice and adopting a school-wide approach to literacy instruction. One factor I believe might have influenced PL was that no clear expectations existed for the teachers to continue the work when I left. Perhaps teachers might have been more enthusiastic about practicing in the classroom and trying out ideas on their own if there had been. As it was, the teachers participated, allowed me to model in the classrooms, and completed activities during PL; each used the lesson plan exemplars to deliver IRA lessons. However, change is hard work, and I did not get the sense there was momentum to carry the work forward without guidance. Around this time, I began to consider other factors that might influence my PL work in this organizational context.

**Considering Another Perspective**

In my proposal I wrote, "The school is an autonomous private school, an active laboratory school, and part of a research university." Borko (2004) argues to
understand teacher learning we must consider multiple contexts, including the individual teacher-learner and the social system in which he/she participates. Toward the end of the PL initiative, I began to wonder how the situative perspective of the "individual teacher-learner" and the context of the school might influence teacher learning and transfer to practice. Based on my observations and interactions, I believe teachers might view the school from one perspective: an autonomous school where teachers make independent decisions, an independent school serving a community of learners not bound by regulations that govern public school, and a lab school with student teachers, at a university. I considered my view of what the school represented might be the opposite: a school affiliated with a research university and research-based instruction, a lab school to ameliorate reading deficiencies in struggling readers, and a model setting for pre-service candidates.

I contemplated my PL plan was grounded in cognitive theory, and through a carefully thought-out set of steps, my goal was to build teachers' PCK. From research, I was evaluating the success of the PL efforts through teacher transfer of PL knowledge into classroom practice (Desimone, 2011). From that perspective, I reported that the PL efforts were successful because the teachers did complete the activities and implemented the highly scaffolded IRA lesson. However, based on the initial interest in PL and my belief that teachers were seeking change in practice, I expected to observe other changes in practice (e.g., planning, shared reading practice, accessing toolbox) reflecting transfer of knowledge. I did not observe those changes.

From the data I collected, I developed the PL plan based on the premise that presently teachers had an “incoherent curriculum” and I was striving to build coherence. To achieve this, my goal was to present teachers with a systematic and
school-wide approach to instruction and support them in efforts to align existing curriculum to a set of standards. I did not consider, in a school where teachers value autonomy and make instructional decisions independently, that instituting a school-wide approach to instruction might not seem warranted. Without school-wide data as evidence of student growth (or lack of progress) each year, the teachers might not see a need for the school to adopt standards or a consistent, school-wide approach to teaching reading or a compelling reason to undertake an initiative that requires a common goal, collaboration, planning, and effort. This type of school wide initiative also requires a systematic approach to assessment and organizing data to strategically plan needs-based instruction and measure students' progress. However, if students' progress is not measured, and teachers' effectiveness is not a factor, there might be little motivation for teachers to undertake substantial change in assessment or instruction.

Regarding the situative perspective and teacher learning, research suggests practices learned in a PL setting be recontextualized, in the teacher’s classroom (Peressini, Borko, Romagnano, Knuth & Willis, 2004). In addition, a situative lens suggests change requires looking at organizational change, instead of focusing solely on individual change (Putnam & Borko, 2000). Upon reflection, from my cognitive perspective, I considered the school setting and culture but expected individuals within the organization to make changes. I believed, incorrectly, that a comprehensive approach to knowledge-building and successful practice in PL would lead to teacher transfer of the practice into the classroom. In the future, when developing site-based PL, my revised understanding suggests that I should determine the parameters the organization has set for change before engaging in PL work. What is the
organization's goal for PL? How will the organization set expectations and support individuals? This way, the organization determines the expectation for organizational change and defines the teacher's role in the change process.

If the situative theory applies and the organization sets expectations for teachers to transfer PL into classroom practice (and assuming reconceptualization in the classroom), then a coach might make brief visits after each strategy is learned to model or observe implementation and answer questions. Teachers might be asked to bring student work samples to PL to share and discuss any improvements in student work observed after implementing change in practice. Guskey (2002) argued change for teachers is often an experiential learning process and the key to changing practice comes from teachers seeing a change in student work, resulting from implementation. Teachers believe the change (e.g., curriculum, strategy) will work based on the evidence (not the PL). The change in beliefs leads to repeated use of practices teachers find useful.

Reflective practice is frequently used as a tool to build collaboration and reflection skills as teachers self-reflect on professional practice (Bevins, Jordan, & Perry, 2011; Darling-Hammond, & McLaughlin, 1995). Therefore, a reflection journal might be a further strategy to consider. Teachers could briefly reflect on how implementation efforts went what changes they might make, jot down questions and each new PL session might begin with five minutes of peer journal sharing. This activity could reinforce the expectation that everyone participates during implementation; it sets a finite amount of time to try out a strategy, encourages reflection, establishes peer accountability, and implementation evidence comes directly from the teacher (journal). If an online resource is available, instead of a
journal, the facilitator might post a prompt related to strategy implementation and teachers could reply online, and respond to peers, by a certain date. The facilitator could respond to the feedback peers provide each other and answer questions. In my experience, teachers like the freedom online participation affords, and this "public" forum might be helpful in building a responsive learning community. Mouza (2002) argued contextual factors (e.g., administrative support) can effect the efficacy of PL efforts within a school setting but the use of technology can help build collaboration and develop pedagogical skills. Bevins, Jordan, & Perry (2011) reported teachers from five schools and colleges across the UK participated in different action research PL but all reflected online. The study found the use of an online hub during this teacher-led process was an effective tool for building collaborative self-reflective practices. Finally, teacher engagement in professional learning activities, in particular trying out new ideas and reflection, seems to occur in teachers who change teaching practice (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002).

Guskey (2002) notes that change can produce anxiety and teachers are often reluctant to make changes until they are sure they can make them successfully. Teachers gain support from collaboration and benefit from feedback. Further, change occurs at different rates; which makes it necessary to follow up on PL efforts and to provide support “coupled with pressure” (Guskey, 2002). The PL journal offers a method of collaboration and non-evaluative feedback but the task itself is a reminder that an expectation exists that teachers will follow through with implementation.

**Considering Other Research**

After the PL initiative, I considered other factors. Although the faculty requested PL, they had not participated in PL in recent years and never in a
comprehensive approach to PL over a period of many months. The teachers were willing to participate in the activities and PL sessions. As the initiative extended over time, however, I realized that presenting PL in this setting might be complicated for other reasons. No classroom observational system is in place for faculty, and there is no school-wide approach to student assessment. Both of these factors make effecting change across an organization a potentially difficult task. When an organization embarks on making change, especially if there are no clear expectations or consequences associated with the change, I believe it is hard to sustain a change effort.

I considered research on effective schools and teachers and found they shared similar findings. Effective schools are child-centered, and have strong leadership. Teachers work collaboratively—with the leader—to achieve shared visions. They feel a shared responsibility for students' progress, use assessment to plan instruction, and actively communicate with parents. Effective teachers are knowledgeable about content, have high expectations and good classroom management, monitor student progress and plan with data, demonstrate less "teacher-talk," and provide explicit instruction (Allington, 2013; Taylor, 2007; Taylor, Pearson, Clark, & Walpole, 2002; Taylor, Pressley, & Pearson, 2002; Pressley & Block, 2002). These teachers also shared a common trait: they know how to teach. To sum it up, the most effective teachers possess a valuable and intangible quality, PCK.

Teachers play such an important role; in fact, when looking at what struggling readers need as a whole, the most powerful intervention tool is not the program, but the teacher, and the teachers' knowledge (Allington, 2013; NICHD, 2000; Snow, et. al. 1998). Most importantly, research confirms it is how teachers use that knowledge, to teach, that results in whether or not students make progress (Foorman & Torgesen,
Taylor (2007) argues that a school can have a strong leader, the best programs, well-designed PL, and supportive coaching, but "without all teachers trying their level best to provide the most effective, differentiated instruction possible to meet all students’ needs, these efforts won’t suffice" (Taylor, 2007, p.22).

**Recommendations**

I recommend the school seek ongoing literacy PL, continue developing teachers’ PCK, and consistently follow a school-wide approach to reading instruction. The school’s relationship with the University makes a potential partnership with members of the University community an attractive possibility. My recommendations for the school are to work with a qualified PL partner to plan and implement PL and for the Director to seek guidance in making the following changes:

1. Develop a set of benchmarks or grade-level expectations (GLEs) in literacy to establish a clear scope and sequence for literacy instruction or adopt CCSS (2010) to benchmark “what” students should know at the end of each grade level.

2. Adopt a school-wide, systematic approach to reading instruction aligned with CCSS (2010) or GLEs.

3. Adopt CCR Anchor Standards (2010) as a tool to provide a focused guide for lesson planning.

4. Determine the expected outcome for PL and expectations for accountability and evaluation of success.

5. Set expectations for participation in PL. What are the teacher’s role, the paraprofessional’s role, and the role of the Director? How will transfer from PL into classroom practice be measured?

6. Adopt a school-wide systematic approach to diagnosis and progress monitoring and use these data to inform lesson planning, to form Tier 2 groups, and target Tier 3 academic interventions.

7. Adopt a school-wide systematic approach to teacher observation.

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Next Steps

I suggest the Director consider several steps, perhaps beginning with developing a comprehensive plan to set goals to make school-wide changes in literacy instruction to reflect research-based best practices. Next, the school should decide if it is adopting CCSS (2010). If not, I suggest establishing a scope and sequence for literacy instruction. After standards are set, the school should determine how to meet the standards (e.g., school-wide reading approach, materials). The school might set up a timeline for change, set expectations for staff participation and implementation, and develop a plan to monitor fidelity of implementation. During the process of developing a path forward, the school should also examine its current approach to assessment. The Director might consult with the school psychologist and University faculty to develop a systematic approach to assessment, including which assessments to administer, how to report results, and how to organize this data. If the school continues administering the Terranova, I suggest ordering reports teachers can utilize. Since assessment can and should drive instruction (McKenna & Stahl, 2015), the teachers need access to current data to inform classroom instruction, monitor students’ progress, and measure student growth.

I considered many factors when self-evaluating my PL and thinking about next steps at the school and future PL. Based on research and my own experiences delivering PL, I anticipated some issues common to PL and encountered others I believe might be attributable to characteristics of the organization. Initially the teachers were very enthusiastic about participating in PL they had requested, discussing the topics generated from earlier meetings with the faculty, and doing text analysis. Nonetheless, I think the scope of the PL plan was more involved and the design more interactive than other PL faculty had previously participated in. When I
debriefed with the Director after the PL initiative, she mentioned in future PL she would support giving teachers a pre- and post-assessment to promote accountability. This might be a consideration for future PL efforts. I realized through the reflection process that these suggestions, and many of the steps I recommend, relate to the critical role the teachers play in moving the school forward.

Before the PL series, I learned teachers are not required to make lesson plans, and many expressed concern about planning as a requirement of PL. In this PL series, I provided teachers with lesson plan exemplars and I did not ask them to plan. This might be important to consider, moving forward. To set accountability in future PL, I believe the teachers should be asked to demonstrate understanding by making lesson plans. ETE students are required to make lesson plans to demonstrate an understanding of CCSS (2010), content, and pedagogy knowledge. Therefore, I believe the faculty who observe them should demonstrate that same understanding by completing lesson plans, especially after they have had the opportunity to study, observe, and implement a lesson using a model. By completing lesson plans that reflect the elements learned during PL, the participants have an opportunity to apply new knowledge and demonstrate an understanding of the intended outcomes of PL. This is especially important if the school adopts CCSS (2010) and a school-wide approach to reading.

**Systematic observation.** A next step might be to implement a classroom observation system to determine teacher effectiveness and to provide teachers meaningful feedback. Teachers might be motivated to make, and sustain, changes in practice if they anticipate systematic observation. Darling-Hammond (2012) argues teacher evaluation is currently the primary tool available to improve teaching. Based
on the premise that observation is critical to effective teaching I suggest the school consider a systematic approach to observation. This might include peer observations, using video for observation, or the CLASS observational system (http://curry.virginia.edu/research/centers/castl/class).

Final Thoughts

I remained steadfast in my efforts, and even with my persistence, I believe I might not have been successful in completing the PL objectives I did without the vocal support of the Director and the occasional interventions she made on my behalf. As a former administrator, and as the literacy consultant, I commend the Director for her leadership skills, which were evident in her engaging and motivating enthusiasm, high visibility, and her consistent level of interest and involvement. Ordinarily, this type of change in a school might take five years. However, this school has a very small faculty of dedicated and experienced teachers who seemed to learn the information I presented quickly. Taylor et al. (2002) caution that teachers can learn quickly, but without motivation to transfer that knowledge into teaching, there is no evidence that it will happen. I am hopeful the school's affiliation with a research university could provide both the motivation and support needed for change. Therefore, I believe it might be possible for the school's culture to work in its favor to expedite change, after adopting some of the accountability suggestions, and under the Director's leadership.

Over the initiative, I established a solid working relationship with the teachers and experienced the unwavering support of the Director. She was the biggest factor in the success I experienced, remaining enthusiastic about the work throughout the year, attending every knowledge-building PL session, reinforcing her expectations regarding active staff participation, and meeting with me regularly. As a former
teacher at the school, the Director is well liked and respected by the staff, and I think her leadership and positivity will be critical for change. I believe her role in leading the staff forward with any long-term PL efforts would be made easier by developing and implementing a strategic plan detailing goals, objectives, next steps, a timeline, and expectations to guide change. The Director might want to consider including a literacy consultant, or members of the University faculty, to collaborate to formulate a school plan to move the school forward by adopting CCSS (2010), and developing and implementing a systematic approach to reading instruction, student assessment, and teacher observation.
Chapter 6

REFLECTIONS ON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

When I entered the doctoral program, I had extensive teaching experience and had served as a school administrator for ten years in a large public school system. In that capacity, I was responsible for facilitating countless hours of teacher PD and promoting teacher implementation of research-based methods of literacy instruction. As a dedicated school leader, I considered myself well read, informed, and certainly qualified to develop teachers’ instructional skills in literacy. I recognized almost immediately upon starting my doctoral studies I had much to learn about "effective" PD and "research-based" reading instruction. Hearing each professor, in one class after another, discuss matter-of-factly how ineffective most PD is, was startling to me and difficult to believe. After all, much of my career had been spent participating in, or leading, the type of "one-shot" PD done commonly in schools across the nation and observing teachers to see if they were following through with implementation. The knowledge I gained in my doctoral program caused a paradigm shift in my thinking as I learned firsthand the value of research and the power of evidence. Now, I look first to research for findings of effectiveness and then to the methodology to consider if the evidence is reliable and valid.

I began my doctoral journey at about the same time CCSS (2010) implementation started. Having recently left a career in public school, I followed the debate surrounding this initiative with great interest and sought out as much information as I could about the content and design of the standards. During my
tenure as a doctoral student, I developed a strong understanding of CCSS (2010) and the significant impact this reform effort has made in education. I reflected on ways to transform my understanding of research-based literacy instruction to deliver information at the school level and incorporate best practices in PL. I have been able to share my knowledge in a leadership capacity by developing and guiding teachers in PL efforts to align literacy curriculum with CCSS (2010), facilitating knowledge-building sessions on CCSS (2010) requirements and instructional shifts, and serving as a member of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium ELA Item Quality Review Team for the State of Delaware.

**Growth as a Scholar**

My academic skills developed with each course I took and most of my growth as a scholar occurred in literacy classes. When I came to work at the University as a literacy coach at DCTE I had not planned to take classes but at Dr. Vukelich's urging, several colleagues and I enrolled in a doctoral-level literacy course taught by Dr. Sharon Walpole. That class was the catalyst in my decision to pursue my doctoral degree in literacy education.

Many things stood out for me from that first class that shaped me as a scholar, and most were influenced by Dr. Walpole's deep knowledge of the content and her delivery. She did not "lecture" but instead shared information in a conversational manner that elicited participation from everyone and left us wanting to hear and read more. Her story-telling approach helped us make personal connections and remember information. She incorporated many teaching strategies to reinforce the concepts we read and discussed, and deepened our understanding through research and academic writing. She provided encouraging feedback on our academic writing and this was the
first of a hundred times she supported me with her expertise in writing. Through the stages of my doctoral work, I realize this class, and other classes Dr. Walpole taught, provide teaching models that embody research-supported best practices, and she has greatly influenced my growth as a learner and teacher.

One of the best pieces of advice I got early on from Dr. Walpole was to read, as much as I could, and as widely as possible. It was through wide reading that I first developed my interest in research, analyzing findings, making connections between scholars, and applying it to my own work. As a scholar, I have experienced significant growth in learning research methodologies, forms of data collection, and how to analyze and synthesize research. I understand the critical role data plays in research and that how it is collected, interpreted, and reported is critical to determining its reliability. I have also learned the importance of narrowing the scope of research, and the significance of creating replicable research.

**Growth as a Problem-Solver**

Shortly after completing my first class, I made a change in my professional path that marked a turning point in my career. I joined the literacy department in SOE to teach pre-service teacher candidates in the undergraduate program. This afforded me the opportunity to collaborate with the professors who would later become my teachers in the doctoral program. I believe the experience of teaching literacy classes and problem-solving with the professors on matters of course design, content, and delivery contributed to my growth in literacy as much as my doctoral coursework. I learned from my professors’ expertise in the field, read research, wrote arguments and literature reviews, collaborated with my peers, and grew professionally. During the process, I was able to apply the content and pedagogical knowledge I learned in my
coursework and reinforce what I was learning by teaching undergraduates, eager to begin their careers as teachers, about literacy instruction. The opportunity to learn “the ropes” of teaching undergrads from the literacy faculty at SOE was an invaluable experience. As the “apprentice” I engaged in the problem-solving process with “more knowledgeable others” (MKO), literacy professors, who scaffolded me in a cognitive approach to learning (Vygotsky, 1978). During the collaborative process, I expanded my understanding of literacy education and shaped my approach to literacy instruction, which allowed me to confidently engage in literacy instruction at the college level. I am grateful to all the MKO in the literacy department who supported me with their time and expertise.

**Growth as a Partner**

When I began the literacy program, I never imagined how this decision would expand my network of colleagues to include people I have learned with, learned from, taught, become friends with, held as role models, and looked to for inspiration or advice. Through my work as a literacy coach, it includes the coaches I worked with, the teachers I coached, school leaders, and DCTE colleagues. Engaging with fellow doctoral students in the literacy cohort and with my professors, I expanded my network to include these dedicated professionals, deeply interested in the field of literacy, with whom I could collaborate and problem-solve. As a member of the literacy faculty, I networked with the esteemed professors in SOE and proudly added SOE students to my network; pre-service candidates I taught gave me new insights into education, renewed my faith in the system, inspired me to teach undergraduates, and made me laugh. Finally, through the doctoral program, I went “home” to DCTE as a graduate assistant. In this capacity, I worked again for Dr. Vukelich and DRWP
staff to deliver literacy services across the state and extended my professional network to include school leaders in private and public schools, and colleagues in the state, and across the nation, with whom I collaborated as a member of the State's SBAC ELA Quality Review Team.

It is with the support of this network of talented individuals I have grown academically and professionally, expanding my teaching and professional leadership skills. I am grateful for the connections I have built within this wonderful network of professionals, many of whom are leaders in the field, and some I believe will lead us in the future.
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Appendix A

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING: MOVING BEYOND SCENTED MARKERS

We all have them—school professional development (PD) days—when we can wear jeans, have an hour for lunch and, if we are lucky, leave at 3:45 feeling like (maybe) we learned something. Occasionally, during the morning presentation, the speaker will pause the PowerPoint, and we have that rare opportunity to “turn and talk” with other adults. Thirty minutes before lunch, we “brainstorm” at our table for 15 minutes, grab the purple marker (the one that smells like grape), jot down our ideas on chart paper, hang it on the wall, and share in a “gallery walk.” When we return from lunch, we hope the new presenter has chocolate (the good ones always do); 90 minutes later, we file away those handouts she gave us. Then, the following week, back in the routine of teaching, we have forgotten all about that new idea we raved about during the PD session. Worse, we do not understand anything more about finding Tier 2 words than before we got that handout. We will have a set of very practical questions: How exactly do we teach them? When are we supposed to fit it in? Is this on top of the vocabulary from the series? There is no one available to answer our questions. We cannot squeeze one more thing in anyway; there is too much to teach as it is. That happy feeling that came with the in-service day’s coffee and donut is history.
The Buzz on PD

We know that those teacher in-service days come at considerable cost. Districts trade valuable student instructional days for teacher PD days and allot scarce funding to pay for the PD. In fact, more than 90% of teachers reported participating in PD in the past year (Gulamhussein, 2013). The issues in any school are varied, and on any given PD day, teachers might get information on a variety of issues: the Common Core State Standards (CCSS, 2010), the math curriculum, the needs of ELL learners, or the new school safety plan. Participants might leave with an idea, a handout, and genuine good intentions to try something out. Best-case scenario: back in the classroom, we figure out what ideas from the workshop to add to our teaching routines, what to eliminate to make room for them, and how to actually teach them. Worst-case scenario: we figure out that we lack the materials, time, and support we need, and we do not even try to implement those ideas that seemed important or interesting on in-service day. How big a surprise is it that the majority of teachers surveyed reported the PD was not useful (Darling-Hammond, Chung Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanus, 2009)? In fact, research reveals that the very popular “one-stop” workshop approach to PD has little to no impact on teacher practice (Borko, 2004; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). Without follow-up sessions and support (coaching, feedback, materials), teachers are not able to incorporate one-time ideas into practice (Fisher & Frey, 2012, 2013).

Participating in this cycle of ineffective PD can prove defeating to teachers. We wonder: how we are supposed to make these big changes our administration clamor for if we do not know how? We are frustrated: the new standards do not come with a curriculum, but do come with hard tests. As controversy swirls around standards and tests, we remind ourselves how many fads in education we have seen.
come and go. Sure, we want to help the students in our class. Maybe if somebody came in here and showed us how to do it, we would understand a little more and could ask some questions.

The realization that the majority of teachers do not find PD useful comes at a high price. It’s costly in time, morale, instructional days lost, and in its failure to elicit changes in practice that might result in improved student learning. In addition to these intangible costs, PD itself is expensive. Funded at the federal and state levels of government, as well as through private contributions, it is difficult to calculate exactly how much money is expended annually on PD. A look at just one source of federal funding provides a snapshot of the price tag for PD. In 2014 alone, Title II budget expenditures, primarily for PD, came to a whopping 2.3 billion dollars (United States Department of Education, 2015).

**PD Days…Overrated?**

If the majority of teachers report attending PD workshops is not useful and the associated costs are quite high, should PD for teacher learning continue? Is this a lost cause, or might research help us understand information from past PD attempts that might help shape current efforts and improve learning opportunities for teachers? Borko (2004) argued PD for teachers is necessary to improve instructional techniques and develop new instructional practices. Desimone (2009) claimed providing teachers with PD is important to improving both the quality of our schools and student achievement. These researchers provide compelling arguments supporting the concept of PD.

Without effective PD opportunities for teachers, how will important information be disseminated and large education initiatives enacted? Presently, the
majority of public school teachers are charged with delivering instruction aligned to the biggest education reform effort in history, the CCSS (2010). Love them or hate them, the reality is that in the majority of states, CCSS (2010) sets the bar for instruction from K through twelfth grade. CCSS (2010) bring new rigor and demands to instruction; they require shifts in teaching practice and new methods of assessment.

Successful enactment of CCSS (2010) is dependent on teachers learning and understanding the standards and transferring that learning into classroom practice. The stakes are high, and to successfully implement standards-based instruction, research has demonstrated we cannot rely on teacher training delivered through a traditional workshop approach. In addition to changing the face of classroom instruction, CCSS (2010) underscores the urgent need for a different approach to PD that will result in professional learning (PL). This will require high quality learning experiences for teachers with a focus on content knowledge and pedagogy. The standards set an unspoken expectation that teacher learning will be translated into classroom practice, aligned with the CCSS (2010).

**Professional Learning**

Before we go much further, it is important for us to make a distinction between “professional development” (PD) and “professional learning” (PL). PD participants generally have a passive role. They attend a workshop, and sit, while they listen to a presentation. PL, on the other hand, should expand teacher-learning opportunities beyond the traditional PD model. In PL, teachers are not being “developed”; instead, they are active learners sharing responsibility for their professional growth. The content of a PL session is developed based on learners’ needs and interests; in other words, the knowledge the teacher wants to learn is valued. One goal of PL is to
structure the content and activities purposefully so teachers are more likely to transfer their learning into observable teacher practice in the classroom, reflective of the PL.

In PL, some sessions may focus on pedagogy and others on content knowledge. Research supports a PL design that includes a combination of both (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon (2001) also emphasized content and pedagogy and supporting teachers to develop ongoing, professional communication with fellow teachers who are changing practice in similar ways. Porter, Garet, Desimone, and Birman (2003) found that teachers shared a common goal when attending PL. They wanted to improve their content knowledge and acquire more pedagogical strategies: “What should I be teaching?” and “How should I be doing it?” It seems teachers and researchers agree that PL should address both needs.

**PL Characteristics**

In addition to establishing a clear content focus, research provides further guidance on the factors considered important to teacher learning. After examining teacher-training efforts, researchers have identified characteristics that were evident in successful teacher learning opportunities. Garet et al. (2001) found three structural features that significantly impact teacher learning: a) form of the activity; b) duration of the activity; and c) the emphasis on collective participation. The last structure, collective participation, refers to PL designed for groups of teachers from the same school, department, or grade level (Garet et al., 2001). The advantages of structuring PL with peers include the opportunity for collaboration with fellow teachers while discussing concepts and goals, working through problems together, and sharing curriculum and assessment materials. This structure provides opportunities for staff to
ask questions and learn effective practices across grade levels. Participating in PL with peers encourages teachers to practice instruction, collaborate, reflect, and align learning goals with the school (Garet et al., 2001).

PL design should consider the qualities of successful PL as reported in research, but only after studying the context of the individual school, its culture, the community of adult learners, and the purpose for PL. There is no “one-size-fits-all” PL model that will work across all schools. Instead, using evidence gleaned from research as the foundation of the plan, PL should reflect the specific needs of the organization and participants. Building a coherent PL plan requires incorporating proven elements from research, selected after considering the school setting, the demonstrated instructional and learner needs, available resources, activities, and the goal of the PL—all pieces of a puzzle that need to fit together. With this approach, a research-based plan tailored to meet teachers’ needs and might optimize opportunities to achieve the desired result: change in practice.

**Active participation.** When teachers engaged as active learners in PL activities, they demonstrated a better understanding of concepts than passive participants did (PD). These activities included readings, discussions, modeling, teacher logs, peer observation, and feedback (Penuel, Fishman, Yamaguchi, & Gallagher, 2007).

**Time.** Research consistently finds that effective PL requires a significant amount of teacher time (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007). This is largely due to the learning curve for teachers, which is greatest at the implementation stage, when teachers need the most support, as they practice new teaching strategies or new curriculum. In PD, teachers might get
information, but then often left on their own for implementation. On the other hand, PL recognizes teachers should receive support during implementation. This might mean providing modeling, sample lesson plans, time for peer observation, and feedback. It is in the implementation stage that teachers are making a commitment to “give it a go.” The ideal structure for ongoing PL is to provide teachers time embedded in the school day, preferably with time set aside for collaboration and coaching (Killion, 2013).

**Commitment is key.** The period of time or number of hours committed to the PL effort matters. PL that is longer in duration has a greater impact on changing teacher practice. This is probably because PL sessions planned over longer periods usually include time to practice. In a review of nine different experimental research studies of teacher professional development, all found that PL of longer duration was positively associated with teacher change (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2009). Simply increasing the amount of time teachers spend in PL is not enough. Practice time allows teachers to work through the implementation process with a new instructional method and some time to struggle with new ideas. This is also when struggle might turn to frustration and when providing extra teacher scaffolding might increase teacher success.

Teachers will need time in their busy schedules to increase content knowledge, practice instructional delivery, learn from each other, and work together. Each PL plan should include time for planning, practice, and reflecting on what they have learned about the teaching process.

**Coaching.** The empirical research on coaching is mixed. Some studies suggest providing coaching support for teachers during implementation helps to change
teaching practices. Deussen, Coskie, Robinson, & Autio (2007) argue coaching is key to supporting learning transfer. In a study of two groups of teachers, both attended PD. Group 1 had PD only; Group 2 had PD and coaching through implementation. Coached teachers demonstrated transfer of learning into practice. Non-coached teachers quickly abandoned the practice. In a similar study of fifty teachers, those who had coaching along with PD were significantly more likely to use the new teaching practice in their classes than teachers with only PD (Knight, 2009). Garet, Cronen, Eaton, Kurki, Ludwig, Jones, & Silverberg (2008), in an IES study on the impact of two PD interventions on early reading and achievement reported coaching did not add any more value above other PD activity. Two groups of teachers were compared; one that did not receive coaching with one where teachers received 61.6 hours of coaching intended to help teachers translate knowledge into practice. In the first year no differences were found in the groups and in the second year the effect size was not significant.

What Should PL Look Like?

With so many varieties of PL available, plans might look different in every school. They might include face-to-face training, online training, or a blended approach using a combination of the two. The PL design should consider the context of the school, the culture, and the learners’ needs (Putnam & Borko, 2000). Certain factors matter: Teachers learn best when they actively engage in learning opportunities together with peers, in the school setting, over extended time, with coaching support in the classroom (Borko, 2004; Desmione et al., 2002; Garet et al., 2001).

Teachers would not expect students to learn the material if they taught in “one-stop” workshops. We cannot expect teachers to learn using this same approach. PL
can no longer just be about exposing teachers to a concept or providing basic knowledge. We must move from a development (workshop) approach to a shared learning model, informed by research. PL in this era of accountability requires a change in a teacher’s practice; this must be developed and supported through well-crafted and ongoing PL opportunities.

School leaders can help support professional learning by:

• Offering access to ongoing professional learning opportunities
• Setting expectations for participation and implementation
• Helping educators implement new knowledge and skills
• Providing observation and feedback
• Providing flexibility in scheduling for coaching, peer observation
REFERENCES


Appendix B

COMPREHENSION STRATEGY INSTRUCTION

The purpose of this brief is to provide an overview of research on reading comprehension strategy instruction, to examine the barriers to strategy instruction that teachers experience in the field, and to offer suggestions that might help reduce these obstacles. I will structure the paper to help practitioners understand what makes teaching comprehension a complex issue and offer research-based, practical approaches to effective comprehension strategy instruction. I hope this paper will provide a knowledge-building resource for teachers interested in planning instruction to improve comprehension while developing the habits of strategic readers.

Recommendations from Research

In 2000, the National Reading Panel (NICHHD, 2000) conducted a rigorous review of reading research. The findings provided scientifically based research recommendations for reading instruction that are still applicable today. The Panel reported on five components of reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Within the comprehension strand, three factors contributed significantly to the development of reading comprehension: (a) vocabulary instruction, (b) text comprehension instruction, and (c) teachers’ strategy instruction.

The report suggested vocabulary instruction is crucial to comprehension, and teaching should be both direct and indirect, include multiple exposures to a word, and reflect a combination of methods. The Panel determined reading is an active process in which engaged readers construct meaning (e.g., build comprehension) through purposeful interaction with the text. Further, from a cognitive perspective, when
readers relate their prior knowledge to the text and make mental representations in memory, text comprehension might improve. The Panel concluded teachers need training to ensure they know when and how to teach specific strategies so students can learn to apply them, as this affects achievement (NICHD, 2000).

The Panel determined that certain comprehension strategies were more effective than others were, that using cognitive and metacognitive comprehension strategies could improve reading comprehension, and this instruction should include explicit instruction. The report stated teaching strategies one at a time worked; however, teaching students to use multiple strategies was a more effective approach. The NRP (2000) considered more than 100,000 studies and reviewed hundreds before recommending six strategies, grounded in science. It is worth noting two additional strategies—using mental imagery (e.g., visualization) and accessing prior knowledge—were effective, but in a smaller number of studies. In addition, some strategies (e.g., using technology) looked promising but lacked enough research. The Panel determined the order and grouping of strategies for instruction were a matter for teachers, and collaboration (e.g., small groups, pairs) was helpful. The Panel recommended these six comprehension strategies, which met the Panel’s stringent criteria (NICHD, 2000):

2. Graphic and semantic organizers: teachers provide graphic representations to organize and remember information (including text structure).
3. Question answering: students answer comprehension questions posed by the teacher.
4. Question generation: students reread text and formulate questions.
5. Story structure: students learn to use story maps.

6. Summarization: students integrate ideas from text and summarize the information.

**Comprehension Defined**

To develop comprehension, readers actively construct meaning; they do not passively receive it when they decode words. No two people engage with a text exactly the same way; even under the same conditions, we construct meaning differently. As a result, even when we read the same text, our comprehension varies. Another group of researchers convened just two years after the Panel (NICHHD, 2000). The RAND Reading Study Group (RAND) (2002) examined how educational research could improve, and one focus was reading comprehension issues. The RAND (2002) group made significant contributions to our understanding of reading through its work and provided a working definition for comprehension, “the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language” (p xiii), through interactions among three elements (reader, text, activity) within a larger sociocultural setting. This often-cited definition grounds “thinking about thinking” while reading. When thinking about teaching comprehension, the teacher should consider:

- Characteristics of the reader (e.g., cognitive abilities, knowledge, motivation)
- Characteristics of the written text (e.g., type, genre, text complexity)
- Characteristics of the activity (e.g., task, purpose)
- Characteristics of the context (e.g., framework, environment) of reading (e.g., classroom, home, collaborative, independent)
In this overview for teachers, it is important to discuss terms and establish a common understanding of what is meant by the educational “jargon” we often hear. We have a common definition for “comprehension,” six recommended cognitive strategies, and will now think about the link between cognition and comprehension.

**Cognition and Comprehension: What is the Connection?**

Cognitive strategies provide learners a framework to complete a task (e.g., understanding a complex text, playing chess). Students might learn cognitive strategies in any content area. Van Dijk and Kintsch (1983) describe cognitive strategies as the procedures or mental steps a learner uses to accomplish a cognitive goal (e.g., reading with understanding, writing a summary). In a very similar description, Duke and Pearson (2002) explain comprehension strategies as “conscious plans—sets of steps that good readers use to make sense of text when reading” (p. 430). In this paper, I use the terms “cognitive strategy” and “comprehension strategy” to describe strategies that should be explicitly taught to readers to develop reading comprehension because both terms appear in literature related to reading comprehension strategy instruction.

In the 1970s, cognitive psychologists researching how children think developed the phrase “cognitive strategies” to describe the actions children take to improve cognitive function (e.g., memory) (Flavel, 1979). This important work in the field of psychology grounded more than 200 scientifically based research studies that followed in the field of education in the 1980s and 1990s, where researchers investigated the relationship between the use of cognitive strategy instruction, reading activities, and comprehension (Afflerbach, Pearson & Paris, 2008). In 1991, after conducting a comprehensive review of this large body of research, Pearson and
Fielding noted an important theme had emerged across the studies. When paired together, reading-related activities and cognitive behaviors, these two previously unrelated entities, were associated with reading comprehension gains (Pearson & Fielding, 1991). This research supported the idea that cognitive strategies, when taught well, can help students understand and remember what they read (NICHD, 2000; Pearson & Fielding, 1991).

Because of this body of research, reading researchers frequently use the term cognitive strategy when describing strategies related to teaching reading comprehension. Practitioners, on the other hand, are more likely to hear or read about reading or comprehension strategies (e.g., practitioner journals, teacher books about reading, professional development). Whether labeled “cognitive” or “comprehension” strategy instruction, research reveals cognition (thinking) and comprehension (understanding) are deeply intertwined strategies, which when explicitly taught, can help students develop comprehension in reading.

Dole, Nokes, and Dritts (2009) state that to achieve comprehension, students must use both cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Metacognitive strategies are a set of cognitive strategies specific to reading comprehension. Like cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies are also learned procedures (Dole et al., 2009). These two closely related strategies may overlap (Flavel, 1979). Learners “construct knowledge” using cognitive strategies, but they plan, self-regulate, and evaluate the knowledge they learn using metacognitive strategies. To differentiate between the two, it might be helpful to consider the purpose of the strategy—is it being used to meet a goal (e.g., read with understanding) or check that the goal has been met (e.g., Did I understand what I read)? For example, asking questions to gain information is a
cognitive strategy, while self-questioning to check understanding is metacognitive. Using a graphic organizer to organize information while reading is a cognitive strategy. Reviewing the notes on the graphic organizer to check for accuracy, study for a test, or write a summary is metacognitive.

Students can be taught metacognitive strategies, which can help improve learning (Nietfeld & Schraw, 2002; Thiede, Anderson, & Therriault, 2003). Together, strategic use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies, including self-monitoring understanding and taking corrective action when needed, help the student reach the reading goal (e.g., constructing meaning)—and achieve metacognition. Metacognition can continue to develop into adulthood and includes self-reflection, a metacognitive skill necessary for students to learn effectively (Baker, Gersten, & Scanlon, 2002).

The readers’ ability to self-monitor understanding, while reading, determines the difference between being a good reader and a poor reader (Paris & Myers, 1981). Poor readers may read a text and at the end have no idea that they do not understand it. In contrast, a student who is engaged in metacognitive activities as he reads has a sense he reads for meaning and engages actively with the text. Metacognitive comprehension strategies require students to engage in procedures that facilitate “thinking about thinking” and allow them to self-monitor understanding (e.g., set a purpose, ask themselves if the sentence makes sense, reread, use context clues, apply “fix-up” strategies). A good reader monitors understanding and can bring strategies to mind while reading; in other words, he reads “metacognitively” (Pressley, 2000; Pressley, Goodchild, Fleet, Zajchowski & Evans, 1989).

**Implications.** The RAND (2002) definition of comprehension implies metacognition. The student reader (bringing his prior knowledge) interacts with the
text (extracting and constructing meaning as he uses strategies) and the task (reading for meaning) within the sociocultural context of the setting (the classroom). The reader’s ability to comprehend may vary, depending on the text and task (RAND, 2000). If teachers accept the RAND (2002) definition of comprehension, the recommendations from the NRP (2000) might help teachers develop student understanding using comprehension strategy instruction. However, Panel recommendations are 15 years old (NICHHD, 2000), and for the past five years, teachers have grappled with implementing a new mandate, Common Core State Standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices [NGA Center] & Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSS], 2010). The CCSS (2010) have brought the biggest transformations and challenges to education in recent history. They are a national priority, but teachers are struggling to enact the changes the standards demand. If reading recommendations have been available for 15 years but not mentioned in CCSS (2010), is a discussion about comprehension strategy instruction still warranted? Much research is available that might provide insight into classroom instruction in this area.

**Teaching Comprehension**

The idea that instruction in reading comprehension is important was not a new concept in 2000 (NICHHD, 2000). In a landmark study of reading comprehension instruction conducted in 1978, Durkin found three things present during 4,000 minutes spent observing in fourth grade classrooms. Teachers would “mention” a skill (say just enough to allow for an assignment related to it), students would “practice” the skill (e.g., workbooks, worksheets), and teachers would “assess” (check if skill was correct). However, *instruction* in comprehension was significantly absent, observed
for less than 1% of the time, only 20 minutes (Durkin, 1981). This study was a catalyst for research in reading comprehension instruction. Comprehension instruction has received much attention over the last three decades. However, research reveals that despite this knowledge, little has changed in terms of strategy instruction since Durkin’s study almost 40 years ago (Barry, 2002; Connor, Morrison, & Petrella, 2004; Dole, 2000, 2003; Duke & Pearson, 2002; Klingner, Urbach, Golos, Brownell, & Menon, 2010; Mosenthal, Schwartz, & MacIsaac, 1992; Pressley, 2000; Pressley et al., 1989).

**Obstacles to Instruction**

What might explain why things have not changed much in classroom practice? Could the recommended strategies (NICHHD, 2000) be too difficult to teach? Or perhaps they are too hard for the students? Research reveals teachers can learn to teach strategies (Dole, 2003; Pressley & El-Dinary, 1997; Pressley, El-Dinary, Gaskins, Schuder, Bergman, Almasi, & Brown, 1992; Williams, 2002), and incorporating effective strategy instruction into existing reading approaches is possible (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Pressley & El-Dinary, 1997; Pressley, Schuder, Bergman, & El-Dinary, 1992; Williams, 2002). Research also indicates that students can be taught to use strategies (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Garner, 1990; Pressley, 2000) and that when they do, comprehension improves (Brown, Pressley, Van Meter, & Schuder, 1996; Connor et al., 2004; Garner, 1990; Klingner, Vaughn, Arguelles, Hughes, & Leftwich, 2004).

So, if strategy instruction is possible with any reading curriculum, and is effective, why are teachers not using strategy instruction? Few studies specifically examine the issue of teacher difficulties in implementing strategy instruction (Dole,
Pressley and his colleagues describe potential barriers to strategy instruction (Pressley et al., 1989). This information comes mostly from discussions “that have occurred in university-level courses, workshops for school personnel, and learning-skills counseling sessions” (Pressley et al., 1989, p. 309). Exploring some of the known issues might help teachers recognize barriers to comprehension strategy instruction in their own practice and identify where they need support. After examining potential implementation problems, I will focus on approaches to strategy instruction.

**Time.** Many teachers cite time as a major barrier to implementation—time to learn about strategy instruction, time to plan and prepare, time to model thinking processes and time to implement (Barry, 2002). Teachers also feel the time push to cover content. Therefore, there might be a tension between content and strategies. While the goal is to build knowledge through content, sometime spent with strategy instruction may improve comprehension of content material.

**Theory.** Some teachers might not engage in strategy instruction because they do not fully understand the theory behind the implementation of practices and strategies. Some teachers do not have enough information about metacognition and comprehension strategies because they were rarely exposed to these ideas during the course of their education or later during professional development (Pressley et al., 1989). It is understandable that teachers are reluctant to invest in learning about theory if it has not been emphasized during professional learning (PL), is rarely discussed in schools, and time is already at a premium. Dole (2000, 2003) argues that teachers’ instructional practices will “likely be inadequate” without an understanding of the reading process (e.g., theory).
A teacher survey to investigate barriers to the use of strategy instruction revealed teachers’ lack of confidence in their own knowledge of comprehension strategies and strategy instruction. Many stated that they feel the need for more instruction and a better understanding of strategies in order to help students (Barry, 2002). Understanding the role of theory in choosing an effective instructional approach and maximizing limited instructional time might make the topic more interesting or valuable to teachers.

School culture. Another barrier to implementation of strategy instruction has to do with the culture of the school. A teacher’s experiences as a student, parent, and teacher in a school culture affect his or her instructional practices. For example, teachers depend on their memories of how they were taught and their experiences from teacher training (Davis, 1989). Based on these understandings and the culture in which they work, a particular style of teaching evolves, and teachers become comfortable maintaining the status quo (Davis, 1989). Grossman describes this phenomenon as the “apprenticeship of observation” in which “the time spent as a student provides prospective teachers with images of teaching that prove difficult to overcome” (1990, p. 10). In other words, teachers teach the same way they themselves learned. Hamilton and Richardson (1995) reported similar findings. The school’s culture strongly affected the teachers in their study. Culture “seemed to influence greatly teachers’ willingness to change, as well as their beliefs, actions, and participation in any school program” (Hamilton & Richardson, 1995, p. 380).

Conflicting information. Many teachers are confused because of the many different types of strategies, the many different ways to teach them, and the difference between “skills” and “strategies.” Research has identified several effective strategies
(e.g., monitoring, summarizing, and questioning) to help students construct meaning. While the literature that identifies effective strategies varies only slightly, there is much variation in the literature on the most effective methods of strategy instruction. Overall, teachers find strategy instruction difficult to learn, implement, and embed in instruction, and they need support to sustain the process (Brown et al., 1996; Duffy, 1993; Gersten, Fuchs, Williams, & Baker, 2001; Klingner et al., 2004; Pressley et al., 1989).

**Effective Strategy Instruction**

Afflerbach et al. (2008) argue that for instructional purposes, there is a need to clarify the differences between “skills” and “strategies.” Examples of “skills” that can be “mastered” are phonics skills (e.g., blending and segmenting sounds) that lead to speed in decoding. In contrast, readers choose “strategies” (e.g., asking questions, summarizing, and self-monitoring) that can be applied flexibly, to help construct meaning. One student might choose one strategy in one situation, while another student might use a different strategy entirely. Strategy selection can vary for many reasons (e.g., reading purpose, prior knowledge, genre, context). Teaching students how to coordinate use of strategies in a collaborative, engaging context is particularly effective. In essence, the goal of skill and strategy instruction is to have readers who can automatically apply skills when reading and can read strategically (Afflerbach et al., 2008). According to Palincsar, “strategies are planful approaches that learners bring to organizing and monitoring their activity as readers” (2003, p. 100). The literature is very thorough in its description of the strategies good readers use to read and understand text. The most effective strategies that good readers use before, during, and after reading include: monitoring comprehension, making inferences,
summarizing, evaluating, thinking aloud, understanding text structure, and asking and answering questions. Pressley et al. argued that good readers employ many strategies interchangeably during a single reading session (1989). While it is helpful to know which strategies good readers use, it is also critical to know how to teach students these strategies.

**Using CCSS as a Guide for Instruction**

CCSS (2010) define benchmarks (skills and concepts) expected for end of grade-level achievement. Consider the grade-level standards “ends” or destinations for students to reach by the end of each school year. The route by which students get there may differ from school to school and classroom to classroom. CCSS (2010) leave curriculum matters and implementation methods to individual districts, schools, and teachers – including how, when, and in what order teaching skills and concepts occurs.

Implementation of CCSS (2010) has proven to be challenging work, and many educators want to know what material to use and how to teach it. Research indicated that comprehension strategy instruction was already lacking in teacher practice before adding the monumental task of implementing the CCSS (2010). At the same time, the new standards require greater rigor. They call for student engagement with text that is more complex. They require CR and attention to textual evidence. Finally, they require students read more informational text (CCSS, 2010). To help students achieve the standards, teachers might benefit from a balanced approach to reading instruction, including evidence-based comprehension strategy instruction.
Implementing Instruction

It is widely agreed that strategy knowledge is essential to effective learning. Some have argued that knowing what strategy to apply, as well as when and how to apply it, can significantly improve students’ understanding (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Pressley, 2006). Because comprehension is at the heart of reading or listening to texts, it is essential to begin teaching a small set of highly effective strategies early and to revisit the strategies often. Just as telling someone he can drive is not adequate instruction to get him a driver’s license, simply “mentioning” the strategies to students will not be enough to result in comprehension.

The goal of reading instruction is always for students to comprehend the text (Duke & Pearson, 2002; NICHD, 2000; Pressley, 2000). Many factors can impact a student’s reading comprehension including decoding ability, fluency, motivation, the text, vocabulary, background knowledge, and knowledge of effective reading strategies (Duke & Pearson, 2002). This guide is designed for teachers to build knowledge about why strategy instruction is important and to learn about the handful of evidence-based comprehension strategies the National Reading Panel (2000) recommends teachers provide explicit instruction in, with the goal of providing students practice so they can eventually apply these strategies on their own, when needed. Knowing that the content of the reading selection drives reading instruction, teachers should be selective in choosing the strategies for instruction and and judicious in the time spent on this instruction. Recent research shows some teachers might be overteaching strategies rather than carefully selecting strategies based on the text to be read (McKeown, Beck, Blake, 2009; Walpole & McKenna, 2007; Willingham, 2006).

Gradual release of responsibility. Afflerbach et al. (2008) advocate for teaching both skills and strategies explicitly, and for teachers modeling instruction and
scaffolding students, in the form of the Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). This model calls for the teacher to provide explicit (direct) instruction before, during, and after reading. Following GRR (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983), sometimes known as “I do, we do, you do,” the teacher quickly explains the strategy and scaffolds student learning by modeling 2-3 times (I do) before students try the strategy. Depending on the text and task, she begins to gradually release responsibility to the students (e.g., think-pair-share) to provide shared practice using the strategy (we do). This allows students to interact collaboratively and encourages student-student discussion about the text, which helps build comprehension. The teacher continues to release responsibility to students as they individually practice applying the strategies (you do). Independent practice promotes the use of metacognitive strategies including generating and/or asking questions, rereading text for a new purpose, completing and/or reviewing graphic organizer, and summarizing. The NRP (2002) recommendations can help guide strategy selection for a lesson (e.g., monitoring for understanding, asking and answering questions, making inferences, summarizing). These strategies align with the expectations of CCSS (2010) and teachers can easily integrate strategy instruction into standards-based plans.

The GRR model is a recursive process in that students may require additional support and feedback after achieving independence, especially as they encounter text that is more complex.

**Thinking aloud.** During strategy instruction, the teacher verbalizes and models, by “thinking aloud” when and how to use the comprehension strategies. The teacher thinks aloud each step of the process and makes her “invisible” thinking
“visible” to students. Students can see and hear the actions a skilled reader takes when constructing meaning from a text. By thinking aloud, the teacher provides a structure students can emulate while reading to develop comprehension (Pressley, 2006).

When the teacher instructs students using think alouds, it slows down the reading process and students can actively engage in reading with cognitive strategies. In addition, students begin to monitor their own understanding while reading (Pressley, 2006). During strategy instruction, students can ask questions, clarify, and clear up misconceptions about the text. The teacher provides explicit instruction over time, with small sets of strategies. Strategy instruction is recursive, and periodically reviewed, as needed. After explicit instruction, the teacher may decide to create and post anchor charts, detailing the strategies.

Before students apply the strategies during other independent reading, the teacher might briefly review the strategies anchor chart and discuss how and why “good readers” use strategies to self-monitor as they read. Depending on the task, text, and reader, this might include stopping at the end of each page, using a graphic organizer to take notes, using sticky notes, sharing a strategy that was used, or conducting student think alouds. Discussing “thinking about thinking” and setting monitoring expectations conveys to students that “good readers” actively engage with text, self-monitor, and apply “fix-up” strategies as needed. The teacher should observe students as they read independently, check the “state of the class” periodically, and coach individuals in need of support.

**Multiple strategy instruction.** This approach to multiple strategy instruction allows the teacher to choose which strategies to teach and the combination of
strategies. A different approach to teaching sets of strategies is to use a research established method to multiple strategy instruction.

Research on comprehension shows instruction that teaches students to engage using multiple strategies is preferable to and more effective than using a single strategy (Pressley, 2000; Pressley, El-Dinary, Gaskins et al., 1992). Constructivist and cognitive theories of instruction ground multiple strategy instruction, in which metacognition and strategy use promotes independent learning. Reciprocal Teaching, Direct Explanation, and Transactional Strategies Instruction are among the most widely known and effective approaches to multiple strategy instruction. Each has a unique focus but all provide procedures for implementation.

Reciprocal Teaching (RT) is an approach to instruction that teaches students to use four comprehension strategies—predicting, questioning, clarifying, summarizing—during small group reading. The teacher begins by explaining and modeling the strategies. Gradually, students take turns as a facilitator of the group, modeling and encouraging other students to use the strategies. Teacher scaffolding at this point is minimal (Palincsar & Brown, 1984).

Direct Explanation (DE) is an approach that focuses on “helping students to (a) view reading as a problem-solving task that necessitates the use of strategic thinking and (b) learn to think strategically about solving reading comprehension problems” (Williams, 2002, p. 246). This approach trains teachers to provide explicit explanations of what they are thinking about while reading. Studies of DE prove its effectiveness by increasing students’ awareness of why strategies are learned and how to use them (Williams, 2002).
Pressley and colleagues (1992) devised Transactional Strategies Instruction (TSI) to reflect a wide combination of cognitive strategies. In TSI, students learn to apply the strategies across texts and subject areas. The teacher’s role is quite different from DE. According to Williams, “although TSI teachers do provide their students with explicit explanations of strategic mental processes used in reading [like DE], the emphasis is on the interactive exchange between learners in the classroom” (2002, p. 249). Students Achieving Independent Learning (SAIL) is one type of TSI program that has enjoyed a great deal of success in schools in Maryland. When compared with traditional reading instruction, SAIL students outperformed the students in the traditional group on all measures (Pressley, El-Dinary, Gaskins et al., 1992; Williams, 2002).

TSI, DE, and RT are just a few examples of effective multiple strategy instruction approaches available to teachers. Practicing “reciprocal teaching,” “transactional strategies instruction,” or another approach to multiple strategy instruction allows the teacher to follow established procedures for multiple strategy instruction. The approach the teacher selects will determine the set of strategies taught.

There are other research-supported approaches to multiple strategy instruction including: 1) Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR), for content area reading (Klingner et al., 2004); 2) Questioning the Author (QTA), for informational text, using queries and discussion (Beck, McKeown, Hamilton, & Kucan, 1997); 3) Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS) pairing high and low readers to alternate the role of coach (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Burish, 2000); and, 4) Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction
(CORI) to promote choice and build student motivation (Guthrie, Van Meter, McCann & Wigfield, 1996).

In any multiple strategy approach it is necessary to explicitly teach the strategies, provide practice for students, and help students understand how, when, and why specific strategies are effective. This helps advance the metacognition students need to develop to become strategic learners.

**Choose your approach.** Strategy instruction is not just a matter of teaching strategies. “It requires…that we help [students] build…‘a conceptual model’ (Duffy, 1993) in which the what, why, how, [when and where] of individual strategies are integrated into an overall plan about what it means to be strategic” (Duffy, 1993, p. 244). In addition, students (and teachers, too) must have “metacognitive knowledge of specific strategies” (Pressley et al., 1989, p. 305). Metacognitive knowledge about specific strategies is necessary for students to sustain strategy use with all types of texts in all learning environments. Clearly, effective comprehension strategy instruction is comprehensive and encourages the development of well-rounded, strategic readers. The key for teachers is to identify and practice the best methods for delivering effective strategy instruction, the ones that work for them.

**Moving Forward**

For teachers to truly understand comprehension strategy instruction, they might need PL to develop knowledge of which strategies are useful as well as why, when, and how strategies should be implemented. Teachers will need content and pedagogical knowledge to help students learn how to use strategies to both construct meaning and “fix up” misunderstandings. PL might begin with knowledge-building sessions to present theoretical foundations of strategy instruction, information on
which strategies are effective (NICHHD, 2000), multiple strategy instruction (e.g., RT, PALS), and how to implement strategy instruction (e.g., GRR, thinking aloud). If possible, teachers should see strategy instruction modeled, have a chance to try out strategy instruction, and receive feedback. To accept, learn, and incorporate strategy instruction, teachers should have support to practice instruction over a sustained period.

**Overcoming Obstacles**

Teachers might have identified with some of the “potential barriers to strategy instruction,” introduced earlier. I briefly discuss these points again; this time to offer some suggestions teachers might find helpful to get past an obstacle and get started with reading strategy instruction.

**Think about theory.** Reading comprehension has been the focus of reading research for decades. More recently, several reports (NICHHD, 2000; RAND, 2002) have provided insight into the process of reading comprehension and the role of strategy instruction. Findings from these reports, and the discussion about cognition, might provide a starting point for learning about the theory-to-practice link to cognitive comprehension strategy instruction.

**Think about culture and beliefs.** It is important to consider that teachers might recall reading content (e.g., theory). However, explicit strategy instruction might not occur in the classroom due to a gap between this knowledge and pedagogical knowledge; that is “how to” deliver the instruction to match teacher belief that reading is a strategic process. Shulman (1986) argued teachers need both knowledge of reading content and the knowledge about how to teach it. Teachers might develop knowledge through readings, peer observation, PLC discussion, or a
school-wide professional development program. If so, Hamilton & Richardson (1995) recommend considering the culture of the school before creating PL initiatives as well as involving teachers in the planning process. Teacher buy-in and support from school leadership are both important for success.

**Think about time.** Cognitive strategy instruction is ongoing and does take time. However, to develop strategic readers who can read closely, think deeply, and engage with complex text is time well spent. Approaching strategy instruction by focusing on a small set of research-based strategies (NICHHD, 2000), as well as grouping multiple strategies together, might be a very effective use of instructional time. Teachers should view strategy instruction as a research-based approach to help them meet the text-based challenges of CCSS (2010), not as additional material to teach. Developing comprehension is key for students to achieve these reading focused, rigorous standards.

**Think about conflicting information.** The Panel makes it clear that explicitly teaching multiple cognitive strategies can aid in comprehension development (NICHHD, 2000). Cognitive strategy instruction develops the thinking skills students need to become strategic, flexible learners. Research suggests that teachers explicitly instruct students in how to choose and use multiple strategies, rather than one at a time, with many opportunities to practice. The instructional goal is to develop strategic readers, students who actively engage with text (e.g., understand that reading requires thought and action), who monitor their understanding, and who can strategically determine when and how to apply a strategy. These goals align with the CCSS (2010) Anchor Standards. All of the multiple strategy approaches described (e.g., RT, DE, TSI, PALS) have research support and consistent instructional
procedures to guide the teacher. Any one of these approaches might be a good place to start.

**Think about new standards.** Duke, Pearson, Strachan, & Bilman (2011) identified 10 actions, aligned with CCSS (2010). Teachers can review this list to self-evaluate current instruction and consider what actions they might change or add to improve reading comprehension instruction. The 10 actions list includes: 1) build disciplinary and world knowledge, 2) provide exposure to a volume and range of texts, 3) provide motivating texts and contexts for reading, 4) provide strategy instruction, 5) teach text structures, 6) engage students in discussion, 7) build vocabulary and language knowledge, 8) integrate reading and writing, 9) observe and assess, and 10) differentiate instruction.

Duke et al. emphasize that teachers must not lose sight of the purpose of strategy use—to support understanding of the text. The authors argue that strategy use is not the end goal of instruction, but rather a means to support the goal of making meaning (2011). Strategy instruction, emphasizing meaning, requires opportunities for students to apply strategies in an authentic context. One example is the Interactive Read Aloud (IRA) model, with an embedded multiple strategy approach to instruction. During the IRA, students are engaged in high-quality discussions about literature or informational text, apply strategies through GRR, and the primary focus is on students gaining knowledge and insight from the text.

**Final Thoughts**

Students need to learn how to intentionally interact with text to construct meaning, whether for understanding or enjoyment. To best foster this, instruction should include sets of multiple strategies, followed by students’ application of
strategies during reading. Through explicit instruction, repeated exposure, and after much practice, some of these strategies may become almost second nature (Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995). At the same time, implementation of multiple strategy instruction might help teachers concerned about which instructional approaches to use in efforts to meet CCSS (2010) goals. Teachers might consider how to adapt one approach from this paper to try out strategy instruction in the classroom, or read more about it, discuss the concepts with colleagues, or think about getting support from school leadership to develop an action plan.
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Appendix C

REINVENTING THE READ ALOUD

Teachers do not need a research study to confirm what educators already know. Teachers are accomplished problem-solvers, skilled at multi-tasking, and highly vested in doing the best job possible in the classroom. They achieve remarkable results with a minimal amount of planning time. They have a healthy skepticism of new “Big Ideas” in education that often disappear almost as fast as they are “unpacked.” They value uninterrupted instructional time and keep ongoing lists of tasks, resources, and lesson ideas they hope to accomplish.

Teachers have many things in common. One is the belief that reading matters—that a student’s ability to read well will affect academic achievement in every subject. Teachers know students who like to read will read more and research reports student interest in reading correlates with reading comprehension (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2010).

Teachers strive to inspire a love of reading in students by creating print rich classrooms and engaging reading activities. Most teachers share a love of children’s books and the act of reading aloud. Reading aloud brings to mind many simple pleasures—the memory of learning language, befriending favorite characters, getting lost in a plot, or being transported by a setting. Reading aloud might be the best part of the day for teachers and students. In fact, a desire to share the powerful language of books and the magic of the read aloud experience may have been one of the reasons you became a teacher in the first place.
According to the authors of Becoming a Nation of Readers, reading to students during the school day is a great opportunity for building the general knowledge required for reading success (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1984). Hoffman, Roser, & Battle (1993) agreed teachers read aloud for this purpose and to instill motivation in students to read. Reading aloud provides an opportunity to expose students to a wide variety of reading materials and engage socially with peers during reading; both practices contribute to building reading motivation (Gambrell, 2011). Teachers, when asked to recount their favorite elementary school experience, repeatedly listed the recollection of the teacher reading aloud as the favorite (Fisher, Flood, Lapp & Frey, 2004). When surveying over 1,700 sixth graders regarding their “best reading experiences in school,” 62% responded, “the teacher read aloud” (Ivey & Broddaus, 2001). Together, the research and surveys offer a compelling argument for the importance of the daily read aloud.

Has the Read Aloud Become a Dinosaur?

Now, more than ever, teachers face tough issues in the classroom with students’ increasingly diverse needs, new and more rigorous standards, and demanding new assessments. This makes competition for instructional time fierce. If your principal sees you reading aloud from a children’s book, will he or she think you are wasting time? Will the read aloud tradition disappear in the battle for all things Common Core (Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects, 2010)? Is it in danger of becoming extinct?

The findings of Fisher et al. (2004) suggested that while teachers devoted time to selecting quality literature, they did not consistently preview and practice the books
they selected to read aloud. In the study, researchers found almost half of the 120 teachers did not adequately model fluent reading or connect the read aloud to other literacy activities. Fast forward ten years later, to classroom teachers tasked with both developing tiered instruction for Response to Intervention (RTI) (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006) and implementing new, more rigorous standards (CCSS, 2010). Despite setting a high academic bar the standards do not suggest what strategies or curriculum to use to achieve CCSS (2010), leaving these choices to districts, schools, and teachers.

Making these decisions requires an understanding of the standards, curriculum design, and reading research. Experts do not always agree on what to use, and teachers have little time to wade through new materials and figure out how to teach them. Faced with more demands, less time, and higher expectations, teacher burnout remains a concern, and new teachers struggle to commit to teaching past the first year (Billingsley, 1993). It is easy to see how teachers might forgo spending instructional time reading aloud to students. Is it possible to do a better job helping teachers meet the standards, make planning easier, and the teaching experience more enjoyable?

Perhaps a research-based interactive read-aloud (IRA) model, combining standards, strategy instruction, and a reading practice enthusiastically endorsed by teachers and students might be part of a solution.

**Rethinking the Read Aloud**

Research on teacher beliefs suggests the beliefs teachers hold about reading are very important and powerfully influence classroom practice, more so than what teachers learn in college or in professional development (Bandura, 1993; Schunk, 1991). Building on the premise that positive beliefs and buy-in toward the read aloud exist, it makes sense teachers would want to continue this time-honored practice they
love, especially with a clear understanding of how it meets current standards, benefits students, and is easily implemented.

Research offers evidence that reading aloud is important (Hoffman et al., 1993; Ivey and Broaddus, 2001) but is more limited on the most effective approach to conducting an instructional read aloud. The positive beliefs and attitudes teachers hold toward the read aloud process are well established (Fisher et al., 2004; Hoffman et al., 1999). Therefore, developing a standards-based framework that redesigns the look and feel of the read aloud might provide teachers an effective, easy to implement, and enjoyable approach to meeting literacy standards.

**Interactive Read Aloud Framework**

Perhaps the secret to effectively reinventing the read aloud for everyday practice lies in providing teachers with a framework or instructional model, reflective of current instructional demands, that can easily be adapted to meet targeted, grade-specific instruction—a model designed to align with standards-based practice while providing opportunities for teacher personalization and choice. A straightforward, easily replicated approach to creating a high-quality experience is needed, supporting the belief that instruction can be designed to accomplish many things at the same time.

When developing a standards-based IRA model it is important to consider the limited time teachers have for instructional planning and lesson delivery, as well as the long list of reading, vocabulary, and writing standards at each grade level. To streamline planning, the redesigned IRA model is framed by the ten CCSS (2010) Reading Anchor Standards that span grades K-12. The design reflects many of the instructional shifts required by CCSS (2010), including instructional decisions to address academic vocabulary instruction, text complexity, and a shift to a 50%-50%
ratio of informational texts and selections from literature required by CCSS (2010). To help build teacher understanding and make planning and implementation easier, the reinvented IRA model includes planning information, and details related to the CCSS (2010), as well as an adaptable read aloud template teachers can follow.

The IRA lesson plan template incorporates a scaffolded approach to literacy instruction. To help build teachers confidence in how instruction is delivered, the plan includes scripted language teachers can follow to help ensure delivery is purposeful and engaging. The model provides a systematic and research-based approach to reading instruction designed to cover multiple CCSS (2010) standards within one lesson during whole group instruction. The IRA lesson plan format, or protocol, is easy for teachers to follow and designed for delivery in thirty minutes.

**Standards Based Framework**

By aligning reading instruction to the Anchor Standards (CCSS, 2010) and embedding the instructional shifts into the suggested framework, the IRA model helps the classroom teacher save time by taking the “guesswork” out of planning and delivering high-quality instruction designed to meet CCSS (2010) demands. The model provides opportunities for explicit instruction before, during, and after the read aloud. At the same time, the interactive approach to instruction promotes active student engagement with the text, with peers, and the teacher. The IRA is an opportunity for teachers to increase the amount of informational text read in the classroom and to teach students how to read informational text. Table 7 provides a quick look of a sample IRA framework outlining suggested instruction embedded in a literature selection and Table 8 within an informational text.
### Table 7  IRA Instructional Framework for Literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Focus</th>
<th>Before</th>
<th>During</th>
<th>After</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graphic Organizer</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text Structure</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background Knowledge</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set Purpose</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inferring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask and Answer Questions</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authors Craft (e.g., similes)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fast Mapping Vocabulary</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context Clues Vocabulary</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 2 Vocabulary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary Writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary Activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 8  IRA Instruction Framework for Informational Text

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Focus</th>
<th>Before</th>
<th>During</th>
<th>After</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graphic Organizer</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text Structure</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background Knowledge</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set Purpose</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 3 Vocab Instruction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inferring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask and Answer Questions</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text Features</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fast Mapping Vocabulary</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context Clues Vocabulary</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tier 2 Vocabulary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary Writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary Activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examining the Framework

Information on the components that comprise the IRA framework is included to build teacher knowledge of how the IRA model is aligned with the reading standards (content) that must be addressed to meet CCSS (2010) as well as research supported ways to deliver instruction (pedagogy).

Scaffolded approach. The IRA plan follows the Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) (Pearson & Gallaher, 1983) framework. In this scaffolded three-step approach, the teacher gradually releases responsibility to the learner. The teacher begins by heavily scaffolding students with teacher modeling (I do), and then students practice by working together (we do), and finally work independently (you do). During the IRA, the teacher provides explicit modeling (2-3 times), and then gradually releases responsibility to students as they participate in collaborative-guided practice (e.g., pair and share, turn and talk). Finally, the teacher releases responsibility to students to practice the strategy independently. The teacher may provide additional opportunities for students to independently apply the comprehension strategy. This might include a written response, after the read aloud, the teacher can later evaluate for understanding.

Text complexity. Walpole and McKenna (2007) argue that all elementary teachers (including K-2) could confidently use an IRA to teach comprehension instruction. Waiting for students to be able to decode the text is too late for teachers to start comprehension instruction. In this model, the teacher reads aloud and therefore carries the decoding burden; this is why the read aloud the teacher selects should be more difficult than the student would read on his own. When choosing a read aloud, text complexity is an important factor to consider.
The authors of CCSS (2010) Appendix A (2012) included the rationale and methodology behind the text complexity bands. If teachers use Lexile measurements as a quantitative guide, the suggested Lexile level for the IRA is two grade levels higher than the students’ grade-level Lexile band (e.g., the Lexile level of a book read aloud in a 2nd grade classroom is high 3rd or 4th grade Lexile band) (Hiebert, 2013). Choosing text more complex (difficult) than the students can read independently helps ensure the IRA will keep students engaged during the read aloud. Appendix A (June, 2012) of the CCSS (2010) defines the three measures to consider when determining text complexity:

1. **Qualitative:** determined by the levels of meaning of vocabulary found in the text, structure, language conventions, and clarity, as well as knowledge demands. (This includes author’s use of literary elements, such as mood, figurative language, poetic rhythms, etc.)

2. **Quantitative:** a score often determined using readily available software (e.g., Lexile.com) measuring the “readability of the text.” Variables in a specific formula will include some combination of sentence length, number of words in sentence and paragraph, number of times a word appears, etc.

3. **Reader and task considerations:** takes into account the background knowledge of the reader, as well as the reader’s motivation, interests, and any academic tasks related to the text. In determining a read aloud selection, the teacher should rely on best professional judgment and consider the students and the task. Teachers should not select a book based on quantitative and qualitative measures alone. The teacher should preview the book in terms of subject content, background and experiences of their students as well as the assignment students will need to complete during, and after, the read aloud.

**Anchor standards.** CCSS (2010) for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (“the standards”) is divided
into four strands: 1) Reading, 2) Writing, 3) Speaking and Listening, and 4) Language. Each of the strands is linked to a set of College and Career Readiness (CCR) Anchor Standards, which lists what students are expected to master, in ELA, across K-12.

Teachers can use CCR Anchor Standards as a guide to navigate the CCSS (2010) and as tool to simplify planning. Table 9 represents the four CCR Anchor Standards (e.g., Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, Language). Each ELA Anchor Standard also has sub-categories, called clusters.

Table 9  
CCR Anchor Standards for ELA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Anchors</th>
<th>Writing Anchors</th>
<th>Speaking and Listening Anchors</th>
<th>Language Anchors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clusters:</td>
<td>Clusters:</td>
<td>Clusters:</td>
<td>Clusters:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Ideas and Details</td>
<td>Text Types and Purposes</td>
<td>Comprehension and Collaboration</td>
<td>Conventions of Standard English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft and Structure</td>
<td>Production and Distribution of Writing</td>
<td>Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas</td>
<td>Knowledge of Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration of Knowledge and Ideas</td>
<td>Research to Build and Present Knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity</td>
<td>Range of Writing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Acquisition and Use</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10 examines the CCR Reading Anchor Standard (K-12) and details the four clusters that make up this Anchor Standard (Key Ideas and Details, Craft and Structure, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity). Together, these four clusters combine for 10 Reading Anchor Standards.
that span across grades K-12. The IRA model is aligned to the Reading Anchor Standards.

### Table 10  10 Reading CCR Anchor Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster 1: Key Ideas and Details</th>
<th>Cluster 2: Craft and Structure</th>
<th>Cluster 3: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.</td>
<td>4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.</td>
<td>7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.</td>
<td>5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.</td>
<td>8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.</td>
<td>6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.</td>
<td>9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Cluster 4: Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity:**
This cluster extends across all the Anchor Standards.
10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.
**Reading anchors guide IRA.** To make planning convenient for teachers, the IRA framework is aligned to the 10 Reading CCR Anchor Standards and follows the progression of the clusters: 1) Key Ideas and Details, 2) Craft and Structure, and 3) Integration of Knowledge and Ideas. Text complexity (Cluster 4) is included in each lesson. Informational text instruction (e.g., vocabulary, text structure) is addressed with a specific teaching protocol.

During the read aloud, the teacher can focus on the cluster of key ideas and details or develop questions focused around the author’s craft and structure, knowledge and ideas, or a short combination of two or all three, depending on grade level and instructional needs. Structuring questions (and follow-up tasks) around the clusters and strands that comprise the 10 Reading Anchor Standards of CCSS (2010) provides a focus for implementation. Teachers can use the 10 Reading Anchor Standards as a guide to identify the goals, objectives, and standards to address in a particular read aloud. Teachers can apply this same method to plan a read aloud using literature or informational text. The Reading Anchor Standards are organized in the same manner, for both literature and informational texts.

Table 11 provides an example of how structuring questions (and follow-up tasks) around a specific cluster can shift, or target, the instructional focus.
### Table 11  Reading Anchor Standards Guide the IRA Plan

Using the Clusters to Guide Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>1. Key Ideas and Details</strong></th>
<th>Sample Questions:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make inferences</td>
<td>Use explicit language to model how to make inferences (It says in the text_____. I say_______.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify the central idea and theme(s)</td>
<td>So, I can put these clues together and make the inference_____.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyze characters and events</td>
<td>How do you think ____is feeling? (It says, I say, and so).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>2. Craft and Structure</strong></th>
<th>Sample Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpret words and phrases</td>
<td>What happened first, next, then, last? Model writing responses on sequencing graphic organizer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyze structures of text</td>
<td>The events of the story happened one right after the other. How can we use the structure to explain how the beginning of the selection contributes to the ending?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach text structure with graphic organizer</td>
<td>How do the characters interact with one another?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss purposes and points of view</td>
<td>What are some of the areas of figurative language the author uses here? Why? How does that help the reader?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12 presents the IRA Lesson Plan format incorporating all the framework components. Using the 10 CCR Reading Anchor Standards as a tool to narrow the focus for instruction simplifies the planning process for teachers across grades K-12.
### Table 12  IRA Suggested Lesson Plan Format

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Instructional Focus</th>
<th>Aligned with Anchor Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Before Reading</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Minutes</td>
<td>Introduce text (or story) structure and matching graphic organizer</td>
<td>Students describe and analyze text structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Reading Standard 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 Minutes</td>
<td>Develop background knowledge, use visual or media clip</td>
<td>Evaluating info from media and two sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Reading Standards 7, 9).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Minutes</td>
<td>Set purpose for reading</td>
<td>Tip: Limit background knowledge to 10% or less of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>read aloud time, 3 minutes for a 30-minute read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>aloud (Equip, 2012).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Minutes</td>
<td>Vocabulary Instruction for Tier 3 words: (INFORMATIONAL TEXT ONLY) If teaching Tier 3 words introduce 1-2 key words before reading.</td>
<td>Tip: Use concept of definition map to teach Tier 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>vocabulary BEFORE reading informational text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>During Reading</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-25 Minutes</td>
<td>Read aloud with focus on comprehension, vocabulary, and text structure instruction</td>
<td>Tip: Use the headings of clusters to guide strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scaffold students with GRR model and use think alouds</td>
<td>instruction and formulate questions aligned to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(If needed) vocabulary introduced using context clues or fast mapping</td>
<td>Reading Anchor Standards (e.g., Key Ideas, Craft and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Structure)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students ask and answer questions, teach students to provide evidence from the text</td>
<td>Reading Standard 4 asks students to determine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>meaning of words from context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scaffold students to make inferences</td>
<td>Tip: Ask “how or why” questions. Students are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>called on across the Reading Standards to determine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>key ideas and details, structure, theme, craft, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>explain how ideas are integrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Making inferences is important for reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>comprehension and called</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>for in Reading Standard 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Instructional Focus</td>
<td>Aligned with Anchor Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teach text structure using matching GO</td>
<td>Reading Standard 5 includes understanding the structure of the whole text, as well as smaller parts (e.g., chapter, page, paragraph, sentence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complete GO- model how to take notes on GO</td>
<td>Tip: Writing during reading strengthens comprehension, graphic organizer helps students organize info, connect ideas, and remember information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>After Reading</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Complete and review GO</td>
<td>Standards ask students to identify organization of text and focus on central ideas (2,5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minutes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vocabulary Instruction for Tier 2 words:</td>
<td>Vocabulary is highly emphasized in CCSS (2010), see Appendix A*. Has own Anchor Standards, under the Language ELA Standards heading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teach 2-3 pre-selected Tier 2 vocab words, follow protocol*</td>
<td>TIP: Teach Tier 2 words AFTER reading selection, use vocab protocol*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summary writing using GO</td>
<td>Reading Standards 2 and 9 call for understanding theme and summarizing central ideas of text</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Implementing the IRA**

Walpole & McKenna (2007) suggest teachers consider how to introduce comprehension strategies by using explicit language. Before reading, tell students what the strategy is, how readers use it, and why it is helpful. When modeling the use of the selected graphic organizer, demonstrate how using the text structure can help
organize information read in the text. Explain to students how and why understanding the text structure of a story is helpful for comprehension. Using the GRR model during the read aloud, the teacher should demonstrate the strategy 2-3 times before the students use the strategy (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). When implementing the IRA, teachers might consider using sticky notes to mark in the book where they plan to stop and model a selected strategy. Jotting down key words to script modeling when “thinking aloud” is another technique that can be valuable. A think aloud is a powerful strategy for teachers to make visible for students the “invisible thinking” that takes place when a proficient reader implements a strategy to develop comprehension. When modeling a think aloud, the teacher will pause at the pre-selected section of the text and think aloud, “Why’s he so mad? The author has not told me, but I know little brothers can be a pain. I’m going to read to find out.” A sentence or two is usually enough.

**Background knowledge.** Coleman & Pimentel (2011) argue too much time has been spent in the past building background knowledge, taking away from the potential instructional value a read aloud opportunity presents. The Equip rubric (2012) suggests limiting the amount of time devoted to background knowledge to 10% or less of the allotted instructional time. This is an opportunity to use visuals (photographs) or embed technology into instruction by using media to quickly introduce a concept or to further support topic development after the read aloud. As a rule of thumb, plan on only 2-3 minutes to build background. Table 12 provides a glance at scope and sequence for teachers. The lesson elements and suggested timeframe align with recommendations from the Equip rubric for lesson design evaluation (Achieve the Core, 2012).
**Text structure.** The IRA provides teachers an opportunity to teach text structure to improve understanding, with graphic organizers. The selection of the graphic organizer is dependent upon the genre chosen for the read aloud. If the read aloud selection is literature, the graphic organizer should match with sequencing or story mapping. If using an informational text, the graphic organizer should align with the structure the author used to organize the information in the text (e.g., for comparing and contrasting, a Venn diagram) (Walpole & McKenna, 2007). Before reading, the teacher briefly introduces the graphic organizer and during the IRA scaffolds students to complete the graphic organizer. In this manner, students learn how to organize information from the text in a way that matches the text structure. This will be helpful in remembering and understanding the content. The lesson incorporates writing to support the understanding of reading (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006). After the IRA, the graphic organizer serves as an organizational tool for students to write a brief retelling (K-1) or summary (2-8) as a follow-up activity.

**Vocabulary Instruction**

Willingham (2006) argues that if students do not understand vocabulary, it affects their understanding in the immediate setting, hindering comprehension as well as limiting acquisition of new vocabulary. Teaching vocabulary may have long-lasting effects for students and actively engaging students can help them learn new vocabulary (Beck et al., 2002; Nagy, 2005). Given the amount of vocabulary unfamiliar to students and the impact vocabulary has on reading comprehension, researchers agree that the question is not whether vocabulary instruction is important, but how it can be systematically included in classroom instruction (Beck et al., 2002; Hiebert, 2005; Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986).
The rich language found in complex texts selected for an IRA provide a source of Tier 2 and Tier 3 vocabulary words and the model promotes active vocabulary instruction, on a daily basis. Prior to reading aloud, teachers should review the text and identify two to three vocabulary words important for content understanding in this context and in later learning (Beck, McKeown & Kucan, 2002; Hiebert, 2005; Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986). The authors of the CCSS (2010), in ELA Appendix A, describe the procedures for identifying words targeted for instruction and place an emphasis on Tier 2 vocabulary instruction.

**Tiered vocabulary.** Vocabulary words with multiple meanings, such as racket, bore, and scale represent Tier 2 targeted vocabulary words and may have greater utility for instruction than Tier 3 words such as isotope, calligraphy, and photosynthesis. Tier 2 words occur across literature and informational text while Tier 3 words, specific to certain topics of study, have less utility. The procedures for explicitly teaching Tier 2 vocabulary call for instruction after the read aloud (Beck et al., 2002). Instruction of Tier 3 words may be crucial for understanding; however, the delivery protocol differs and occurs before the read aloud. The Beck et al. (2002) protocol for Tier 2 vocabulary instruction is included in Table 13 and explained in CCSS (2010) ELA Appendix A.


**Table 13  Teacher Steps for Tier 2 Vocabulary Instruction**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier 2 Vocabulary Protocol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Say the word, children repeat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell a child-friendly definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell how the word was used in the book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give examples of the word used in multiple, unrelated contexts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invite children to construct an example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have children repeat the word</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Context clues.** Another emphasis in the CCSS (2010) vocabulary standards focuses on the use of contextual clues to determine meaning while reading. One strategy researchers found significant for teaching context clues in social studies texts is the “CLUE” strategy (Baumann, Edwards, Boland, Olejnik, & Kame’enui, 2003). During a read aloud, when it appears that the context of the sentence would be effective in clarifying meaning, teachers can model for students how to use the CLUE strategy to determine meaning through context. Teachers should communicate that using context clues does not work for every unfamiliar word. The strategy has four steps: (a) check, (b) look, (c) use, and (d) expand. Table 14 elaborates on the steps used in the CLUE strategy (Baumann et al., 2003).

**Table 14  Determining Word Meaning through Context**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context Clue Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Check the text as you read, for unfamiliar words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look for and read the sentences around the word.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See if you find clues to the meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use the word in the sentence. Do you understand the meaning of the word?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If not, expand your resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand your resources means use a glossary, online dictionary, ask a friend, or teacher.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Final Thoughts

Teachers can provide research-supported instruction reflective of the academic rigor demanded by CCSS (2010) when implementing the IRA during whole group reading instruction. The IRA framework incorporates multiple standards guided by the Anchor Standards. Teachers can easily modify the model to target grade-specific standards for any grade level (K-8) while creating memorable experiences through an activity that has proven enjoyable for students and teachers. Reinventing the read aloud transforms a beloved standby into an effective tool to deliver high-quality, standards-aligned literacy instruction in today’s classroom.
REFERENCES


Appendix D

HOW TO TEACH INFORMATIONAL TEXT STRUCTURE

Common Core State Standards (CCSS, 2010) call for instruction in text structure—the way an author organizes ideas and information in a text—and requires students to “analyze the structure of texts” (Anchor Standard 5). This seems to be a reasonable request, considering readers who understand text structure can more readily identify key concepts and details, organize and remember information, and construct meaning (Duke & Pearson, 2002; National Reading Panel [NRP], 2000). The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) also “strongly recommends” the explicit teaching of informational text structures as an important part of reading comprehension instruction (Shanahan, Callison, Carriere, Duke, Pearson, Schatschneider & Torgesen, 2010).

In addition, CCSS (2010) introduces major instructional shifts that demand students read texts of greater complexity and substantially increase the amount of informational text that students must read. In fact, the standards require that half the reading 5th graders read in a day be informational text, increasing to 70% by 12th grade (CCSS, 2010).

If we agree that teaching text structure is a way to help improve students’ comprehension of informational text (Duke & Pearson, 2002; NICHD, 2000; Shanahan et al., 2010)—and given the increased focus on the importance of informational text (CCSS, 2010)—then we agree it is critical that teachers know how to teach informational text structure.
But wait. Implicit in this discussion—a built-in assumption—is that teachers already know how to correctly identify informational text. Imagine the scenario: on any given Friday afternoon at 3 p.m., every educator in the country is called to a mandatory meeting. Each educator (teacher, administrator, researcher, professor, practitioner) is presented with five identical texts, typical to any 5th grade classroom, and a simple task: “Working on your own, please sort the five texts into two groups—informational text in one group, everything else in the other. You have as much time as you need. However, as soon as you complete the task correctly, you may leave, and all five texts are yours to keep.” It is reasonable to expect every educator could successfully accomplish this in a matter of minutes. We all know what informational text is, don’t we?

Therein lies our challenge. The term “informational text” is not defined in the CCSS (2010). Within research, the definition varies. Duke (2004) argues informational text is limited to texts providing information about the “natural and social world.” Marinak and Gambrell (2008) espouse a much broader view calling anything written to convey information, informational text. The International Reading Association (IRA) has one interpretation and National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) provides another. None of the understandings appears to align with the informational text expectations provided in CCSS (2010). These inconsistencies suggest potential barriers for instruction of informational text; if we cannot agree on what the term means, it is not likely we will agree on how to teach it. In an effort to provide teachers with some clarity and develop a common understanding, this paper looks to address and resolve some of the confusion around informational text that has
accompanied CCSS (2010). Only then can we move forward and discuss how to teach informational text structure.

Nonfiction and Informational Text: Synonyms?

Teachers are being asked to increase the amount of informational text students read. When choosing informational texts for instruction, can any nonfiction text be selected? The terms “nonfiction” and “informational text” are often used interchangeably; do they mean the same thing? Does the terminology matter?

Nonfiction is any writing that is factual in basis. According to Duke and Bennett-Armistead (2003), nonfiction is a broad category of writing, of which informational text is a sub-category. Under the category of nonfiction, Duke and Tower (2004) have classified five separate genres of nonfiction texts: informational, reference, biographies, procedural, and concept books. Shanahan (2012) emphasizes that all nonfiction is not informational text and that teachers need to know how to distinguish the various kinds of nonfiction in order to teach each type. Each of the five genres of nonfiction is written for a different purpose and can be identified by unique characteristics, and instruction should address these characteristics.

Informational Text

Informational text is a sub-category of nonfiction, written to expose students to facts and is sometimes referred to as expository text. The purpose of informational text is to inform or instruct about the topic. Gail Gibbon’s Monarch Butterflies (1991) and Wendy Pfeffer’s Thunder and Lightning (2002) are two examples of children’s informational texts that skillfully use text features and technical vocabulary to help convey information to even our youngest readers. Informational text is a very important type of nonfiction that teachers can identify through several characteristics.
The text contains **factual content** (information related to science or social studies topics) and includes **text features** (e.g., table of contents, photos, labels, diagrams) (Duke, 2004; Duke & Roberts, 2010; Duke & Tower, 2004; Shanahan, 2013a).

Another important characteristic is **text structure**. To organize the complex content of informational text (e.g., information, ideas), authors commonly rely on **five text structures** (e.g., descriptive, problem/solution, sequence, compare/contrast, cause and effect) (Williams, Nubla-Kung, Pollini, Stafford, Garcia, & Snyder, 2007; Williams, Stafford, Lauer, Hall, & Pollini, 2009). An informational text may include one, several, or all five text structures. Students will need explicit instruction and practice for each type of text structure, one structure at a time (Duke & Roberts, 2010; Williams et al., 2007, 2009). The combination of complex content, vocabulary, features (e.g., graphs, tables, figures), and text structure often make informational text more challenging than literature (e.g., narrative, fiction) for students to understand and remember.

From research, we gain a clear understanding of the terms **nonfiction** and **informational text**. The information that might be very helpful for teachers tasked with instruction. However, CCSS (2010) sets the expectations that guide instruction. Therefore, it is important to carefully consider how the terms appear in CCSS (2010).

**CCSS and informational text.** When examining how the terms “nonfiction” and “informational text” are used in CCSS (2010), please keep in mind the meaning of these two terms as acquired from research. Upon comparison, educators might notice a disparity between the two views. Let’s take a close look at the language in CCSS (2010) to analyze what might be causing this disconnect.
One of the CCSS (2010) English Language Arts (ELA) instructional shifts calls for “building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction” and requires 50% informational reading in elementary school. CCSS (2010) also states, “Informational reading includes content-rich nonfiction.” CCSS (2010) includes both terms “informational” and “nonfiction,” which is not unusual. However, educators might be puzzled by how the terms are presented, in a manner that appears to contradict the explanation provided by research.

In CCSS (2010), “informational reading” is described as the broad category of text and “nonfiction” as a subcategory —the opposite of Duke’s explanation of the two terms (Duke & Tower, 2004). Additionally, when CCSS (2010) describes "informational readings,” it includes a wide range of topics—information found in content areas of history, social studies, science, and the arts—and in technical texts (e.g., how-to books, directions, forms, charts, graphs, procedural books) —and in “literary nonfiction,” which can include narrative nonfiction (e.g., memoirs, biographies). CCSS (2010) categorizes all of these types of writing as informational text, in contrast to the narrow description of informational text offered by research (Duke, 2004; Duke & Roberts, 2010; Williams et al., 2009). How might educators, tasked with meeting CCSS (2010) demands (e.g., increasing informational text, teaching text structure), reconcile the apparent differences presented in the two views of informational text? Is one description of informational text correct and the other wrong?

Possible explanation. Shanahan (2013) describes the way CCSS (2010) presents categories of nonfiction as types of informational text as an “informational text stewpot.” Maloch and Bomer (2013) acknowledge teachers might be frustrated
trying to understand contradictions in CCSS (2010), suggesting “the writers of the CCSS document got tangled up, as so many people do, in these forms and functions” (p. 209). Susan Pimental, one of the primary architects of CCSS (2010), concedes the description of informational text in CCSS (2010) might be problematic. In a personal communication to Tim Shanahan in 2012, Pimental writes:

“I think David [Coleman] and I have to take the blame for biographies and autobiographies and memoirs getting into the informational pile. To atone, we've been pushing hard on students reading informational text with informational text structures so as to counter the proclivity to just pick up another narrative that just happens to be true” (as cited in Shanahan, 2013b, p.13).

The terms “nonfiction” and “informational text” have been a source of confusion for teachers tasked with implementing the CCSS (2010). Shanahan (2013) and Maloch & Bomer (2013) suggest teachers move beyond any mistakes that might appear in the standards. In that spirit, the suggestions for informational text instruction that follow are based on the research-based descriptions of informational text (Duke & Roberts, 2010) and focus on the intent of the CCSS (2010)—to increase the amount of informational reading students do in a day to gain knowledge of the world.

**Moving Forward**

From research, we have determined that informational text is an important type of nonfiction that can be identified by the content (e.g., factual, science, social studies), text features (e.g., glossary, diagrams, charts), text structure (e.g., descriptive, problem/solution, sequence, compare/contrast, cause and effect), and signal words (e.g., first, next, last; similar, different; if, then). Teachers can use this knowledge to help identify resources, increase the amount of informational text students read, and to
teach text structure (CCSS, 2010). However, teachers often have questions about potential instructional barriers that include: finding texts, finding instructional time, and finding ways to teach text structures. Now that we have a common understanding of informational text, we can explore these other real concerns.

**Informational Text Characteristics**

Students should have opportunities to read all types of literature and nonfiction. However, the other genres of nonfiction (e.g., narrative nonfiction, how-to), should not be counted as informational text (Shanahan, 2012, 2013a). Informational text characteristics make it a unique and critically important genre and this is the type of text we want students to read to gain world knowledge. To become “College and Career Ready” however, students will need to learn *how to* read informational text. Narrative nonfiction (e.g., biographies, memoirs) is written for a different purpose: to tell the story of a person’s life—for example, Michael McCurdy’s *Trapped by the Ice!: Shackleton’s Amazing Antarctic Adventure* (2002) or Christine King Farris’ *My Brother Martin* (2006). These “true stories,” often told in chronological order, usually follow the same sequential structure found in narrative fiction, the type of writing students have had the most experience reading (Shanahan, 2013a). Duke and Bennet-Armistead (2003) explain narratives usually follow a linear structure: the **story structure** is sequential … *first* one thing happens, *then* another, *next* another, until *finally* the story ends. Story elements (e.g. plot, characters, setting, theme) are critical to a narrative and students must learn how to analyze literature and consider how the author’s use of story grammar contributes to the complexity and richness of a narrative. In fact, the CCSS (2010) Anchor Standards apply to both literature and informational text. However, in terms of teaching **text structure**,
Williams et al. (2007, 2009) note narratives have only one structure. On the other hand, informational texts can be organized using one to five text structures, which contributes to text complexity and helps explain why informational texts are more challenging to read. Unlike narratives that tell a story across time, in a linear fashion, informational text is often (though not always) nonlinear. It does not usually have to be read in order (chapter by chapter) to make sense. Informational text is often organized by topic and supporting details.

**Text features.** Text features contribute to informational text structure (as story elements contribute to narrative text structure). Text features (e.g., boldface headings, photos, illustrations, captions, graphs) indicate importance in the text and help readers locate information quickly (e.g., table of contents, index glossaries, maps). With explicit instruction, signal words and text features often become fairly obvious to readers. However, the five text structures are usually much less transparent, contributing to text complexity. Being able to identify and understand the almost invisible structures of informational text has been shown to boost student comprehension (Armbruster, Anderson, & Ostertag, 1989; Pearson & Duke, 2002; Read, Reutzel, & Fawson, 2008).

**Finding Informational Texts**

Informational text is popular with readers of all ages and skill levels due to the availability of texts on nearly any topic of interest. Informational text is written for many different purposes and might include texts that explain “how to” do something, provide information “all about” a topic, explain cause and effect, pose questions and provide answers, and content area textbooks; all subcategories of the genre of informational text. Informational texts are also available in diverse formats (e.g., print
or digital text, video, multimedia), and readers are not limited to books (e.g., articles, magazines).

**Include Content Area Text**

To meet the instructional shift requiring an increased emphasis on reading informational texts, teachers might consider a wide variety of materials across the school day, including content area textbooks. Reading these texts can help students gain world knowledge and information while teachers address the CCSS (2010) literacy demands across history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. Before trying to find additional informational texts, teachers might first examine the amount of informational text already available for students to read, across all content areas. The requirement for reading informational text is not an initiative solely for reading and/or English teachers to tackle alone in one class period or reading block a day. Rather, CCSS (2010) indicates the standards and shifts are a shared responsibility among all teachers. The standards place a key focus on students gaining content knowledge; therefore, content area teachers play an important role in developing students’ content area literacy. These teachers might also consider how to provide text structure instruction to help students acquire, use, and remember knowledge found in content area informational resources (e.g., print, media, electronic). Content-area teachers can approach text structure instruction with a mentor text, a short article, or excerpt of the textbook.

**Interactive Read Alouds**

Teachers might consider a plan to teach informational text structure but require more specific information on the different text structures, implementation, and where
to fit it in an already demanding schedule. One simple way to tilt the balance is to choose informational texts several times a week for the Interactive Read Aloud (IRA). This approach will help teachers address multiple goals at one time, including improving student comprehension, developing strategic readers, and meeting CCSS (2010) requirements. Using an informational text during a read aloud is an opportunity to increase exposure to informational text, content knowledge, vocabulary, use of graphic organizers, and understanding of text structure. Let’s take a closer look at informational text structure instruction: the five text structures, an overview of how to teach them, and how an IRA lesson might include them.

**Informational Text Structure Instruction**

Each one of the five text structures should be explicitly taught; one at a time. Informational texts are more difficult to comprehend due to factual content and complex text structures; often a text includes *more than one structure* (Duke, 2004; Duke & Roberts, 2010). For example, an article on river pollution might begin with a chronological/sequential structure describing a timeline of events, and as the author introduces the pollutants, the structure changes into cause and effect. A chapter in a social studies text on the Civil War may follow a sequence, compare and contrast points of view, offer problems/solutions, and then be descriptive. Content-area textbooks often present many structures within a chapter. In fact, it is more common to find informational texts organized with multiple structures than a single structure. This may be one of the reasons content area teachers hesitate to teach text structure. The teacher has to analyze the text and identify each of the multiple structures and might be uncertain where to begin with this process or he/she might think teaching text structure is a job for the English department. In the end, we want students to
recognize the shifts in internal text structure as they read and a long-term instructional goal is for students to understand this, identify each type of structure, and adjust reading accordingly, to build understanding and retain information. However, the short-term instructional goal is to introduce and focus on teaching one structure at a time (Shanahan et al., 2010; Read et al., 2008; Williams et al., 2007, 2009).

**Planning for Instruction**

Teachers should begin instruction with one structure, and model and explicitly teach, each structure. Knowing how to recognize and use one structure does not guarantee the student can transfer that understanding to another structure (Duke, 2000; Duke & Roberts, 2010; Williams, 2005). In fact, across the years, students have had lots of practice with narrative structure. However, even a thorough understanding of narrative structure does not transfer to informational text structure. Duke (2000) explains that comprehension strategies are genre or text type specific. This means students who learned structure with narratives would also need explicit instruction in each informational text structure (all 5 types) (Duke & Roberts, 2010). Therefore, approaching text structure instruction methodically—one structure at a time—will help students more easily recognize each structure when faced with many. The goal is to have students apply knowledge of individual structures to organize and comprehend information from complex text with multiple structures (Williams et al., 2007, 2009).

**Five text structures.** For instructional purposes, the organization of the information in the selected text should clearly follow one of the five structures. To begin text structure instruction, teachers should choose a book, a mentor text, which emphasizes just one structure. The five structures include description, sequence, compare and contrast, cause and effect, and problem and solution.
1. **Description**: A text on rocks might describe the characteristics of the three major types of rocks; within each section, subsections might name and describe rocks that belong in the category. In this text structure the topic of the text is described by its components; order is not important.

2. **Sequence**: A text about the water cycle might describe the steps that occur during the process (e.g., evaporation to condensation to rain, hail, and snow to precipitation to transpiration). The water cycle occurs as a sequence of events; one step always follows the next, in order. In this text structure, the sequence/series of events in the text are related to a particular event; order matters.

3. **Compare and Contrast**: A text on moths and butterflies might begin by comparing similarities and then contrasting the characteristics that are not shared; facts include ways they are alike and different. In this text structure, two or more concepts/ideas are presented in the text by describing how they are similar and/or different.

4. **Cause/Effect**: A text about an oil spill might begin by describing the pollution on the shore (effect) and the leaking tanker offshore (cause) or begin by describing why the spill happened (cause) and then the damage to the environment (effect). In this text structure, the results or effects from an event are described in the text and causes are included.

5. **Problem/Solution**: A text on air pollution might begin by discussing a neighborhood that has high numbers of children with asthma (problem) and nearby factories that emit air pollution (cause), then discuss regulations, laws (possible solutions). In this text structure a social studies or science related problem is described in the text and an answer (solution) provided.

**Why Teach Structure?**

The goal of all strategy instruction is to improve comprehension. To improve their comprehension of informational text students must have knowledge of how information is organized and presented through different expository text structures (Duke & Pearson, 2002). Understanding text structure helps students identify which information is most important and which presents supporting details, and this helps them to construct a complete model of the text while they read and to select and store
information in their memory (Kintsch & van Dijk, 1983). Therefore, we teach students to recognize and use each of the five common text structures found in informational text. This knowledge will help them identify and organize information as they read and achieve the goal of text structure instruction, increasing student understanding and retention of content (Duke & Pearson, 2002). Each text structure must be taught explicitly, because having knowledge of one text structure does not transfer understanding to another text structure (Duke & Roberts, 2010; Williams et al., 2007, 2009).

**How to Teach Structure**

Teachers might consider the IRA model, which follows the Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). The teacher chooses a mentor (model) text with information organized around one of the five text structures and creates a graphic organizer (GO) with the same structure. The teacher should consider projecting text so all students can see the text. The teacher provides explicit instruction through modeling and GRR, a GO, discussion, and summary writing. Before the read aloud, the teacher introduces signal words. The teacher should explain readers often identify the text organization by paying close attention to signal words. These are the words authors use, to give us a clue about the relationships among ideas in the text (e.g., compare/contrast, problem/solution). After the teacher previews signal words with the students, she might read aloud a short portion of the text and point out the signal words.

The teacher then introduces the GO that aligns with the signal words and text structure and briefly explains how it works. During the read aloud process, the teacher models note-taking with the GO, draws attention to the important facts in the text,
points out signal words and shows connections between individual ideas. After reading, the teacher uses the GO to review information and has students reference it when writing a summary after reading. The teacher might make and post an anchor chart after teaching each structure. Each time a new structure is introduced the teacher repeats the process.

After students have had opportunities to practice with each structure, the teacher might model instruction with text that includes several structures. As students become proficient with text structure, the teacher might consider instruction using multiple sources of informational text with structures that vary. In this way, students learn to analyze structures and use this knowledge when presented with multiple sources of informational texts.

**Call attention to signal words.** The author uses signal words to give the reader clues that the information is important and will provide a clue to the way the author has organized the text. Signal words are transition words that link ideas together, show relationships, and denote movement from one idea to the next. One way to help students identify text structure is by teaching them the important role signal words play in identifying text structure (Meyer, Theodorou, Brezinski, Middlemiss, McDougall, & Barlett, 2002; Williams et al., 2009). Each text structure is associated with different signal words (shown in the chart at the end of the guide). Teaching students to recognize the structure of texts might help them focus on key concepts, identify relationships between ideas in the text, and self-monitor understanding as they read.

The teacher should model how textual clues (signal words) might assist students in identifying the text structure. The teacher might ask students to listen to a
short excerpt from a text that provides a clear example of signal words used in the text; the words that might help students identify the structure. The teacher provides explicit instruction about signal words (and might also point to them or underline them) associated with one structure. “The author writes first this happens, then this, and finally this. He uses signal words to give us a clue that the events happen in order, in a sequence. First one thing happens, and then another, and another, until finally (the end). Signal words can help us anticipate the way the information in the text is organized. In this text the information follows a sequence. If the text structure is sequential we can choose a GO to match the way the text is organized.”

**Utilize GOs and modeling.** Using a GO that aligns to the structure of the text helps students organize information in the same way the author has written the text. The teacher thinks aloud during the process so students can hear the thought process good readers use as they read to learn, organize, and remember information. Modeling with the GO (a graphic tool), the teacher can scaffold students as they begin to construct a visual model of the text and “see” how ideas are related. In this way, students begin to use text structure to organize important facts, connect ideas, and later to construct a summary to help them remember the content.

**Call attention to text features.** Teaching text structure also includes teaching students how to identify and use text features (e.g., headings, indexes, photographs, captions). The teacher can choose a few features to emphasize during each IRA. “I see two words on this page are bolded, so I know to pay attention to them. Good readers know that special print or bold font is a clue that the author is sharing important facts or key words and that I can use the glossary for more information.” “The author uses these to make the information stand out to the reader. They are
called text features, we can make a list of them as we identify them so we know to watch for them when we read.” “When the author includes a photo, good readers look for the caption to read important information about the photo.” In this way, the teacher models how text features help readers determine what is important in the text. Modeling should also include how text features are a tool to help students quickly find information that is important to them (e.g., table of contents, index). As text features and signal words are taught, they can be added to text structure anchor charts.

Build student motivation. Frequently students are drawn to informational text (in all formats) to learn more about a topic of interest (e.g., sports, hobbies, news) (Duke, 2004). Teachers might begin text structure instruction by explaining that a readers’ ability to identify and understand text structure might make these texts easier to understand, help them find more information about their favorite topic, and remember what they read. Learning how to do this will be helpful later on, since most reading students will do in school, and in college and a career, will be of informational text. Teachers might model how writers use text structure and how good readers benefit from knowledge of text structure. “When an author writes informational text, the purpose is to teach us about a science or social studies-related topic. The author researches the topic and collects lots of facts and information. He has to decide the best way to organize all this information so we can understand and remember it. Writers know that information can be organized following a pattern or “text structure.” In informational text, five text structures work best to organize facts. Sometimes, writers have to use more than one text structure in a text to organize all the information. Good readers know the five text structures are important, and when they read informational text, they know to look for the text structure(s). Good readers
know how to identify which of the five text structure(s) the author used and how to use the structure to help them understand what they read. We are going to learn each of the five text structures, one at a time, and the tricks good readers use to find text structure. Then you will be able to use your knowledge of text structure to better understand and remember any informational text you read, in school, or on your own.”

Nuts and Bolts: Sample Lesson Structure

An easy way to begin text structure instruction is by using the Interactive Read Aloud (IRA) model with instructional opportunities embedded throughout the lesson (before, during, and after). I suggest students learn each structure before teachers provide instruction with multiple structure mentor texts. Students may need 3-4 instructional opportunities with each type of structure, as well as scaffolded practice, depending on the difficulty of the structure, needs of the students, and text complexity. This is a brief look at how a teacher might organize informational text structure instruction during an IRA lesson with sample modeling:

Before Reading

- Select an informational mentor (model) text with content organized with one of the five text structures. Mentor text suggestions appear in Teacher Tips.
- Decide how you will display the text so students will all see it during instruction.
- Identify signal words that provide textual clues to the text structure.
- Choose a graphic organizer (GO) that matches the text structure. GO suggestions are located in Figure 1.
- Set a purpose for reading: “This is an informational text, which means it is factual, written for us to learn information about
When we read informational text, the author wants us to learn as much about the topic as we can. That is why there are always text features in informational text. The author uses them to help us notice and understand important facts and as one-way to organize information for the reader. “Before I read an informational text, I take a minute to quickly look through—skim—the text. As I scan the pages, I can quickly see the author has included several text features: ________ (e.g., table of contents, photographs, map, a labeled diagram, headings in bold font). The author makes sure text features are clear and stand out, so when I look at the text, I will usually notice them right away. I know good readers pay attention to the text features, because the author uses them to share important facts. Whenever I read informational text, I know it will have text features AND text structure. Text structure does not stand out as text features do, so it’s not as easy to spot. It might seem invisible at first. However, the structure is just as important as the features. If we find the structure of the text, and know how to use it, it can really help us understand the text. Good readers know how to find text structure, even when it seems hidden. They know how to use text structure so it helps them understand and remember information. After you learn the tricks, you will be able to find text structure, and use it, to help understand and remember facts. We already know informational text might include five different text structures and we will learn them all, one at a time.”

- Model how to identify text structure, using a think aloud: “When I read informational text, I know I will be reading lots of facts. It can help me understand and remember the information if I figure out the way the author organized the information and the type of text structure he used. I know the text structure might seem hidden, so I will use one of the tricks good readers use to find text structure: as they read, they start looking for word clues. The author often includes special words called signal words that might help me identify the text structure. I think the author wrote this ________ (article, book, chapter) using ________ (one of the five structures), because during my quick scan of the first few pages, I saw these clues ________ (signal words). Also, the title ________ gives me a clue.”

- Briefly explain to students how the GO works: “When the text structure is ________, the ________ GO is a good match to help us organize information from the text. Another thing good readers do
is use a GO and take brief notes as they read; it helps them remember the information, and we are going to do that, too! After reading, we will use the notes on the GO to help write a summary.”

**During Reading**

- Continue to notice the key language (e.g., signal words, word clues) the author uses. Signal words might help students identify text structure and begin to see the relationship between ideas. *Suggestions for signal words for each structure are located in Figure 1.*

- For example, the teacher notes the author’s use of signal words in the text while reading aloud about dolphins and whales and models using a think aloud: “As I read informational text, I know there might be words that signal how the author has organized the facts. The author has included several words (e.g., compare, contrast, alike, different) that might be clues to the text structure. For example, I just read “alike” and “different,” so I think the author wants me to pay attention to characteristics dolphins and whales share (how they are alike) and also how they are different. As I read, I will note facts unique to dolphins in one circle of the Venn diagram GO and facts only for whales in the other. When I read information that is true for both dolphins and whales (e.g., characteristics they share), I will write in the area where the circles overlap or intersect (e.g., mammals). Organizing my notes like this will help me understand and remember information I read—how dolphins and whales are different and ways they are alike. Organizing the information the same way the text is organized can also help me when I write a summary about what I read.”

- Ask questions to guide students in understanding the content and text structure. *Possible questions for each of the five text structures are located in Figure 1.*

- Stop and model how good readers take brief notes and organize information on the GO.

- Over several lessons, help students become aware of the link between specific signal words, structures, and GOs (see Figure 1). “I am noticing a pattern in the past few texts; each time the text structure was ______, we saw these signal words ______. So,
When I am reading on my own and read these signal words, I can predict the structure is _______. If I am not sure, I can check the anchor chart. The GO for ____ structure is _______. I can draw that on my paper and take notes. Note: when instruction advances to texts with multiple structures, provide explicit instruction and model changes in signal words that suggest a change in structure.

**After Reading**

- Briefly review the GO and how facts, ideas, terms may relate to each other. Model how to make connections between ideas.

- After reviewing the GO, have students write a brief summary of the informational text to synthesize and remember information. The teacher may choose to model summary writing.

- After teaching each text structure, the teacher might make and post an anchor chart for students to refer to when they are reading.

**Teacher Tips and Resources**

The sample lesson emphasized text structure instruction. However, the IRA model might provide an opportunity for this AND multiple strategy instruction, to meet multiple CCSS standards. For more implementation tips read, *How to Plan for an Interactive Read Aloud*, *How to Teach Vocabulary*, and *Re-inventing the Read Aloud*.

Finding mentor texts with just one organizational text structure often poses a challenge. Teachers might plan together and share resources. When choosing an informational text to read aloud, teachers might consider a text with a Lexile level above grade level (harder text than students should be able to read themselves). This helps ensure the content of the text, which is being read aloud, is interesting. To assist teachers in finding mentor texts, a resource is available with titles of possible mentor texts and Lexile levels (Utah State University, 2010).
At A Glance

Teachers will want to be well informed about different text structures for informational texts, the signal words common to each text structure, and the appropriate graphic organizer specific to each text structure. To get started, Figure 1 provides teachers with details for each of the five common text structures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Five Common Structures</th>
<th>Characteristics of the Text</th>
<th>Signal Word Clues</th>
<th>Possible Questions</th>
<th>GO Ideas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Description</td>
<td>Topic is described by its components; order is not important</td>
<td>For instance, to illustrate, for example, another quality</td>
<td>What are the characteristics of the topic? How does the author describe the topic? How does it work? Why is this important?</td>
<td>Concept map</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sequence</td>
<td>Sequence/series of events are provided related to a particular event; order is important</td>
<td>First, then, next, last, before, during, after, beginning, middle, end, in addition</td>
<td>What important event happened? How do we know this? Why is this important? What happened next? Why is event order important? How would things be different if event order was changed?</td>
<td>Timeline, cycle, or step-by-step events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Compare/Contrast</td>
<td>Two or more concepts/ideas presented by describing how they are similar and/or different</td>
<td>Alike, unlike, same, different, similar, in contrast, on the other hand, instead of</td>
<td>What can we compared? How are they similar, how do you know (evidence)? How are they different, how do you know (evidence)?</td>
<td>Venn diagram or T chart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Cause/Effect</td>
<td>Description of results or effects from an event and the causes</td>
<td>If, so, since, if-then, because, leads to, as a result,</td>
<td>What happened? Why? How? What happened next? What was</td>
<td>Cause/effect or effect/cause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Problem/ Solution</td>
<td>A social, or scientific problem(s), is described, and an answer (solution) is provided.</td>
<td>Problem, worry, issue, difficulty, concern, cause, future, consequently, as a result, because of, due to, leads to, solve, then, solution, answer</td>
<td>How would you describe the problem? Why is this a problem? What is causing the problem? How might the problem be resolved? How might this solution work? Why is/isn’t this a good thing?</td>
<td>Figure 1  This chart might be helpful to plan informational text structure instruction.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES


Appendix E

SUMMARY DOCUMENT: CORE READING PROGRAM ANALYSIS

During the 2014-2015 school year, I facilitated a series of professional learning sessions with the staff at the school. The private school had not adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS, 2010); however, the teachers were interested in determining the alignment between their core reading program and CCSS (2010). To open a dialogue about reading materials and instruction, one of the first PL projects I undertook with the teachers and the Director was a text analysis training and subsequent review of the core material. Together, we collaborated in a process to examine Journeys ©2012, the core reading program published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt and used at the school for whole group reading instruction in grades 1-5. Based on our findings, I hoped to help the staff identify any gaps in the material or instructional approaches that I could incorporate into our professional learning work at the school, including lesson development and classroom modeling.

Overview

One of the first steps was to check our assumptions about whether Journeys ©2012 meets the intent of CCSS (2010). Most publishers of “basal” readers advertise that their instructional reading materials (e.g., basal, core series, anthologies) align with the CCSS (2010). This was evident when Houghton Mifflin Harcourt unveiled Journeys ©2012 at the International Reading Association (IRA) meeting in 2011. Its press release claimed: Journeys ©2012 is the only K-6 elementary reading program
written after the inception of the Common Core State Standards, therefore providing unparalleled and comprehensive support and instruction for the Standards. Journeys supplies explicit, systematic instruction while being fully aligned to the CCSS in the areas of reading, fluency, writing, listening, and speaking, language and writing (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011, p. 3).

While we all probably agree there is no “perfect” textbook, teachers across the nation often depend heavily on their core-reading program to deliver the bulk of their reading instruction (for reasons such as cost, availability, publishing claims). This is also true at this school, where Journeys ©2012 provides the foundation for reading instruction in grades 1-5. Basal reading programs include a scope and sequence that teachers might follow to guide instruction. They also provide teachers with a teachers’ edition that include lesson plans, skills, and strategies to teach at each grade level and a ready source of material (e.g., stories, workbooks, activities). It is not surprising that 80% of elementary teachers follow the reading approach found in the school’s basal program (Simmons & Kame’enui, 2003).

**Method**

An evaluation protocol designed by Educators Evaluating the Quality of Instructional Products (EQuIP) (Achieve, 2015) framed the review process of the existing core material at the school. During the review, staff followed procedures established by EQuIP, learned in a related PL training session. This included using the EQuIP rubric, designed to help provide guidance to teachers and administrators interested in evaluating English Language Arts (ELA) units, or extended lessons. The rubric is a tool used to help identify the alignment of instructional materials with
CCSS (2010). Each Journeys ©2012 lesson is taught over several days and overall met the EQuIP extended lessons requirement.

For this analysis, data was gathered from the TEs for grades 1-5 Journeys ©2012. The text selections in the TE, and also located in the students’ editions, were analyzed. In addition, the teachers examined lessons from “main selections,” not shorter “paired selections.” Teachers first examined the TEs for literary and informational text selections. We categorized the text at each grade level (1-5) by genre, and teachers recorded the number of selections for each genre (e.g., literature, informational text). The number of instances each genre appeared as the “main text” selection and in the second shorter selection “paired reading” (1 paragraph- 2 pages), was coded. This information was used to determine the percentage of literary and informational main text selections that appeared within each grade level of the Journeys ©2012 reading series.

From these two genres, teachers worked in pairs to further examine one literary and one informational extended lesson at each grade level. Each 5-day lesson in Journeys @2012 included whole-group reading instruction through the basal “main text selection” and a shorter (maximum 2 pages) “paired selection.” The extended lesson also included vocabulary, writing, grammar, and spelling instruction. The suggested 5- day lesson structure follows a repetitive format. On day 1 the teacher reads aloud a “listening comprehension” 2-page selection and introduces vocabulary; on days 2-3, students read the “main text”; on day 4, students read the “paired selection”; and on day 5, extension activities are suggested.

Before coding with the EQuIP rubric, each teacher read the Journeys ©2012 text selection to think about the text and tasks. Even with training, and following an
established protocol, this type of evaluation does not guarantee each person will interpret a match between the text and the criterion in exactly the same way. To help ensure the rating process would produce reliable results, teachers worked in pairs to establish inter-rater reliability. If the two teachers did not reach an agreement, I was available as a third reader.

Materials

The coding form used in this textbook analysis was a rubric developed by EQuIP (Achieve, 2015). Two days before analyzing the text, to help ensure consistency during data collection, I presented a PL training session for teachers and the Director using textbook-analysis training material provided from the EQuIP Toolkit for Evaluating Alignment of Instructional and Assessment Materials to the Common Core State Standards ( Achieve, 2015). In addition, before the text analysis PL session, I briefly reviewed steps, had information posted, and was available to answer questions and assist teachers.

The EQuIP training material included specific procedures for coding each text selection, detailed descriptions of each variable and systematic instruction for the coding process. The EQuIP rubric is an organizational tool for recording data and included the following categories:

Dimension I: Alignment to the Depth of the CCSS, Dimension II: Shifts in the CCSS, Dimension III: Instructional Supports, and Dimension IV: Assessments. Within each dimension, there were criteria for the evaluator to consider. The rating scale for the criteria in each dimension followed a 0-3 point scale. To score a 3 the dimension “meets most criteria”; 2 “meets many criteria,” 1 “meets some criteria,” and 0 “does not meet the criteria.” Each lesson was also given an overall rating:
E=Exemplar (11-12 points); E/I=Exemplar if Improved (8-10 points); R=Revision Needed (3-7 points); N=Not Ready to Review (0-2 points).

**Procedures**

1. Read over the selection to see how the lesson is organized, over several days.

2. Follow the rubric format and examine text for criteria presented in each dimension. Check each criterion, in each of the 4 dimensions, and note if it is supported by clear evidence in the text.

3. Record a criteria rating (0, 1, 2, 3) for each dimension, for one informational and one literature selection, at each grade level.

4. Calculate the total of the dimension scores to determine the overall lesson rating (e.g., E-exemplifies CCSS, E/I exemplifies CCSS in some dimensions could benefit from revision in others) and record it on the rubric.

**Results**

After the data was collected, I analyzed the results and found that for all 4 dimensions, for all 12 selections, the teachers scored the dimensions with a rating of a 2 (or in a few cases, a 3). When calculated, the criteria score for each selection was between 8-10, making the overall rating for each of the extended lessons, “Exemplar if Improved” (E/I). This rating meant that the lesson exemplified CCSS (2010) in some dimensions but could benefit from revision in others.

The Common Core (2010) requires a 50/50 balance between literature and informational text. The calculations for the genres found in the core material (at all but first grade) indicated there was a higher percentage of literature available, which suggested teachers might want to supplement the Journeys ©2012 material with additional informational text. Table 15 provides a look at the percentages for both
genres, found across grades 1-5. At most grade levels, 19-20 of the 30 main selections were literature.

Table 15 Percentage of Literary Texts vs. Informational Texts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>% Literary texts in main selections</th>
<th>% Informational texts in main selections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>67.8</td>
<td>32.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>33.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>67.8</td>
<td>32.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>67.8</td>
<td>32.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I shared the text-analysis results with the teachers, including the overall E/I lesson rating and genre information. I asked the teachers to consider the following: 1) the amount of literature and informational text available for students to read at each grade level in the reading program, and 2) whether the lessons aligned with the demands of the CCSS (2010), or in some instances might benefit from revision, as indicated by the EQuIP rubric rating of E/I, Exemplar if Improved.

Discussion

From the calculations, I determined Houghton Mifflin Harcourt’s Journeys ©2012 devoted a larger percentage of main text selections to literature. During the text examination process, I also noted that the core program did not require students to read every day (1, 5) and on days they read (2-4), it did not specify how students read the text (e.g., read aloud by the teachers, round-robin, popcorn, shared). The review process also revealed that asking and answering questions appeared to be the primary approach to comprehension strategy instruction. For example, in the third grade the
CCSS (2010) standard for “asking and answering questions” appeared in every extended lesson but was often the only CCSS (2010) standard listed in the lesson. However, these were not criteria evaluated by the EQuIP rubric. Based on the criteria measured on the EQuIP rubric, the Journeys ©2012 core program appeared to meet the quality review standards.

Although results indicated the Journeys ©2012 reading program aligns with CCSS (2010), I would argue the EQuIP rubric might provide a surface examination of texts but perhaps does not support an in-depth analysis that might be required to reveal potential gaps, as indicated by research. For example, across many studies that examined multiple commercial reading programs, researchers evaluated comprehension instruction (Afflerbach & Walker, 1992; Dewitz, Jones & Leahy, 2009; Durkin, 1981; Jitendra, Chard, Hoppes, Renouf & Gardill, 2001), and each reported concerns. Durkin (1981) found teachers use of questioning as the primary form of comprehension instruction problematic. Teachers often find it difficult to distinguish between “strategies” and “skills” in basal readers because of the way they are positioned in the text (Afflerbach, Pearson, & Paris, 2008; Afflerbach & Walker, 1992; Dewitz et al., 2009). Publishers do not always distinguish between the two in the teachers’ edition (Dewitz et al., 2009). This may be why basal readers often cover between 18-29 “strategies and skills,” one at a time, instead of the 7 comprehension strategies and multiple-strategy approach recommended by National Reading Panel (NRP) (2000). Basal programs do not typically reflect a gradual release of responsibility (GRR) approach to instruction that includes teacher modeling, explicit instruction, and scaffolded opportunities for student practice (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). Instead, research reveals basal reading programs often provide less explicit
teacher modeling and little guided and independent practice; they often lack coherence in the instructional sequence. Generally, the programs do not prioritize instruction for teachers or provide comprehension strategy instruction with the rigor and frequency suggested by research (Afflerbach & Walker, 1992; Dewitt et al., 2009; Jitendra et al., 2001).

Taken together, the reading research and rigorous CCSS (2010) requirements indicated the teachers might want to consider more than the EQuIP analysis when thinking about their reading program and instruction. While the analysis indicated the Journeys ©2012 material might be a helpful resource, and the lessons were rated E/I (Exemplar if Improved), the teachers might want additional information, including research on best practices in reading and comprehension strategy instruction to enhance the existing core material.
REFERENCES


Appendix F

ENHANCED GRADE-LEVEL INSTRUCTION: SHARED AND CORE MATERIALS

The Shared Reading Model (SRM) portion of the Enhanced Grade-Level Reading Instructional Model is used with existing core material. In the SRM, during whole group instruction, students use the shared reading approach developed by Walpole & McKenna (2010). However, with SRM the shared approach is adapted to align with CCSS (2010) and is used to teach students how to read closely. I facilitated knowledge-building sessions to develop teachers’ PCK in these areas.

Enhanced Grade Level Instruction
Shared Reading Model (SRM) and Core Materials
Jill Compello

Figure 2 This slide represents presentations I designed and delivered in knowledge building sessions to develop teachers’ understanding of shared reading and close reading.
Appendix G

READING COMPREHENSION STRATEGY INSTRUCTION AND THE INTERACTIVE READ ALOUD

Reading comprehension instruction is embedded in the SRM and IRA. First, I presented research-based comprehension strategy instruction. Second, I presented the structure of the IRA model. Teachers learned how the IRA model can be used to deliver strategy instruction and meet the demands of CCSS (2010). I facilitated knowledge-building sessions to develop teachers’ PCK in these areas.

![The Enhanced Reading Model: Reading Comprehension Strategy Instruction AND the IRA](image)

Figure 3 This slide represents presentations I designed and delivered in knowledge building sessions to develop teachers’ understanding of comprehension strategy instruction and the IRA.
Appendix H

HOW TO CHOOSE AND TEACH VOCABULARY

Beck, McKeown, & Kucan (2002) suggest words could fit into one of three categorizes, or tiers. CCSS (2010) recognizes three tiers of vocabulary and places an instructional emphasis on Tier 2 words. These words are particularly important to identify and target, since they appear across all disciplines and enhance comprehension. Taking a tiered approach to vocabulary instruction can help teachers identify which words are important to teach. The task, then, is to identify a few important words and then find effective instructional strategies to support acquisition of these words. This how-to guide helps teachers do both.

So—how can you quickly determine if a word is Tier 1, Tier 2, or Tier 3?

**Tier 1 Words**

These are basic words, acquired through everyday conversation. They do not require teacher instruction (e.g., desk, computer, baby).

Ask yourself: Would a third grader know this word? If yes, it is Tier 1.

**Tier 2 Words**

Tier 2 words are in all types of text (literary, informational, technical). Tier 2 words are more likely to found in text than heard in everyday conversation. They are often descriptive or precise words used in place of common words (e.g., gallop, instead of run). These words often have multiple meanings (e.g., warrant). Some Tier 2 words are more important to learn than others. How can you decide which ones to teach?

Ask yourself: Is the answer yes? The more times you answer yes to these questions the more likely the word is Tier 2 AND valuable to teach.
• Is this word interesting AND useful to know?
• Does it promote the general understanding of the text?
• Can I explain this word using a “child-friendly” definition?
• Is this a word found in other texts or across content areas?
• Does it have multiple meanings?

Tier 3 Words
These are words specifically related to content or domain (e.g., photosynthesis, lava) and usually found in informational text. They are important in understanding content.

Ask yourself: Is this word one that would be in the glossary? Would an author bold or italicize it in a text? If yes, it is Tier 3.

Getting Started
You can integrate vocabulary instruction into the interactive read aloud (IRA) process using well-written children’s literature or informational text. Identify the words first.

When using literature, you usually teach Tier 2 words after the IRA and with informational text, you usually teach Tier 3 words before the IRA.

Tier 2 Instructional Tips:
1. Some Tier 2 words might be taught during reading using “fast mapping,” you provide a brief initial explanation of the meaning, or a synonym (e.g., “he was contrite; that means sorry) when you read.
2. Some Tier 2 words lend themselves to word analysis to help determine meaning (e.g., root words, affixes). This may occur before (if critical to understanding the story), during, or after reading aloud.
3. Many Tier 2 words require thoughtful instruction using a multi-step procedure, or a teaching protocol, to help students develop a deeper understanding of vocabulary. Start by choosing a small set of Tier 2
words from the selection that are important for students to know and remember. Then, after reading, follow this Beck et al. (2002) protocol:

- We read a word today, “penned,” I think is interesting. One of things I know about this word is that in can mean two very different things.

- Say the word and have students repeat it. The word is “penned.” What word? Students repeat word.

- Give a child-friendly definition. “Penned” means you wrote something.

- Read from the text. In our book, the author said, “Grandmother penned the recipe.” That means she wrote it. TIP: YOU PROVIDE THE DEFINITION. Don’t ask students “what does that mean”?

- Give examples of the word in a different context. (You can use it in other ways: The poem you “penned” was beautiful. The songwriter “penned” the words to the hit song.)

- Ask students to provide an example of the word. (I “penned” a _____ because ______.) Say the word and have students repeat it. The word is “penned.” What word? Students repeat word

Vocabulary and Informational Text

1. You might choose to teach Tier 2 vocabulary, found in informational text. If so, follow the Tier 2 protocol described above and teach after reading.

2. You might provide brief instruction of Tier 3 words during the read aloud using fast mapping or text features. Tier 3 words often appear bolded in text, in captions under photographs, or in glossaries. Sometimes modeling how to use these text features during the read aloud can also build an initial understanding of a Tier 3 word.

3. You might choose Tier 3 words that are essential to understanding the content. If so, choose 1-2 and provide instruction before reading, using one of the approaches described below. Tip: recommended to teach Tier 3 words in clusters, with other related words.
**Tier 3 Instructional Tips:**

1. **Target Tier 3 words for direct instruction BEFORE reading informational text if students need to understand the word to comprehend the overall text.**

2. **Teach Tier 3 words, in relationship to other words.** Strategies for teaching Tier 3 words include concept of definition, semantic feature analysis, semantic maps, and diagrams.

**Concept of Definition (COD)**

- COD the teacher explains the category the Tier 3 word is part of, using a hierarchal graphic organizer (Figure 4).

- **What is it?** A dolphin is a mammal.

- **What is it like (e.g., properties)?** A dolphin has hair, it breathes air, and it is warm-blooded.

- **What are some examples?** Bottle-nosed dolphins, black dolphins

- **What are some non-examples?** A killer whale is a mammal, but not a dolphin.

![Figure 4](image)

This concept of definition graphic organizer is a useful tool for Tier 3 vocabulary.
Semantic Feature Analysis (SFA)

Figure 5 illustrates SFA. Teachers use a grid to teach a set of related words, by comparing and contrasting features. For example, students have a chart with a list of insects (e.g., mosquito, wasp, cricket) written in a vertical list. Possible insect features (e.g., has wings, lays eggs, bites) are across the top of the chart. The student compares the name of each insect with each insect feature. At the point on the chart where the insect name and feature intersect, the student writes + or - to indicate the feature is (or is not) a characteristic of the insect. In this way, students visually organize information about each insect and can compare and contrast the features of insects.

![Semantic Feature Analysis Chart](image)

Figure 5  This chart provides an example of SFA, an approach to teaching Tier 3 vocabulary. Students can see the relationship between related Tier 3 words.

Semantic Maps

To develop a Tier 3 concept and related ideas the teacher provides characteristics of the word, using a web or map (e.g., instaGrok, Popplet). For example, the topic “volcano” appears in the center of a web and related concepts “lava, magma, Hawaii,” are connected to the key word.
Diagrams

In this approach to Tier 3 vocabulary instruction the teacher labels the parts of a picture or photo while teaching Tier 3 vocabulary.

How Do Words Become Vocabulary?

We understand words by degree. The more we see a word, talk about it, read about it, write about it, the more likely we are to know it. To really know a word, students need multiple (repeated) encounters with the word. This is why students who “learn” vocabulary in isolation—from vocabulary lists and workbook pages—may be familiar enough with the word to the degree needed to pass a weekly vocabulary test.
However, they do not “know” the word (retain the meaning, use the word). It is important to provide continued exposure to words after initial instruction, through continued reading, discussion, games, and word study.

Students acquire vocabulary as they read. It is important to provide students with a variety of reading material and opportunities for wide reading to grow vocabulary. It is not enough to tell students to “figure out the word from the context.” Students will need instruction to use context to determine meaning. Even then, it is often very difficult to acquire meaning from context. See Figure 8 for an example of teaching context clues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context Clue Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➢ Check text for words that are unfamiliar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Look for, and read, the sentences around the unfamiliar word to see if there are clues to its meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Use the word in the sentence to see if you understand the meaning of the word.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ If not, expand your resources: use a glossary, ask a friend, online resource, or teacher.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8  This strategy might help students learn how to use context clues. (Baumann, Edwards, Boland, Olejnik, and Kame’enui, 2003).
Online Resources

Many interactive digital tools are available to teach and explore vocabulary. The first tool, WordSift, may be helpful for identifying Tier 2 and Tier 3 words; it does not require a login. The second tool, instaGrok, will definitely help generate information for teaching Tier 3 words; you can create a free student account to try it. Popplet is another amazing mapping tool that is easy to use and provides access to media resources to add to the graphic. Both teachers and students can use these tools.

WordSift: is a great tool, developed by Stanford University. The user pastes any text into a box (e.g., a speech, a poem, science content), which generates a word cloud. The user can sort words by how often they appear in the text, across content areas, or by a word list. Related images and video for words are available, and word relationships explored using the Visual Thesaurus.

InstaGrok: is a visual search engine and interactive learning tool that displays content, related to the word you select, in the form of a web. After you enter a Tier 3 word or search term in the box, related content displays on the screen. The tool offers a variety of multimedia features to help teach the meaning of Tier 3 words using related words and concepts. The semantic map includes related words, images, video, and web links. A slider tool allows for differentiated instruction, as the user can vary the level of difficulty of the results displayed. A pushpin feature allows you to add relevant content you choose to add to the web. A journal with a note-taking feature allows users to take notes about the Tier 3 word or concept. Click on the pushpin to add content (e.g., images, links) to the journal and take notes. You can then email or print the journal. Popplet.com: is an online mapping tool with similar multimedia features. The teacher or student can even record a quick presentation to accompany the concept map. Popplet is highly engaging, free, and very user-friendly.
REFERENCES


Appendix I

HOW TO ENGAGE STUDENTS IN CLOSE READING

Six changes in literacy instructional practices and curriculum materials are required to successfully implement the CCSS (2010). These shifts in content expectations and pedagogy will require changes in how teachers teach, as well as how students learn. This guide for practitioners examines the complexities of one of the required pedagogical shifts, close reading (CR), and considers why CR instruction might be challenging or confusing for teachers. To help teachers implement CR, the guide takes a close look at CR instruction and offers suggestions for implementation.

1. Students should have an opportunity to read a balance of informational text and literature.

2. Students should gain content knowledge by reading informational text, rather than from the teacher or activities.

3. Teachers should focus instruction on grade-level (complex) text.

4. Teachers should provide supported opportunities for students to read text closely AND students should learn how to engage in evidence-based discussions and support conclusions with textual evidence.

5. Students should learn to use evidence from sources to make or support a written argument.

6. Teachers should provide opportunities to learn the academic vocabulary needed to comprehend grade-level text.
CR Challenges

While CR instruction is required, it is complex, new to most teachers and administrators, and probably not a topic studied in college. Further, CCSS (2010) did not provide a shared definition or set of instructions for CR. As a result teachers might have many interpretations of CR and ways to teach it, or lack the information needed to meet CCSS (2010) CR requirements.

In fact, many educators might never have heard the term before CCSS (2010). CR is not a strategy, nor is there a list of prescribed steps to follow. With the lack of background information teachers have about CR it is understandable that the idea of CR implementation has been met with confusion. Therefore, before teachers can consider how to develop the CR habits required by CCSS (2010), it is important to establish a shared understanding of CR by offering a definition of CR and its individual parts.

Defining CR

Simply put, CR means rereading, but the concept is much more complex. Shanahan (2012) describes CR as “an intensive analysis of a text in order to come to terms with what it says, how it says it, and what it means.” The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), one of the consortia responsible for assessing students’ close reading ability, offers this definition of CR:

Close, analytic reading stresses engaging with a text of sufficient complexity directly, and examining meaning thoroughly and methodically, encouraging students to read and reread deliberately. Directing student attention to the text itself empowers students to understand the central ideas and key supporting details. It also enables students to reflect on the meanings of individual words and sentences, the order in
which sentences unfold, and the development of ideas over the course of the text, which ultimately leads students to arrive at an understanding of the text as a whole (PARCC, 2011, p.7).

While a common definition of CR is helpful, and a good place to start, it does not explain how to transfer expectations into instructional practice. To teach CR, teachers must understand the process of CR. They must also have knowledge of individual CR components including:

- Text complexity: difficulty of the text determined by qualitative, quantitative, reader/text factors
- Text dependent questions (TDQs): questions that rely on evidence found only in the text
- Textual evidence: providing direct quotations from the text to make or support a claim
- Text analysis: how Reading Anchor Standards Key Ideas and Details, Authors’ Craft and Structure, Integrating Knowledge and Ideas are used to guide analysis during rereading

Teachers will need information detailing how to plan, how to deliver instruction, and how to scaffold students in order to avoid potential instructional barriers that might arise. Teachers will also need to make informed decisions about the frequency of CR instruction, text choices, and how students will read complex text. Finally, for many reasons, time is an important element for teachers to consider. Taken together, these factors make implementation of CR instruction potentially challenging. This guide examines these challenges, offers possible solutions, and presents a CR model for consideration.
Overview of the CR Model

The CR model was designed to provide teachers with a **systematic approach** to effective CR instruction. It includes a teaching protocol teachers can follow or modify. The model is systematically organized to align with Career and College Readiness (CCR) Reading Anchor Standards and incorporates individual CR components to meet CCSS (2010) required instructional shifts including complex text, TDQs, text analysis, and textual evidence. Overall, the model follows these steps:

1. Teachers select *complex text* that requires **rereading**.
2. Teachers set a specific *purpose* for the first reading, aligned to an *Anchor Standard*, and ask *TDQs*, that require students to reread and support answers with *textual evidence*.
3. Teachers set a *new purpose* and ask *new TDQs* (related to the purpose) with each rereading of the text.
4. Teachers *construct TDQs* to focus each reading and guide students through text analysis. *Anchor Standards* guide the progression of TDQs across readings in order to deepen understanding of the text with each rereading.

**Rereading.** It is true that CR means rereading, but the idea of having students reread a text several times to answer questions is certainly not a new one for teachers. CCSS (2010) introduces new expectations for rereading text. When rereading, teachers must provide explicit instruction to teach students how to read closely. The text students reread must be complex, teachers must construct TDQs to drive text analysis, and students need to answer TDQs by citing evidence from the text. Students must learn to write and support arguments using evidence from sources.

**Systematic approach.** To guide teachers during CR instruction the model relies on a systematic approach to instruction. Procedures are detailed in a teaching protocol (guide) that provides teachers with a CR teaching model that follows the
gradual release of responsibility (GRR) (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983) model in which teachers deliver explicit instruction and support students. The protocol outlines how to approach CR instruction and also offers practical suggestions to help teachers determine text complexity, decide if CR is warranted, engage students in reading the text, and construct TDQs.

**Time.** In addition to new academic demands presented by CCSS (2010), teachers are commonly short on a critical and finite resource, time. A lack of time can potentially present a barrier to instruction, and CCSS (2010) implementation is already challenging and time consuming. The CR model considers how to determine the instructional time required for CR and shorten planning time by combining standards AND by providing suggestions for CR text selections, a plan to construct TDQs, and an adaptable teaching protocol.

**CR Model Overview**

The model was designed to help teachers gain knowledge about the content and process of CR and develop an understanding of how to deliver CR instruction. Each of the elements critical to successful CR instruction is examined in depth and integrated into an easily modified CR teaching protocol to help teachers plan and systematically deliver effective CR instruction to meet the intent of CCSS (2010) requirements. The structured approach to CR instruction also suggests research-supported methods to deliver explicit instruction and to guide repeated readings. The information that follows details information to build teacher knowledge about CR and also describes factors teachers might consider prior to implementation.
Choosing the Text

CCSS (2010) requires students to read text that is on grade level and sets text complexity and comprehension expectations in Appendix A. This means teachers who provide instruction using grade-level text, as defined by the school or district, are already instructing with complex text. If you do not have grade-level text for students to read, or you need to supplement reading material, or are unsure if the grade-level material is complex enough to require CR, then going through the process of identifying complex text may be necessary. CCSS (2010) requires complex text and relies on teachers to choose the complex text that students read. A text selected for CR must be complex enough to demand rereading (Fisher & Frey, 2012; Shanahan, 2012).

Text complexity. Detailed information about text complexity and selecting complex text can be found in Appendix A (CCSS, 2010). The first consideration for text selection for CR is text complexity (e.g., purpose, quantitative, qualitative, reader, task, length). An important “rule” to remember for CR is if the text does not pass the “worth reading twice” test, you might rethink having students spend time reading it closely. In a nutshell, when evaluating text complexity teachers should consider three factors: quantitative measures, qualitative factors, and the reader/task.

Quantitative measures:

- Does the selection meet “grade level” requirements, either as determined by the school (e.g., textbook, required reading) or by a quantitative measure (e.g., Lexile)?
- Does the text fall within the grade/Lexile band?
- Numbers alone however, do not determine text complexity.
• To determine if the text is complex and requires rereading, the teacher should read the text.

**Qualitative factors:**

• Is there enough going on with the author’s craft and the language of the text to warrant multiple readings (e.g., multiple themes, vocabulary)?

• If yes, consider the reader and task.

**The reader (your students), and the task (close reading):**

• Is the information important enough, or the story interesting enough, to justify rereading 2-3 times?

• Will the students have to make many inferences to determine meaning?

**Shorter text.** It is important to consider the task of CR and what is required of the reader. We are asking students to reread the same text, three different times. To keep students motivated to read difficult text three times we must keep the selection brief; the length will depend on the students and the complexity of the text. Complex text requires students to do “heavy lifting” such as finding textual evidence and engaging in text analysis. One way teachers can lighten the load is by using short text selections, not be confused with worksheets. The focus of CR is not on the amount of reading students do, but on building comprehension of difficult material. An entire text might be complex and require CR, but should be taught in short segments (Fisher & Frey, 2012. Choose the page(s) or paragraph from the text that merits CR to begin instruction.
CR Across Content Areas

The model suggests approaching CR instruction by using texts you already have, which are the ones students are required to read and understand, across the content areas. Think about the difficult textbooks, chapters, and articles your students have struggled with in the past. What approaches have you tried to help students read and understand these challenging texts? Perhaps you read the text to them, used buddy reading, skipped it, found other material, then reconciled that they just had to do the best they could? How successful were these approaches? You might think of CR as the reading approach you will teach students to comprehend these demanding texts, the ones that require rereading. These are the texts critical to academic success and that will contribute to knowledge building, one of the key outcomes of CCSS (2010) ELA instruction across the content areas (Cervetti & Hiebert, 2015a). Text selections might include excerpts from a reading anthology, informational text, articles, a chapter, or a section in a content area text, part of a novel...any complex (grade-level) text in the curriculum. CCSS (2010) requires teachers teach CR and students must read closely. Teachers (in any content area) could use CR as an approach to build comprehension when texts are important enough to require rereading. Using the CR protocol for these difficult texts saves on prep time, maximizes instructional time, and helps teachers meet the demands of CCSS (2010). Most importantly, utilizing the CR to deepen understanding of complex material can help build students’ world knowledge. All content area teachers might begin to think about implementing CR.

Scheduling CR. In this model, teachers do not block set times on the schedule for “teaching CR,” which might mean eliminating something else from the schedule to make room for CR. Instead, teachers embed the CR process into existing reading and
content area instruction, across the year, as complex text requires it. This flexibility in scheduling CR allows teachers control over instructional time. Teachers teach CR when complex text is critical to academic success and knowledge building AND during reading, social studies, or science, as the text demands it. This means all teachers can teach CR as the need arises. In this way students gain the content knowledge required by CCSS (2010) as they build understanding by reading closely.

On the other hand, when scheduling CR, the amount of time it takes for the CR process must be carefully considered (Fisher & Frey, 2012). You might think of CR as “slower” reading; it is likely to take at least three times longer to closely read. CR is a process that must be taught systematically. For each reading, plan time for students to read, for explicit instruction, for asking and answering TDQs, and for teaching students to support answers with textual evidence. Time should also be included for discussion and any required written response. The amount of time needed to implement the CR process is one very important reason the text the teacher selects for CR should be worth rereading.

**Teachers’ role.** Students must be taught how to read complex text and teachers must support students throughout the CR process. The harder the text, the more teaching will be required. Teachers provide explicit instruction and support students while they learn the habits of close readers by following the GRR (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983) model. The teacher sets a new purpose for each reading and prepares TDQs, in advance, to drive text analysis. The teacher models CR using think alouds to provide students insight into how good readers think about text and how to respond to TDQs, by supporting answers with textual evidence. The teacher also models how to correctly “write and cite” by incorporating textual evidence in written
responses to make or support a claim. A teaching protocol is provided for teachers who want to consider following a structured format to deliver CR instruction aligned to the CRR Anchor Standards. A protocol can help shorten the planning process for teachers, ensure consistent delivery, and expedite instruction.

**CR Methodology**

It is implied a complex text requiring CR instruction will be inherently difficult. The level of difficulty suggests many students might struggle to *read* the text. How will teachers meet the intent of CR if the students can’t *read* the text? Pearson (2013) notes requirements for students to closely read complex (grade-level) texts, when efforts to get students on “grade-level” have been unsuccessful, **are only likely to succeed with support.** In this model the approach to supporting all students in their CR efforts relies on providing a scaffolded approach to rereading complex texts by following the GRR model ((Pearson & Gallagher, 1983) **AND** by utilizing a research-based approach to repeated text reading, the shared reading (SR) model (Walpole & McKenna, 2007). Both SR and CR follow a repetitive instructional frame—read, reread, reread.

**Shared Reading Approach**

Multiple readings of complex text in the CR model follows a systematic SR approach to rereading text first developed for Fluency Oriented Reading Instruction (FORI) (Stahl & Heubach, 2005). FORI, a comprehension intervention, was originally developed for students reading below grade level, using core (grade level) reading material. Using FORI, teachers **scaffolded** students during the rereading of the core selection multiple times over a week, moving from Day 1 teacher led choral
reading, Day 2 repeated reading, Day 3 echo reading, to Day 4 partner reading (Stahl & Heubach, 2005). The plan was designed to increase fluency, a factor which impacts reading comprehension (Schwaneflugel, Kuhn, Morris, Meisinger, Woo, Quirk, & Sevcik, 2009). Walpole and McKenna (2007) suggest the SR approach might be used with grade level texts and described a modified SR model that included GRR (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). The teacher scaffolded students in multiple readings of text, moving from choral reading, to reading in pairs, to independent reading. These repeated readings can be completed in one instructional period and do not have to follow the “one approach a day” model described in FORI (Walpole & McKenna, 2007). Walpole & McKenna’s (2007) SR model for reading grade level texts might also be helpful to scaffold reading of complex texts, during CR instruction.

Rereading complex text. In this model, teachers guide students in CR complex text following the SR approach Walpole and McKenna (2007) advocate to scaffold students’ access to difficult texts that otherwise might be too challenging to read (Pearson, 2013).

Teachers scaffold students during the first reading of complex text during CR instruction through choral reading, which helps students practice fluency and focus on reading comprehension (Schwanenflugel, et al., 2009). Choral reading also allows the teacher to model how to read fluently with expression (prosody), for the students. While this is not a time for reading strategy instruction, teacher modeling might sometimes be appropriate, such as using the context of the text to determine meaning of an unknown word (Walpole & McKenna, 2007). For the second rereading, students read in pairs. Research has shown partner reading can also contribute to comprehension development (Rasinski & Hoffman, 2003; Fuchs, D., Fuchs, L. S.,
Thompson, A., Svenson, E., Yen, L., Al Otaiba, S., & Saenz, L. 2001). Using a SR approach during repeated readings of text can influence students’ comprehension (Therrien, 2004). For the **third rereading**, students **read independently**. The end goal of incorporating SR into the CR model is to use a systematic and proven approach to repeated reading, along with explicit CR instruction, to build students’ understanding of complex text. Using the SR approach to CR differs from other reading approaches that emphasize independent reading of complex text each time. Teacher scaffolding following GRR (I do, We do, You do) during CR helps to ensure all students are actively engaged in closely reading complex text and building knowledge.

To summarize, the three rereading’s for CR follow this order:

1. Teacher leads a choral reading (I do)
2. Students reread the text in pairs (We do)
3. Each student reads the text independently (You do)

Depending on the text and other factors such as time, the **three close readings** may be scheduled for one day or over several days. A teaching protocol is provided for a series of three complex text readings, guided by TDQs. In the protocol a new purpose is set each time the text is read. Reading research indicates student engagement and comprehension can be accelerated when students read “real texts” for a “real purpose” (Purcell-Gates, Duke, & Martineau, 2007). **Complex** texts usually contain multiple layers of meaning. Rereading the text several times, and for a new purpose each time, helps readers focus and find new meaning with each reading. Each new purpose creates an opportunity for students to think about the text from a different perspective. This strategy, combined with teacher-led TDQs, sets the stage for text
analysis. Students learn to respond to TDQs by rereading and citing textual evidence (the author’s words). During each of the three readings, instruction is aligned to one set of the CCR Reading Anchor Standards.

**Grounded in Anchor Standards**

Three sets, or clusters, of the CCR Reading Anchor Standards (CCSS, 2010) guide teacher planning for CR: 1) Key Ideas and Details (Anchor Standards 1-3), 2) Craft and Structure (4-6) and, 3) Knowledge Integration (7-9). In Reading 1, the purpose and TDQs align with identifying Key Ideas. In Reading 2, the focus is on noticing Author’s Craft and Structure, which requires analysis and interpretation. Finally, in Reading 3, the purpose and the TDQs are designed to go deeper into the text as Knowledge Integration requires synthesis of multiple sources. TDQs drive theme identification and students learn to make connections within, and across, texts that require synthesis and evaluation. The order of the CCR Reading Anchor Standards helps determine the increasing progression of TDQs asked across the three readings. TDQs become more difficult with each reading, as the focus of the standards change. Collectively, the TDQs are designed to systematically build students’ deep understanding of complex text over multiple readings.

**Role of TDQs**

CCSS (2010) requires students to “read closely to determine what the text says, explicitly.” During CR, students must cite evidence from the text (use the author’s exact words) when responding to TDQs, either orally or in writing. The value of requiring ‘evidence’ is that it drives the process of reading closely. Teachers can use TDQs as a tool to teach students how to rely on the text to explicitly support their
ideas (claims, arguments). In each reading, TDQs should focus students on the purpose for reading and help them uncover meaning one layer at a time. TDQs drive text analysis by helping students develop and communicate understanding of the multiple layers of meaning found in complex text over repeated readings. Text reliance is an important factor to consider however, when constructing TDQs the questions should go beyond the surface level. The answers should not be found by simply skimming the text, as these questions will not help students develop deep meaning. In the past, students have often been able to rely on prior knowledge to answer reading questions. The standards now require students to answer questions that rely on reading carefully and on the text for supportive evidence.

Constructing TDQs. TDQs are critical to CR, as almost every reading standard (in each grade) demands text-dependent analysis (CCSS, 2010). However, there is not a “set” process or formula for teachers to follow when writing TDQs. Shanahan (2012) describes his process for developing TDQs. He reads the text three times and develops TDQs after each reading. Achieve the Core (ATC) (“Achieve the Core,” n.d.) suggests teachers utilize a “backward design” that also begins by reading the text. They suggest teachers keep track of what they want students to understand when they read, identify standards they cover, and develop a progression of TDQs to build student understanding (“Achieve the Core,” n.d.).

In this model a systematic approach was developed to construct TDQs by incorporating elements from Shanahan (2012), ATC (“Achieve the Core,” n.d.), and CCSS (2010).

Systematic approach to TDQs. In this approach, teachers formulate TDQs by first examining the CCR Reading Anchor Standards and setting a related reading
purpose. For each of the three readings, the purpose and TDQs are aligned to a set of the CCR Reading Anchor Standards following this progression: Reading 1) Key Ideas and Details (Anchor Standards 1-3), Reading 2) Craft and Structure (4-6) and, Reading 3) Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (7-9). Teachers read the text for a purpose aligned to the Anchor Standards and after the reading construct a few TDQs aligned to the purpose. Teachers repeat the steps in this process by rereading the same text three times for three different purposes writing three TDQs after each reading. Through these repeated readings, teachers develop an understanding of the qualitative factors (e.g., organization, vocabulary, literary devices) that contribute to making this text complex and potentially challenging to their students. After each reading, teachers jot down a few TDQs designed to keep students focused on the Anchor Standards aligned purpose. These TDQs will require students to return to the text for textual evidence.

**Responding to TDQs.** Overall, TDQs should relate to the purpose for reading and focus on the complexity issues of the particular text. TDQs guide students to dig in, reread, discuss, question, and reread looking for evidence. While students are doing this, they are resolving the issues that make the text difficult. Students learn to develop text supported responses to TDQs with evidence from the author’s own words (e.g., “it says in the text,” “the author writes”). There does not have to be one correct response to a TDQ. However, students must support or make their arguments using textual evidence. This is not an approach asking students what they think about a text or how they feel about it. Instead, using the GRR model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983), teachers explicitly instruct students how to return to the text, reread, and find exactly what the author wrote (e.g., textual evidence) to support an answer. Formulating an
answer to a TDQ starts by rereading and “relying on the text” for support. Responding to TDQs, however, may require students to make inferences and synthesize information across the text selection, or by the third reading, across several texts. When students appear unsure, they should be encouraged to collaborate, discuss ideas, and return to the text to find phrases and sentences that support their thinking.

**TDQs and GRR.** Following the GRR model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983), teachers provide explicit instruction and model how to answer TDQs by thinking aloud how ‘good readers’ reread to find textual evidence and come to an understanding of text (I do). Gradually, students take on this responsibility by answering TDQS together (We do) and then on their own (You do). Teachers might consider how planning for TDQs has similarities to planning for think alouds. The difference is when it is the students’ turn to answer TDQs; the teacher is not explaining her thinking. Instead, TDQs prompt students to reread and find evidence, and require students, in think alouds or written explanation, to demonstrate how students (e.g., good readers) developed their understanding. When reading the text to construct TDQs, teachers might consider where a think aloud would make sense and instead formulate a TDQ. It is important to remember, however, that CR is a complex process and the goal is to build students understanding. Therefore, depending on the complexity of the text and student needs, the teacher may need to provide increased scaffolding, including additional modeling and think alouds.

**Close Reading Protocol**

The protocol guides teachers through three CR of a complex text. The language provides examples for teachers to follow or modify to meet their needs.
CR Protocol Reading 1

Anchor Standards for Cluster 1: Key Ideas and Details.

- **Before reading:** Teacher sets reading purpose related to Key Ideas and Details Anchor Standards. For example: “We are reading to find the big idea in the text.” “Our purpose in reading today is to determine the key ideas and important events.” “While we are reading, think about the main idea the author wants us to remember.”

- **During reading:** Students read the text using Shared Reading and GRR (I do). The first reading of the text selection is the most highly scaffolded of the three readings. The teacher leads the class in a choral reading of the complex text, modeling fluent reading and prosody for the students. The class chorally reads the text selection together, in unison. Students, guided by a stronger teacher voice, are actively engaged in reading and develop prosody. This is in contrast to passive reading that might occur with other approaches (e.g., round-robin, popcorn, teacher reads aloud, students read alone). Using a think aloud, the teacher explicitly models asking and answering TDQ and models how to provide textual evidence (I do). The teacher gradually releases responsibility to students and poses TDQ for students to discuss in pairs (We do). Pairs reread to find textual evidence to support response. Based on insights from responses, the teacher provides additional modeling or asks additional TDQ for pairs to consider.

- **Close reading:** During the first reading, TDQs focus student thinking on the purpose: key events, big ideas in the text. Depending on text and students, TDQs might also address particular events or information the teacher thinks students might find confusing. **NOTE:** Before asking students to support answers to TDQs with textual evidence, the teacher should explain that every time students respond, they will need to “find the facts” in the text that support their answer. “Good readers are able to reread the text and find the exact words the author uses and explain how these words support their thinking. Good readers know how to support their response by sharing ‘evidence’ (words) from the text.” Teachers might provide students with a framework to use when responding to TDQs:

Sample TDQ: “What is a key detail conveyed in the text?”

Students discuss and reread in pairs to determine main idea(s) and provide evidence of understanding (e.g., textual evidence, quotation). Follow-up TDQs might focus on supporting events. “What event(s) or detail(s) support the main idea?” Students continue to work in pairs discussing and reading closely to find textual evidence. Students do not analyze text or make interpretations in Reading 1.

- **After reading:** Students will write and cite. Each student writes a short summary to demonstrate understanding of the main idea and provides textual evidence to demonstrate ability to correctly cite textual evidence. The teacher models how to write and cite textual evidence (as needed) and models quotation use.

**CR Protocol Reading 2**

Reread text and focus on Anchor Standards for Cluster 2, Craft, and Structure.

- **Before reading:** Teacher sets reading purpose related to Anchor Standards for Craft and Structure. Teacher sets a different purpose for rereading related to author’s use of craft or structure. (Narrative example): “We are rereading the text for a new purpose, to analyze how the author’s use of (craft) _____ (e.g., language, character development, sarcasm, humor) helps develop our understanding of______.” (Informational example): “An author of informational text uses many different strategies to convey information on a particular topic. We are rereading the text for a new purpose: to analyze how the author’s use of ______ (structure, text features) helps the author_________ (e.g., develop ideas, support meaning in the text).”

- **During reading:** Students reread the text using Shared Reading and GRR (We do). The teacher gradually releases scaffolding by moving from teacher-led (I do) choral reading (Reading 1) to students rereading text in pairs (Reading 2). In pairs, students reread the selection with a partner (We do) to gain more practice reading complex text. Students reread text for the new purpose set by the teacher and discuss, analyze, and interpret (author’s use craft/structure). When the teacher poses TDQs, the students
continue to work in pairs, rereading, discussing, interpreting, and analyzing author’s craft. The pairs (We do) provide textual evidence to support responses to TDQs. This step in the GRR process promotes active engagement as students read together and access complex text by discussing, asking questions, and clarifying information. Based on insights from conversation and responses to TDQ, the teacher models, prompts, or asks additional TDQs. These may include questions to guide students to use context to determine meaning of unknown vocabulary. (Teachers may also need to provide definitions for Tier 3 words before reading, fastmap Tier 2 words during reading, and discuss vocabulary after reading).

- **Close reading:** TDQs relate to the purpose; they draw attention to how the author uses craft and structure to tell the story (e.g., literary devices, word choices, structure, purpose). Second reading TDQs may require students to analyze craft and structure, to interpret meanings (words and phrases), and consider why the author made certain language choices and how these choices affect meaning or tone or explain how structure works. TDQ: “What effect (mood, tone, etc.) is created by the author by using _____ (word/phrase)?”

The discussion informed by TDQs should help students build understanding that choices in craft and structure made by the author affect text meaning. Sample TDQs: The teacher uses TDQs to build student understanding of “how the text works.” TDQs lead students to analyze author’s craft. (Narrative examples): “What is the author’s tone when he describes ______?” “How does the author’s choice of language influence (or create) the mood?” “How does the author’s use of language convey that____ (a character) is sarcastic?” “What phrases help us understand how the author changed the mood across the story?” “How does the author communicate his point of view?” (Informational examples): “How does the author convey his purpose through his choice of facts and examples?” “What words did the author use to characterize ______?” “How does the author use text features to convey meaning?” “How does the author’s word choice influence how the reader will think about ______ (the topic)?” “How does the author’s use of text structure help us understand the content?” “What new information does the chart provide that is not in the article?” “How does the graph help clarify our understanding of the article?” Answering TDQs: After each TDQ, prompt students to discuss with a partner, go back into the text, and reread to find evidence in the text to support their answer (We do). “How can you support your idea? What does the author say?” Teach students
to defend answers using textual evidence—the author’s words—and practice orally supporting their argument with their partner. Student analysis/interpretation of text is required in Reading 2.

- **After reading:** Students will write and cite. *Each student* writes a brief *analysis* of author’s use of structure in informational text (e.g., structure, features) or analyzes/interprets the author’s craft (e.g., use of sarcasm, flashback) in narrative. Support the analysis with textual evidence. *The teacher models how to write and cite textual evidence (as needed), including use of quotations.* Students demonstrate understanding of author’s craft and structure and use of textual evidence to support the answer.

**CR Protocol Reading 3:**

Reread text for third time and focus on Anchor Standards for Cluster 3, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- **Before reading:** Teacher sets reading purpose related to Anchor Standards for Integration of Knowledge and Ideas. The teacher sets another new purpose for rereading. For example: “While you read, think about the message the author is conveying. What do you think it means?” “How does this text connect to____ (other text)?” “Why is this text important?” “What does this text have in common with (other texts)?”

- **During reading:** Students read the text using Shared Reading and GRR (You do). Moving from choral (I do), to pairs (We do), to independent reading (You do), the teacher gradually shifts reading responsibility to students while building comprehension and students’ self-confidence in reading complex text. During the third reading, students reread the same text independently.

- **Close reading:** Use TDQs to guide students to make text connections, compare, and *synthesize* information from other text sources (e.g., including diverse media and multiple formats) and critically *evaluate* the reasoning and language used in the text. Students support answers with textual evidence. **Note:** Multiple texts should be on the same topic or related. **Sample TDQs (evaluating language):** “What did you think about the author’s use of literary devices (e.g., irony)? How was this effective or not effective?” “Did the author provide sufficient evidence to support
his claim? Why or why not?” “Does the author include relevant evidence to support his ideas?” TDQs in Reading 3 should guide students to think about what the text means to them and how it connects to other texts/stories/events/films. **Sample TDQs (text-self/text-text):** TDQs for narratives might include asking students to compare characters’ personalities or actions, story events, themes, messages. **Informational text TDQs** might focus on personal connections by asking students what part of text: causes surprise, produces insight, raises questions, and causes a change in opinion. Reading 3 TDQs push students to explain what the text means and may include synthesis, with evidence from more than one source (connecting other text(s) with this text). Before asking students to “synthesize” or “evaluate,” students will need a common understanding of the terms (e.g., explicit instruction, modeling). Synthesizing asks students to combine new information with known information and, from the two, generate a new idea, gain a new perspective or insight, form a new opinion. **Sample TDQs (synthesizing):** “We have read two texts on ______. Synthesize the ideas in this text and (other text) using evidence/reasons from both texts to explain why (the topic) is important.” **Student evaluation/synthesis of text is required in Reading 3.**

**After reading:** Students will write and cite. Students write an evaluation or synthesis, citing textual evidence. For example: 1) Give two examples of how the author used _____ (craft, structure) and explain the effect of the author’s craft (e.g., word choice) on the text’s meaning. 2) How would you evaluate the quality of this text, compared to _____ and _____? Provide evidence from each source to support your response. 3) What effect (mood, tone, etc.) does the author create by using the word/phrase ____, and how does this connect to ______? The teacher models how to write and cite textual evidence (as needed), including use of quotations. Students demonstrate an understanding of integrating knowledge and ideas by making text connections and using textual evidence.
REFERENCES


Appendix J

HOW TO CONQUER CLOSE READING: AN INFOGRAPHIC

Figure 9  This info graphic illustrates the steps to conquer close reading.
Appendix K

INTERACTIVE READ ALOUD LESSON PLAN EXEMPLAR

Table 16  Interactive Read Aloud Exemplar for Literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Brother Martin by Christine King Farris</th>
<th>Genre: Memoir</th>
<th>Lexile: 970</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**ANCHOR STANDARDS**

**Key Ideas and Details:**
1. Make inferences; cite textual evidence
2. Determine themes, ideas of text, analyze development; summarize
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events and ideas develop

**Craft and Structure:**
4. Interpret and analyze word choices
5. Analyze text structure
6. Point of view

**Integration of Knowledge & Ideas:**
7. Integrate media, visual content
8. Evaluate arguments/claims
9. Analyze two or more texts, similar themes

**BEFORE READING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps And Time</th>
<th>Teaching Points And Anchor Standards</th>
<th>Teacher Says</th>
<th>Teacher Does</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1 2 mins.</td>
<td><strong>Introduce Text Structure:</strong> (AS 5)</td>
<td>Today, we are going to use a three column graphic organizer to organize how people, events, and ideas develop in the text. I will model for you as we go and you will fill out your GO, too. You will be able to use it to write a short summary of the text. I will show you how at the end.</td>
<td>[Three Column Chart]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Show the child the graphic organizer that matches the text and explain how it works.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 2. 2 mins.</th>
<th><strong>Develop Background Knowledge:</strong> (AS 7)</th>
<th>Do you know who this is? Turn to your neighbor and share what you know. MLK was famous for his work in civil rights-he wanted everyone to be equal- and for his speeches.</th>
<th>Show students a picture of MLK Call on 1-2 students to share responses. Read the quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 3. 1 min.</td>
<td><strong>Set Purpose:</strong> (AS 2)</td>
<td>The purpose of this text is to learn how people, ideas, and events in MLK’s childhood influenced his adult life.</td>
<td>His sister, the author, started the text with a quote. from the inside of the book.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Step 4. 15 mins. | **Model:** Making Inferences & Ask “how” and “why” questions (AS 1, AS 3) | Teacher uses think aloud to model for students how to make an inference by putting together information from the text (it says) AND what teacher knows (I say) to form a new thought (So, I can make an inference__) | **I Do:** Think aloud: *It says* in the book, his grandfather was a reverend. *I say* that a reverend is someone who preaches in a church and is peaceful, so I’m going to put these two clues together and make an inference. Martin grew up in a calm and peaceful family. If I look at my GO, I think this is an important idea in MLK’s childhood that we can add to GO.  
**I Do:** In the text it says the children called their mom “mother dear.” I say, if I call my kids “honey or sweetie” it is because we are really close. So, I can make the inference that MLK really loved his mom.  
**We Do:** When an author uses like or as to compare two unlike things, it is a *simile*. The author uses a simile to describe how the siblings get along, “we got along like three peas in one pod.” How does this simile help us understand how they acted with each other?  
**It says** in the text that Martins’ Grandmother and Aunt Ida read aloud to him and spent time with him. What do *you say* this means? (I say that means he...)

**Model strategy instruction using GRR (I Do, You Do, We Do).**  
Model making inferences. Use open-ended questions in the text and stop when students are able to make inferences.  
Vocab: teacher embeds child-friendly definitions (fast-mapping) when needed by providing a synonym after the targeted word.  
(AS 4) Figurative language is part of author’s craft (e.g., similes are a way to compare two different things using the words “like” or “as”)

**We Do:** Ask students to “turn, pair” during the *We Do* section. Share 1-2 responses before moving on.  
Teacher can follow “It says, I say, and so” to help students make inferences.
|   | enjoyed spending time with them) **So what** inference can we make? (We can make the inference that Martin benefits from living with his grandmother and Aunt Ida.) Why does his father prefer the family to stay close to home? (It says, I say, and so) Martin described what happened as a “crushing blow”? How does this language help us understand how he felt? How is this an example of injustice? How did his mom make him feel hopeful?

Why do you think Martin was inspired to say, “I’m going to turn this world upside down”? How might he have reacted instead?

**You Do:** After last page: Use this note card to write your own ‘how’ or ‘why’ question. Take a few moments to think and write your question down.  

As students make inferences the teacher may ask, “What is your inference?” and “What information did you use to make the inference?”

After Martin’s mother explains the law.

Ask students (pair /share) to develop a “how or why” question.

**You Do:** In this section students respond independently

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 5 5 mins.</th>
<th><strong>Discussion:</strong> (AS 2, AS 3) Complete and discuss GO and focus discussion on comprehension points.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| | A defining moment is an experience that you go through in your life that changes the way you think. How do you think the defining moments in his life shaped his character and inspired Martin in his dream to “turn the world upside down?”

Let us look back at the GO and see if we can decide how the people, ideas, and events in Martin’s life influenced him AND then how he later influenced ideas and events. |

Complete GO. Lead discussion to analyze the interactions between the individuals, events, and ideas in the text (e.g., how did ideas influence people or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events) Answers will vary. |

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Step 6.  
5 mins.

**Vocabulary:** Tier 2 after the read aloud, following Beck, McKeown, & Kucan (2002) protocol

**WORD 1:**  
A word used in the text is segregation. The word segregation means keeping things or people apart from each other on purpose. There used to be laws in this country for racial segregation that kept black and white people separate because of the color of their skin. In the book it says, “Martin grew up in the South when segregation was the law.” I could also say, “The girls were segregated from the boys on the all-girls soccer team.” You can say, “I segregated my peas from my carrots.”

**WORD 2:**  
Another word in the text is bigotry. The word bigotry means disliking or even hating other people, just because they are different from you. The book tells us “his father taught him to speak out against bigotry and hatred.” I could also say, “Kindness is the only way to end bigotry.” As a little boy, MLK experienced bigotry when his white friends wouldn’t play with him just because he was black.

**WORD 3:**  
One important word in the text is indignity. The word indignity means something happens to you that makes you feel really bad about yourself and hurt or angry. The book tells us when the family moved to Atlanta” they

**Teacher provides extended vocab instruction for 3-4 Tier 2 words**
rarely went to picture shows because Martin’s father wanted to protect the family from the laws that kept blacks segregated (separate) from whites and the indignity that went with them.”
I could also say, “I felt indignity after the bully picked on me day after day after day.”
The opposite of indignity is dignity. Dignity means you feel proud and good about yourself.
For example, I accepted my Scout badge I earned with dignity.
If you experience an indignity it means the opposite of that good feeling, you do not feel you are worth anything.

| Step 7. 10 mins. | **Writing:** (AS 2) Students will respond to the text in writing, usually with a brief summary. If students have not been taught how to summarize, plan for this instruction. | You are going to use the GO to help write a brief summary of the experiences you think were the most important defining moments for Martin. What do you believe are the defining moments that influenced Martin to become the man he did?
(You may review GO with some, or all, students first). | Have students turn over index card and write summary on the back referring to GO. When students are done, collect the summary as evidence of understanding. |
### Table 17  Coaching Form for IRA Observations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Teaching Points</th>
<th>Teacher Actions</th>
<th>Teacher Reflection Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Introduce Text Structure Using Graphic Organizer</td>
<td>Introduces text structure and explains marching graphic organizer (GO).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Develop Prior Knowledge</td>
<td>Uses media to quickly develop background knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Set Purpose</td>
<td>Sets the purpose for read aloud.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Model: Making Inferences, Ask how and why questions, Follow GRR</td>
<td>I Do: Follows “It says, I say, and so” while modeling how to make an inference. We Do: Engages student pairs to practice making inferences You Do: Provides opportunity for independent practice.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lead Discussion:</td>
<td>Completes and discusses GO and focuses discussion on comprehension points.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Vocabulary Instruction:</td>
<td>Follows vocabulary protocol for Tier 2 (after) or Tier 3 words (before).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Summary Writing:</td>
<td>Engages students in a short writing activity, supported GO.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix M

TEACHER TOOLBOX: ONLINE CANVAS SITE

Course Modules

Professional Learning Guides
• Comprehension Strategy Instruction.docx
• Reinventing the Read-Aloud.docx
• Informational Text Structure Instruction.docx
• Professional Learning: Moving Beyond Scented Markers.docx
• Core Reading Text Analysis.docx

The Enhanced Grade-Level Reading Model
• Shared Reading Model.pptx
• Comprehension Strategy Instruction AND IRA.pptx

How to Guides
• How to Choose and Teach Vocabulary.docx
• How to Plan for an Interactive Read Aloud.docx
• How to Engage Students in Close Reading.docx
• How to Conquer Close Reading Infographic.pdf

Interactive Read Aloud Exemplars
• Interactive Read Aloud Plans
• COD monarch copy.docx
• COD milkweed.docx
• Monarch Butterfly by Gail Gibbons.docx
• Thunder and Lightning by Wendy Pfeiffer.docx
• My Brother Martin by Christine King Farris.docx
• Thundere Cake by Patricia Pollaco.docx
• Bad Case of Stripes by David Shannon.docx
• Legend of the Loon by Kathy-Jo Wargin.docx
• LOVE That Dog by Sharon Creech.docx
• IRA Coaching Feedback Form
• Coaching Feedback Log.docx

CCSS (2010) Resources
• Lexile Level TCS Compello.pdf
• Common Core+DCTE (Compello) 2013cv.pptx
• ANCHOR STANDARDS-handout.pdf

Teacher to Teacher Resources
• Share Resources with Each Other :)
• Kellie shares...
• Laurie shared...list of school books

Check Out: Online Literacy Resources
• Comprehensive Reading Solutions
• Center on Instruction
• What Works Clearinghouse (IES)
• Milestone Videos
• Livebinder
• BetterLessons
• OpenEd
• Literacy in Learning Resource
• ReadWorks
• Journeys
• Reading Comprehension (IES Practice Guide) K-3.pdf
• Vocabulary
• Popplet
• Check Out: Book Resources!
• Book Lists

Tutor/Mentor Ideas
• Reading Partners +Tutor idea+ school.pdf
• Repeated Reading +mentors.pdf