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A CASE STUDY: THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS IN A SECONDARY SCHOOL SETTING

by
Adam L. Angelozzi

A Dissertation

Submitted to the
Department of Educational Leadership
College of Education
In partial fulfillment of the requirement
For the degree of
Doctor of Education
at
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Dissertation Chair: Gini Doolittle, Ph.D.

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Dedication

I dedicate my dissertation and my doctoral studies to my family. Without your love and support, I would not have been able to persevere through the long nights of class, the full days of writing and reading, and the increased time away from all of you. First and foremost, my wife Dayna has been and continues to be my best friend, the love of my life, my primary editor, and our family's pillar through both my time in school and through our lives together. My daughters Kai, Brynn, and Saige have provided me with unwavering motivation to continue with my studies in ways that they do not know. When I got home late at night, either because I was in class or I was cooped up in my office writing, all I needed was to pop-in your rooms and kiss you on the forehead for a renewed sense of motivation and purpose. All my girls have encouraged me, danced with me, and worked alongside me through this entire process and for that I am especially grateful and fortunate.

To my mother and Jeff you have taught me what hard work and family values are about. Without your love and assistance, I would have been unable to spend countless hours on my schooling, rebuild a home after a natural disaster, and work full-time with a family of five. My mother has always encouraged me and stood by me through both the good times and the bad times, and she has kept me surrounded by a caring family over the past 37 years. Additionally, both my father and stepfather have taught me that while you can make a good living in the trades, I am not particularly handy and so continuing my college education was probably the best course of action. My brother and sisters have helped with watching kids, motivating me through sarcasm (and sometimes ridicule), and have helped me to decompress at the appropriate times.

In short, I could not have written this dissertation or earned my doctorate without my family and for that, I thank all of you.

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To Dr. Leonard Goduto and Dr. Barbara Horner, thank you for serving on the committee and thank you for providing me with insights, questions, and the will to complete this dissertation. Dr. Goduto served as my advisor while I earned my Master's Degree at Rider University, and he helped to inspire me to begin a doctoral program. Dr. Horner served as a constant motivator through quick one line emails with simple yet encouraging messages that got me writing again after frustration had set in.

Finally, I am indebted to the superintendent, the administration, and the teachers of the district where I conducted this study. Thank you for your time, your honesty, and your patience. It is my hope, that today's educators will glean many valuable and practical lessons from your experiences. The care that everyone, who participate in and

supported me through this study, conveyed for their students shone through in every aspect of the study.

Abstract

Adam L. Angelozzi
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Gini Doolittle, Ph.D.
Doctorate in Educational Leadership

This study provides insight into the curriculum and policy implementation process of the English Language Arts (ELA) Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in a secondary high school setting. The most critical factor to successful implementation of both policy and curriculum involves instructional leadership that provides ongoing support and resources through knowledge- and capacity-building activities. McLaughlin (1976) describes that implementation of educational policy constitutes a mutually adaptive process between the policy implementers and the setting; accordingly, changes in relation to the originally intended outcomes occur across the organizational hierarchy and between policy actors (Anderson, 2011; Fullan, 2007; Sabatier & Mazmanian, 1980). The utilization of an embedded case study design provides an examination of the perceptions and beliefs of those individuals who operate between formal policy implementers and the target population (Fowler, 2004), which include district administrators, school leaders, and teachers. The collection and analysis of qualitative data in the form of participant interviews, field observations, and study artifacts provided rich information, which described the implementation process. The findings include: the use of a compliance model of curriculum revision to meet state mandates for implementation of the ELA CCSS, the establishment of an authentic curriculum development process for an English I freshmen level course, a belief by teachers that

professional development must attend to concrete real-world examples of instructional strategies aligned to the ELA CCSS, and resistance from teachers stemming from a perceived loss of fiction literature within the curriculum. The entire case study describes a mutually adaptive curriculum and policy implementation process, whereby the establishment of a well-articulated and well-designed curriculum provides one of the greatest supports to teachers.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The current proposal by the Obama Administration for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) supports college and career readiness standards as outlined in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Initiative (National Governors Association & Council of Chief School Officers [NGA & CCSO], 2011a; U.S. Department of Education [USDOE], 2010). Through the powers of economic dominance and authority emanating from policy makers and public policy organizations (Fowler, 2004), the federal government has again increased its role in matters of education to include the mandated teaching of specific content in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics for students in kindergarten through twelfth grade. The adoption of the CCSS by the states is the most widespread, successful, and rapid attempt at nationalizing a set of academic standards to date (McGuinn, 2012; Porter, McMaken, Hwang, & Yang, 2012; Superfine, Gottlieb, & Smylie, 2012; Tienken, 2010); however, federal, state, and local governments do not directly affect student learning.

The Problem

Considering the regulatory nature of the CCSS Initiative, school districts and state education agencies across the nation are providing CCSS related professional development to school administrators, teacher trainers, and teachers (Kober, McIntosh, & Renter, 2013). Building "the will and the capacity" of teachers to implement a largely top-down standards-based reform movement presents a challenge to policy actors who operate between formal policy implementers and the target population (Fowler, 2004, p. 271). The CCSS Initiative represents the most dominant example of standards-based

reform to date; however, the influence that this policy will have on American education is dependent upon the manner in which policy implementers, and specifically policy intermediaries (Anderson, 2011), enact it.

School districts have a responsibility under the policy adoption of the CCSS to develop both the desire and capacity of teachers to implement "instructional shifts in their classroom practices" by providing resources and time, job-embedded supports, and ongoing professional development (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development [ASCD], 2012, p. 28). Local educational agencies have the responsibility of developing, and implementing a curriculum aligned to the goals, standards, and objectives of state education agencies (Oliva, 2001). Consequently, CCSS implementation at the local level represents the implementation of a policy that began when individual states adopted proposed national standards and continues to the extent that those standards have an impact on the curriculum and student learning outcomes.

A curriculum signifies the plan and educational offerings that a school adheres to (Oliva, 2001), and it "represents the substance and means through which the rising generation is to become knowledgeable and competent in the life and the work of society" (Tanner & Tanner, 1995, p. 591). Curriculum development, design, and implementation signify a means by which educators can have a positive effect on student achievement and learning (Tramaglini & Tienken, 2011; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Through the implementation of a curriculum aligned to the CCSS, teachers will develop goals, design classroom activities, and teach lessons based off curricular objectives designed to increase student learning and achievement (Oliva, 2001).

This study provides a detailed description of the ELA CCSS implementation process within the context of a mandated educational change endeavor emanating from the federal and state government. The focus of this embedded case study centers on the practitioners at the secondary level, which includes administrators in the Central Office Curriculum and Instruction Office, continues to building level school leaders, and ends with teachers in their respective classrooms. The implementation of the ELA CCSS at the practitioner level involves the revision, development, alignment, and enactment of a curriculum to new learning standards. Furthermore, the design of the study allowed for the analysis of the implementation process across hierarchical levels of school governance. As described by the research questions, which guide every aspect of this study, this process requires ongoing administrative support in order to meet the goals of the ELA CCSS (Sabatier & Mazmanian, 1980). Additionally, the implementation of any programmatic change represents a mutual adaptive process between the policy actors and the setting (McLaughlin, 1976).

Research Questions

I utilized one broad question to introduce the "exploration of the central phenomenon" in the study (Creswell, 2009, "Research Questions," para. 2), and four research sub-questions that break down the relevant themes inherent in the implementation of the ELA CCSS within a secondary school setting (Creswell, 2007, 2009; Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). The main research question serves to provide a broad focus of the implementation process (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 25). More specifically, the design of the research question centers on what happens through "the many links in the causal chain between ambiguous policy intentions and classrooms filled

with students clamoring for attention" (Cuban, 2004, p. 112). Additionally, the four sub-questions focus on the more specific and targeted ideals and practices inherent in curriculum and policy implementation including instructional leadership, implemented verse intended outcomes, and school culture that all play critical roles in educational change (Evans, 1996; Fullan, 2007; Oliva, 2001; Peterson, & Deal, 2012). The primary research question and four issue sub-questions include:

Considering that the ELA CCSS represent a major educational change initiative, what variations occur during the policy and curriculum implementation process at varying organizational levels within the secondary school governance structure and how do the variations occur?

- How do the policy intermediaries perceive the effectiveness of the policy implementation process regarding the adoption of the CCSS within the secondary school setting?
- Do the teachers, central office administrators, building principals, and ELA supervisors espouse beliefs of cooptation or mutual adaptation regarding the implementation of the ELA CCSS within the secondary school setting?
- What factors within the implementation process and the work environment foster the belief by the policy intermediaries that the ELA CCSS bring about change in teaching and learning at the classroom level?
- How do the teachers within the secondary setting perceive their working environment in relation to organizational support and instructional leadership towards the implementation of the ELA CCSS?

Furthermore, considering the implications this study has on the instructional leadership required to support and bring about educational change within a secondary setting, I will examine how this study has informed my own professional practice as a high school principal and as an instructional leader.

Purpose

To date, many researchers and practitioners have written articles and performed studies that extol the virtues of, criticize the need for, and provide tips on implementing the CCSS (Conley, 2011; Eilers & D'Amico, 2012; Jennings, 2009; Lee, 2011; Tienken, 2011, 2012). Others have examined the CCSS policy implementation as part of the Obama Administration's reform agenda, which includes tracking Race to the Top (RttT) Grants, tracking American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds, and exploring individual state's progress towards implementation of the standards (Griffith, 2011; Kober et al., 2009; McGuinn, 2012; Superfine et al., 2012). In comparison, this study will describe, examine, and analyze one school's journey through the implementation process of the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards.

Research Design

I utilized the research strategy of a qualitative single case study in order to examine the real world and significant qualities of implementing the ELA CCSS across multiple hierarchical levels of school governance (Yin, 2003). Researchers utilize qualitative case studies to find comprehensive and in-depth meaning in bound systems (Merriam, 2002; Patton, 2002). The bound system that describes a case study must include a finite number of participants or a concrete period for observations (Merriam, 2009). Additionally, the product of a single case study entails a comprehensive or holistic

description and analysis of the process, organization, or individual under study (Merriam, 2002, 2009; Yin, 2003).

Within this single case study, the implementation of the ELA CCSS involved policy actors between both Riverdale High School and the Curriculum and Instruction Office of the Riverdale School District. Both Riverdale High School and Riverdale School District are pseudonyms for the school and school district that served as the setting for this case study. Combined, these two groups of individuals served as integral components of the case or unit of analysis within the study (Yin, 2003). Whereas, Riverdale High School and the Riverdale School District represent two organizational entities, the goal of the study is to provide insight into the implementation process of the ELA CCSS within the secondary setting. The organizational level at which the policy implementation is realized begins with district level curriculum and instruction administrators and ends with teachers at the building level. Consequently, the policy intermediaries who put into practice the implementation of the CCSS at Riverdale High School include central office administrators, building level school leaders, and teachers. The activity of implementing the ELA CCSS at Riverdale High School provides the boundaries of this single case study (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009).

Rationale for research design. According to Yin (2003), a rationale for utilizing a single case study stems from the need to describe the experiences of a typical or average institution. I chose Riverdale High School as a representative or a typical case for a New Jersey High School in that the school is under the same timeline to align and revise curriculum to the ELA CCSS as other high schools in the state. Additionally, the hierarchical levels of school governance including district curriculum and instruction

administrators, school leaders, and ELA teachers all function within a school and district community that adheres to policy, develops curriculum, implements curriculum, and evaluates curriculum. Implementation of the ELA CCSS represents "a commonplace situation" that schools across the state and the country are involved in. Furthermore, this study serves to communicate the "circumstances and conditions" under which one school implements those academic standards (Yin, 2003, p. 41).

The State of New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE, 2010b) has the following description of the CCSS posted to its website:

> In June 2010, the New Jersey State Board of Education (NJBOE) and the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The standards were developed in collaboration with teachers, school administrators, and experts, to provide a clear and consistent framework to prepare our children for college and the workforce. ("CCSS,", para. 1)

The new ELA CCSS do not align to current and previous state standards in ELA across the country (Porter et al., 2011). A possible rationale for the disparity between currently utilized state standards and the ELA CCSS lies in the idea that a goal of the ELA CCSS is to increase rigor and academic content within primary and secondary schools (Beach, 2011). Additionally, the ELA CCSS have a major focus on increasing the degree to which students read and write complex information and rich non-fiction text (CCSS Initiative, 2010). The ELA CCSS provide a framework through which students must read and understand textual information to the extent that by end of their twelfth grade year they are ready for the workforce or college; furthermore, this mandate represents an educational change initiative that will challenge school administrators, teachers, and students (Eilers & D'Amico, 2012; Goatley, 2012; Ostenson & Wadham, 2012; Wixson & Lipson, 2012).

This study provides a summative evaluation of the curriculum implementation process of the ELA CCSS within the secondary setting (Patton, 2002). Policy adoption alone does not signify a change towards successful classroom strategies and practices, rather successful implementation of any educational change initiative is a "mutually adaptive process" between the policy intermediaries and the setting (McLaughlin, 1976, para. 3). To that end, educational change is dependent upon teachers 'actions in the classroom and their beliefs as educators (Fullan, 2007). This study highlights the conditions and practices towards ELA CCSS implementation that may or may not work in similar settings (Patton, 2002). Whereas, educational change endeavors designed to transform pedagogical practices often times take years to accomplish (Fullan, 2007), the timeline set both nationally and in the State of New Jersey provides school districts a relatively short amount of time for implementation.

The NJDOE (2011) has set a timeline for all schools to implement fully the ELA CCSS by September of 2012. The current national reform agenda, and the current educational environment within the State of New Jersey, provide the setting for examining one school's progress towards implementing the ELA CCSS. As New Jersey begins to implement these standards, there are lessons one can learn from previous mandates, policies, and curriculum development practices. As schools within the State of New Jersey grapple with the many educational change requirements or initiatives currently facing local boards of education, district and school leaders, teachers, and students, one must first seek to understand the role of the federal and state government on educational policy and educational practice. A brief history of the federal government's

role in education, and current reform efforts underway in New Jersey partly describe the context under which schools will implement the ELA CCSS.

The Increasing Role of the Federal Government

Numerous standards and accountability reform measures stemming from federal and state governments have previously failed to produce both the will and capacity for beneficial educational change (Fullan, 2007). A trend in education has been to continue to centralize the power over education to both federal and state governments, who "generally have embraced what are called standards-based reforms" (Epstein, 2004, p. 3). Standards-based reform measures thus far have included utilizing the alignment of curriculum to specific learning standards, teaching standards, and standardized student assessments (Epstein, 2004; Superfine et al., 2012). Using economic power, voluntary policy adoption, and sanctions (Anderson, 2011), the federal government has successfully provided the impetus for a majority of states to place mandates on local education agencies to adopt and implement the ELA CCSS. In turn, this extended the federal government's influence in K-12 education to include aspects of teaching and learning (Grissom & Herrington, 2012).

In order to understand the context of the federal government's role in matters of education, I will first examine the political environment surrounding educational policy within the United States. The tenth amendment of the U.S. constitution provides that all powers not expressly reserved for the federal government, or those not defined as prohibited to the state governments, are then reserved for the state governments or the people (U.S. Const. amend. X). Education is not a power reserved for the federal government. It is therefore necessary to ask the question, how did the federal government

become involved in matters of education that have led to school districts implementing the CCSS?

Equity-based reform. To portray the role of the federal government in today's educational climate, it is first necessary to examine the increasing role of the federal government from the 1950s to the current day. In 1954 with the Brown v. Board of Education decision that prompted desegregation of public schools, the federal government thrust itself into civil rights issues that pertained to education (Alexander & Alexander, 2008; Superfine et al., 2012). This began an "equity-based reform" movement by the federal government that has had a continued impact on American education (Jennings, 2009 p. 2).

The federal government largely enforces equity-based reform measures that affect school governance through fiscal incentives (Superfine et al., 2012). For example, the ESEA provides funds to local schools through the Title I program, specifically the federally funded Title I program provides monies to schools that are deemed economically disadvantaged (Jennings, 2009 Superfine et al., 2012). In another example, Title IX of the education amendments of 1972 protects students and employees of programs that receive federal funds from sexual discrimination (Alexander & Alexander, 2008). As a final example, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1975, later the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, guarantees that all students with disabilities receive appropriate educational programs and related services (Jennings, 2009; USDOE, 2012a). Issues of equal educational opportunities stemming from differences in social class, race, gender, ability, and immigration status remain prevalent in American schools. The events of the 1960s and 1970s have not been fleeting. Therefore, a policy window

has remained open (Kingdon, 2003), which has enabled the federal government to stay involved in matters of education as well as extending its influence into other areas of educational reform.

The equity reform movement in education that began in the 1950s, and is still a major component of American education today, was spurred on by the normative right that all children are entitled to a free, thorough, appropriate, and equal education in order to become contributing members of a democratic society (Fullan, 1982; Stone, 2012). When students of specific racial and cultural backgrounds are walking past higher performing schools that are in better physical condition just to arrive at a school that is decrepit and does not offer equal or equitable academic opportunities there is a rational and moral obligation from society for change (Stone, 2012). The Brown v. Board of Education decision exemplifies how normative rights became positive or legal rights. Additionally, the decision paved the way for the involvement of federal government in matters of education including teacher accountability, student achievement, and ultimately nationalized learning standards (Jennings, 2009; Stone, 2012; Superfine et al., 2012).

Standards-based reform. The 1990s saw a change in the role of the federal government in public education. A new emphasis on state-based educational standards and student achievement became the focus of numerous federal initiatives and subsequent policies (Superfine et al., 2012). For example, when the ESEA was reauthorized in 1994 it included rhetoric such as “ensuring high standards for all children,” “all children can master challenging content,” and “promoting school-wide reform” (Improving America’s Schools Act of 1994, 1993). Additionally, in 1994 the U. S. Department of Education

changed the name of the ESEA to the Improving America's School Act (Improving America's Schools Act of 1994, 1993; Superfine et al., 2012). The name change alone portrays the intent on the federal government to improve all of the countries schools without a focus on those particular schools that service categorically designated disadvantaged students.

Other federal policies required that states have academic standards and accountability measures in place in order to determine student achievement. The Goals 2000: Educate America Act (1994) provided grant monies to help states establish their own "high-quality, internationally competitive content and student performance standards" ("Sec. 2. Purpose," para. 4). At the same time, the federal government developed a set of voluntary national standards under the act whereby states could choose to adopt the standards or design their own state-developed standards (Goals 2000: Educate America Act § 1, H.R. 1804 § 2, 1994). Furthermore, the emphasis by the federal government on state standards and accountability measures increased when the ESEA was reauthorized in 2002 as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act (Superfine et al., 2012).

The NCLB Act mandated that public schools maintained yearly standards of progress and that teachers were highly qualified within designated content areas, but the federal government left actual measures of what constituted these two accountability measures to state governments and state departments of education to determine (No Child Left Behind Act. Pub. L. 107-110, 2001). Critics of NCLB point to the inconsistencies that occur as a consequence of states maintaining their own specific and different accountability measures as major flaws in NCLB legislation and the American

educational system as a whole (Green, 2007). NCLB legislation describes a process where states maintain the responsibility and control over defining what students should know and be able to do according to state developed content area performance standards (Forte, 2010). State governments additionally had the added responsibility of assessing students against those state-developed standards in order to formulate policy and make programmatic decisions towards school improvement and overall student achievement (Forte, 2010)

These reform measures describe the expanding role of the federal government that has led to new proposed and enacted policies, and a new plan for the reauthorization of the ESEA. According to Au (2007), the high-stakes testing that evolved out of the NCLB era ensures that federal and state policymakers have "standardization control, discipline, and surveillance" over teaching in the classroom (p. 39). The current proposal towards the reauthorization of the ESEA focuses on educator accountability, improving student learning, providing resources to the lowest performing schools, and the creation of national standards and accountability systems with an emphasis on college and career readiness (USDOE, 2010).

The Current Reform Agenda

The current proposal for reauthorization of the ESEA contains multiple "key priorities" for educational reform nationally (USDOE, 2010, p. 3). The priorities, as defined in the proposal, include "college- and career-ready students," "great teachers and leaders in every school," "equity and opportunity for all students," "raise the bar and reward excellence," and "promote innovation and reward excellence" (USDOE, 2010, pp. 3-6). For public schools, these objectives or goals stemming from the federal government

include the implementation of nationalized learning standards, the use of nationalized assessments aligned to those standards, and increased teacher and school leader accountability based in part on student achievement (USDOE, 2010; Superfine et al., 2012).

The ARRA allocated $787 billion to various programs designed to spur the economy during one of the worst recessions in American history (McGuinn, 2012 Superfine et al., 2012). Of that $787 billion, the federal government allocated approximately $80 billion towards educational reform for the expressed purpose of increasing student achievement through expansion of charter schools, improved standards, improved assessments, increased school leadership, and increased teacher performance and accountability (Superfine et al., 2012). Under ARRA funding, the federal government utilized the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) and the RttT grant program to align state efforts towards improving education with the national goals as outlined in the reauthorization of the ESEA (Superfine et al., 2012; USDOE, 2010). The State of New Jersey received both SFSF funds and RttT grants from the federal government in return for a commitment towards "college- and career-ready standards and high-quality, valid and reliable assessments for all students; development and use of pre-K through post-secondary and career data systems," and teacher and school leaders evaluation systems based partly on student achievement (NJDOE, 2010a, "Uses of ARRA State Fiscal Stabilization Funds," para. 1).

New Jersey's Commitment

The NJDOE (2010b, 2010c, 2014a) has fully committed to implementing the CCSS, formalizing structures for teacher and principal evaluation, and developing a more

comprehensive statewide data collection system for schools. In June of 2010, the NJDOE (2011) adopted the CCSS and has set a timeline for full implementation of the ELA and mathematics standards for September of 2012. Additionally in the spring of 2010, the State of New Jersey joined a consortium of states in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC), which will provide a common set of assessments aligned to the CCSS for elementary, middle, and secondary school-age students in the 2014-2015 school year (NJDOE, 2010b). Last, AchieveNJ, which began in the 2013-2014 school year, provides regulations for teacher and school leader evaluation based on numerous indicators including student achievement as measured by standardized test scores, student achievement as measured by teacher selected assessments, and the use of NJDOE approved teacher and school leader observation instruments (NJDOE, 2014b, 2014c).

The CCCS and Accountability

The CCSS provides a set of internationally benchmarked, rigorous standards, designed to prepare students in kindergarten through twelfth grade with the knowledge and skills necessary for colleges and careers (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010). After adoption of the CCSS in June of 2010, the State of New Jersey provided local school districts two school years to revise and align curricula to the CCSS (NJDOE, 2011). Additionally, local school districts had two more school years beyond that to prepare for standardized testing aligned to the new standards (NJDOE, 2010b). The new accountability testing measures, which include PARCC assessments, provide a different approach to standardized testing as compared to what states have previously utilized (Dougherty-Stahl & Schweid, 2013; Porter et al., 2011), as opposed to previous tests that

measured student achievement through stand-alone questions that focused on one skill or unit of knowledge (Dougherty-Stahl & Schweid, 2013; Mislevy, Almond, & Lukas, 2004). The design of this next generation of tests promises to provide an assessment of students' skills and knowledge based on multiple connected assessment items (Dougherty-Stahl & Schweid, 2013; Mislevy et al., 2004). These connected assessment items create a framework for assessment utilized to determine student proficiency and achievement. Furthermore, standardized testing requirements tied to the CCSS provides an accountability measure upon which state and federal governments can compare states, schools, school leaders, teachers, and students. The use of the PARCC assessments aligned to the CCSS represents the next step in connecting school performance to standardized testing in an effort to increase student achievement in public education (Dee & Jacob, 2011).

AchieveNJ

For the 2013-2014 school year, the NJDOE implemented the AchieveNJ initiative based on the recommendations from the Educator Effectiveness Task Force, which the state convened in 2010 (NJDOE, 2014a). The state officially adopted New Jersey Administrative Code 6A: 6A:10, titled Educator Effectiveness, approximately two weeks into the 2013-2014 school year (NJDOE, 2014a). This law provides regulations aligned to the AchieveNJ initiative. AchieveNJ has many components for teacher and school leader evaluation and observation. The many facets of AchieveNJ include the use of standardized test scores for the rating of teacher and principal effectiveness, the use of teacher created or local assessments to evaluate teacher effectiveness, and the use of state

approved observation systems to evaluate the practice of teachers and school leaders (NJDOE, 2014a).

Student achievement. For the 2013-2014 school year, teachers in grades 4 through 8 receive 30 percent of their "overall evaluation rating" from Student Growth Percentiles (SGP) (NJDOE, 2014d, p. 1). The term SGP refers to the rating score that a teacher receives based on student achievement as determined by performance on standardized test scores (NJDOE, 2014d, p. 1). Teachers receive an SGP evaluation rating if he or she has 20 students with valid SGP scores for a minimum of 70 percent of the school year; additionally, an SGP score for an individual student derives from how that student's standardized test scores have changed compared to how other students, who have attained similar achievement levels in previous school years, have performed on standardized tests (NJDOE, 2014e). Furthermore, for principals who lead schools with grade levels that receive SGPs, 20-30 percent of the principal's final evaluation score derives from the average SGP score of the school (NJDOE, 2014b). In addition to SGP scores, The AchieveNJ law requires that teachers of all grade levels utilize Student Growth Objectives (SGOs) as a means of evaluating the effectiveness of classroom instruction and school progress (NJDOE, 2014a).

The major difference between SGPs and SGOs centers on the use of standardized assessment data to determine the former, and the use of teacher developed and principal approved assessments to determine the latter (NJDOE, 2014a). Teachers develop SGOs based on deficiencies in student achievement or learning as evidenced by national, state, district, or teacher-made assessments. Student achievement on an initial assessment determines the baseline data for the SGO (NJDOE, 2013d). The final SGO requires

principal approval, and the evaluation of the SGO entails meeting progress towards a measurable learning goal as determined by student scores on a final assessment which could include a culminating performance assessment, ongoing portfolio assessment, or a more traditional test (see Appendix A for the NJDOE SGO template). Teachers of grade levels who have SGPs must develop one SGO, and all other teachers must develop two SGOs in the 2013-2014 school year (NJDOE, 2014a). Regardless of how many SGOs a teacher must develop and implement, the final score of the SGO(s) accounts for 15 percent of a teacher's final evaluation score (NJDOE, 2014a). Additionally, a portion of the final evaluation score for a school principal derives from the average of all teachers' SGO scores within the school leader's building or area of responsibility (NJDOE, 2014b).

Teacher observation. A component of AchieveNJ involves the use of teacher practice evaluation instruments that local education agencies either choose from a list of NJDOE approved instruments, or the use of a district-developed evaluation instrument that the NJDOE approves through an Evaluation Instrument Request for Qualifications process (NJDOE, 2013a, 2014d). According to the NJDOE (2014d), the list of approved instruments contains research-based models of teacher evaluation designed to provide evidence of teacher effectiveness primarily through classroom observations. For teachers in grade 4 through 8, where teachers receive SGP scores, teacher evaluation based on classroom observation accounts for 55 percent of a teacher's final evaluation score (NJDOE, 2014a). For teachers of other grade-levels, teacher evaluation based on classroom observation accounts for 85 percent of a teacher's final evaluation score (NJDOE, 2014a).

The evaluation of principal and school leader practice also involves the use of an NJDOE approved evaluation instrument to determine partially the school leader's final evaluation score (NJDOE, 2014b). Other areas of evaluation for school leaders include an average of the school's student achievement as measured by SGPs and/or SGOs, school leader practice towards facilitating an effective staff evaluation process, and progress towards meeting administrative goals (NJDOE, 2014b). Overall, the AchieveNJ initiative describes a process of teacher and school leader accountability that utilizes multiple indicators to evaluate educator effectiveness based on student achievement and professional practice.

Summary

As school districts adopt the CCSS, align and revise curricula, and implement those curricula, there is a process of policy implementation whereby school leaders mobilize human and fiscal resources, develop and carry out plans, and encounter resistance to change (Fowler, 2004). I explored the extent to which curriculum planning, development, and implementation occurs within the classroom, school, and school district in order to explain the "holistic and meaningful characteristics" inherent in the implementation of the ELA CCSS at the secondary level (Yin, 2003, p. 3). Accordingly, I designed the study to answer the question, "Considering that the ELA CCSS represent a major educational change initiative, what variations occur during the policy and curriculum implementation process at varying organizational levels within the secondary school governance structure and how do the variations occur?"

First, I explored the literature as it pertains to the policy formation, policy adoption, and the overall implementation of the ELA CCSS. Then I examined the

methods utilized to answer the research questions including aspects of the strategies of inquiry, sampling, data collection, data analysis, credibility, trustworthiness, validity, and ethical considerations within the research design. In the fourth chapter, I have presented data through five salient themes that emerged through a meticulous qualitative data analysis process. Additionally, I have provided a discussion of the findings as it relates to the research question and sub-questions, and the implications this study has on instructional leadership both from a broad and personal perspective. The dissertation concludes with a synopsis of relevant findings derived from the analysis of data, and the impact this had on my leadership. The entire case study and dissertation describes one school's journey through the implementation process of the ELA CCSS while considering the practices and procedures that may or may not work in similar organizational settings.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

For the past three years, the Center on Education Policy has formulated reports that focused on school districts' and state education agencies' challenges, progress, and views towards implementation of the CCSS (Kober & Rentner, 2011, 2012; Rentner, 2013). Among the insights found was that a majority of districts within states that have adopted the CCSS recognize that the new standards are more academically demanding compared to current standards; moreover, educators and/or educational agencies will need to align and rewrite curriculum, and instructional practices will need to change (Kober & Rentner, 2011). States that have adopted the CCSS have cited opposition to the standards, which stems from the perception that the standards are representative of federally mandated top-down reform measures. Despite these beliefs, state education agencies are still moving forward on implementing the CCSS by adopting new assessments, supporting professional development, and changing teacher induction and evaluation (Kober & Rentner, 2012; Rentner, 2013). A major aspect of the research questions within this study focuses on the extent to which supports for change exist in order to realize the initiative's goals.

Anderson (2011) describes five stages of the policy process including "problem identification and agenda setting," "formulation," "adoption," "implementation," and "evaluation" (pp. 3-5). Whereas the focus of this study centers on the policy implementation phase of the process, the former categories all play critical roles in explaining the context and the historical perspective of the CCSS as a policy. Within the policy implementation process, aspects of curriculum planning, development, and

implementation are critical components inherent in implementing the ELA CCSS (Fowler, 2004; Oliva, 2001). Additionally, the implementation of the CCSS at the local level marks an initiative whereby school and district administrators, building level school leaders, and teachers enact policy and curriculum in the multidimensional arena of educational change (Fullan, 1982).

The Impact of NCLB

Multiple researchers have performed studies related to policy and program implementation under NCLB (Dee & Jacob, 2011; Kaniuka, 2009; Milner, Sondergeld, Demer, Johnson, & Czerniak, 2011; Spohn, 2008). These studies provide applicable areas of research when studying the implementation of the CCSS Initiative at the local level. Furthermore, a critical component of performing an extensive literature review lies in integrating topics, related occurrences, and significant events (Hart, 1998). Considering that state and local governments, including boards of education and school districts, have only just begun to implement the CCSS, studies related to NCLB act as a large body of information that serves to inform future research related to national education policy in content, theoretical perspectives, methodological decisions, and context.

NCLB legislation has provided mixed results in regards to student achievement (Dee & Jacob, 2011; Kaniuka, 2009). Accordingly, Kaniuka (2009) calls for a research agenda that examines the decision-making processes for both school leaders and teachers. The decisions teachers make in the classroom setting determine the enacted curriculum. There is a need for further studies that provide evaluation of both the impact of the written curriculum on teachers' beliefs, and the impact of the written curriculum on instructional practices utilized in the classroom in order to determine the effectiveness of

educational reform initiatives (Kaniuka, 2009). Additionally, Kaniuka (2009) calls for researchers to examine the cultural issues and phenomena inherent within organizations and school districts that determine how teachers and school administrators participate in shared decision-making to bring about systemic gains in student achievement. A critical component of this study centers on the notion that the ideologies of the intermediaries change through the policy implementation process. The extent of change in both beliefs and actions of those intermediaries will determine the extent to which classroom instruction changes as a result of the ELA CCSS policy and curriculum implementation process (Fowler, 2004; Fullan, 1982).

According to McLaughlin (1987), "what actually is delivered or provided under the aegis of a policy depends finally on the individual at the end of the line" (p. 174). Under the umbrella of this theoretical perspective, Milner et al. (2011) conducted a study to examine the "belief-based effects" of science teaching within the elementary school classroom, as well as how NCLB has affected teachers' beliefs, values, and practices as it pertains to science education (p. 116). Within the study, the researchers utilized an open-ended questionnaire in order to develop a survey that targeted a national sample of teachers. The researchers determined that a disconnect exists between the intended outcomes of NCLB mandates and what actually occurs at the administrative and classroom levels of school governance (Milner et al., 2011). The study highlights how a major flaw of NCLB legislation was a failure on behalf of policymakers to concentrate on, and provide provisions for capacity building at the local level (Fullan, 2007).

The political and historical context of educational reform in the U. S. has given way to an age of accountability. The goal of holding schools accountable lies in getting

schools to do what the public wants them to do, which usually means increasing school performance as measured by student achievement (Leithwood & Earl, 2000). Furthermore, these accountability measures, and particularly the mandates under NCLB, have created school cultures that are conservative, where teachers continue to do what they have always done and view new initiatives as top-down measures that do not take into consideration the classroom environment (Lee, 2011). Federal, state, and local education agencies cannot just hand down standards and initiatives from one level of governance to the next. Rather, these entities must embrace collaboration, alignment of curriculum, allocation of resources, and alignment of assessments in order to produce better results than what has previously been seen (ASCD, 2012; Oliva, 2001; Rothman, 2013).

Opponents of the CCSS largely point towards lack of gains in student achievement under NCLB to make the case that more stringent standards-based reform measures and accountability efforts will not improve American education (Fuhrman, 2004; Shannon & Goodman, 2011; Tienken, 2011). Dee and Jacobs (2011) performed a study on the impact of NCLB legislation on test-scores by comparing states that previously had accountability standards similar to NCLB and those states that did not. The study yielded mixed results (Dee & Jacobs, 2011). For example, there were "substantial and almost universal gains in fourth-grade math achievement." In contrast, the researchers noted less significant achievement gains in mathematics across other grade levels (Dee & Jacobs, 2011, p. 442). Furthermore, there was no evidence to suggest that ELA achievement increased as a result NCLB legislation (Dee & Jacobs, 2011). There is little evidence to suggest that the policies of NCLB have had an

impact on student learning outcomes (Dee & Jacobs, 2011; Mintrop & Sunderman, 2009). Federal and state governments have traditionally embraced standards-based reform measures "with specific academic goals and increasing testing to hold schools accountable" (Epstein, 2004, p. 3), and the current reform agenda holds true to these philosophies and principles (Shannon & Goodman, 2011).

The current educational reform agenda in the U. S. places additional accountability measures and standards-based reform requirements on state and local education agencies (USDOE, 2010, 2012b, 2012c). Many scholars, researchers, and educators espouse a belief of comprehensive social reforms, partnerships amongst all levels of governance, and capacity building at the local level to bring about increased student achievement nationally (Jenkins & Agamba, 2013; Kirst, 2004; Mintrop & Sunderman, 2009). One cannot argue that the goals of the current reform agenda of "college- and career-ready students," "great teachers and leaders in every school," "equity and opportunity for all students," raising the bar and rewarding excellence, and promoting innovation and continuous improvement are not admirable (USDOE, 2010, pp. 3-6). However, the assignment that the federal government has once again charged states and local agencies with pertains to how to implement these policies and practices to yield the greatest positive impact on teaching and learning in America's schools (Ostenson & Wadham, 2012).

Agenda Setting and the CCSS

The belief that students from other countries are outperforming American students was a central problem recognized by policymakers. A report by the NGA and the CCSO (2008) shows how 15-year-old students ranked 25th in mathematics and 21st in science in

2006 when compared to students from other countries. The same demographic of students ranked 15th in reading and 24th in problem solving according to the report. Additionally, policymakers and public policy organizations made it clear that the educational systems in Finland, Korea, and Canada outranked the U. S. educational system. The power of symbols and specifically, the power of numbers as symbols showed that the U. S. was faltering as a global power (Kern, 2011; Stone, 2012). In December of 2009, Bill Ritter, the Governor of Colorado, used these symbols to convey to federal lawmakers that someone had to do something or the problem would get worse (NGA, 2009).

Another part of the issue that provided a call to action by federal and state lawmakers was the central idea that technology is changing the way the world does business; therefore, preparing students for a new global economy is essential to our growth as nation. This new global economy is largely knowledge-based and skills-driven in that the available jobs depend on technical skill sets, increased human intelligence, and technological proficiency (Alic, 1997). Furthermore, beginning in 2008, the U. S. plummeted into a financial recession, and one manner that many politicians and scholars agreed would move the country forward in a new global economy is through education (Duncan, 2009; Howard, 2009).

The financial recession represented a problem felt by Americans across the country. The idea that the U. S. was economically at a disadvantage because we as a nation did not have the human capital in the form of knowledge to compete globally represents a tangible cause (Anderson, 2011). Moreover, the problem and cause had a solution. An education that prepared students for careers in a global economy would help

in ending the recession. The U. S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan (2009) stated, "Our nation's economy won't continue to grow without an educated workforce" (p. 27). The NGA and the CCSO (2008) stated that "governments around the world are adopting policies aligned with a 21st century economy that is increasingly knowledge-fueled, innovation driven, and global in scope" (p. 10). Policymakers and public policy organizations utilized an economic recession and societal changes to convey the idea that the country was in crisis and by adopting national policies that would better prepare students for college and careers, the U. S. could compete globally and once again attain economic stability. These rationales provided the impetus for the setting of a political agenda

Many researchers and scholars oppose these rationales for implementing a set of nationalized standards (Allensworth, Takako, Montgomery, Lee, & Mazzeo, 2010; McCluskey, 2010; Tienken, 2010, 2011). First, the argument that many countries who outperform the United States on internationally benchmarked exams have a nationwide set of standards does not take into consideration that other countries who also outperform the United States do not have national standards (McCluskey, 2010; Tienken, 2011). Many of those countries who outperformed the United States on international exams also provided comprehensive social reforms such as fair housing policies and universal healthcare (Tienken, 2011). Additionally, and according to Allensworth et al. (2010), increasing the rigor of coursework does not necessarily provide an increase in student achievement, but improved instructional practices will positively affect student learning outcomes. Finally, Tienken (2008, 2011) contends that no significant relationship exists between the economies of nations and their performance on internationally benchmarked

exams in mathematics and science. Despite the alternative explanations and research suggesting that a nationwide set of academic standards does not provide the answer to the nation's economic and academic woes, the policy of the ELA moved swiftly through the policy process.

In order for government entities to formally adopt or accept a policy proposal, government officials, lawmakers, and advocacy groups must put the policy in a written format (Fowler, 2004). The NGA and the CCSSO have largely led the CCSS Initiative, which began in April of 2009 (ASCD, 2012; Porter et al., 2012; Rentner, 2013). The actual CCSS represent the policy formation process in that these two groups developed the standards in conjunction with teachers, administrators, and scholars with the intent of states adopting the standards thereby creating national benchmarks for all students. Additionally, an advisory group has been instrumental in the development of the standards and the overall CCSS Initiative. The companies and organizations in the advisory group include Achieve Incorporated, ACT, the College Board, the National Association of State Boards of Education, and the State Higher Education Executive Officers (CCSS Initiative, 2012a). The standards went through two rounds of drafts and revisions based in part on public comment, and in June of 2010, the final copy of the CCSS was released (CCSS Initiative, 2012a). With the standards finalized, three different policy agenda setting opportunities would provide the means for adoption of the CCSS by state governments and state education agencies.

Policy Adoption of the CCSS

The ARRA of 2009 provided 4.35 billion dollars for federal RttT grants that continue to serve as an impetus for educational reform in American education (USDOE,

2009). Among the areas of reform is the adoption of common academic standards that are internationally benchmarked, prepare students for college and the workplace, and enable students to compete in a global economy (Kolbe & Rice, 2012; USDOE, 2009). By June of 2013, 45 states and the District of Columbia had adopted the CCSS (Rentner, 2013); accordingly, the mission of the CCSS Initiative (2012b) perfectly aligns to this area of reform and it reads as follows:

> The Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. With American students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy. ("Mission Statement")

The use of RttT grants as a driving force for educational reform nationwide represents a means by which the federal government coerced states towards the adoption of the CCSS (Grissom & Herrington, 2012; Kolbe & Rice, 2012). The federal government implemented the RttT grant program to push an agenda of educational accountability that is similar to the Obama Administration's plan for the reauthorization of the ESEA (USDOE, 2010; 2012c). The RttT grant process is a competitive process whereby states apply for a share of federal funds to help schools achieve more through "innovation, collective standards, and a common assessment" (Shannon & Goodman, 2011, p. 6). According to Kolbe and Rice (2012), the 10 states awarded RttT funds during round two of the competition allocated between 3% and 40% of funds on implementing new standards and assessments. This shows an obvious disparity amongst states and it reflects the individual needs, priorities, and concerns of the states. By providing states

with fiscal incentives to utilize common standards, the states have adopted federal policies without having to wait for the reauthorization of the ESEA.

Another alternative to the adoption of the CCSS is through federal waivers that relax certain state requirements under NLCB (USDOE, 2012b). One of the first requirements for federal ESEA waivers is "college- and career-ready expectations for all students" (USDOE, 2012b, p. 9). These terms are staples of the CCSS and as such, the federal government has expressed the need for common national standards that prepare students for a global economy in both the RttT grant application process and the ESEA waiver application process.

Both RttT grants and NCLB waivers illustrate how the federal government has employed a multitude of voluntary control measures to get the states and local education agencies to adopt the CCSS (Anderson, 2011). Educators, policymakers, public policy organizations, and a multitude of other stakeholders had long considered the idea of enacting a nationwide set of standards (ASCD, 2012). However, the current political and educational environment of the U. S., the timing of the policy initiative, and the policy process provided a platform for large-scale adoption of the CCSS by the states (ASCD, 2012).

The CCSS Explained

The CCSS provide a coherent and uniform understanding of the knowledge and skills that students will learn within their kindergarten through 12th grade educations (Rust, 2012; Wixson, & Lipson, 2012). A goal of the standards is to provide relevant and rigorous coursework to students for the expressed purpose of success in first year credit-bearing college coursework and for entry-level career placement directly out of high

school (CCSS Initiative, 2012c; Rust, 2012). Overall, the CCSS provide key intellectual and cognitive progressions that students need to acquire within their primary and secondary schooling (Conley, 2011: Rust, 2012). The CCSS call for the essential learning strategies and cognitive processes of problem framing and formulation, research skills, interpretation of information, communication skills, and an understanding of mathematical concepts, procedures, and applications (Beach, 2011; CCSS Initiative, 2012c; Conley, 2011; Rust, 2012). The standards alone do not constitute a curriculum, but rather they provide a clear set of goals and expectations that students must learn for success in college and careers (Jenkins & Agamba; 2013; Rust, 2012).

The ELA CCSS have three main components. These components include a comprehensive set of standards for students in kindergarten through fifth grade, a comprehensive set of standards for students in sixth through 12th grade, and literacy standards for students in sixth through 12th grade specific to the subjects of science, history, social studies, and technical subjects (CCSS Initiative, 2012d; DeWitt, 2011; Jenkins & Agamba, 2013). Furthermore, each section has multiple sub-sections or strands. The comprehensive ELA standards for students in kindergarten through sixth grade consist of strands for reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language; in contrast, the subject specific ELA standards focus only on reading and writing (CCSS Initiative, 2012d; Jenkins & Agamba, 2013). In general, and when compared to other states' standards, the ELA CCSS have a larger emphasis on the teaching and learning of complex textual information and argumentative writing (Beach, 2011).

Reading and comprehending age- and grade-appropriate textual information represents a staple of the ELA CCSS (CCSS Initiative, 2010). Inherent within each grade

levels' standards resides a specific Standard 10 that clearly denotes expectations of student outcomes concerning reading and comprehension. For example, Standard 10 for eighth grade reads "By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently" (CCSS Initiative, 2010, "Grade 8 » 10," para. 1). Determining the appropriate text complexity for a given grade level, student, or group of students represents a critical factor in the implementation of the ELA CCSS, which both states and districts have control over within the framework of the CCSS (Williamson, Fitzgerald, & Stenner, 2013). Furthermore, multiple studies suggest that students cannot sufficiently read and comprehend textual information that is grade appropriate, which would put them on a path for success in both post-secondary schooling and the workplace (ACT, 2011; USDOE, National Center for Education Statistics, 2011; Williamson et al., 2013). Having teachers navigate the ways to determine appropriate text complexity in order to engage students slightly above their ability level represents one of the key challenges in implementing the ELA CCSS (Benjamin, 2011; Gewertz, 2011; Vygotsky, 1978; Williamson et al., 2013).

Implementation of the CCSS

The examination of the policy implementation process of the CCSS Initiative through hierarchical levels of governance beginning with the federal government and ending with the classroom mirrors the planning process of curriculum development and sources of educational and curricular change (Fowler, 2004; Fullan, 2007; Oliva, 2001; Tanner & Tanner, 1995). As such, it is important to discern the concepts and definitions of policy and curriculum moving forward. Anderson (2011) defines policy as "a

relatively stable, purposive course of action or inaction followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or set of concerns" (p. 6). In contrast, Tanner and Tanner (1995) define curriculum as "that reconstruction of knowledge and experience that enables the learner to grow in exercising intelligent control of subsequent knowledge and experience" (p. 189). The planning, the actors, the sources of mobilization, and the implementation of both policy and curriculum are strikingly similar, but the constructs are decisively distinct from one another.

Policy Implementation

From the perspective of policy implementation, McLaughlin (1976) utilizes two different constructs or "interactions" to describe the enactment of educational policies, which take into consideration the multitude of variables in the implementation process including the organizational setting, the methods used to enact the policy, and the perceived goals of the mandate (para. 5). The first type of interaction is mutual adaptation, which describes a process of successful attainment of the policy's goals with modifications made at each organizational level in the implementation process (McLaughlin, 1976, para. 6). The second type of interaction, cooptation, describes a process of policy adoption and implementation with no marked change in practices that would affect the target population. Considering that the Riverdale School District has been in the process of providing professional development and allocating resources towards the implementation of the CCSS in ELA since September of 2011, and the district aligned curriculum documents for all core classes in ELA to the CCSS within the district, cooptation represents the lowest level of implementation with this setting.

According to Sabatier and Mazmanian (1980), organizational leadership and

support towards policy implementation, is the greatest variable in determining "statutory objectives" (p. 553). Within the setting of Riverdale High School and the Riverdale School District, leadership and support take on many forms. For example, the building level ELA supervisor meets with other building based supervisors and the district curriculum and instruction administrators multiple times throughout the course of year to discuss curricular changes, develop and implement initiatives, and maintain adherence across the district to standards and policies. Additionally, building principals meet with the entire central office administrative team on a monthly basis to discuss contextually broader issues and to examine the individual school and district progress towards proposed goals and objectives. Multiple layers of school governance affect policy and curriculum implementation; moreover, the extent to which building leaders support the ELA CCSS initiative informs teachers' beliefs and capacity towards changing instructional practices within the classroom (McLaughlin, 1990).

Cuban (2004) maintains that schools often times do not enact federal, state, and local mandates as originally intended, and that the school and district environments shape the manner in which policies become practice within the classroom. Moreover, the political context of federally and state mandated policies, standards-based form measures, and standardized testing all impact the school environment (Fullan, 2007; Kirst, 2004; LoRocque; 1986). As the power of the federal government increases in matters of education, local boards of education, school leaders, teachers, and support staff have had less control over decisions made at school and district levels (Kirst, 2004). Within this context, school administrators react to and comply with policy, which has an effect on teacher practices in the classroom (Kirst, 2004).

LoRocque (1986) examined the beliefs and perceptions of school board members, school administrators, and teachers regarding the implementation of policy within a large regional school district, comprised of 36 primary schools and nine secondary schools in Western Canada. What the researcher found were three conflicting views regarding policy implementation at each tier of organizational governance. For example, school board members conveyed the belief that enacting policy was a matter of following statutory objectives as written in the letter of the mandate; in contrast, district employees at varying organizational levels espoused the belief that support and resources were necessary for change (LoRocque, 1986). Additionally, the employees' main concerns regarding the implementation of policy stemmed from the impact the change initiative would have on the working environment and the initial rationale for the policy (LoRocque, 1986). In examining the implementation of the ELA CCSS from a policy perspective, not only does the organizational environment and setting influence the manner in which the actors implement policy, but also the act of policy implementation changes the organizational environment (Cuban, 2004; LoRocque, 1986).

In between the documents that spell out the ELA CCSS and the students engaging in lessons at the classroom level, the process of successful policy implementation involves professional development, resources allocation, a change in beliefs, and human interaction. A non-statutory variable that affects policy implementation stems from the need for any programmatic change to receive constant and deliberate support in order to bring about buy-in, change in beliefs, and a change in actions from a large group of people who may feel that change is unnecessary (Sabatier & Mazmanian, 1980).

Leadership within schools and within school districts that promote effective practices towards change and puts into place the appropriate processes while supporting change initiatives through resources allocation represents a critical component of implementing change and promoting effective teaching practices (McLaughlin, 1990). Furthermore, and according to Fullan, Bennett, and Rollheiser-Bennett (1989), teachers must not only feel supported to bring about change, but they must also engage in shared decision-making, engage in collaborative practices, and be provided with feedback that informs practice. The multifaceted and multitier educational leadership entities within a school district and individual school provide multiple opportunities to examine the support structures in place towards implementing change, while at the same time examining the working environments of the school and district leaders, and teachers.

The working environment at the district level and at the individual school level also represents the policy environment where the intermediaries are enacting the CCSS in ELA. Stone (2012) describes the policy environment as having two distinct communities, which she describes as the "political community" and the "cultural community" (p. 21). The political community denotes a group of people who operate under the same "political rules and structure of governance," and a cultural community as "a group of people who share a culture and draw their identities from a shared language, history, and traditions" (Stone, 2012, p. 21). Within this study, the distinction between the two components of the policy environment will have ramifications. The examination of the values, beliefs, and perceptions of the policy intermediaries towards implementation of the CCSS for ELA is also a study of those policy actors' interactions within the policy environment and the organizational environment.

Curriculum Implementation

The components of a thoroughly designed and implemented curriculum are vital to the success and achievement of students exposed to that curriculum (Oloruntegbe, 2011). However, there is a difference between what the teacher teaches in the classroom, or the implemented curriculum, and what the curriculum documents denote that the teacher should teach in the classroom, or the intended curriculum (Marzano, 2003). It is at the classroom level, where the curriculum, either implemented or intended, makes an impact on the learner (Oliva, 2001). Accordingly, curriculum development, curriculum implementation, and instructional leadership through these processes play an important role in teaching and learning at the classroom level (Doolittle, & Gallagher-Browne, 2011; Oloruntegbe, 2011; Tramaglini & Tienken, 2011).

Critical to a school's success is the educational leaders' ability and commitment to coordinating and providing resources for the process of curriculum development (Leithwood, Harris, & Strauss, 2010). Within a school district, board members, administrators, staff members, parents, and students all influence the curriculum (Tanner & Tanner, 1995). Take for example a physics teacher who finds that his or her students do not understand basic trigonometric functions that, according to curriculum documents, the students covered in a previous grade-level's math class. If the teacher continued on through the physics curriculum without re-teaching this subject matter, an outcry from parents, board members, school administrators, and the students could certainly impact the lessons taught in that particular classroom.

A multitude of factors external to a school community that influence the development of a curriculum include political, social, technological, and economic

influences (Tanner & Tanner, 1995). Curriculum development is "the process for making programmatic decisions, and for revising the products of those decisions on the basis of continuous and subsequent evaluation" (Oliva, 2001, p. 139). Understanding the interactions and influences of curriculum development are critical to understanding the intended curriculum, and critical to understanding the decisions that teachers must make on a daily basis regarding the delivery of that curriculum (Lee, 2011; Marzano, 2003; Tanner & Tanner, 1995).

In developing curricula and curriculum documents, curriculum developers must establish well-written and clearly articulated goals and objectives that focus on organizational and student outcomes (Dewey, 1941; Marzano, 2007; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). By definition, curriculum goals denote the end-point or rationale for student learning without describing the specific measurable characteristics of student achievement; in contrast, curriculum goals derived from curriculum objectives elucidate the specific and measurable outcomes of learning experiences (Oliva, 2001). The written curriculum connects to what the teacher enacts in the classroom through the goals of individual lessons and units (Marzano, 2007). According to Marzano, the formulation and communication of learning goals and objectives, when done right by the teacher, has a "general tendency" to increase student learning and achievement (pp. 11-12).

Not only do the teachers' goals have to align to the district's objectives, but the district's objectives must also align to state goals, objectives, and standards. In the process of curriculum development, teachers, supervisors, and other educational leaders have struggled with writing clear goals and objectives aligned to state academic standards (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Considering the size and nature of the ELA CCSS, the

process of aligning the school's curriculum will not get any easier. Additionally, within the context of curriculum implementation, teachers' lesson plans provide a valuable piece of data that may or may not note alignment to the ELA CCSS and the district curriculum.

Instructional Leadership

As noted previously, in order for the implementation of policy to be successful, the policy intermediaries must have the capacity or ability to carry out what the policy requires (Fowler, 2004). Similarly, Fullan (2007) views that the intent of government educational policies is that of accountability, but espouses that capacity building and the allocation of resources towards the alignment of policies are necessary for lasting change. Today's school leaders need to be able to "assess curriculum for alignment with state standards and assist teachers in scaffolding, articulating, implementing, and assessing the curriculum" (Doolittle & Gallagher-Browne, 2011, p. 310). Characteristics of successful curriculum implementation include building the capacity and will of teachers by providing appropriate and adequate professional development, maintaining training and inclusion in the curriculum development process for teachers, and a steadfast focus on teaching and learning at the classroom level (Leithwood, Strauss, & Anderson, 2007; Oloruntegbe, 2011).

Leithwood et al. (2010) describe the management and support of instructional programs, and a focus on teaching and learning at the classroom level as "core leadership practices" associated with educational administration and school turnaround (p. 155). Within my study, the district and school leaders include central office administrators, the building principal, and an ELA building level supervisor. Considering the expediency under which schools are required to implement the CCSS (NJDOE, 2011), school leaders

may find themselves prescribing courses of action without utilizing well-planned, research-based, and deliberate implementation strategies (Eilers & D'Amico, 2012). Additionally, many educators find that the curriculum is something handed down to them from local, state, and even federal levels of school governance (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2004). For many, enacting curriculum concerns is a matter of adhering to mandates and policies, and a reason for this "is that in the era of legislated learning, teachers and school leaders are seen as incapable of knowing what their students should be taught" (Glickman et al., 2004, p. 403).

In a meta-analysis that examined the impact of different types of leadership practices on student outcomes, Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008) found that those leadership practices most closely associated with classroom activities had the greatest positive impact on student achievement and learning outcomes. The State of Kentucky has developed and carried out a plan for curriculum development whereby teachers engage in professional development and collaborative activities to understand the CCSS, develop pacing guides, deconstruct standards, design instruction focused on learning outcomes, analyze student work, and provide collaborative teacher-to-teacher feedback on improving instructional practice (Holliday & Smith, 2012). Furthermore, the State of Kentucky's plan calls for educational administrators to establish a vision that communicates the necessity towards alignment of the CCSS, identify instructional resources and instructional shifts needed for implementation of the CCSS, highlight the use of effective instructional strategies for professional development purposes, monitor learning in the classroom based on student outcomes, and allocate necessary resources for successful implementation of the CCSS (Holliday & Smith, 2012). As shown, an

educational change initiative, such as the implementation of a newly aligned and developed curriculum, requires teachers and educational leaders alike to commit to the endeavor and have competency in carrying out the initiative (Evans, 1996; Fullan, 2007).

Resistance to Change

As with any programmatic change endeavor, there are staff members, both teacher and administrators alike, who will embrace change and who will resist change (Fullan, 2007; Goatley, 2012). To bring about change of the magnitude that CCSS calls for is a monumental task, especially when considering that the results involve change in instructional practices, which include the use of more informational texts, the use of complex texts at earlier grade levels, and teaching writing for real-world applications (Goatley, 2007). The timeframe for implementation of the CCSS is rapid and compact with mandated testing aligned to the CCSS coming onboard in the 2014-2015 school year (NJDOE, 2010b; Sawchuk, 2012). Moreover, during this compressed timeline, and in order for the successful implementation of the CCSS, teachers will deal with shifts in instructional strategies, increased cognitive demands for themselves and their students, and an understanding of the standards and new assessments (Sawchuk, 2012).

Resistance in the traditional sense connotes the ideas of confrontations, opposition, and even defiance. Agocs (1997) defines "institutionalized resistance as the pattern of organizational behavior that decision makers in organizations employ to actively deny, reject, refuse to implement, repress, or even dismantle change proposals and initiatives" (p. 918). In implementing the ELA CCSS, there are decision-makers at every level of school governance including policymakers, federal and state education officials, local boards of education, superintendents, school and district administrators,

and teachers. Additionally, there are critics of the CCSS at every level of governance who contend, among other things, that a standardization of content and schooling narrowly reduces the curriculum, and that intensifying standards-based reform and accountability measures while not adequately supporting capacity building and resources at the state and local level will only make American education worse (Mathis, 2010). The successful implementation of the CCSS will require changes in teachers' understandings of student learning, the curriculum, instructional strategies, learning outcomes, and subject matter (Sergiovanni, 2000). Conversely, resistance to change exists because of people's lack of understanding, knowledge, skills, fear of the future, and because of lifelong habits (Agocs, 1997).

According to Scherz (2004), change would occur too fast or possibly, not at all, if it was not for resistance; accordingly, educational leaders can utilize resistance as a source of creativity, motivation, and self-discovery. Fullan (2007), also confirms the case that resistance can act as a source of learning when leading change. Often times those opposing the change have valid points to make, which school administrators must address for "actual implementation and sustained impact" (Fullan, 2007, pp. 111-12). Along the same line of reasoning, Kotter (1996) describes two common errors when implementing change that include "too much complacency" within an organization, and allowing resistance to hinder the new vision (p. 4). Interestingly, the paradigm that exists within these two common implementation errors centers on the idea that in a culture of complacency there is little resistance.

In an ethnographic study of three Bolivian state schools undergoing a major educational reform initiative to modernize teaching, Talavera (2002) found that for the

most part teachers did not implement reform measures as dictated by specialists in the field. There were, however, instances of teachers who had exposure to practical hands-on reform modules changing their perceptions and practices in light of reform measures. Furthermore, Talavera (2002) contends that communication of reform goals and consistent professional development to that end are critical components of leading change and addressing resistance. Similarly, Kotter (1996) espouses that communicating the goals and objectives of change while also empowering employees to bring about the desired change represent critical elements of implementation. Reformers, policymakers, and educational leaders all must listen to those responsible for carrying the initiatives in the classroom setting. Resistance from teachers can often time focus on student interests, practical professional knowledge from the classroom setting (Clabaugh, 2010).

Of the group of actors who will implement the ELA CCSS, it is the teachers at the classroom level, who directly influence teaching and learning, and it is the teachers' decisions in classrooms that will determine the success of the CCSS (Lee, 2011). The implementation of policy related to student achievement and ultimately classroom instruction represents a complicated task defined by changing student-teacher interactions, instructional practices and strategies, the curriculum, and the capacity of both students and teachers (Fuhrman, 2004).

Spillane (2005) performed a 4-year case study analysis of the implementation of math standards in the State of Michigan in the mid 1990s, and found that state policy can enable teachers to make changes in pedagogical practices, but only under the right conditions. Those conditions include providing the necessary time and human resources for teachers, school leaders, and local policymakers, which includes district leadership, to

come together in order to more fully understand the intended outcomes of the proposed and mandated standards (Spillane, 2005). Throughout curriculum and policy implementation, it is critical to integrate teachers into a collaborative process with district and school leaders in order to address issues of resistance, and to foster a vision of curriculum development towards the realization of teaching, learning, and accountability towards a well-articulated and aligned curriculum (Oloruntegbe, 2011; Spillane, 2005.

Summary

The increasing role of the federal government in matters of education began in the 1950s through equity-based reform measures and mandates (Jennings, 2009; Superfine et al., 2012). Currently, and in order for states to continue to receive certain federal funds allotted for education, they must to adhere to the standards-based policies that began in the 1990s. The current proposal by the Obama Administration for the reauthorization of the ESEA supports the nationwide adoption of rigorous academic standards that prepare student for college and careers (USDOE, 2010). The adoption of the CCSS took place, and is still taking place, through three different policy agenda setting opportunities. These opportunities include the adoption of the finalized standards by the states as part of the original CCSS Initiative, as part of the waiver process for the flexibility of meeting certain mandates under NCLB, and through the RttT federal grant program (CCSS Initiative, 2011; USDOE 2012b, 2012c). Using economic power, voluntary policy adoption, and sanctions (Anderson, 2011), the federal government along with public policy making groups have successfully gotten the states to adopt and implement the CCSS, thereby extending the federal government's influence in K-12 education to include aspects of teaching and learning (Grissom & Herrington, 2012).

School districts, administrators, and teachers have dealt with numerous disconnected federal and states mandates over the past two decades (Fowler, 2004; Fullan, 2007). Whereas these government entities certainly have provided incentives and accountability measures they have largely left building the capacity to implement change up to individual districts (Fullan, 2007). School leaders, teachers, and other pertinent support staff will write and align curriculum documents, engage in and provide professional development, and espouse beliefs about the worthiness, or lack thereof of the CCSS. However, the implemented curriculum at the classroom level will determine just how far the policy of the CCSS strayed from original intents, and if students, teachers, and schools are realizing intended outcomes (Cuban, 2004; Marzano, 2007).

Chapter 3

Methodology

For this study, I conducted a qualitative exploration of the policy and curriculum implementation process of the ELA CCSS within Riverdale High School in order to provide a summative evaluation of the implementation process. This case study provides a comprehensive detailed description and subsequent analysis of the history of the CCSS Initiative within the research setting and up to the present day. The delimiting factors of the subject matter studied largely define this qualitative case study (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009). I defined the case as the implementation process of the ELA CCSS within a secondary school setting. Furthermore, the research strategy of a case study provides a means to examine the real world and significant qualities of the CCSS Initiative for ELA that the policy intermediaries put into practice (Yin, 2003). In short, the focus of the study lies in both the policy and curriculum implementation process of the ELA CCSS within a secondary school setting.

Whereas, an individual, program, or institution can represent the unit of study for a single case, multiple layers of analysis can exist within a single case (Merriam 2002; Patton, 2002; Yin, 2003). An embedded case study design allows for multiple subunits of analysis within the confines of the larger case (Yin, 2003). Within the boundaries of this embedded case study, multiple levels of school governance exist. While the overall design of the study centers on the process of policy and curriculum implementation, three subunits of analysis exist within the holistic case that I took into consideration within the research design (Yin, 2003). Those subunits of analysis include the hierarchical levels of school and district governance inherent within the policy implementation process.

The hierarchical levels of school governance include administrators in the district Curriculum and Instruction Office, the building level school leaders, and the ELA teachers. Within the embedded case study design, I will give attention to inquiry, data collection, and data analysis for all the subunits of analysis. However, the final data analysis, and subsequent discussions and conclusion provide an analysis of the data for the larger bounded overall case, or the implementation of the CCSS for ELA in the secondary school setting (Yin, 2003).

According to Yin (2003), a rationale for utilizing a single-case embedded design is to "capture the circumstances and conditions of an everyday or common place situation" (p. 41). Riverdale High School is one of 488 high schools in the State of New Jersey that primarily services students in grades 9 through 12 (NJDOE, 2012b). Likewise, the Riverdale School District represents one of 67 school districts in the State of New Jersey responsible for the operations of more than one high school. Additionally, Riverdale High School is one of 235 high schools that operates under the auspices of a central office that services more than one high school (NJDOE, 2012a). The common place situation that exists stems from the implementation of the ELA CCSS by September of 2012 in a high school setting that shares organizational commonalities with 235 other schools across the State of New Jersey (NJDOE, 2011, 2012a; Yin, 2003).

In designing and carrying out an embedded case study that serves as a summative evaluation of the implementation of the ELA CCSS within Riverdale High School, I highlighted the conditions and practices towards the implementation of these mandates. This process represents a commonplace situation in New Jersey applicable to other high schools and school districts (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2003). Riverdale School District and

Riverdale High School constitute representative cases within the State of New Jersey for a district and school that operate within the framework of a school district with multiple high schools. Furthermore, the multiple levels of school governance responsible for the implementation of the ELA CCSS represent separate units of analysis within the embedded case study research design (Yin, 2003). Other pertinent methodological components of the study include the research setting, data collection, data analysis, participants, validity, and trustworthiness.

Setting

Riverdale School District and Riverdale High School serve as the setting for this research study. The district services approximately over 10,000 students from multiple municipalities in New Jersey. The NJDOE (2004) has up until recently utilized an alphabetical classification system to compare the socioeconomic factors of school districts across the state. The classification system begins with the letter A for schools with the lowest socioeconomic classification and ends with a classification of J for schools with the highest socioeconomic classification. The NJDOE (2004) classified Riverdale School District as a GH district based on socioeconomics. The district factor grouping of GH places the Riverdale School District in the sixth highest district factor group among the eight socioeconomic classifications for public schools in the State of New Jersey.

According to the NJDOE (2004), there are eight classifications of school districts based on socioeconomics. The NJDOE (2004) developed district factor grouping classifications in 1975 in order to compare students' performance on statewide assessments, and the classifications are updated every 10 years based on the latest

Decennial Census data released by the Census Bureau. The state based the most recent district factor groupings on seven variables from the census data in order to describe the socioeconomic status of the population that a school district services. Those variables include the percent of adults with no high school diploma, percent of adults with some college education, occupational status, population density, unemployment rate, percent of individuals in poverty, and median family income (NJDOE, 2004). Whereas, district factor groups provide valuable insight into the socioeconomics of the population that a school district services, this methodology for comparing school districts was last utilized by the NJDOE for the 2010-2011 school year (NJDOE, 2013b).

In comparing data and schools for the 2011-2012 school year, the NJDOE utilized School Performance reports (2012b) and the categorization of school peer groups to compare data and performance of schools in the areas of college and career readiness, academic achievement, graduation, and post-secondary education. The NJDOE (2013a) provides the following description to explain the determination of school peer groups:

> Peer schools are drawn from across the state and represent schools that have similar grade configurations and that are educating students of similar demographic characteristics, as measured by enrollment in Free/Reduced Lunch Programs, Limited English Proficiency or Special Education Programs. (p. 11)

Riverdale High School's peer group consists of 30 other schools, and the percentage of students enrolled in Free/Reduced Lunch Programs for all school within the peer group ranges from slightly above 3% to slightly over 9%. Additionally, the percentage of students enrolled in Limited English Proficiency Programs within the peer group ranges from 0% to slightly over 3%, and the percentage of students enrolled in Special Education Programs ranges from between 9% to 18% (NJDOE, 2012b). Comparatively, the report describes Riverdale High School's academic performance as high when

compared to schools across the state and average when compared to peer schools. The report further included a description of the school's college and career readiness, and graduation and post-secondary enrollment rates as about average when compared to schools across the state and lagging in comparison to schools within the peer grouping (NJDOE, 2012b). According to the NJDOE (2014e), the data presented in the school performance provides a basis for schools to engage in dialogue that examines school successes while also guiding positive school reform efforts.

Whereas, the Riverdale School District houses the subunit of analysis of the curriculum and instruction administrators within this embedded case study, Riverdale High School houses the other two subunits of analysis. Those subunits of analysis include building level school leaders, and the ELA teachers. Riverdale High School is one of multiple schools in the Riverdale School District. The school had an enrollment of over 2,500 students in the 2010-211 school year, and an enrollment of over 2,100 students in the 2011-2012 school year. Additionally, the school receives federal Title I funds (NJDOE, 2010d).

The federally funded Title I program provides funds to local schools that are deemed economically disadvantaged, so that all children, regardless of where they live, achieve proficiency on state assessments aligned to state approved core learning standards (Jennings, 2009; NJDOE, 2010d; Superfine et al., 2012). Riverdale High School receives Title I funds due to the fact that the percent of children who come from households where the annual income falls below the federal defined poverty level is equal to or greater than the percent of children district wide who come from households where the annual income falls below the poverty level (NJDOE, 2010d).

Rationale for the Setting

In examining factors that affect educational change and implementation, including district and building leadership (Fowler, 2004; Sabatier & Mazmanian, 1980), the environment, and organizational support, and resources allocation (McLaughlin, 1976), Riverdale School District and Riverdale High School provide a representative setting and a representative case for implementation of the CCSS for ELA at the secondary level within the State of New Jersey (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2004). For example, the Riverdale School District Central Office Curriculum and Instruction Administrators execute initial activities towards professional development, curriculum and policy implementation, and district-wide change initiatives for all schools within the district. The adaptation of those intended outcomes as they progress through various levels of school governance within an individual school building may highlight the extent to which conditions and practices towards implementation affect teachers' beliefs and views about teaching, instructional strategies, and classroom learning. Furthermore, this setting enables the researcher to compare and contrast the extent to which the central office administrators, and school leaders, who are unique to one individual school within the district, build "the will," "capacity," and necessary scaffolding necessary to implement a standards-based educational reform movement (Fowler, 2004, p. 271).

The cultural and political communities of the district and the individual school describe the overall policy environment for this research setting. As Stone (2012) describes nations as being comprised of multiple cultural communities, so is the Riverdale School District comprised of multiple cultural communities that operate independently while still maintaining certain norms, procedures, and rules that pervade

the district. Additionally, the beliefs, attitudes, and values of the individuals working within a school setting all contribute to how that organization operates, deals with problems and issues, and ultimately, teaches children (Peterson & Deal, 2002). The examination of the values, beliefs, and perceptions of the policy intermediaries within Riverdale High School, and pertaining to the implementation of the ELA CCSS, constitute a study of the cultural communities that exist within the school and larger district. The cultural and political communities involved in implementing the ELA CCSS at Riverdale High School include each level of school governance or subunit of analysis within this study.

Consider for a moment the district administrator who goes to informational sessions and workshops given by the NJDOE pertaining to the implementation of the CCSS Initiative. Now consider the teacher who receives all of his or her information, pertaining to the CCSS, directly from district and school administrators. For each of these individuals the rules for implementing the mandate are very different given their roles in the implementation process. Furthermore, the modifications that each level of school governance places on those rules, represented by beliefs and strategies towards implementing the CCSS, travel from the federal government, to the state government, and ultimately through multiple levels within the district and school governance structure before reaching students in the classroom (Cuban, 2004).

Within the political community, factors such as the increasing role of the federal government in matters pertaining to public education and intergovernmental relationships may have more of an impact on the perceptions and beliefs of central office administrators who deal directly with those entities, as opposed to classroom teachers

who may not. Teachers are often times at the “receiving end” of educational change efforts (Fullan, 1982, p. 123), which may have ramifications on the policy and curriculum implementation of the CCSS for ELA within the Riverdale School District and Riverdale High School.

Data Collection, Data Analysis, and Participants

Within this embedded case study, I conducted interviews on a sample of participants that includes policy intermediaries from each hierarchical level of school governance for matters related to ELA curriculum and instruction within the organizational structure of the school district. These individuals are ultimately responsible for carrying out the CCSS Initiative in ELA at the school and district levels (Fowler, 2004). Specifically, the policy intermediaries include the District Curriculum and Instruction Administrators, building-level school leaders, and the ELA teaching staff members. I utilized purposive criterion sampling for all participants interviewed. I based the participant sample on attributes that fostered insight and knowledge about the implementation of the CCSS in ELA within the district (Patton, 2002; Seidman, 2006; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). This study centers on the beliefs and perceptions of teachers regarding the implementation of a national policy; however, it focuses on one school and three hierarchical levels of school governance. Selecting individuals that provide in-depth, meaningful, and relevant information that informs the qualitative study furnished detailed information about the values, beliefs, and perceptions of the policy intermediaries regarding the implementation of the ELA CCSS at Riverdale High School (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011).

Participants

All administrators and supervisors met the definition of policy intermediaries as previously defined. Within the first subunit of analysis, which is the district curriculum and instruction department, there were two individuals eligible to participate in the study. One of the participants heads up the District Curriculum and Instruction office, and has served in this position since September of 2012. Prior to that, this administrator served as an administrative supervisor within the District Curriculum and Instruction Department. The second participant from this organizational level serves as an Administrative Supervisor for Curriculum and Instruction, who oversees matters related to ELA, started in this capacity in December of 2012 and prior to that served in the capacity of a building-level ELA supervisor. Both central office administrators served as policy intermediaries at varied levels within the school and district organizational structure at the onset of the implementation of the CCSS for ELA.

Building-level school leadership represents the next subunit of analysis, which includes the building principal and the ELA supervisor. The principal has served in this capacity for the past eight years, and has been in high school administration as both an assistant principal and principal for over a decade. Relatively new to Riverdale High School, the ELA Supervisor was not with the school or district at the onset of the CCSS initiative, but the inclusion of this participant provided unique data within the research setting and overall case study. In addition to serving as the ELA supervisor, this person also supervises the Health and Physical Education Department.

Teachers represent the final subunit of analysis within the research setting. Specifically, 11 out of 14 teachers who met the criteria of being an ELA teacher for four

years within Riverdale High School participated in the study. The ELA department within Riverdale represents a cultural community of teachers who collectively have an "underlying set of norms and values" that convey a largely positive department culture whereby the focus lies in teaching and learning at the classroom level (Peterson & Deal, 2002, p. 87). Deal and Peterson (1999) describe 13 characteristics of a positive school culture, and of those 13 characteristics, seven distinct and unique traits of a positive school culture clearly describe the culture of the ELA Department at Riverdale High School.

A researcher's familiarization with the culture of the research setting helps to ensure the credibility of findings for qualitative studies (Shenton, 2004). As the culture of the department represents a key component of the working environment within which teachers will implement the ELA CCSS, an examination of the attributes of this cultural community provides valuable insight into the implementation setting. To begin, prior to beginning the study and throughout the course of data collection and analysis, the teachers within the department clearly demonstrated collegiality amongst each other, a focus on student learning, accountability for student achievement, reflective and ongoing dialogue within department meetings, a belief of purpose towards teaching ELA, and a sense of respect for both each other and the students. According to Peterson and Deal (2009), all of these attributes contribute to a positive ELA department culture described by strong interpersonal relationships amongst staff and students with a focus on student learning outcomes.

Data Collection

I also conducted interviews on 11 ELA teachers at Riverdale High School. I utilized purposeful criterion and typical case sampling to choose my interviewees (Patton, 2002; Seidman, 2006). I interviewed any ELA teacher who met the criterion of working within Riverdale High School for the past four years, and who agreed to participate in the study. Of the 17 ELA teachers currently working at Riverdale High School, 14 teachers fit this criterion. Eleven of the 14 teachers who met the criterion to participate in the study, agreed to participate in the study. A rationale for setting the criteria of working in the school for four years stemmed from the need for study participants to understand the context of the environment prior to initial implementation of the ELA CCSS. Additionally, teachers who have worked in the school for the previous four years have achieved tenure, which has the potential to afford a more open and honest dialogue between the interviewer and the interviewee.

I conducted all interviews with a predetermined interview guide or interview protocol (Seidman, 2006). The design of the interview protocol covered topics about the implementation of the CCSS in ELA encompassing the participant's beliefs, value, and perceptions pertaining to:

- the role he or she has in the implementation process,
- the scaffolds and resources in place to support implementation,
- the implementation strategies utilized within the district and individual school,
- the goal of the policy and curriculum implementation,
- district and school leadership towards educational change, policy implementation, and curriculum implementation; and

- cultural aspects of the district and school as it pertains to policy implementation and educational change.

The final interview questions asked to individuals at different hierarchical levels within the school governance structure or subunits of analysis differed, but included questions that reflect areas of interest as noted above (see Appendix B for the interview protocols). This enabled an analysis of the responses to questions within and between the groups of policy intermediaries (LoRocque, 1986; Seidman, 2006).

In addition to conducting qualitative interviews, I performed field observations. According to Hatch (2002), the reason for performing observations is to gain an understanding of the school and district culture, the research setting, and the phenomenon under study. I performed field observations of ELA department meetings and curriculum implementation meetings. Within this research setting, the social settings of departmental and district meetings provided insight into the information that participants did not discuss in interviews. Additionally, it provided an opportunity to note and describe not just what people said, but also how they behaved. The field observations offered another means through which to understand the cultural norms and values of the district and the individual school (Hatch, 2002; Patton, 2002). I enhanced the study's internal validity by performing multiple observations over a period of two months at both the district office and at the individual school level (Creswell, 2009).

I also collected unobtrusive data, in the forms of archival documents, in order to examine the espoused beliefs and perceptions regarding the implementation of the ELA CCSS without interfering with the social environment (Hatch, 2002). Within the research setting, the forms of data related to implementing the ELA CCSS at the Riverdale School

District includes teacher generated goals and objectives or SGOs, ELA department meeting agendas and minutes, district-wide ELA meetings agendas and minutes, curriculum documents, and other pertinent archival documents. I collected and evaluated some of the documents as a means of determining certain "paths of inquiry," which I explored further during field observations and interviews (Patton, 2002, p. 294).

Data Analysis

All of the study artifacts, field notes, and transcribed interviews received analytical memos. Throughout the study, the memos served as a place for me to question aspects of the study, and to begin direct interpretation of specific aspects of data (Creswell, 2007; Saldana, 2009; Stake, 1995). Once all of the data received analytical memos, I began the first cycle of coding (see Appendix C for the codebook). All of the data initially received descriptive or topic codes, in order to gain insight into what is occurring throughout the policy and curriculum implementation process (Saldana, 2009). Next, I performed a second cycle of coding utilizing pattern codes to condense and categorize the descriptive codes into more manageable broad themes of data to determine the prevalent themes in the case study (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Triangulation of data refers to the analysis and use of findings from multiple data sources to validate findings within the research setting (Hussein, 2009). To increase the validity of findings, triangulation of data occurred through both the types of data collected and across the subunits of analysis within the embedded case study. All themes were prevalent across multiple data sets including interview transcripts, field notes, and archival documents. Additionally, all themes were prevalent across all three subunits of analysis including the district administration, school leadership, and the ELA teachers.

Triangulating the data in this manner served to help in ensuring confirmability and validity of findings (Craig, 2009; Toma, 2006).

First cycle coding. In the first coding cycles, the codes grew organically in order to determine just what was occurring during the implementation of the ELA CCSS within Riverdale School District and Riverdale High School. At first the ideas, concepts, and themes that emerged from the data seemed disconnected within documents and across multiple sources of data; however, as the first cycle of descriptive coding progressed, it became necessary to assign the codes more specific and detailed "subcodes" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 61). The use of topical subcodes became necessary as study participants espoused detailed beliefs, ideas, and events pertaining to specific topics in the implementation process. During the first cycle of coding, 32 independent themes, or ideas emerged from the data as follows:

- Support - A Voice,
- CCSS - Good,
- Instructional Shift - General,
- Support - Time,
- Instructional Shift - Independent Work,
- Instructional Shift - Material Resources,
- Accountability - Observations,
- Accountability - General Testing,
- Accountability - PARCC,
- Support - Administrative,
- Instructional Shift - Old Gone,

- Change - Too Much,
- Resistance - Advocacy Students,
- Resistance - Practice,
- Resistance - Literature,
- CCSS - Alignment,
- Support - Professional Development,
- Support - On Our Own,
- Support - Need for Examples,
- CCSS - Language,
- Reality - Hierarchical Level,
- Top Down - Administration,
- Top Down - State/Federal,
- Resistance - Change,
- Support - Ancillary Resources,
- CCSS - Lesson Plans,
- CCSS - Politics,
- CCSS - Fit Lessons,
- Change - Same,
- Support - No Professional Development,
- Goals and Objectives, and
- Curriculum Guide.

In the first cycle of coding, codes that did not emerge as relevant to the theoretical propositions of the study, or that did materialize across multiple sources of data were

either dropped from the list of codes altogether, or were merged into other codes. For example, the code Change – Change, conveyed a study participants' belief that change for the sake of change as a practice was unjustified. A participant stated, "The faculty, I suppose, felt that it was unfair to make a change for what seemed to be for the sake of just changing and not for any necessarily significant improvement." This statement was the only coded segment for the Change - Change code, subsequently, I recoded the segment of text to the Resistance - Change code. The Resistance - Change code depicts the idea that resistance towards implementation of the standards comes from the idea of change itself (see Appendix C for a detailed description of all first and second cycle codes).

First cycle codes were analyzed, recoded, and adjusted as needed. Moreover, some initial codes did not appear across documents, interview transcripts, and field notes. For example, an initial first cycle descriptive code labeled Instructional Shift – Criticism, portrayed the need for students to criticize pieces of non-fiction and fiction text as part of the demand placed on instructional practices due to the CCSS; however, I only coded one segment of data with this label. Subsequently, I dropped the code Instructional Shift - Criticism from the "tentative scheme of categories" and recoded the segment as Instructional Shift - General (Merriam, 2009, p. 182). The code Instructional Shift - General refers to a general reference to an instructional shift employed by the teacher within the classroom setting. Additionally, 46 segments of data received the code Instructional Shift - General and those segments appeared in interview transcripts, archival documents, and field notes.

Second cycle coding. Once I had completed the first cycle of descriptive coding and established a tentative scheme of themes, ideas, and concepts, categorization of first cycle codes into larger pattern codes began. The second cycle pattern codes describe the major themes, constructs, and ideas that emerged out of the first cycle descriptive codes (Saldana, 2009). Furthermore, the second cycle pattern codes (Figure 1) derived not only from the coded segments of data but also from the study's intent and theoretical prepositions, my own knowledge and pragmatic orientation, and the espoused beliefs and actions of the study's participants (Merriam, 2009). In order to create the second cycle pattern codes, I examined the research questions, the study's objectives, the first cycle pattern codes, and specific coded segments of data in order to place each of the first cycle patterns into one of five 2nd cycle pattern codes. The second cycle pattern codes include the themes and concepts of Support/Capacity Building, Non-Support, Reality of the Organizational Level, Resistance towards Implementation/Cooptation, and Successful Implementation Strategies/Mutual Adaptation.

All of the data determined as important to the ELA CCSS implementation received unique and exclusive first cycle descriptive codes and ultimately received a second cycle pattern code. In this manner, the coding process was "exhaustive" for all selected data segments (Merriam, 2009, p. 185). For example, a first cycle code labeled Instructional Shift – Old Gone describes a theme whereby study participants spoke of letting go of pedagogical practices in light of the implementation of the ELA CCSS. A participant noted:

> I've let go of many things that were once very near and dear to my heart. I let go of those things to try to get in as much as I can of what I consider to be more important things.

This particular code in the first cycle only arose amongst interview segments and only four segments of data received this particular code. Upon consideration and reflection, I determined that the code was relevant enough to the study that it should retain its own category, and that it could prove insightful and beneficial within the second cycle of coding. This code, combined with 10 other first cycle codes, comprised the second cycle pattern code titled Successful Implementation/Mutual Adaptation (Figure 1).

Categorization of First Cycle Codes into Second Cycle Codes	
Second Cycle Pattern Codes	**First Cycle Descriptive Codes**
Support/Capacity Building	Support - Administrative Support - Ancillary Resources Support - Professional Development Curriculum Guide
Additional Support Needed	Support - Need for Examples Support - On Our Own Support - No PD
Reality of the Organizational Level	Change - Too Much Reality - Hierarchical Level Advocacy Students Top Down - Administration Top Down - State/Federal Accountability - General Testing Accountability - Observations Accountability - PARCC
Resistance towards Implementation/ Cooptation	CCSS - Fit Lessons CCSS - Politics Change - Same Resistance - Change Resistance - Literature Resistance - Practice
Successful Implementation /Mutual Adaptation	CCSS - Good CCSS - Alignment CCSS - Language CCSS - Lesson Plans Instructional Shift - General Instructional Shift - Independent Work Instructional Shift - Material Resources Goals/Objectives Instructional Shift - Old Gone Support - Time Support - A Voice

Figure 1. The categorization of first cycle codes into second cycle codes. The number of first cycle descriptive codes within each of the second cycle topic codes does not infer prominence over any other first cycle code.

All data deemed important to the theoretical prepositions of the study received "mutually exclusive" codes (Merriam, 2009, p. 185). All individual data segments received exactly one first cycle descriptive code. During the first cycle of coding, all of the coded data segments were revised, refined, and/or recoded to ensure that every individual segment of data is unique and received its own first cycle code and subsequent second cycle code. Throughout the coding process, I separated passages and sometimes larger contextually sensitive segments of data into more than one first cycle code in order to maintain mutual exclusivity for all coded segments of data. For example, a passage within a transcribed interview read, "The change, it's hard to express. The expectation is higher but the reality is lower. If you know the standards have increased, the rubrics have increased, with the PARCC coming and all this…" This passage received a code at the front of the passage titled Reality – Organizational Level for the idea that the reality of the classroom environment is not what administrators and policy makers believe it to be. However, the end of the passage speaks to a specific state mandated test, and therefore received the code Accountability - PARCC. Fortunately, within the MAXQDA software I analyzed individual segments of data as standalone passages, or within the context of the original data set or document.

Ethical Considerations

All participants throughout the study signed an informed consent form in order to partake in the proposed research activities (Creswell, 2009, "Ethical Issues in Data Collection," para. 2). Additionally, I obtained permission to conduct the research study by both the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and from the school district where the study took place. This process required that I receive permission to conduct this case study and

collect archival documents from the Superintendent of Riverdale School District. I followed protocols to avoid blatant forms of unethical and illegal research throughout the study; however, maintaining the dual role of participant observer and researcher-as-instrument posed challenges regarding objectivity (Association for Institutional Research, 2001; Craig, 2009).

I will address issues that arose due to my role as a participant observer by maintaining an adherence to "scrupulous honesty" (Madsen, 1992, p. 79). For example, when examining the analytical memos and coding data, I ensured that information that did not fit neatly into the study was just as rigorously analyzed as information that did confirm certain personal suppositions and beliefs, and emergent themes (Saldana, 2009). In addition, the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee preserved a certain amount of formality in an effort to avoid expressing too much of my own experiences in education (Seidman, 2006). Finally, I provided all interview participants a copy of the final transcribed interviews for review prior to final approval before including any portion of the interview as part of the raw data collected. This provided the interviewee an opportunity to omit any portion of the transcript for any reason (Seidman, 2006), thereby aiding in establishing the participants' comfort with the process and the interviewer.

Summary

Between the central office administrators and the teachers, who are ultimately responsible for carrying out the policy implementation of the CCSS in ELA, there is a story of espoused beliefs, cultural communities, actions, and organizational leadership. I designed this study to illuminate the factors inherent in implementing the CCSS in ELA

within a secondary high school and regional high school district with the intent of informing future programmatic decisions within the district, and highlighting the conditions and issues applicable to other similar settings. The design of the study supports a qualitative exploration of the perceptions and values of policy intermediaries within Riverdale High School and the Riverdale School District. According to Fullan (2007), educational change is dependent upon teachers' actions in the classroom and their beliefs as educators, and at the end of the line within educational policy and curriculum implementation, it is the teachers who will have a direct impact on classroom instruction and student learning.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis

According to Yin (2003), “relying on theoretical prepositions” provides a basis upon which to analyze data (p. 111). This strategy organizes the study by providing the researcher a constant focus on the original goals and objectives of the study that helped to frame the research questions (Yin, 2003). A comparison and analysis of all the qualitative data collected, including educator interviews, field observations, and archival documents, provided themes and patterns of the variations that occur during the policy and curriculum implementation process of the ELA CCSS at varying organizational levels with the governance structure of Riverdale High School. Furthermore, the themes, ideas, and concepts emerged through a process of providing analytic memos, first cycle descriptive codes, second cycle pattern codes, and the utilization of various focusing strategies in order to realize the essential and critical meanings inherent in the case study and the data (Saldana, 2009).

While placing analytic memos within a transcribed interview, a statement from a building level school leader so readily aligned to the overarching research question that it seemed fitting to place it in the introduction to this chapter. When asked about how to implement the new standards in lesson plans, the supervisor responded:

> When I look at Common Core and I look at PARCC, it’s basically your interpretation of the Common Core, because Common Core is not a curriculum, it's a set of standards; it's not a curriculum in and of itself, you use that to write your curriculum, so you can't look at it as curriculum.

This statement speaks to the adaptation of the CCSS by teachers, school leaders, and building level administrators. It additionally serves to describe a process of policy

implementation through the revision, development, and enactment of curricula aligned to the ELA CCSS.

The Emergence of Salient Themes

Throughout the second cycle of pattern coding, I analyzed first cycle descriptive codes of data segments from archival documents, field observations, and interview transcripts in order to analyze the content for the emergence of patterns and themes (Patton, 2002; Saldana 2009). The analysis of all the coded data segments revealed five distinct patterns. The first pattern, coded as Support/Capacity Building, describes an environment of direct and indirect support and capacity building during the ELA CCSS implementation process by building level and district level administrators. The second pattern, coded as Additional Support Needed, depicts the views of study participants regarding multiple factors pertinent to capacity building and resources needed for implementation of the new standards. Next, the second cycle code titled Reality of the Organizational Level conveys how teachers, school leaders, and district level administrators perceive their working environment within the context of implementing the ELA CCCS. The fourth pattern code, Resistance towards Implementation/ Cooptation, portrays resistance towards implementing the standards that derive from various sources, and this code portrays ideas and insights that convey no marked change in practices that would affect the target population. Finally, the theme titled Successful Implementation/Mutual Adaptation describes implementation strategies that fostered beliefs and practices towards successful attainment of the ELA CCSS's goals.

Support/Capacity Building

Across all subunits of analysis within the embedded case study participant interviews, archival documents, and field notes, themes of support and capacity towards implementing the ELA CCSS that stemmed from colleagues, building level school leaders, and district level administrators were presented. In total, 123 unique and mutually exclusive segments of data received the second cycle pattern code titled Support/Capacity Building, which accounts for 12.2 percent of all data segments coded within the overall study. Additionally, 102 of those segments of data received codes within interview transcripts, 18 segments of data derived from archival documents, and three segments of data derived from field notes. The types of support noted took on many forms including the use curriculum guides aligned to the ELA CCSS, internal and external professional development opportunities, the use of ancillary materials for implementing the standards, and generalized support and feedback from the administration. Finally, the data segments coded from interview transcripts spanned the three hierarchical levels of school governance within the embedded case study including the ELA teachers, the school leadership, and the district curriculum and instruction leadership.

Teachers. Multiple ELA teachers at Riverdale High School espoused a belief that they received personal, department-wide, and school-wide supports from administration, which seemingly affected their aptitude towards implementing the new standards. To begin, multiple ELA teachers felt supported by the school administrators within the high school. As one participant stated, when referring to a building administrator, "…she'll help us. She actually sat down and helped me match up something last year I wanted to

do with the Common Core…" Another teacher made the point that the district and school was supporting the teaching staff by stating, "I do think there was enough support, and I don't really think much more could have been done.... I think they did a good job." Out of the 11 total ELA teachers who participated in the study, 10 teachers espoused positive beliefs related to the assistance and scaffolding provided by district and school administration necessary for implementation of the ELA CCSS. One teacher summed up a feeling of support that permeated many of the other interviews by stating:

> I do have to say that I feel more prepared more than a lot of other people. I know teachers in other districts who came in September and they were hearing some of this language for the first time. Between Common Core and Marzano, they are absolutely over the edge. I do think that our administration in this building tried to familiarize us, prep us, and they do try to put us at ease by reviewing as they get the information, reviewing what they know as they are getting the information.

Another area of support derived from professional development opportunities related to the CCSS that were either directly provided by school and district administrators or turn keyed by colleagues. One of these opportunities, the Common Core Black Belt Certification program offered by the Common Core Institute, was voluntary and compensated by the school district. One teacher described the Black Belt Certification Program as "almost like an online learning class. It was, like, similar to when I got my Master's online. We had to do assignments, look things up." Another source of professional development originated with the teachers themselves. An ELA teacher describes an instance where an administrator provided him an opportunity to provide a professional development session to the entire staff in describing that "even the principal of the building I was in had me do some turnkey at … two faculty meetings about lexiles and what that meant for everyone, to help educate the staff as a whole…" One teacher summed up this notion of support through professional development by

stating, “I think we've received a lot of professional development…. I think we've had a lot of resources that were sent to us. I think a lot of department meetings have been dedicated to discussing it.” Although all of these supports describe different types of professional development opportunities, all of the supports describe a focus on developing the staff members’ content knowledge about the CCSS.

School leaders. Building based school leaders described beliefs and practices congruent with providing supports towards implementing the standards, and they spoke to the provisions towards implementing the standards that they received as educators and educational leaders. One school administrator stated:

> I was giving feedback on the weekly lesson plans. I even had a spreadsheet that I created for each week, what the teacher was working on, what my comments were, if there were any issues or mistakes that they were making with the standards and we had the ability to comment on their lesson plans so I would give them comments that, ‘I don’t think this is the right standard. This is what you’re really doing based off what you wrote. I think this standard would work better. Look at that.’

Further emphasis on this practice stems from a school leader’s description of a learning experience whereby she describes:

> I sat in this person’s class and they had this great comparison between Claudius’ speech in Hamlet and LBJ’s first speech to Congress after he was sworn in as President. It was this great comparison. It was so Common Core. It wasn’t me pulling examples out of ether but what was going on in their actual classrooms. I know teachers listen to what other teachers do when you’re in the trenches so I try to … tried to use that as much as possible.

Both descriptions of instructional leadership speak to strategies of personal support and feedback that the administrators provided to staff on an ongoing basis. It also details a practice of continuous improvement and capacity building whereby teachers gain greater confidence in their decision-making process towards implementing the standards (Fullan, 2007).

School based administrators were also responsible for initially introducing the overall CCSS in the winter of 2011 during a faculty meeting. This presentation contained ideas that portrayed an environment of support and collaboration towards implementing the CCSS (Figure 2). Additionally, the presentation provided example problems and insights necessary for understanding the CCSS, and ultimately implementing the CCSS. Examples pertinent and specific to implementing ELA CCSS received codes in the first cycle of coding as Support - Professional Development (Figure 2). The administrators responsible for the introduction of the CCSS in the winter of 2011, were part of a larger district-wide Common Core Black Team, which one administrator described in this way, "We had administrators, the experts in Common Core, so that's been a two-year mini-master's program almost, like a mini graduate course of being … becoming more and more familiar with the Common Core."

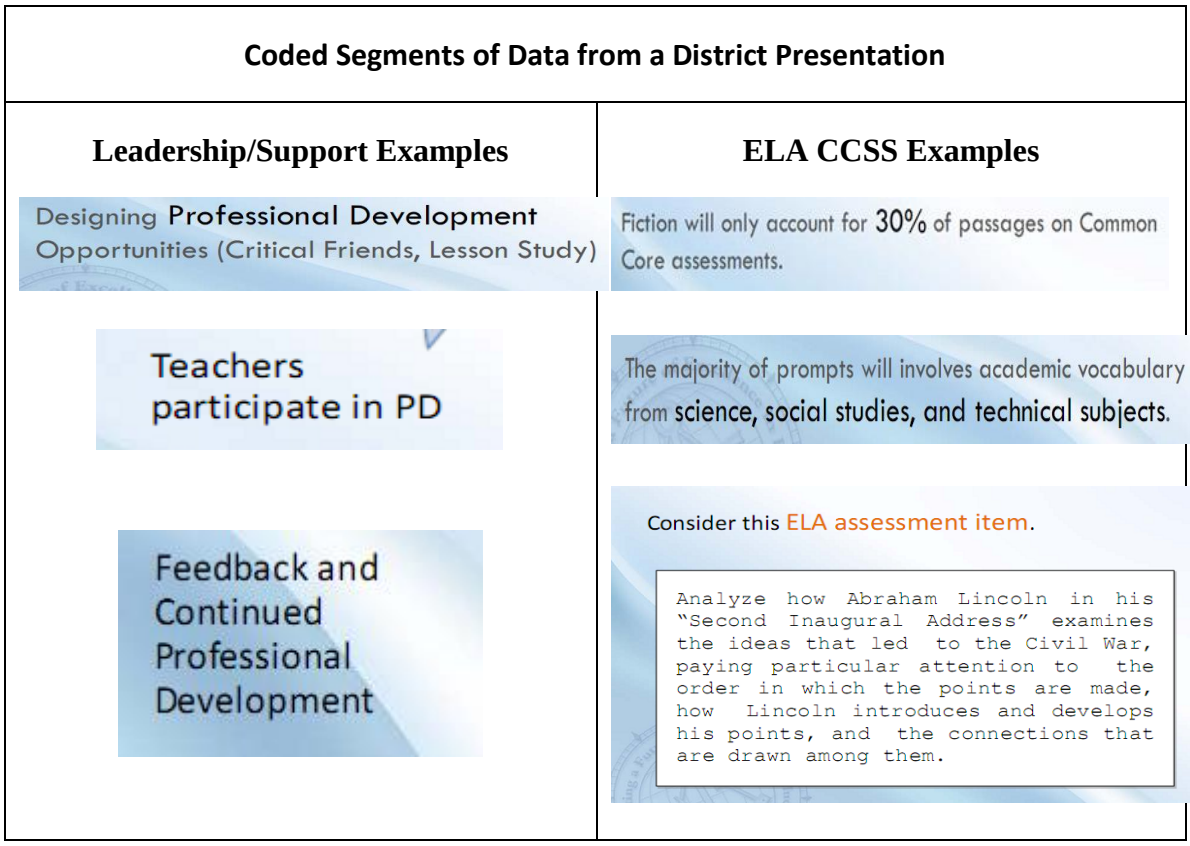


Figure 2. Coded segments of data from a district presentation titled, *Introducing the Common Core: What's Changing and Why?*

District administrators. District administrators personally involved themselves in multiple professional development opportunities in order to learn more about the ELA CCSS standards. One curriculum and instruction district administrator explained this overall process by stating:

> I guess the most formal was through that black belt process, and that involved additional experiences that I was able to take part in that were unique for me and that other folks in the district weren't necessarily there with, so the initial run up to that process, thinking back 2010, '11, and before, we had a lot of opportunity to meet, not just with Steve Smith and his folks with the Common Core Institute, but also folks who were connected to him and were actually in the field… and so we had a lot of time with those folks in the early days to get a sense of what experiences they thought would be important.

This process of networking with consultants and professionals from the Common Core Institute continued to the extent that curriculum and instruction administrators from the Riverdale School District presented the implementation process at a National Conference hosted by the Common Core Institute. The presentation by central office administrators became part of the archival documents analyzed; furthermore, the presentation contained multiple segments of data pertinent support and capacity (Figure 3).

Espoused Beliefs from National Presentation

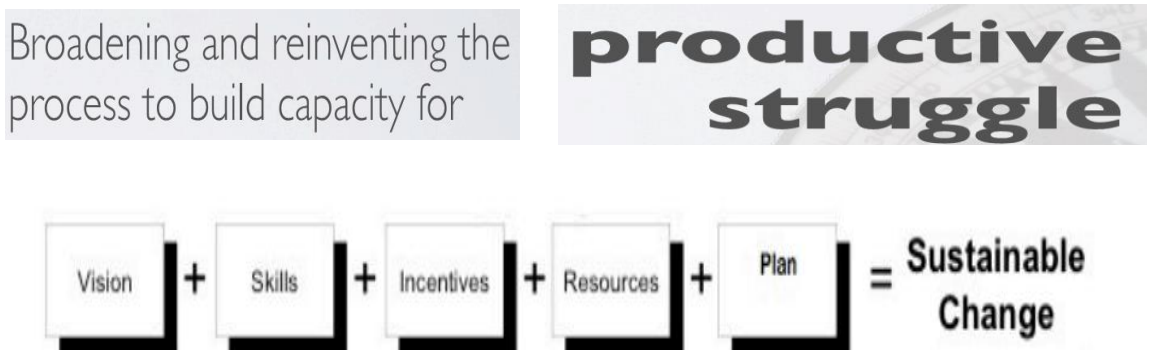


Figure 3. Segments of data coded with the second cycle descriptive code titled Support/Capacity Building. These segments of data came from a presentation delivered by central office curriculum and instruction administrators at a National Conference on the CCSS.

Overall bounded case. Across each subunit of analysis, an espoused belief regarding the implementation of the ELA CCSS pervades all three hierarchical levels of school governance within the overall case study. The school and district leaders preach practices of collaboration, resource allocation, skill development, providing professional development, a productive struggle, building capacity, and enacting a vision towards

implementation of the ELA CCSS. One school-based administrator described these beliefs when stating:

> I always look at myself as the supporter, as part of the team because there's definitely nothing that can be done in isolation. The Common Core, by definition, is not an isolated thing and is something that has to happen across the school, across the district.

Furthermore, all but one teacher participant interviewed as part of this study conveyed ideas of professional development and support from district and school administrators pertaining to the implementation of the standards. These notions of capacity building spanned data collected from the interview transcripts of all but one study participant across the entire case study, and both field notes and archival documents received support and capacity building codes in the second cycle of descriptive coding.

Additional Support Needed

After coding all of the data, an analysis of the first cycle codes clearly portrayed a pattern, with regard to implementing the ELA CCSS, of study participants needing additional supports, discontentment with current aids, and lack of meaningful professional development. The theme that evolved, which is in stark contrast to the previous theme, points to additional supports perceived as beneficial to the implementation process of the new standards as not in place. In total, 101 total segments of data received the second cycle pattern code labeled Additional Support Needed. Furthermore, these 101 codes account for 10.0 percent of all mutually exclusive data segments coded, and this theme occurred within transcribed interviews, archival documents, and field observations.

Teachers. This subunit of analysis within the case study had the most number of coded segments of data related to a need for additional supports towards implementing

the ELA CCSS. To begin, 92 separate and unique pieces of content within the transcribed interviews received the code of Additional Supports Needed, and of those 92 coded segments, 76 originated with the ELA teachers during the interview process. One of the biggest concerns noted was a lack of meaningful professional development. While many teachers expressed ideas of support and receiving professional development, teachers also portrayed the belief of a need for more practical examples and/or meaningful professional development. Additionally, teachers often times felt as if they were on their own to determine how to best implement the standards within their respective classrooms.

The idea that the teachers needed more practical examples occurred within multiple interviews. One teacher stated quite simply by noting, "It's more of the how I think that people are struggling with." Another teacher more descriptively stated:

> Most faculty meetings and department meetings and in services and all that were basically, 'Here are the changes, this is what the changes look like, here's some changes. Read these standards because they've changed.' But there was no … 'And this is what the change should look like in your classroom. No, here's how to write a test that is more appropriate for the Common Core. Here's what a test looks like now.' That's something that I would have to assume that all of us, not just even in this school, this district, any of us would've really benefited from.

A third teacher summed up the beliefs as noted by many other interview participants within this organizational level in saying:

> I expect for my kids to learn, but I also … they expect me to teach them; not just to speak at them, but to facilitate their learning process. I need that; as a professional, I need somebody else to facilitate my learning process. When we say, "Oh, the best way to do this is by doing it," and then you teach me by speaking to me on a PowerPoint, there's a very big disconnect there.

This last quote really speaks to the manner in which the staff portrayed some of the supports and capacity building activities. As noted in the previous section, when teachers responded to interview questions pertaining to supports they received towards

implementation, they almost unilaterally responded that the administration supported them through the process. However, when asked about a need for other supports, a cry for more examples and more practical professional development came from 10 out of the 11 teachers interviewed. During the analysis, the second cycle pattern codes of support and capacity building verse the need for additional support seemingly contradict each other; however, the resounding difference between the two themes stems from the types of supports enacted. In other words, the pattern code of additional support needed describes instances and statements where teachers experienced support, yet still felt that the type of professional development and/or resources allocated did not adequately assist them through the implementation process.

Within field observations, multiple teachers made various references and asked questions pertaining to a need for additional supports and practical examples from which to draw from when implementing the CCSS and for preparing for upcoming state mandated testing. For example, during an ELA department meeting, the teachers, along with a building level school leader, were examining sample items from the PARCC assessment. Noting the frustration and anxiety towards this new test that the teachers were feeling within the meeting, the administrator stated, “I don’t have all the answers; like I said, I just want to give an overview.” Additionally, during a collaborative curriculum implementation meeting, teachers noted the lack of assessment items aligned to the standards within the new text.

As with any new large-scale change initiative taking place on a national stage, barriers towards successful implementation could include schools utilization of teacher-proof quick-fix programs that claim to make the change process easier, and/or the belief

by educators that we can continue to do what they have always done to meet the goals of the new standards (Goatley, 2012). However, the successful policy and curriculum implementation of the ELA CCSS must involve ongoing and open dialogue amongst teachers and educational administrators in order to identify successful examples of implementation and seek out best practices (Goatley, 2012). In order for school leaders to establish and implement a common vision towards implementing the CCSS, leaders must establish school community that promote professional learning and discussion around the new standards (Eilers & D'Amico, 2012; Goatley, 2012). However, considering how new the CCSS are within the landscape of American education, I was not surprised to find that this theme of additional supports, practical examples, and meaningful professional development extended to the school and district educational leaders as well.

School leaders. Two distinct ideas emerged within the theme of additional supports needed from building level school leadership. The first idea stems from school leaders needing additional support and professional development towards leading the implementation of the ELA CCSS. As one school leader stated, "I think that the administration has not been really included… but right now I think that that's one area our district has to train, the administration." Within this passage, the school leader is referring to the administration at the building level and is putting the onus to provide provisions on district level administration.

The other notion presented stems from the idea that the teachers need additional supports and practical examples, which do not exist yet. Within this hierarchical level of school governance there is frustration that few examples exist that show teachers just

what ELA CCSS implementation looks like in the classroom. A school leader identified this area of concern as follows:

> The focus is definitely elementary and that's too bad, because there's a lot that could be learned at the high school level from reading instruction at the elementary level… I don't think they do enough at the upper level to focus on those higher level skills and that's where it all really comes together.

In examining these two organizational levels, the teachers asked for more examples from the building leaders, and the building leaders sought more resources and support from other places. In the quote above, a school leader goes so far as to describe this lack of support as systemic to high school implementation of the ELA CCSS.

District administrators. The district curriculum and instruction administration also espoused beliefs that they could have conducted capacity building and support strategies towards implementing the ELA CCSS differently and possibly more effectively. A district leader, who also served as a building level school administrator in a previous position, describes how she would have changed certain capacity building strategies if she had it do over again when she stated,

> I would have used more department meeting time together to really be more hands on, do some lesson plan study, bring in one of your best lessons that you really have worked on over the years and you've perfected, see where it is meeting the Common Core, see how you can incorporate the new shifts.

The interesting component about this segment of data is again that need for practical examples. However, in the face of not having examples, the district administrator describes a process of having teachers present and analyze their own practices against the standards of the ELA CCSS.

Overall bounded case. Across all three levels of school governance, the same theme of a need for additional and more concrete supports regarding how to implement

the ELA CCSS within the classroom developed during the data analysis of this case study. The image (Figure 4) depicts an underlying philosophy of how teachers could have felt supported through the implementation process while still needing professional development. One teacher stated:

> Jim Burke, who wrote this book *The Common Core Companion*, makes a comment that says, you know, 'We as teachers are given this huge task of trying to decode it, but it's like having to go somewhere without a map.' There's a destination, but there's no direction.

This passage and the message "We're building the plane as we're flying it!" which came from a presentation delivered by central office curriculum and instruction administrators at a National Conference on the CCSS, convey the similar message of a newly mandated set of standards that teachers, school leaders, and district administrators implemented without the aid of concrete real-world examples.

Reality of the Organizational Level

Across all three levels of school governance within the overall case study, notions and ideas that conveyed an environment of top-down mandates, a concern for student needs, too much change at one time, a lack of understanding of the current work environment, and the always looming accountability factors emerged throughout the first cycle of descriptive coding. Thematically, these views merged into a theme that describes the reality of the working environment within the case study. Furthermore, the motivation to change within an organization largely stems from the group's ability to recognize their current reality and create a vision for the future (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002). Describing and defining this reality plays a critical role in implementing an educational change endeavor such as the ELA CCSS.

Teachers. In total, 256 segments of data received the second cycle pattern code Reality of the Organizational Level, accounting for 25.5 percent of all coded segments of data. Moreover, of those 256 coded segments of data, 114 segments came directly from teacher interviews, and every teacher participant spoke to the educational environment and the reality of that environment during an interview.

Many teachers spoke purely of the reality of their specific work environment within the context of the larger community and the expectations of the ELA CCSS. One teacher stated, “The change, it’s hard to express. The expectation is higher but the reality is lower.” Multiple teachers expressed similar messages of a classroom environment non-conducive to the demands and rigor of the ELA CCSS. For example, one teacher described how she addresses a classroom environment perceived as not prepared for the implementation of the ELA CCSS by stating, “The kids are coming to us, honor students unable to write sentences now. There’s nowhere within the standards for me to teach basic grammar, there literally is no grammar standards. Yet, the kids don’t know it.” Often times, educational innovations, although sound in principle and theory, do not in turn reflect the realities of the classroom and school environment (Fullan, 1982). Additionally, the students within these teacher classrooms have not received instruction aligned to the ELA CCSS in earlier academic years.

During a field observation that focused on the implementation of state mandated testing, which the state and federal government have slated to begin in the 2014-2015 school year, many teachers advocated for students by describing a classroom environment that does not address the needs of all learners. As one teacher stated “The Common Core does not allow for basic skills.” As seen in Figure 5 many groups of

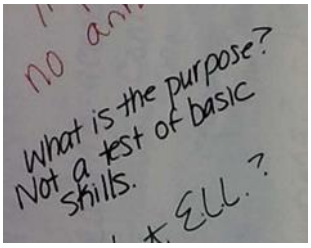
teachers also conveyed this belief in brief poster presentations shared with the entire department. These images also convey the belief that many concerns exist amongst the teachers regarding the manner in which the administration of state mandated assessments will address the needs of diverse learners.

Conversely, many teachers spoke to how the other hierarchical levels of school governance contextually influence their working environment, and the pressures felt by a top-down organizational and professional climate. One teacher stated:

> I feel like if you have good teachers, and you license me by the state of New Jersey to be certified in English and English as a Second Language, then until I prove otherwise, trust me. Disrespected. Not by you, but by… and not by our administration here, because people here are very, very good to us. I feel like as a profession we're just being beat down.

In this passage, the teacher describes how the organizational climate is "good," but as a profession, within the context of the entire state, there is an air of disrespect and distrust that she believes permeates the educational climate.

Artifacts Portraying the Perceived Reality of Standardized Testing



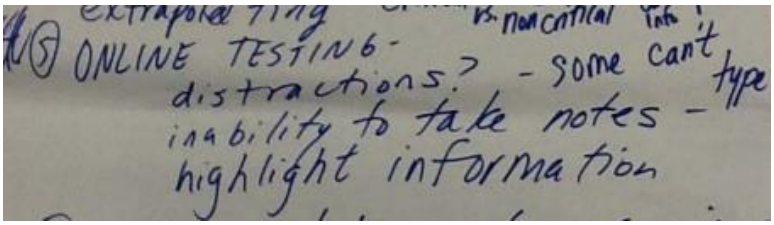


Figure 4.5. Images from posters created and presented by groups of teachers presented during an ELA department meeting that focused on sample items, testing requirements, and overall administration of the new standardized PARCC test. These segments of data received the pattern code Reality of the Organizational Level.

Accountability factors stemming from the school and district, a new teacher evaluation system, and the state mandated testing pervaded the organizational and climate for teachers. One teacher made the comment, “The PARCC testing scares me a lot.” In referring to the students in the classroom, a teacher stated:

> These are the ones who are going to supposedly take that PARCC test, they essentially are guinea pigs. It’s scary because, we pride ourselves on everyone passing the HSPA, everyone is doing wonderfully and then comes this PARCC test, we’re like ‘Oh crap, what’re you going to do?’ It’s a very real concern.

Additionally, a third teacher bluntly speaks to an atmosphere of accountability when stating, “In reality, the fact that every year my name gets brought up when testing comes around and how well my kids did. That's the bottom line.” Within this environment, and as noted with the previous passage, teacher and student accountability seem coupled within the educational environment, and the data convey the notion that accountability factors overshadow the implementation of the ELA CCSS throughout the other organizational levels as well.

School leaders. School leaders described an educational environment overburdened by numerous change initiatives implemented at the same time, which has affected the implementation of the ELA CCSS. One building level administrator stated:

> Introducing the Common Core… I think we spent a lot of time at the faculty meetings. But to be quite honest, right now, with the new evaluation model put in by the state this year and with the SGOs, that the Common Core for right now has taken a back seat because we have the teachers' angst with their new evaluation system with SGOs.

Another school leader described how not all of the current mandates align to what is currently in place. Furthermore, the school leader presented a belief that a difficulty exists in implementing mandates and change initiatives not associated with current accountability measures when stating, “We are still in a HSPA year so I can't say there is

a huge articulation between Common Core and HSPA, so there's a lot of things happening at the same time and not necessarily jiving together… ” An idea of too much change at one time saturated the pattern code Reality of the Organizational Level.

Teachers, school administrators, and district leaders all voiced the notion that as one teacher summarized, we as a collective group are expected to “just add this, and add this, and do this, and do this.” A school leader further stated that “the challenge will be the unification and the collaboration and integration of what teacher evaluation is, what Common Core is, what testing is and the relationship between all of that.” Finally, a district leader refers to state and federal governments as not recognizing the current reality in schools and districts by communicating that “They don’t seem to recognize the real world difficulties of not just allowing the Common Core but meeting other mandates as well along the way.”

Perceptions and views of accountability spread throughout this subunit of analysis as well. School leaders seemed largely focused on their students, their teachers, and ultimately on how their schools would be held accountable within the current educational environment. One school leader stated:

> I think that's why I keep going back to PARCC because in some sense, PARCC becomes an interpretation of Common Core and that's going to be what it means and we are going to have to react a little bit to that too. So, there's going to be this balance of having our curriculum, but making sure that it's not only aligned to Common Core, but also aligns to the assessments of the Common Core and that takes a close analysis too. Well, we haven't even seen that test yet, so at this point, you are not even sure if you are doing it right.

School leaders also described how accountability fosters urgency towards implementation of the ELA CCSS. A school administrator referred to the ELA teaching

staff when stating, “They know that the high stakes is PARCC.” Furthermore, a second school leader expressed that:

> You have to understand that it's also standardized testing that affects instruction in the classroom. I think that's why they figured that, if we raise the rigor in Common Core but we don't raise the rigor in testing, we will continue to have a low level shift because they know that it's the testing that schools react too. They had to raise the rigor there too. If they kept Common Core, but kept something like a HSPA test or New Jersey Ask, well you might not see the results because the tests themselves are not rigorous.

District administrators. District Curriculum and Instruction administrators additionally describe their working environment in terms of accountability measures and the current educational landscape. To begin, a district administrator made one of the most poignant and colorful statements regarding state mandated testing and the implementation of the CCSS. After speaking about a collaborative and positive curriculum development and alignment process, he stated, “I am very worried about what the testing is going to do to that. Whether the testing is going to be the devil in the details that the standards was trying not to be.” Furthermore, another equally colorful statement emerged from this organizational level of school governance when a district leader stated, “I drank Kool-Aid in terms of the standards… the jury’s out on PARCC. It’s more of a balance…. People saying they hate the standards. Well, no, they’re hating it because of the way evaluation is tied into them.” In both of these segments of data, the district officials describe this system of accountability as possibly being detrimental to the implementation process, while also espousing positive notions about the nature of the ELA CCSS.

District leaders also described the reality of their work environment in terms of meeting mandates and trying to enact change from the district, which exists apart from

the day-to-day operations of the school. One school administrator described that the entire ELA CCSS process started as a…

> …compliance operation, to do what we had to do by that deadline but fully knowing that our real ownership over those standards was going to have to be a more deliberate process that's going to take a little bit longer.

Another district leader describes that within that timeframe prior to mandated alignment of the ELA CCSS that she could have done more. She stated:

> I think I would have been more adamant and pushed teachers to start using the standards earlier. They had to as of September 2012 and I had a lot of teachers in the spring before that starting to use it because they're like, 'Well, I'm going to start using in September, I might as well start playing with it now.' Others were saying, 'Nope, I don't' have to do it 'til September. I won't.' I should've pushed more.

Both administrators describe the reality of the organizational climate from two very different perspectives. One as a person responsible for making sure that certain documents are aligned to standards as per state mandate, and another as a change agent seeking to impact teacher lesson plan alignment to the ELA CCSS.

Overall bounded case. A few sources of data specifically pertain to the overall implementation process of the ELA CCSS within Riverdale High School. To begin, ELA teachers' SGOs received first cycle codes pertinent to accountability measures placed on teachers within the educational environment. In total, 32 segments of data, similar to the example shown in Figure 5, received codes directly from teachers' SGOs. Specific portions of the SGO show how district supported standardized tests, assignments, and district-wide course assessments provide teachers and school leaders with baseline data. Teachers and school administrators then utilized the baseline data to develop a scoring plan that shows student growth. In this particular example, the teacher would need to have 75 percent of his or her students achieve a target score of 75 percent on a post-

assessment in order to obtain the evaluative indicator of an effective teacher. Furthermore, the focus of this SGO pertains to students "using textual support in non-fiction humanities readings," which directly aligns to the ELA CCSS (Figure 5).

Example of SGO Baseline Data and Scoring Plan

Baseline Data (Please include what you know about your students' performance/skills/achievement levels at the beginning of the year, as well as any additional student data or background information used in setting your objective.)				
Prior data considered includes deficiency identified in the English portion of the ACT in using textual support in non-fiction humanities readings and data collected from scoring rubrics used for district created summer reading assessment as well as the TCA 1 writing assessment.				
Scoring Plan				
Objective Attainment Level Based on Percent and Number of Students Achieving Target Score				
Target Score	Exceptional (4)	Full (3)	Partial (2)	Insufficient (1)
75%	85% (63 or more) of students will increase one proficiency level on the rubric	75% (53 or more) of students will increase one proficiency level on the rubric	65% (48 or more) of students will increase one proficiency on the rubric	<65% (fewer than 48) will increase one proficiency level on the rubric in their ability to use

Figure 4.6. Part of an SGO that shows the baseline data and scoring plan utilized for the evaluation of teaching staff members.

Teachers, school administrators, and district administrators described the SGO process and accountability that comes along with it as needing to align to the ELA CCSS. As one school administrator noted:

> We really did try with the SGOs to have that, at least that integration of a strong Common Core coming in, and using our assessments, like the TCAs, to track

> student achievement at that level. So, we deliberately chose a reading, a close-reading, or a citing of integrated reading, a writing kind of connection to study and look at, or vocabulary instruction to make sure that those Common Core skills are there.

A district level administrator further describes, "From all of that, we've had a lot of conversations about practice, but now trying to bring it back around to student achievement, making sure the standards are the keystones around which we measure the achievement." Finally, a teacher described how local district assessments provide "…real benchmark data that is standardized and formalized that we can begin to use as measurements against the common core…"

Resistance Towards Implementation/Cooptation

Ideas and beliefs across all three subunits of analysis and across interviews, field observations, and archival documents showed that staff members resisted change throughout the implementation process. Moreover, in some instances this resistance took the form of cooptation whereby teachers implemented the ELA CCSS from a compliance standpoint, with no real change in practice. For example, one teacher stated, "The standards that are in the curriculum guide and that are adopted by all these states…. We find a way to make the standards fit, as opposed to here are the standards, let's find a way to teach them." The teacher describes designing lessons with no intention of changing practice, the standards became an afterthought while the lesson design and possibly classroom practice remained the same.

The theme of resistance and cooptation emerged from teachers' and administrators' descriptions of compliance models of implementation, resistance to specific types of change, and practices and beliefs remaining the same. In total, 126 mutually exclusive segments of data received the pattern code Resistance Towards

Implementation/Cooptation. This accounted for 12.5% of all data collected, and every participant's interview transcript had a minimum of four segments of data receive this particular code.

Teachers. Teachers conveyed resistance in various forms, but the most notable source of resistance stemmed from the belief that the curriculum was losing, or would lose fiction literature as a result of the new ELA CCSS. For example, a teacher stated, "I think there's great lessons in great literature and that's one thing I don't like about the Common Core, all the nonfiction coming in."

Another teacher asserted the same belief when saying, "Oh, there's too much literature. It's taking away the opportunity for empathy and understanding people. Non-fiction is wonderful, but it can't afford the same opportunity for imagination that fiction does." Finally, a third teacher expressed, "Literature is apparently not as valuable anymore is what we're being told. I don't know. It's weird. It's disheartening for me. It really is." Teachers reiterated this passion towards literature and preserving literature in every single interview, and I further noted in a field observation that a group of teachers expressed how there is a "literary imbalance" between fiction and non-fiction in the implementation of the ELA CCSS.

Throughout this organizational level, teachers also conveyed the belief that things change yet things stay the same throughout implementation. For example, when a teacher responded to a question asking if her instructional practice had changed as result of the implementation of the new standards, she verbalized, "… the things that are really important, like the research papers…, I don't think, no, I have not fundamentally changed. As we always say, and it's true, we were doing these things all along."

Furthermore, another teacher speaking directly about the ELA CCSS conveyed, “Essentially I don’t find them to be significantly different than what we were doing before.” This idea of not changing practice or beliefs also additionally came about when teachers discussed lesson planning practices.

Within this setting, teachers are required to submit weekly lesson plans aligned to the ELA CCSS weekly. Furthermore, building-level school leaders check those lesson plans at the beginning of the week. Lesson planning and alignment to the new standards provided an area of examination within the study. Within the interview protocol (see Appendix B), a question pertains to teachers describing their lesson planning process. Many teachers revealed that they match standards to the lesson as an afterthought in the planning process. As one teacher stated, in describing how he utilizes the standards in the lesson planning process:

> I hate to say it, but I make it (the ELA CCSS) fit. Do you know what I mean? That's what it is, because the choices that I had previously don't exist anymore. They (the former NJCCCS) were more specific, to what I do.

The theme of resistance and cooptation also exists within the other administrative organizational levels within the case study. However, the perceptions and beliefs espoused by the administrators described a process of enabling teachers to change practices and views towards implementing the ELA CCSS.

School leaders. School administrators spoke to resistance and teachers adhering to former instructional practices from multiple viewpoints. To begin, one school administrator maintained that, “I think right now they are ending with it” in response to a question pertaining to how and when teachers are aligning lessons to the ELA CCSS. The administrator went on to explain that this was due to curriculum documents which, with

the exception of English I, do not align to the new standards but merely link to the new standards. The administrator stated, “The curriculum's focus is on these big questions of the novel and the themes of the novel, but the Common Core doesn't really focus on that.” In contrast, the ELA CCSS has a focus on the skills necessary for reading grade-level appropriate complex text, which enables the reader to determine the significance of the text, what the passage is about, and the details of the text (Roskos & Neuman, 2013).

The building level school leaders recognized and spoke to how they addressed ideas and practices that the ELA curriculum was losing fiction and literature as part of the implementation of the new standards. For example, a school administrator declared:

> The English teachers felt that they had to do all the informational text, but once they realized that… that part of it can be done also within the other classrooms, I think that made a lot of their uneasiness go away… concern of losing too much of their content.

Another school leader described proposed changes to the curriculum that could more readily foster the incorporation of additional non-fiction text in the ELA curriculum. The school administrator expressed:

> I think there was a good attempt to… to bring in non-fiction and literature and I think it's a little clumsy because it goes from non-fiction, novel, non-fiction, novel, you know, maybe if there was a little bit more of an integration.

Both passages show that this organizational level of school governance recognizes sources of resistance from the teachers and even conveys two possible ways to address this issue. The first administrator expressed an idea or solution of spreading the ELA CCSS required non-fiction shift across subject areas other than ELA, and the second solution stems from integrating the non-fiction more effectively with the fiction as compared to stand alone lessons and units that solely focus on informational text or

literature. In short, both school leaders not only recognize the source of resistance, but they also speak to possible ways in which to address the resistance.

District administrators. A curriculum and instruction central office administrator provides a key quote that describes some pertinent and major sources of resistance within the district. The administrator stated:

> We do have teachers who are ignoring the new curriculum and we can see that clearly in their lesson plans, and we have supervisors who are letting that happen. Yeah, I have been seeing that, but that may be resistance where it may just be a lack of capacity or negligence, so I'm not sure what that looks like but as we step back and examine the first semester through the new English I Curriculum, we're seeing particularly in our resource areas, in our … in those areas, we've seen folks who are flagrantly ignoring the mandate there, but yeah, it could be lack of capacity as well, especially in those areas, it's difficult to figure out where and how to bring those kids up to the expectation.

In this statement, the district leader specifically describes possible sources of the resistance, while also expressing that the students, which represent the target population in the CCSS mandate, are central to this change initiative. Additionally, the notions of lack of capacity-building and/or the presence of blatant negligence denote two key areas of concern within the organization and the implementation process.

Amongst the views expressed within this organizational level of governance was a feeling of empathy towards the perceived loss of literature across the ELA curriculum. For example, one central office administrator first conveys the source of resistance when stating, "There's still this feeling from English teachers that you're taking away my fiction because English teachers love their literature. That's been a big push back." Then the district administrator further exclaimed:

> We were told literature was going away and there is a value in reading fiction. There's a reason why we still read Shakespeare hundreds and hundreds of years after it was first performed. There are some things … we see ourselves reflected

> in these narratives. Hollywood is a multi-billion dollar industry so fictional stories are important to us at the base of who we are as human beings.

Recognizing, empathizing with, and ultimately addressing types of resistance provide teachers and administrators with a source of reflection upon which one can employ and revise specific implementation strategies towards implementation of the ELA CCSS.

Overall bounded case. As noted in Chapter 2, in an organizational climate of complacency there is little resistance. Across all three organizational levels, the espoused beliefs did not convey a message of complacency. English teachers conveyed a passion for literature. For example, one teacher stated, "…fiction creates avenues towards empathy. This is one of the least empathetic generations that we've ever seen. Fiction allows a person to hold up a mirror to him or herself and to examine his or her beliefs." Furthermore, a school leader conveyed frustration amongst the teachers in aligning the ELA CCSS to lesson plans. She stated, "…the frustration I see is that they are beginning to recognize that their lesson plan and curriculum are not jiving together and that is a little frustrating because they don't know how to pull that together." The resistance noted in both segments of interview transcripts does not convey an atmosphere of complacency; rather, they convey emotions common to new initiatives. As described by Heifitz and Linsky (2002), people recognize and are passionate about the perceived losses inherent within a new change initiative ("Leadership Is Dangerous," para. 4).

A central office administrator described working through this resistance by maintaining a vision of what the ELA CCSS would look like in practice and beliefs. He stated:

> There was a little bit of rough patch there, and a lot of … I don't want to call it resistance but that's where we had to have some frank conversations about, 'Well

> no, this is what we've committed to in the curriculum.' Multiple informational text, writing essays, all of that, that's what we committed to.

In interpreting this passage through the framework of mutual adaptation, the district vision of the ELA CCSS travels through multiple levels of school governance within the setting (McLaughlin, 1976). However, this vision must meet the goals of ELA CCSS, and must adhere to specific state and federal guidelines pertinent to the implementation of state standards. The extent to which the implementation process will meet the statutory objectives as originally intended largely depends upon the instructional leadership within the setting (Cuban, 2004; Sabatier & Mazmanian, 1980). Within this instance, the district administrator describes a process of not allowing the written curriculum to diverge from the district's original vision of the ELA CCSS.

Successful Implementation/Mutual Adaptation

Descriptions of successful implementation and mutual adaptation conveyed ideas relevant to successful implementation of the ELA CCSS. These descriptions concern the alignment of instructional practices, goals, objectives, curriculum documents, lesson plans, and resources to the ELA CCSS. Additionally, support towards implementation of the standards and a common language amongst all study participants accounts for depictions of employed strategies, which clearly showed a change in teachers' beliefs and practices aligned to the new standards. Throughout interview transcripts, artifacts, archival documents, and field observations, these descriptions communicated change. In total, 388 unique pattern codes received the code Successful Implementation/Mutual Adaptation, and this accounted for 38.6 percent of all coded segments of data.

Teachers. Alignment to the ELA CCSS took on many forms for the teachers. To begin, teachers described alignment to standards from the viewpoint of curriculum

alignment. Within the setting, only the English I curriculum had been rewritten and aligned to the ELA CCSS. Conversely, English II, III, and IV curriculum documents had only been aligned or linked to the ELA CCSS but not rewritten as of the completion of this study. This contextual fact served to highlight just how beneficial curriculum writing and alignment was to helping teachers more fully understand and implement the standards. One teacher explained how she wanted students to meet certain goals and objectives within the classroom when stating:

> Once those new curriculums are rolled out and once the curriculums are rewritten, that's going to be a lot easier for us to do and for us to reflect in our lesson plans. Right now, unless you're a freshmen teacher, it's impossible to do.

Furthermore, an English I freshmen level teacher described that with the new curriculum fully revised and aligned to the standards, the standards are "ever present and you can't do anything without the standards in mind." A third teacher went on to exclaim how she specifically aligns the standards to goals and objectives for classroom lessons and ultimately the students. The teacher stated:

> Now, we were encouraged last year, and to continue this year to actually take the language of the standards themselves and transfer that language into the goals and objectives portion. That, for example, if a standard were to stay something like, "Supporting textual evidence and citing examples from the text," then our objective would be the student will be able to cite examples from the text by using complete and thorough textual evidence. We're actually using the language of the standards to translate into our wording of our objectives and our lessons.

A change in instructional practices partly defines a successful educational change endeavor (Fullan, 2007). Teachers described instructional shifts within the classroom setting as a result of the implementation of the ELA CCSS. One teacher asserted:

> …because of all these non-fiction pieces that I've started to infuse, that I actually end up being a math teacher at times, and a science teacher at times. I'm actually able to touch on so many more content areas, and become so much more cross-

> curricular with what I'm teaching; which is great, until it hits calculus, and then I'm in big trouble.

A second teacher described how she has incorporated the citing of textual evidence with journal writing in the classroom. The teacher avowed:

> Then, I ask them to go back and maybe cite five examples of either full sentences, words, or phrases that you think are particularly powerful that you would quote if you were going to write an essay about this article or utilize it in a research paper. That's just like a go-to. My kids know how to do that. In fact, I've been swapping. I'm not … I still do a lot of journal writing but that will be something that I'll do interchangeably now with journal writing which is something that I didn't really do before.

Both examples, although very different, demonstrate how teachers within the setting have changed instructional practices due to the curriculum and standards implementation process.

Teachers also described the lesson planning process as an area impacted by the implementation of the ELA CCSS. Teachers emphasized that the process took more time, while also explaining a marked change in the manner in which they planned for lessons. For example, a teacher stated:

> I'll go into the standards and look for whatever standard might be, you know, if it's about theme, or if it's about characterization or something. And then I'll try to find what core content standard matches up with it. And then I'll click it and come back, and then adjust the lesson accordingly.

Additionally, a teacher expressed: "As far as building my lesson plans, I do base it on this now. I'll look at the curriculum and then I'll go to the Common Core and I'll say, 'What should I be doing with my students?'" Finally, a third teacher described how the process has gotten easier for her as she gets to know the standards, when stating, "It's become not so interchangeable to me. I find that the activities that I'm planning go along with the standards." These statements all convey an honest and meaningful lesson plan alignment,

which has the potential to affect the instructional strategies and activities planned for students in the classroom.

During field observations, many teachers working in conjunction with school and district leaders described the changes in instructional practices occurring, and they also described the changes that need to occur, as a result of the ELA CCSS and standardized testing aligned to the new standards. Within this meeting, teachers espoused beliefs that classroom questioning techniques needed to change, that reading is a process and not a product, and that giving students a choice of texts works well. Teachers also conveyed notions that students were responding well to the new instructional changes, and numerous teachers shared instructional strategies that worked for their students. Finally, teachers described instructional strategies and principles of teaching that needed to change as result of new standards coupled with new testing mandates (Figure 6).

Artifacts from ELA Department Meeting

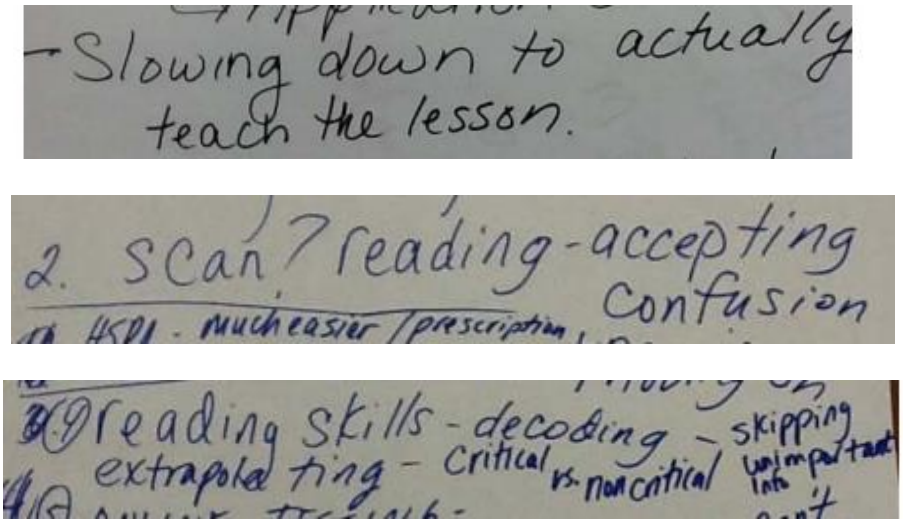


Figure 6. Images from posters created and presented by groups of teachers presented during an ELA department meeting that focused on sample items, testing requirements, and overall administration of the new standardized PARCC test. These segments of data received the pattern code Successful Implementation/Mutual Adaptation.

School leaders. Building level administrators lead a process of goal development for all teachers, which resulted in all ELA teachers developing two SGOs each. Furthermore, each of these SGOs align to the ELA CCSS (Figure 7). A school leader in a department meeting described this process when stating, “Our SGOs are based on important skills that students need for the Common Core.” The use of the ELA CCSS coupled with the creation of SGOs as an accountability measure serve as an impetus to align teacher planning, practice, and assessment to the new standards.

Segments of ELA Teachers' Student Growth Objectives

75% of my students (56/75) will increase one proficiency level on the department-created TCA 3 rubric assessing students' proficiency level in their ability to support analysis of what the text says explicitly, as we as inferences drawn from the text, using proper format.

This SGO includes all of my English II Honors students as well as the following state standards:
LA.9-10.CCSS.ELA-Literary.R1.9-10.1--: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the te says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text using proper format.
District created Summer Reading Assessment—multi-paragraph written response on a district chosen novel.

This SGO includes the majority of my English III students. In terms of NJCCS standards: **LA.11-12.CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.6** - [*Grade Level Standard*] - Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific wor and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Figure 7. Images from teacher created SGOs, which required building level school leader approval prior to implementation.

School leaders conveyed numerous beliefs of instructional shifts occurring, and/or the instructional shifts that need to occur in the classroom as a result of putting into practice the new standards. For example, school leaders explained how the department utilized computers and web-based programs to determine students' reading levels based on lexile scores and how this informed teachers' instructional practices. One school leader stated:

> I think that really helps that when you know where kids' reading level is and you provide appropriate material, get them at the level they can read and then move them up, they're not frustrated that they grow actually faster when you start at their appropriate level and then keep bringing them up.

Furthermore, a second school leader stated:

> There is still a heavy literature focus, so that has to change. What I think has to change also, like I said before, that reading and writing analysis happening, where you are not just annotating a text and that's one level, but then you have to take that and you have to write the analysis. I don't think it can be on a single text, I think that writing and that analysis has to be across texts and then the writing has

> to be an integration of multiple texts. I think that's going to be a big shift and I think it's very hard to teach and very hard to get the kids to that level, but that has to happen.

Across the organizational level, school leaders expressed practices currently occurring and practices that need to occur in implementing the ELA CCSS. Moreover, school officials spoke to beliefs and implemented practices that focused on teaching and learning at the classroom level.

District leaders. District leaders described a commitment to the ELA CCSS, and they seemingly embraced the proposed changes that the new standards bring to the curriculum. Their resolve towards implementing the standards played a critical role in building the will and capacity of the school leaders and teachers within the organization. As one district leader described, "I think the standards are a good direction for us, if they live up to their promise. With the standards, which is we're guiding your curriculum development and your lesson planning, we're not mandating specifics, that's good." Furthermore, the passage conveys a belief that by not mandating specifics, schools and individual teachers will implement the standards through multiple instructional strategies and classroom practices, which further speaks to the mutual adaptation inherent within the process of implementation.

A second district administrator stated, "The standards themselves, at least in English Language Arts and in the literacy standards for the non-English subjects, I like that they really focus on important reading skills, on important research skills, on important writing skills…" In contrast, the administrator conveys an expression that the ELA CCSS present skills important to students in the classroom. Whether the message spoke directly to the influence that the ELA CCSS would have on the target population or

the influence that it would have on curriculum and instruction, the message across the subunit of analysis conveyed either that they "liked the standards" or that the standards are "good."

Additionally, the curriculum and instruction department constantly espoused beliefs of collaboration towards aligning and implementing the standards, and ownership over the standards across all levels of school governance. At a national presentation, both curriculum and instruction administrators described a district philosophy of aligning curriculum documents to the ELA CCSS through collaboration amongst stakeholders (Figure 8). Furthermore, the administrators adhered to these beliefs through curriculum implementation workshops and surveys, where they elicited and listened to teacher feedback with the expressed belief that as one central office administrator stated, "We can certainly make changes to the curriculum…" based on feedback, data, and research.

Data Collected from Archival Documents and Field Observations	
Components of Presentation from National Presentation on CCSS Implementation	**Curriculum Implementation Feedback Committee Artifacts**
"Implement mission-focused curricula that are aligned with the Common Core State Standards."	***4 A's Protocol***: Using your curriculum as a reference, please list examples or describe areas of the curriculum that fit into the 4A's: Assumptions, Agreements, Arguments, Aspirations.
collaborative	12. I have not needed to go beyond the Bedford Reader to find non-fiction reading selections appropriate for my students. 17.5% 25% 32.5% 17.5% 5% 13. I have been provided with the resources that I need to be successful. 12.5% 25% 45% 15% 2.5%

Figure 8. Segments of data collected from archival documents and field observations conveying the district administration's commitment to collaboration and empowering teachers as part of the curriculum process.

Overall bounded case. A common language regarding the ELA CCSS emerged across all three subunits of analysis. Teachers, school leaders, and administrators utilized terms and vocabulary inherent in the ELA CCSS and the expectations for learning and student achievement expressed within those standards. For example, a teacher described the standards as "being really focused on skills." Another teacher stated, "I know that they are specifically geared towards college and career readiness." A third teacher described that, "The emphasis is on critical skills, critical reading, and being able to apply knowledge and not just memorize it in isolation." Furthermore, school leaders described that:

> When you look at Common Core, you are seeing that there really is integration of reading and writing together of technology and speaking and listening, but also that students today need to have that ability to be readers and writers across the

> curriculum and non-fiction and not just literature and to be prepared for college and careers.

A teacher stated that, “The biggest thing… I think the difference is the teachers have to realize they're not literature teachers that they're Language Arts teachers, and it's much more skill-based.” District curriculum and instruction administrators expressed how “we have to look more on the skills versus the content because there’s no way that kids could read every seminal piece of literature,” and another district administrator stated, “I do see that in the English language arts classroom, there needs to be more of an attention to non-fiction text and multiple complex non-fiction text and how we make meaning and sense of all that.”

Fowler (2004) describes how policy implementers need “the will” to bring about change. Within the implementation process of the ELA CCSS, that will derives from believing that the standards represent a beneficial change for students, for the school, for the district, and for society (Fowler, 2004, p. 271). Descriptions of the CCSS representing a necessary shift in ELA teaching and learning pervaded the overall case study. For example, a teacher stated, “I think it has benefited not only the students, but myself as a teacher too because it makes me look back at what I’m doing and making sure that I’m doing what’s needed.” Additionally another teacher described how:

> Even though some people find it limiting, I don't believe that it is. I believe it's going to open up and challenge, not only me as a teacher to use it and implement it, but the students, because it increases rigor, it expects more from them.

In both passages, the teachers describe not only how students will benefit from the standards, but also how the standards will enable them to reflect and build upon their own professional practice towards teaching language arts. Administrators at both the district and school levels conveyed beliefs of usefulness and benefits of the new standards.

Administrators stated, “I think the Common Core is good in terms of focusing on the skills of students,” and that “the Common Core was a needed shift.”

Summary

Through pre-coding, first-cycle descriptive coding, and second-cycle pattern coding the key themes of Support/Capacity Building, Non-Support, Reality of the Organizational Level, Resistance towards Implementation/Cooptation, and Successful Implementation Strategies/Mutual Adaptation emerged. These five themes clearly depict the relationships that exist amongst administration and teachers, the overall work environment, sources of resistance towards implementation, and progress towards successful attainment of the ELA CCSS’s goals. The themes emerged across all three levels of school governance including teachers, school leaders, and district level administrators; furthermore, 1005 mutually exclusive segments of data, utilized to develop the major themes, received codes across interviews transcripts, study artifacts, archival documents, and field observations. Finally, the theoretical prepositions and research questions informed the analysis of all data throughout the study.

Chapter 5

Conclusion and Implications

This chapter will describe how all the salient themes present within the overall case study describe practices towards the implementation of the ELA CCSS that may or may not work in similar settings. Specifically, the entirety of the chapter provides answers to the question, "Considering that the ELA CCSS represent a major educational change initiative, what variations occur during the policy and curriculum implementation process at varying organizational levels within the secondary school governance structure and how do the variations occur?" A description of the overall case for the research sub-questions and overarching main research questions provides insights into effective implementation strategies, and instructional leadership towards change. Further, Chapter 5 will include a discussion of the overall critical factors that lead to either the belief that no marked change in practice existed towards implementing the ELA CCSS, or that a marked change in practice towards implementing the ELA CCSS did occur, and the factors within the implementation process lead to these beliefs and changes. Next, the chapter includes a discussion of the implications that these findings have on implementing the ELA CCSS in similar settings. Finally, the chapter concludes with suggestions for further research pertinent to the implementation of the CCSS policy decisions surrounding the CCSS, and the impact of the CCSS on students.

Perceived Effectiveness of Implementation

In today's schools, evaluation of programs, teachers, administrators, and students characterizes an age of accountability that pervades American education (Fowler, 2004; Spring, 1996). The practices of teachers, school leaders, and district administrators

determine the effectiveness of implementing the ELA CCSS because their professional practice as educators both indirectly and directly affects students learning in the classroom (Robinson et al., 2008). One of the research study sub-questions, "How do the policy intermediaries perceive the effectiveness of the policy implementation process regarding the adoption of the CCSS within the secondary school setting?" was a pertinent component of the implementation process examined within this study. Whereas an assessment of student achievement towards curriculum goals and objectives that align to the standards will ultimately determine the school and district's success towards implementation of the ELA CCSS (Oliva, 2001). The beliefs and practices of teachers and educational leaders provide insight into the implementation process, and research provides insight into best practices towards implementation upon which one can evaluate the perceived effectiveness of the implementation process.

Coping with Lost Literature

Within the language of the ELA CCSS, expressions of skill development, increased rigor, relevance of coursework, and comprehension of complex textual information require not only a change in curriculum documents, but also a shift in pedagogical skills by teachers (Beach, 2011; CCSS Initiative, 2010; Rust, 2012). The ELA CCSS require that students read more non-fiction texts in grades 9-12 as opposed to traditional literature-based ELA courses of study. Throughout Riverdale High School, resistance that stemmed from a perceived loss of literature saturated teachers' opinions and views towards implementing the new standards. Teachers stated, "English teachers were panicked that we were not going to teach literature anymore…," "English teachers love their literature," and "…more work, and less of what I love."

This manifestation of resistance towards implementing the new standards most likely came from two sources. First, teachers throughout the study described a passion for teaching literature and the need for students to interact with fiction literature in order to create "avenues towards empathy." In comparison, Heifetz and Linsky (2002) describe that resistance to change derives from the loss of past practices, ideals, and values. All of the teachers within the study, taught with a curriculum for at least the past four years. They had lesson plans, activities, and assessments for a curriculum aligned to the NJCCCS. The resistance, which stems from a perceived loss, derived both from the teachers' values pertaining to non-fiction literature and when school and district administrators questioned "their values, beliefs, or habits of a lifetime" pertaining to teaching ELA in the secondary setting (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002, "Leadership Is Dangerous," para. 3). As administrators touted the instructional shifts and curricular changes necessary to implement the ELA CCSS, the teachers pushed back because of the loss they were experiencing.

The teachers resisted a decrease in fiction as it went against their professional values as English teachers. English teachers professed beliefs about losing literature and fiction in public ways including department meetings and during meetings with administration. Additionally, some teachers claimed not to have changed their instructional practices or lessons to include more non-fiction. However, the administration at both the district level and at the school level recognized this source of resistance and the professed concern over losing literature by the teachers.

School and district leaders portrayed the ideals that teachers across all content areas would share the responsibility of increasing the reading and comprehension of non-

fiction complex texts. One teacher expressed that an administrator explained it to her as "…a focus on non-fiction but across all disciplines so that in each class, the kids are certainly being exposed to non-fiction, which allows us the opportunity to preserve the fiction in our own department." Furthermore, revisions to existing curriculum documents take place on a rotating basis across a five-year-plan. A district administrator confirmed the practice of aligning other content area curriculum documents to the CCSS when explaining the alignment of:

> Architecture, let me go through the list, AP Latin, English 1, Geometry, AP Bio, no, no, nothing in social studies and then, nothing, Child Development 1 and 2, Architecture 1 and 2, which I said, and Intro to Art History.

Furthermore, the administration, in collaboration with the teachers, rewrote, revised, and aligned the English I curriculum to include a fusion of skills, literature, and non-fiction text, which fostered buy-in by the teaching staff.

English I curriculum. The process of developing an English I curriculum aligned to the standards, began with central administration hiring two teachers within district to begin the curriculum writing process in the 2011-2012 school year. However, as one of those writers described:

> We got about halfway through and we suddenly stopped in the process and said we're going in the wrong direction. It's not aligned. This is not exactly what we're looking for. We were stopped, literally, after putting in these hours, which is okay.

At that point, the central office curriculum and instruction administrators facilitated a process of shared decision-making and collaboration in order to develop a curriculum design based on teacher feedback and the ELA CCSS. A teacher involved in the process described how an administrator:

> …made a point, a valid point, 'why are we rushing this? We might as well do it right, and it could take us another year to do it and so be it.' Then last year (2012-

> 2013) when we did the process, and I felt like it was much more organized, … I think they did it correctly where they had English 1, 2 and 3 at the same time, even though they were not all rolled out at the same time, so that we could align our curriculum that we could make sure that one skill built upon the next and that we weren't being redundant and we were all giving copies of the (Common) Core Content Standards.

Additionally, a teacher described how the district curriculum instruction office utilized feedback and data from ELA teachers across the district when stating:

> They sent out a survey to all the teachers and said, 'Okay. Tell us what do you need to have, what do you like to teach, what do you not like to teach.' A survey came back over 100 teachers responded to it. At that point, we sort of changed gears and then said, 'Okay, now let's really look at the standards and let's see what people want and let's see how we can marry the two together.' At the end, I think it ended up being an ultimate and successful curriculum.

Furthermore, a district curriculum and instruction supervisor explained the English I curriculum writing process in the following way:

> As we started it and I was working with the curriculum writers, we realized we didn't know enough about the Common Core and that we needed to kind of take a pause and realize we need to not just do English 1 but English 2 and 3 as well. That's something that thankfully they … it was one of the things I say, we were able to adjust on the fly and I think it definitely worked out better because those three teams worked together on the vertical vision of Common Core English for the district. That definitely worked out well.

The English I curriculum documents written during the process described above reached full implementation in the September of 2013. Furthermore, the district curriculum and instruction held a curriculum implementation committee workshop that teachers across the district attended and received remuneration for. Agenda items on the curriculum implementation reflect an open forum for professional learning whereby teachers have an opportunity to engage in dialogue about the curriculum and share-out successful strategies for the implementation of a curriculum aligned to the ELA CCSS (Figure 9).

Artifacts Portraying the Perceived Reality of Standardized Testing

2:30/3:30: Welcome / Introductions

Four As Protocol: in reviewing Units 1-3:

- What ASSUMPTIONS do the units make?
- Where do you AGREE with units 1-3?
- Where do you ARGUE with units 1-3?
- What would you like units 1-3 to ASPIRE to?

3:15/4:15: Successful Strategies Share-Out

- Save the Last World for Me or Tuning protocol

3:50/4:50: Closure

- Voucher signing/collecting
- Exit Ticket: what topics would you like see addressed in workshop #2 in February

Figure 9. Agenda from English I Curriculum Implementation Workshop depicting the activities and topics of discussion for group of English I teachers from across the Riverdale School District.

Use of fiction literature to teach skills. Another manner in which administrators addressed resistance stemming from the professional values of English teachers, who perceived a loss of literature within the curriculum due to the ELA CCSS, derived from utilizing literature to teach the skills required by the new standards. One way to address resistance is through the mutual adaptation of the policy and the setting while still preserving the desired effects of the mandate as originally intended (Fowler, 2004; McLaughlin, 1976). Within the overall case study, the implementation of a new English I curriculum rewritten and aligned to the ELA CCSS served as an exemplar in the setting

as a means of utilizing literature to address the teaching of ELA skills. As described by a school leader:

> You extract those plans from the Common Core and you are teaching this analytic skill or this reading skill, you are teaching this writing skill and you are using the literature to do that; you are not teaching them the Enlightenment Period, you are not teaching Shakespeare, you are not teaching this author or this theme, you are teaching kids how to extract the theme and you are teaching the students how to analyze the characters, but the focus just can't be on, "I teach this novel." You use the literature to teach those skills that are stranded out in the Common Core and there is an integration of that across the analysis of the text to pull all of those skills out and less of a focus on appreciation of literature, that this is good, it's a venue, it's a mode to get to those other skills, it is not the thing in and of itself to teach that book.

The passage conveys a philosophy of teaching the skills inherent in the curriculum and the ELA CCSS through literature, which helped in alleviating that fear of losing literature as a result of the implementation of the ELA CCSS.

One teacher described how teaching rigorous and complex text requires teaching reading comprehension skills early on in the school. She stated,

> Literally, it's nothing but stories they've never read before, poetry they've never read before that's on a really high level and really complex. Spending September and October really drilling them on the skills that are required to kind of read something … I guess, it's not just teaching the test. It's actually good reading skills and that's what skill readers do all the time.

Throughout the implementation of the ELA CCSS, school and district administrators perceived loss of literature as a source of resistance emanating from the teachers. Although many teachers within the study still perceived this loss of literature, the school and district leaders attended to this issue by involving the staff in a collaborative and ongoing curriculum development and implementation process for the English I curriculum, which calls for the utilization of literature to teach the skills as required by the standards. Teachers and educational leaders have rewritten curriculum documents

outside of the ELA content areas and aligned to the new standards to include an increase in students reading and analyzing non-fiction text throughout the instructional day.

Alignment to the ELA CCSS

Within the overall study, alignment to the ELA CCSS took on many forms. To begin, teachers, school leaders, and district administrators rewrote, revised, and aligned curriculum documents. Second, teachers aligned daily lesson plans, and classroom goals and objectives to the new standards. Third, teachers aligned school goals and deficiencies to SGOs and assessments that served as indicators for teacher evaluation. In turn, the school goals and deficiencies aligned to the ELA CCSS. Some researchers make no clear distinction between the curriculum and instruction, while others contend that curriculum describes the plan for delivering content, skills, and knowledge while instruction describes the methods by which educators carry out that plan (Oliva, 2001; Tanner & Tanner, 1995). The alignment of the curriculum documents, lesson plans, goals, holistic and evaluative achievement objectives in the form of SGOs, provide multiple ways for teachers to operationalize the teaching of the skills and content inherent in the ELA CCSS. At the end of the implementation process, the responsibility for implementing the ELA CCSS falls on local school districts and specifically, teachers in the classroom (Cuban, 2004).

At Riverdale High School, teachers began utilizing the ELA CCSS before revision and authentic alignment of ELA curriculum documents even began. Starting in the 2012-2013 school year ELA teachers were required to utilize the new ELA CCSS; however, authentically aligned curriculum documents were not in place. Rather,

curriculum committees linked the new standards to then existing curriculum documents. As one central office administrator described,

> Nothing was changed to those documents but I know like the spring beforehand, there were committees of teachers, small committees of teachers paid to go through the curriculum documents and see where they aligned to the Common Core Standards so we would see, yes, we are aligned.

In this passage, the administrator describes a process whereby the district hired teachers to take curriculum documents developed with and aligned to the previously enacted NJCCCS, and determine what ELA CCSS aligned to specific units within the curriculum document. This strategy enabled the school district to implement the CCSS in ELA by September of 2012 (NJDOE, 2011). In contrast to this process, the Riverdale School District Board of Education adopted a new English I freshmen curriculum for the 2013-2014 school year.

Teachers, school leaders, and district administrators rewrote the English I curriculum documents so that they aligned to the ELA CCSS. Teachers described a different process when aligning lesson plans to the English I curriculum documents and ELA CCSS as opposed to other curriculum documents. One English IV teacher described that:

> …with Common Core, it's like, I'm still doing the curriculum, and then I'm just trying to link it to standards, but there is no, you know, you have to cover these standards by this period, or you even have to cover all of them. And I don't know if anybody's, not that I want them to check on that, but I don't know if there's any real checking of that.

Conversely, a freshmen level English I teacher held up the actual English I curriculum document and stated:

> These are Common Core aligned. This is the freshmen. This is the only new curriculum out there, and we got a draft earlier, the end of last year. This is the

> final copy that was approved. It's way more challenging than the previous curriculum. To me, this is helpful. This is very helpful.

The implementation of an English I freshmen level curriculum completely aligned to the new standards, clearly depicts the need for a well-constructed and well-articulated curriculum in ensuring that teachers address the "essential content" and skills inherent in the ELA CCSS (Marzano, 2003).

Within the context of a relatively short-time frame nationally, district administration within the Riverdale School District fully understood that the original linking of the standards constituted conformity to the new mandate of the ELA CCSS but would foster no real change in practices or beliefs of the teachers. As one district administrator described:

> We knew that we were going to be facing a compliance task that was going to be separate from our authentic alignment and understanding. We never imagined that what we were going to produce by September 2012, was going to be as fully authentic as the real alignment that we needed to effect. We knew that was going to take longer.

The term authentic, as utilized in the above statement, describes a process of curriculum development where the goals and objectives of the ELA CCSS were central to discussions, feedback, and curriculum writing early on in the curriculum development process. In contrast, a non-authentic or linking of the standards describes a process, in this setting, whereby teachers and administrators took curriculum documents developed and aligned to the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (NJCCCS) and literally wrote in the new ELA CCSS into places where the new standards seemingly fit. The district linked the new ELA CCSS to previously written ELA curriculum documents in order to adhere to the State of New Jersey's timeline for implementation of the CCSS.

Within this setting, the strategy of only linking the standards to the then current state mandates for compliance purposes seemingly worked to facilitate and create the buy-in, collaboration, and reflection on the part of English I teachers and administrators as noted in field observations, archival documents, and field observations. The district administration separated the technical problem of linking the standards to current curriculum documents from the adaptive challenge of implementing new standards and curricula that demand an increase in rigor, new skills development, and the increased use of complex informational text (Beach, 2011; CCSS Initiative, 2010; Heifitz & Linsky, 2002). In short, in order to achieve sustainable change, the district leaders, school administrators, and teachers had to engage in a meaningful and deliberate curriculum development process aligned to content and skills inherent within the ELA CCSS. Curriculum and educational change stem from people at all organizational levels changing practices and beliefs, and internalizing the change process on their own (Fullan, 2007; Heifitz & Linsky, 2002; Oliva, 2001).

Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership in implementing the ELA CCSS took on different forms throughout the embedded case study. To begin, although teachers made statements of administrative support towards implementing the new standards, the types of professional development that teachers received was, at times, the subject of scrutiny. The main focus of analyzing the instructional leadership present within the implementation centered on answering the research sub-question, “How do the teachers within the secondary setting perceive their working environment in relation to organizational support and leadership towards the implementation of the CCSS in ELA?”

In order for teachers to implement successfully a curriculum aligned to new standards, they must receive ample and applicable professional development and supports in order to bring about lasting change (Leithwood et al., 2007; Oloruntegbe, 2011). Furthermore, instructional leadership closely related to classroom instruction played a critical role in the teachers' feelings of support throughout the implementation process, and those practices have the greatest influence on student learning outcomes and student achievement (Robinson et al., 2008). Overall, the supports in place fostered a sense of preparedness amongst teachers towards meeting the challenges of the ELA CCSS within the classroom; however, the belief of a need for additional supports, and the view that too many change initiatives at once hindered the efficiency of the change process lingered throughout the study.

Professional Development

Within the setting, two conflicting views emerged from the data as they pertained to the extent to which teachers engaged in professional development towards implementing the ELA CCSS within Riverdale High School. Specifically, multiple teachers responded that they had not received professional development related to the ELA CCSS. Teachers stated, "We just used it ourselves and figured it out," "I tell you I don't recall any specific PD about it," and "We never actually had professional development offered in the Common Core." Conversely, multiple teachers expressed beliefs of support towards utilizing and learning about the standards throughout the implementation process. Multiple teachers described how they received "Black Belt training online". Furthermore, a teacher stated, "I think we've received a lot of professional development, to be honest with you." While other teachers made claims of

feeling “more prepared than a lot of other people” in other school districts, of definitely having “professional development about the core, the Common Core,” and receiving “multiple trainings on the Common Core State Standards” through faculty meetings and department meetings. With conflicting views prevalent in the data, the question became: Where did the disconnect lie amongst teachers’ views of support towards implementing the standards and the idea that teachers needed additional supports?

Successful implementation of the CCSS requires that teachers receive ongoing and thorough professional development (Sawchuk, 2012). Moreover, critical aspects of teacher professional development include a focus on teacher reflection, professional collaboration, and the building of professional capacity by teachers (Fullan, 2007; National Board of Professional Teaching Standards, 2014; Tomlinson et al., 2009). Professional development must extend beyond just providing the teachers with knowledge of content through occasional sporadic meetings where teachers sit and listen to a presenter (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011). Fostering collegiality and professional capacity amongst teachers and administrators throughout the curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation process creates a high-quality curriculum that connects teaching, learning, student achievement, and the content (Tanner & Tanner, 1995; Tomlinson et al., 2009).

Throughout the case study, administrators conveyed beliefs of providing professional development. School and district leaders made statements pertaining to professional development towards implementing the ELA CCSS such as, “we present it at faculty meetings,” “very large numbers of teachers” got involved in the Common Institute’s webinars, and “that we will try and break down the subjects, you know, a topic

for each of our monthly department meetings to cover" the ELA CCSS. Interview transcripts, artifacts, and field observations all clearly depict that professional development occurred within the Riverdale School District and Riverdale High School. Sustained teacher learning cannot occur through occasional and intermittent workshops void of collaboration. Rather professional development must occur through collegial dialogue where teachers have opportunities to reflect upon their practices and share best practices amongst each other (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). One possible explanation regarding the disconnect that exists amongst teachers that professional development either was or was not provided, stems from the type of professional development provided. The teachers expressed a need for examples as an additional support needed throughout the implementation process. As one teacher described:

> I would've loved a few examples, I think we all would have. What does that look like in the classroom as opposed to what it has looked like in the past? What change is being made? What are we asking the students to do now that we weren't necessarily asking them to do then?

Another teacher stated:

> Most faculty meetings and department meetings and in services and all that were basically, 'Here are the changes, this is what the changes look like, here's some changes. Read these standards because they've changed.' But there was no … 'And this is what the change should look like in your classroom. No, here's how to write a test that is more appropriate for the Common Core. Here's what a test looks like now.' That's something that I would have to assume that all of us, not just even in this school, this district, any of us would've really benefited from.

At this stage in the curriculum and policy implementation process of the ELA CCSS within Riverdale High School, the teachers describe a need for more practical examples and a need to learn from one another.

Effective professional development. Effective professional development for teachers not only addresses the knowledge and skills necessary to bring about change, but it also provides teachers an opportunity to learn from one another by sharing best practices and personal successes towards implementation (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). Within Riverdale High School, movement towards providing more collegial experiences with practical examples exists. Furthermore, the administration recognizes a need for teachers to have more meaningful professional development opportunities. One administrator described things that he could have done differently earlier in the implementation process:

> I would have used more department meeting time together to really be more hands on, do some lesson plan study, bring in one of your best lessons that you really have worked on over the years and you've perfected, see where it is meeting the Common Core, see how you can incorporate the new shifts."

This example conveys a belief of how school leaders could have made changes to the support structures designed to build capacity towards implementing the ELA CCSS earlier on in the implementation process. Field observations of an ELA department meeting and an English I District Feedback Committee meeting provided insight into focused, content-specific, and collaborative professional development occurring within both the school and the district.

At an ELA department meeting, teachers and a school administrator engaged in small group work whereby teachers collectively analyzed sample assessment items from the new PARCC assessment against the ELA CCSS. Throughout the meeting teachers not only spoke to and seemingly contemplated the challenges that the new testing and new standards presented, but they also posed solutions to addressing the problems. Teachers noted instructional shifts needed for students to make inferences, cite evidence

from text, and analyze contextual information within readings. Additionally, at the English I District Feedback Committee meeting, teachers shared personally successful classroom strategies, analyzed the curriculum implementation process thus far, and committed to bringing ELA CCSS aligned assessments to the next meeting. Whereas, the professional development at Riverdale High School has largely focused on the content of the ELA CCSS throughout the implementation process, there are indicators of a shift towards utilizing a more collegial approach to capacity building moving forward. Considering the relative newness of the ELA CCSS with the landscape of American education, teacher collaboration focused on student learning, instructional practices, and inquiry represent hallmarks of best professional development strategies necessary for successful implementation of the ELA CCSS (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Sawchuk, 2012).

Effective teacher learning cannot take place in isolation, rather professional development must embody the principles of a shared collaborative and collective inquiry, and learning through experience (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2008; Joyner, 2000). According to Joyner (2000), "staff development and team learning should be synonymous" with teachers engaging in practices that enable them to learn new from each other, to determine how to best teach content and skills, and to change pedagogical practices as necessary (p. 391). The ELA CCSS demand instructional shifts that teachers within the study resisted, ignored, and were ill-prepared for; however, the teachers expressed a need for practical examples. This expression provides administrators a notion of how best to support ELA teachers within the district and the school. Teachers must

engage in collaborative and collegial learning in order to implement the ELA CCSS in a manner consistent with the vision of the district's curriculum.

Too Much Change

School and district leaders, in conjunction with teachers, must implement sustained and focused support measures in order to bring about educational change and implement educational policies (Fowler, 2004; Fullan, 2007). The task of remaining focused within the context of multiple change initiatives, which stemmed from educational policies and mandates, pervaded the reality of the organizational setting. Throughout interviews, teachers, school leaders, and district administrators spoke to the implementation of numerous change initiatives within the same school year. These initiatives include the implementation of the CCSS, a new teacher observation system, preparation for upcoming PARCC testing, and the use of SGOs as part of the overall teacher and administrator evaluation system. A teacher conveyed that:

> …everything else that's been thrown at us by the state … has made us forget that we're really new with the whole common core thing, and we have a ways to go. Nobody's addressing it anymore, because other things have overshadowed it.

Furthermore, a school leader described:

> …to be quite honest, right now, with the new evaluation model put in by the state this year and with the SGOs that the Common Core for right now has taken a back seat because we have the teachers' angst with their new evaluation system with SGOs.

Within the implementation process, complexity describes the change in skills, knowledge, and beliefs needed by the teachers carrying out the initiative (Fullan, 2007). At Riverdale High School, multiple large-scale educational change initiatives compound the complexity of implementation, while also adding to factors that foster resistance towards change in the setting.

Educational change initiatives driven by policies and mandates stemming from state and federal governments often times fail to consider the reality of the educators who lead schools and who teach children in the classroom (Evans, 1996). Considering the number of major change initiatives enacted all at once within Riverdale High School, the very act of multiple change initiatives impacts the organizational climate and cultural community of the ELA teachers within this setting (Evans, 1996; Stone, 2012). At the core of resistance lies people's fear of loss and need for stability; moreover, educational change initiatives require that teachers change former habits, embrace new philosophies, and implement new pedagogical strategies (Evans, 1996; Fullan, 2007; Heifetz, 2002). Within the context of this setting, the number of change initiatives has compounded those feelings of loss and unpreparedness, and has served as an impediment towards implementing focused, ongoing, and collaborative support towards implementation of the ELA CCSS. Throughout the study teachers made statements such as "…the number of additional requirements that are put upon the staff makes it (the CCSS) that much more difficult to do," and "People are struggling. Some of it has to do with what's coming down with Common Core and, I know, PARCC and Marzano. It's like, I feel like, every time we think, well, what one more thing could they add." Additionally, school and district leaders conveyed similar beliefs.

Within the organizational setting administrators recognized the sheer number of changes present and the magnitude of these educational change initiatives. They espoused that "it was just so much at one time," a commitment toward ensuring that the CCSS's "conversation stays alive right now in the midst of everything else that is front burner," and a belief that "there's a lot of things happening at the same time and not necessarily

jiving together, so it's a challenge that way." However, the data point to already enacted solutions whereby teachers, school leaders, and district administrators have worked towards linking multiple initiatives together, in order to develop a more targeted and effective implementation process.

Continuous intense supports and professional development towards implementing the ELA CCSS represent best practices towards implementation. Another aspect of successful capacity building leads to teacher learning and school improvement, and connects policy and mandates to other aspects of school change (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011). Within this setting, school and district administrators pronounced the long-term and ongoing goal of connecting the multiple change initiatives underway into one cohesive picture of school and district improvement. As one district administrator summarized:

> I will be satisfied when folks are showing through their planning and through their assessment and through their SGOs and all the other structures that we have that they're showing a real true awareness of the alignment between their goals, their assessment, and student achievement, because that's larger than just the common core and that's larger than Marzano and it's larger than all these things, although all these things are built to address that stuff, but when teachers no longer say, 'You mean I actually have to specifically assess all of my objectives?' When teachers write objectives that aren't grounded in their parochial content but which are aligned explicitly through specific verbs to the standards, that's when I'll know we've arrived.

Additionally, all of the teachers' SGOs clearly showed alignment to the ELA CCSS. The teacher-made SGOs measured student achievement against district-wide assessments aligned to the students' ability to "support analysis of what the text says explicitly," "determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in text," "use transitions properly," and "explain and interpret information from informational text."

Schools and school leaders that implement too many changes at one time often times end up lacking the "depth and coherence" necessary to affect change that fosters school improvement, teacher capacity building, and ultimately increased student achievement (Fullan, 2001, p. 36). However, none of the educational change initiatives noted as sources of resistance towards implementing the ELA CCSS originated at the school or district levels and teachers recognized this current reality of American education. Teachers stated, "all the states are jumping on board and we're trying to as well," "the country is heading in this direction," and "it starts, I guess, at the federal level and then state department of education." School and district leaders must find ways to shift the focus "from policies that seek to control or direct the work of teachers to strategies intended to develop schools' and teachers' capacity to be responsible for student learning" (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011, p. 82). This process involves motivating staff towards implementation, connecting initiatives, building capacity, addressing resistance, and supporting the change process (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011; Evans, 1996; Fullan, 2007; Kotter, 1996).

Successful Implementation

At the end of the policy implementation process, the ELA CCSS call for students to read and comprehend age- and grade-appropriate textual information, write argumentatively, enjoy complex works of literature, and to analyze large amounts of informational text (Beach, 2011; CCSS, 2010; Valencia & Wixson, 2013). The successfulness of this policy depends on how well students meet the demands, vision of learning, and engagement with reading and writing that the ELA CCSS set forth. This section provides answers to two of the research study sub-questions, which include: "Do

the teachers, central office administrators, building principals, and ELA supervisors espouse beliefs of cooptation or mutual adaptation regarding the implementation of the ELA CCSS within the secondary school setting?" and "What factors within the implementation process and the work environment foster the belief by the policy intermediaries that the ELA CCSS bring about change in teaching and learning at the classroom level?" The policy intermediaries responsible for helping the students to achieve the goals as set forth in the ELA CCSS include district administrators, school leaders, and the teachers who have a direct impact on teaching and learning in the classroom.

Throughout the policy implementation process, cooptation describes a process whereby the intermediaries would seemingly comply with the mandates of the ELA CCSS without a marked change in beliefs and practices (McLaughlin, 1976). In contrast, mutual adaptation describes a process of implementation whereby the intermediaries not only comply with the mandates set forth in the ELA CCSS, but also a change in beliefs has occurred and teachers implement instructional strategies towards meeting the vision of the ELA CCSS (McLaughlin, 1976). Additionally, mutual adaptation describes a process of change throughout the implementation process between the hierarchical structures of school governance and amongst individual policy intermediaries (McLaughlin, 1976). Throughout the case study, ideas and actions indicative of both cooptation and mutual adaptation were present.

Cooptation

Cooptation describes a process and evaluation of policy implementation wrought by compliance without any marked change in classroom teaching strategies and other

pedagogical practices (McLaughlin, 1976). Within this study, cooptation in implementing a curriculum aligned to new standards took on many forms, including the linking of standards to existing curriculum documents in order to meet state deadlines towards implementation and connecting the ELA CCSS to existing lesson plans and classroom activities designed to the meet the goals and vision of previously enacted state standards. Additionally, the notions and ideas of accountability derived from standardized testing systems threaten to distract from the implementation of new standards by focusing on teaching to the test as opposed to enacting authentic and creative learning activities aligned to national standards (Oliva, 2001). A difference exists between the curriculum documents that describe what to teach, or the intended curriculum, and the delivery of skills and knowledge in the classroom, or the implemented curriculum (Marzano, 2003). Within Riverdale School District and Riverdale High School, the differences between the intended and implemented are most pronounced in the ELA areas that lack authentically aligned curriculum documents.

Intended curriculum. District administrators at Riverdale School District described an initial curriculum alignment process that merely linked the ELA CCSS to curriculum documents, which were originally written and implemented to align to the previous NJCCCS. The initial adoption of the ELA CCSS within the district represented a compliance model, whereby teachers were utilizing curriculum documents and district-adopted materials that administrators and teachers did not alter in any manner except for a change in the referenced standards from the NJCCCS to the ELA CCSS. Developing, implementing, and evaluating a clearly aligned curriculum, provides teachers a means through which to establish clear goals and objectives (Oliva, 2001; Marzano, 2007;

Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Those goals and objectives connect to the teacher plans and practices in the classroom, which directly affect student learning and achievement (Marzano, 2007). For those curriculum documents within this setting and in the absence of a newly rewritten curriculum, the goals and objectives inherent within the written document remained the same. In short, the intended curriculum for grades 10 through 12 did not align to the goals, objectives, and the overall vision of the ELA CCSS.

Many teachers described how they had not changed their instructional practices as a result of the ELA CCSS and even went on to describe the pedagogical skills necessary for implementation of the ELA as largely resembling what they had always done. One teacher described the impact of the ELA CCSS on his teaching as, "at heart they're not any different than what we've already done, what we've always done. It's just a matter of almost trying to justify what you do backwards instead of having the justification and then proceeding." Teachers utilized ELA curriculum documents in grades 10 through 12 that teachers and administrators had only linked to the new ELA CCSS. In actuality, the design of those curriculum documents aligned to the previously mandated NJCCCS, and the district hired teachers to link the ELA CCSS to largely outdated curriculum documents. Teachers conveyed frustration that the goals of the ELA CCSS convey the need for literature and non-fiction text with a higher text complexity (Glaus, 2014). However, teachers in grades 10 through 12 did not have the appropriate classroom instructional resources to meet that objective, and some teachers sought out and utilized their own resources.

Lesson planning. Beliefs described by some teachers regarding lesson planning also described a lack of fundamental changes in instructional practices as a result of the

implementation of the ELA CCSS. Teachers described a process of making the ELA CCSS fit to their lesson plans and classroom activities. In describing the alignment of standards within the lesson planning process teachers said, “I hate to say it, but I make it fit,” “I'm just trying to link it (the lesson plan) to standards,” and “I effectively copy and paste from the deconstructed Common Core State Standards document for our daily lesson plans.” Furthermore, the administration recognized this practice, and as one administrator stated:

> Folks are still aligning where it’s not necessarily appropriate for their assessments and their objectives. They’re aligning based on content that they might be dealing with. They’re not necessarily aligning because their assessments are showing them that they’re actually measuring achievement against those standards.

Instructional leadership focused on developing, aligning, and supporting a well-articulated curriculum helps to provide the will and capacity of teachers necessary to affect change at the classroom level (Doolittle, & Gallagher-Browne, 2011; Leithwood et al., 2010; Oloruntegbe, 2011; Tramaglini & Tienken, 2011). In the absence of a well-articulated curriculum authentically aligned to the ELA CCSS, the outcome of curriculum revision and adoption tended towards an espoused belief of cooptation by some teachers. As noted, only the ninth grade ELA curriculum documents described an intended curriculum designed with the goals and objectives of ELA CCSS.

Multiple indicators of teachers changing their beliefs and practices as a result of the curricular and policy implementation of the ELA CCSS, stemmed from support structures emanating from the English I curriculum development and implementation process, and support from school and district leadership. Teachers utilizing curriculum documents developed through a collaborative process and specifically aligned to the new standards had better opportunities to align lessons and instructional resources to the goals

and objectives ELA CCSS. Not having a curriculum specifically aligned and designed to the ELA CCSS caused teachers to utilize varied instructional resources, and to continue with existing instructional and lesson planning practices leading to adaptations that may or may not have been in accordance with the district's vision of ELA CCSS implementation.

Mutual Adaptation

Policy implementation represents a difficult endeavor; however, through well-planned processes and reflective planning, school leaders can successfully bring about educational change (Fowler, 2004). Within the Riverdale School District, school leaders and teachers are largely in the mobilization phase of policy implementation for some of the ELA course sections within the district, and at the same time have moved into the early implementation process for the English I course. The mobilization phase of policy implementation represents the planning, knowledge building, and resources allocation that intermediaries prepare prior to initial implementation strategies that affect the target population or the students (Fowler, 2004; Huberman & Miles, 1984). Regardless of the extent of preparations and supports in place, the early implementation phase represents a time of transition that often times includes problems, confusion, and anxiety on the part of those responsible for carrying out the initiative (Huberman & Miles, 1984). Within this setting, teachers represent the policy actors who are ultimately responsible for carrying out the ELA CCSS initiative. However, throughout both the mobilization and early implementation phase of policy and curriculum implementation, a change in the actions and beliefs of teachers aligned to the goals of the new policy indicate successful implementation (Cuban, 2004; Fowler, 2004; Fullan, 2007), and those changes in beliefs

and actions will have marked variations in practice across hierarchical levels of school governance and amongst individual policy intermediaries (McLaughlin, 1976).

Common language. The mobilization phase of policy implementation and the planning phase of curriculum development require that school and district leaders, and teachers build a knowledge base towards the content necessary to execute the educational initiative and to develop a common understanding of the proposed program (Fowler, 2004; Huberman & Miles, 1984; Oliva, 2001). Study participants portrayed indicators of the change in knowledge necessary to implement the ELA CCSS by the use of a common language surrounding the new standards, and a belief by study participants that the new standards represented a necessary shift in ELA pedagogy. For example, teachers and administrators made statements that aligned to the goals, objectives, and language of the ELA CCSS. Teachers stated, "I've been trying to just incorporate a lot more non-fiction, more informational text," "It's looking at the structure of the work, of the structure of also non-fictional text," and "There's a lot of opportunity to cite textual evidence…" Identifying and cultivating the professional capacity of the policy intermediaries to implement the ELA CCSS characterizes a successful implementation strategy that fosters an ongoing dialogue necessary for change (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978; Fullan, 2007).

Throughout the study, policy intermediaries, which included administrators and teachers, utilized a common language when describing their individual experiences with the implementation of the ELA CCSS. Teachers consistently described the demands that the ELA CCSS placed on students in the following ways, "understanding and analyzing and synthesizing," "citing information," "workplace readiness," "non-fiction over fiction," "skills-based stuff," "focusing on the skill," and an "increase in rigor."

Furthermore, a district leader summarized how she feels that the skill development relates to the required utilization of more nonfiction by students in the classroom when stating:

> I haven't read every important piece of literature out there and I'm never going to but I have the skills that if you put it into my hands, I know how to tackle it and that's what we have to give our kids. We have to give them the skills so that no matter what context they're in, they know how to tackle the problem, the project or how to do the research work.

Furthermore, a school leader espoused that:

> …when you look at Common Core, you are seeing that there really is integration of reading and writing together of technology and speaking and listening, but also that students today need to have that ability to be readers and writers across the curriculum and non-fiction and not just literature and to be prepared for college and career today, you have to have that reading and analytic ability for anything you read.

The utilization of a common language centered on the goals and vision of the ELA CCSS enables teachers and administrators to collaborate effectively across the organization while also fostering an ongoing dialogue critical to the adoption and implementation process (Foorman, Arndt, & Crawford, 2011; Fowler, 2004; Fullan, 2007).

The will to implement. An additional aspect of successful implementation involves fostering and maintaining the will amongst policy intermediaries to implement the ELA CCSS (Fowler, 2004). Although beliefs towards implementation and support regarding the standards differed amongst study participants, teachers and administrators throughout the study explained how the ELA CCSS contained a necessary change in teaching reading and writing skills for today's students. The goals and objectives of the ELA CCSS include preparing students for college and careers "through meaningful encounters with interesting and complex texts" (Glaus, 2014, p. 407). A limitation inherent within the study stems from the idea that I did not observe the classroom setting, but rather examined the beliefs and practices of teachers and administrators through

interviews, archival documents, and field observations of professional activities. However, teachers and administrators described experiences and beliefs that aligned to the goals and objectives of the ELA CCSS.

Teachers made statements ranging from general comments such as, “I think the kids actually have benefitted from the changes,” to the specific notion that, “the overall focus of the Common Core on the advancement of reading comprehension and development of writing skills is positive.” The beliefs of administrators clearly demonstrated alignment to these values as school and district leaders avowed that, “the standards are a good direction for us,” “the Common Core was a needed shift,” and that “kids need to learn and be able to have the determination to be able to sit through and read something that's just not a novel.” Often times policies handed down from outside of the organization can lead to opposition towards new mandates, which in this case is the ELA CCSS (Fowler, 2004). In communicating and supporting the vision of the ELA CCSS within the Riverdale High School, school leaders make clear the direction and necessity for change while also motivating the policy intermediaries towards change (Fowler, 2004; Fullan, 2007; Kotter, 1996).

The impact that the ELA CCSS has on students depends on the instructional techniques and strategies employed by teachers in the classroom. Furthermore, successful implementation of the ELA CCSS calls for the increase of non-fiction text in the classroom, an increase in rigor through age- and grade-appropriate reading materials, the prevalent use of text-based answers, and the teaching of academic and content specific vocabulary across disciplines (Beach, 2011; CCSS Initiative, 2010; Jenkins & Agamba, 2013; Smith, Schiano, & Lattanzio, 2014). Throughout the study, several instructional

shifts towards implementing the ELA CCSS were evident in interview transcripts, artifacts, and field observations.

Teachers across all grade levels spoke to the instructional shift of utilizing more non-fiction within the implemented curriculum. A teacher discussed one way that he had brought in more non-fiction when describing an assignment he had given to his class in the following way:

> They (students) had to take a theme from Hamlet, and they had to find a current, you know, like a current news story. Something, a current piece of non-fiction that would align to it. Some people pulled up, like, political speeches even, believe it or not. But a lot of them were, you know, news articles, big news stories.

Another teacher described that shift in literature to the increase of non-fiction in her lessons as follows:

> I'm infusing so much into my lessons with the non-fiction, that I had math problems in the board, and then I had artwork of smokestacks and tailpipes, because it was talking about smokestack and tailpipe society. We were talking about how a banker … the glacier manages its gains and losses like a banker. I was trying to explain banking to the students, and what it means to earn interest.

Administrators further espoused the need for these changes when stating "we need to teach kids how to analyze, how to make inferences, it's the skills that just knowing Hamlet isn't going to help you when you have a job," and "you use the literature to teach those skills that are stranded out in the Common Core and there is an integration of that across the analysis of the text." As administrators and school leaders work towards designing and implementing curricula and lessons focused on the ELA CCSS, critical shifts in instruction derive from the supports of common goals and vision, and an ongoing dialogue across organizational levels (Fullan, 2007, Kotter, 1996; Lee, 2011).

Material resources. During the mobilization stage of policy implementation,

determining and allocating material resources for the proposed mandate or program provides teachers and other policy intermediaries with the physical means through which to affect change (Fowler, 2004). The use of differing material resources within the organizational setting not only marked an instructional shift utilized in lesson plan and classroom activities, but the practice also clearly demonstrated the adaptations that occurred from teacher to teacher and from grade level to grade level. Adaptation during implementation occurs because teachers have their own styles, philosophies, and approach to classroom lesson and activities (McLaughlin, 1976). However, within this setting teachers expressed that the use of consistent material resources and lesson alignment to the ELA CCSS greatly changed from the newly developed English I curriculum and those curricula only linked to the new standards for compliance purposes.

Teachers of various classes other than English I described utilizing multiple and differing resources for teaching and lesson planning within the classroom. Concerning lesson planning, teachers described utilizing a set of deconstructed standards that the district curriculum and instruction office provided, while other teachers explained how they have migrated towards the use of third party resources, which they sought out on their own, for lesson planning and preparation. However, English I teachers described utilizing the curriculum documents directly during lesson planning as opposed to utilizing the standards as a stand-alone document. One teacher described the reliance on a curriculum authentically aligned to the ELA CCSS in the following way, “Once the curriculum is written, then it's already aligned.” Conversely, a teacher who did not teach English I described:

> Once those new curriculums are rolled out and once the curriculums are rewritten, that's going to be a lot easier for us to do and for us to reflect in our lesson plans. Right now, unless you're a freshmen teacher, it's impossible to do.

Curriculum documents connect to the teachers' classroom practices and pedagogical skills through the goals and objectives of teachers' lessons (Marzano, 2007). Within this setting, the absence of curriculum documents aligned specifically to the ELA CCSS for classes other than English I lead teachers to utilize various material resources for lesson planning purposes. Educational programmatic initiatives represent a mutually adaptive process between the policy actors and the setting. Within this study, a source of adaptation in implementing the ELA CCSS stemmed from the practice of providing professional development designed towards building teachers' knowledge of the ELA CCSS, without providing an intended curriculum developed and aligned to the ELA CCSS.

A difference exists between the intended curriculum, as described by documents aligned to standards, and the enacted curriculum defined by teachers' skills, philosophies, and actual classroom practices affecting student learning and achievement (Marzano, 2003). Within this study, teachers across grade levels described beliefs and practices indicative of successful implementation and marked by change. Supporting a process of mutual adoption leads to successful implementation of the program's goals and intended outcomes in that policy intermediaries interact as professionals within the setting, bring their own pedagogical beliefs and actions to the classroom, and interact uniquely with the environment (McLaughlin, 1976, 1990). The provision of successful implementation strategies, and the ideas of mutual adaptation and cooptation have practical implications

towards future and current programmatic and curricular initiatives involving the ELA CCSS in the secondary setting.

Practical Leadership Implications

Researchers have studied and provided numerous recommendations for program, policy, and curriculum implementation to date (Anderson, 2011; Fowler, 2004; Oliva, 2001; Tanner & Tanner, 1995). The CCSS represent a widely-adopted and seemingly successful attempt at nationalizing a set of academic standards for students in kindergarten through 12th grade (McGuinn, 2012; Porter et al., 2012; Superfine et al., 2012; Tienken, 2010), and the current national and state reform agendas call for changes in teacher and leader evaluation, increased use of student achievement data to evaluate educators, and new student assessments aligned to the CCSS (USDOE, 2010; NJDOE, 2014a). As shown throughout this case study, the pressures emanating from multiple initiatives can detract from the sustained and ongoing support necessary indicative of successful implementation strategies. The data and subsequent analysis convey three main implications pertinent to instructional leadership required to implement the ELA CCSS in today's educational climate. Those practical leadership implications include complying to state and federal mandates, while still implementing a well-planned and well-developed curriculum, and developing the will and capacity of teachers to implement the ELA CCSS through the development of a collegial and collaborative work environment.

Leading in a Context of Mandates

Leading change spurred by unpopular mandates emanating from the state and federal government poses many challenges for school and district leaders (Fowler, 2004).

Within this secondary school setting, the administration faced challenges which included providing ongoing and focused support towards implementation of the new standards within the context of multiple and separate mandates. Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) describe 21 responsibilities that school leaders have within their professions (pp. 42-42). School and district leaders clearly utilized three of those responsibilities to bring about curricular change, within the context of numerous programmatic change endeavors occurring within a relatively short period of time. Those factors include demonstrating the flexibility to adapt to the current needs of the situation while also being comfortable with resistance, establishing and sustaining communication with teachers throughout the curriculum and development process, and providing teachers with the resources and support needed to bring about change (Marzano et al., 2005).

School leaders, district administrators, and teachers all demonstrated the flexibility needed to implement the ELA CCSS within an educational landscape marked by many new policies and procedures emanating from the current national education reform agenda. Within the State of New Jersey, the first major change endeavor constituted implementing the ELA CCSS beginning in the 2012-2013 school year. An example of the flexibility demonstrated by district leaders and teachers occurred during the development of an English I curriculum aligned to the ELA CCSS. District leadership conveyed a belief of engaging in a process of curriculum development that was both collaborative and aligned to the goals and objectives of the ELA CCSS; furthermore, by initially having teachers and administrators link the new standards to the then currently utilized curriculum documents, district leadership secured the time necessary to engage in

a thorough and meaningful curriculum development and implementation process with teachers and school leaders.

Once the district was in compliance with adoption of the ELA CCSS, the commitment to designing a curriculum aligned to the goals and objectives of the new standards continued. For example, both teachers and district administrators described a point in time when teachers were prompted to stop writing curriculum documents aligned to the new standards, due to the fact that the curriculum was "not exactly aligned" to the ELA CCSS, as one teacher stated. During the original English I curriculum development process, a district leader described how "we were able to adjust on the fly" in order to work "together on the vertical vision of Common Core English for the district." Flexibility, as demonstrated in educational leadership, derives from the awareness and knowledge to make practical changes when considering the circumstances and context (Fullan, 2001, Marzano et al., 2005). Considering the newness of the ELA CCSS, school leaders and teachers had the foresight and insight, through collaboration, to adjust the curriculum development process in order to rewrite and implement an intended curriculum aligned to the district's vision of the ELA CCSS.

Contextually, this district was dealing with drastic changes in teacher evaluation and observation, the introduction of new standardized testing in the form of PARCC for the upcoming school year, and the implementation of the CCSS. Any one of these initiatives constitutes a major undertaking in terms of bringing about educational change, and preparing for any one of these change initiatives requires an "explicit effort" to develop "new capacities" in teachers, district administrators, and school leaders within the context of the organizational setting (Fullan, 2005, p. 69). Within this context, school

and district leaders promoted a systems approach to change that connected many of the seemingly disconnected mandates and policies, which derived from the state government. One example noted within the study, derived from the manner in which ELA teachers, with supervisor and principal approval, aligned a teacher evaluation instrument to the ELA CCSS.

In the beginning of the school year, teachers had to create SGOs designed to track student progress towards a desired learning goal. Teachers utilized achievement data from pre-tests or a previously administered standardized tests to determine two SGOs, or learning goals. At the end of the school year, 15 percent of a teacher's final evaluation derives from his or her students' performance on a final assessment designed to measure student progress on the SGO. All of the ELA SGOs within the study demonstrated clear alignment to the standards. Additionally, all SGOs contained specific ELA CCSSs in describing the rationale for the SGO. All teachers aligned their respective SGOs to the ELA CCSS, regardless of the grade-level they taught. Teachers that taught the same grade levels wrote similar SGOs, but teachers tailored the final measures of student achievement to the students in their classes.

Connecting mandates in this manner provided an opportunity for teachers to work with the standards in a job-embedded format, and it provided an additional opportunity to align the standards to teaching and learning in the classroom through the use of a state mandated construct. Within the context of one programmatic change, teachers can often times feel burdened by the pressures and requirements of the initiative (Huberman & Miles, 1984). As this study shows, within the context of multiple initiatives, school and

district leaders found ways to connect initiatives across and between mandates to not only provide a focus on the ELA CCSS, but to lessen the overall burden on teachers.

Developing Will and Capacity

Developing the will and the capacity of teachers to carry out the implementation of a curriculum aligned to ELA CCSS requires constant and deliberate support in order to bring about buy-in and change (Fowler, 2004; Fullan, 2007; Oliva, 2001; Sabatier & Mazmanian, 1980). One of the greatest areas of resistance espoused by the teachers stemmed from the perceived loss of fiction within the curriculum. The most profound area where leadership addressed the issue of losing fiction was in the English I curriculum. The English II, English III, and English IV intended curricula did not have a change in required texts, as a result of the implementation of the ELA CCSS and prior to this study. Whereas, the curriculum and instruction administration chose a non-fiction anthology as the primary text for the English I course, the teachers had positive reactions to utilizing sources of both fiction and non-fiction literature to teach skills as required by the ELA CCSS.

Teachers noted during a Curriculum Feedback Committee Meeting that the new English I curriculum provided “freedom” in the teaching of skills, and that the new non-fiction text was similar to what the students “are going to see in college.” Additionally, a teacher stated that, “For the freshman curriculum, they’ve minimized the number of books that we need; the amount of fiction, so it’s being replaced by non-fiction, but it’s not in addition to.” For those teachers utilizing the new English I curriculum document, written and aligned in accordance with the ELA CCSS, the fear and resistance of losing fiction provided a catalyst to examine the teaching of skills through various means. In a

culture of complacency, little resistance exists (Kotter, 1996). Throughout the implementation process, teachers must have the opportunity to "discuss, argue about, and work through changes in their assumptions" (Evans, 1996, p. 65). Teachers within this setting had these opportunities through department meetings, committees, curriculum development activities, and surveys.

The passion that English I teachers had for classic fiction literature provided an area of focus within the curriculum development and implementation process to fuse the teaching and learning of skills as required by the ELA CCSS with the increased use of non-fiction, and this occurred without fully abandoning the teaching of fiction literature. Teachers described teaching skills through fiction literature. For example, one teacher described, during a Curriculum Feedback Committee, how the class spent time looking at advertisements to decide which advertisement was the most balanced. The students were then able to apply this evaluation skill into examining the novels *The House on Mango Street* and *Fahrenheit 451*. Another teacher describes that she and other teachers in her department utilized compare/contrast skills with short stories and non-fiction texts, in order to address the process skills first and then to address the information and meanings inherent within the texts. Through professional collaboration designed to bring about curricular change (Oliva, 2001), teachers, school leaders, and district administrators addressed the concerns and resistance emanating from English teachers by incorporating the teaching of skills required by the ELA CCSS through both fiction and non-fiction literature.

Teachers must have the skills and knowledge required to bring about the desired results in order for change to occur (Fowler, 2004; Fullan, 2007). Additionally, major

change initiatives require ongoing and quality support structures for successful implementation (Huberman & Miles, 1984; Sabatier & Mazmanian, 1980). Throughout the study, teachers noted professional development activities that fostered knowledge about the CCSS, without necessarily providing real-world and concrete examples towards implementation. Teachers and administrators spoke about online webinars, department and faculty meeting presentations, and personal one-on-one feedback from supervisors as a source of knowledge about the ELA CCSS. However, the teachers continually conveyed a need for support in applying that knowledge to the classroom setting. During an English I Curriculum Feedback Committee meeting, moments of teachers sharing activities and assessments aligned to the ELA CCSS through professional collaboration, demonstrated the type of ongoing dialogue required for sustained change and for enhancement of the enacted curriculum (Oliva, 2001; Tomlinson et al., 2009). These types of practices within the setting provided teachers with applicable examples and instructional strategies aligned to the intended curriculum.

Personal Leadership Implications

Programmatic change requires collaboration, constant support, buy-in amongst those responsible for implementation, and the need for leadership to address the pre-requisite technical work necessary for adaptive change (Heifetz, 1994). A technical challenge requires utilizing the current knowledge, skills, and beliefs of school leaders or teachers to address the issue or problem (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). For example, a technical challenge related to implementing the ELA CCSS could include developing a master schedule that allows ELA teachers common prep time. In contrast, adaptive challenges require people to change their attitudes, beliefs, and actions for the

betterment of the organization (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002), or in this case the students. To take the previous example a step further, an adaptive challenge towards implementing the ELA CCSS could include utilizing that common prep time to develop and implement professional learning communities with the expressed purpose of providing teachers time to hone their instructional practices in accordance with a new curriculum aligned to the ELA CCSS. As I examined my own leadership in relation to the implementation processes described within this case study, many practices, ideas, and notions provided insight into my professional practice.

Addressing technical challenges within the context of bringing about adaptive change towards implementing the ELA CCSS clearly presents a challenge to district level administrators, especially within an educational environment consisting of multiple mandated reform initiatives. One of the first challenges that the District Curriculum and Instruction Office encountered included meeting the mandate of the "implementation of revised curricula" aligned to the ELA CCSS by September of 2012 (NJDOE, 2011, para. 1). The administration and the teachers described a process whereby teachers and administrators placed or linked the ELA CCSS into the then currently enacted curriculum documents. Teachers and administrators had originally developed and aligned those curriculum documents to the former NJCCCS for ELA. This process describes cooptation in that the district met the statutory objective of revising curricula; however, the original goals, objectives, units, activities, and overall content of that revised curricula remained aligned to the previously enacted NJCCCS.

As McLaughlin (1976) describes, when cooptation occurs, the program, or in this instance the curriculum, is "simply modified to conform in a pro forma fashion to the

traditional practices the innovation was expected to replace" (McLaughlin, 1976, para. 8). Seemingly, district administrators opted for a process of cooptation as opposed to mutual implementation when examining this implementation strategy. However, upon further analysis the alignment of previously enacted curriculum documents to the ELA CCSS provided a type of placeholder that enabled district administrators the necessary resource of time to address the technical challenges while still complying to a state imposed timeline. A teacher described the subsequent curriculum development and alignment in the following way:

> We got about halfway through and we suddenly stopped in the process and said we're going in the wrong direction. It's not aligned. This is not exactly what we're looking for. We were stopped, literally, after putting in these hours, which is okay. (A district administrator) at that time made a point, a valid point, why are we rushing this? We might as well do it right, and it could take us another year to do it and so be it.

Without revised curriculum documents aligned or linked to the ELA CCSS, a need would have existed for "rushing" through the curriculum development process as opposed to taking the time to put in place the curriculum writing committees, teacher feedback structures, and resource allocation as previously described throughout the curriculum and policy implementation process.

Within this setting, instructional leaders made the conscious decision to comply with mandates at the onset of the CCSS adoption as part of the technical challenge of needing more time. However, during early implementation, district and school leaders required teachers to plan and prepare for lessons aligned to the ELA CCSS in the absence of a curriculum adequately aligned to the ELA CCSS, and without providing the necessary resources for implementation. In this area, teachers did not perceive adequate development and support towards meeting the adaptive challenges posed by the ELA

CSSS, which include more rigorous skill development, reading and analyzing complex textual information, and a greater focus on the use of non-fiction (Goatley, 2012; Ostenson, & Wadham, 2012). One teacher described how she utilized standards throughout her career when designing lessons in the following way, “I have never in my life (used the standards), unless I'm writing the curriculum thinking about standards because once the curriculum is written, then it's already aligned.” This statement describes how a well-aligned and well-articulated curriculum document provides a necessary support for aligned lesson plans and instructional practices.

The realities of teachers, school leaders, and district administrators stem from a multitude of pressures that stem from the students, the community, the state government, and the federal government. Often times, the “single-focus assumption implicit” in many programmatic change initiatives portrays a process of capacity-building and support that does not consider the reality of the policy implementers (McLaughlin, 1990). Those responsible for carrying out the CCSS Initiative within Riverdale School District had to contend with multiple mandates all enacted within a relatively short-time period. During the course of data collection, the study participants constantly contextualized the ELA CCSS implementation process. They described how PARCC assessment readiness, SGOs, district-wide assessments, teacher evaluation, and a myriad of other responsibilities affected their ability to focus on the ELA CCSS implementation process. In response, district and school leaders found ways to connect SGOs, and district-wide assessments to the ELA CCSS as means of additional capacity-building opportunities for staff, and as a further method of standards alignment.

When faced with mandated implementation timelines and multiple required initiatives, school leaders and teachers must find ways to bring about adaptive change technical by first addressing the technical challenges. The Riverdale School District complied with state mandates on paper while putting into place the structures and knowledge-building activities necessary for a successful yet still mutually adaptive implementation process. In utilizing this strategy, the district did not provide teachers the necessary resources to implement the standards. Moreover, expecting those teachers to design lessons aligned to ELA CCSS provided opportunities for adaptations to occur within the implementation process from teacher to teacher, and across grade-levels. In the absence of curriculum documents developed, implemented, and aligned to the ELA CCSS, teachers found their own resources for lesson planning, lesson preparation, and for classroom instruction.

Changes in Professional Practice

The entire process of formulating a topic, designing a proposal, conducting a study, and writing a dissertation have greatly influenced my professional practice as an educational leader. First, as the process of designing and implementing curriculum aligned to the CCSS occurs within the building for which I serve as the principal, the standards of capacity-building and mutual adaptation informs the instructional leadership practices that I utilize. My proximity to the curriculum, the teaching staff, and to classroom practices more closely exemplifies instructional leadership due to all aspects of conducting this study, and writing a dissertation. Essential practices for instructional leaders include actions and beliefs that attend to teaching and learning in the classroom, which include providing support in the form of a well-articulated and well-designed

curriculum, and by delivering ongoing and relevant professional development (Leithwood et al., 2010; Oliva, 2001). Prior to engaging in this study, I managed an instructional program within a school by delegating the vast majority of instructional leadership practices to assistants, principals, and teachers. Today, I engage in leadership practices that closely connect to the curriculum, and to teaching and learning in the classroom.

Throughout the data collection and analysis phases of the study, I quickly came to recognize the importance of the curriculum in implementing the standards. On one particular school day, a few teachers brought to my attention the difficulties they were experiencing in aligning the CCSS to their lesson plans. Subsequently, I questioned the teachers as to why they were searching for standards to fit their already completed lesson plans. When considering that the curriculum documents for this course had not recently gone through curriculum revisions aligned to the CCSS, I quickly realized how futile and unnecessary this practice was.

Teachers were aligning lesson plans simply because a supervisor required them to. Whereas these teachers did not teach math or ELA, their lessons did not require alignment under a state or district mandate. Furthermore, beyond some basic knowledge-building professional development opportunities, these teachers had not engaged in professional development that would have provided them with the resources necessary to utilize the standards in a way to inform classroom practices. This study has shown that requiring teachers to utilize the CCSS in the absence of a curriculum sufficiently aligned to the new standards can lead to unnecessary adaptations in implementation once the teachers and the course do receive the necessary material and curriculum resources

required for successful implementation. Consequently, I stopped the practice of requiring teachers to utilize the CCSS in subject areas other than mathematics and ELA, in the absence of an up-to-date curriculum document that underwent revisions or a full rewrite using the new standards.

In the above scenario, I would have previously defaulted the matter to a content area supervisor or an assistant principal. This study brought my professional practice closer to matters related to the curriculum and classroom practices. Oliva (2004) contends that "the principal serves actively as curriculum leader, or passively by delegating leadership responsibilities to subordinates" (p. 97). Conversely, I believe that the principal, as an instructional leader, can perform his or her duties by serving as both a curriculum leader and a delegator of instructional leadership responsibilities. Through the literature review and conceptualization of this study, I quickly came to believe and espouse that instructional leadership closely connected to classroom practices represents a non-negotiable principle, to which my administrative team and I must hold true. Through the course of the past of two school years, I have taken on the added responsibility of a department supervisor, which directly connects my professional practice to program and curriculum development and implementation. In this capacity, I remain informed on matters related to the curriculum across the hierarchical levels of school and district governance; furthermore, these practices serve to help inform my decisions when delegating instructional leadership responsibilities to the rest of the administrative team.

Providing continuous support towards implementing a new program, policy, and/or curriculum signifies a major factor necessary for successful implementation

(Sabatier & Mazmanian, 1980). This study has shown that the type of supports provided matter to teachers, school leaders, and district administrators. When offering professional development I now examine the goal of the work session or meeting. During the initial phases of implementation, knowledge-building activities that involve formal presentations with question and answer segments could successfully introduce teachers to topics. However, once teachers begin to utilize the initiative within the classroom, school leaders must introduce capacity-building activities that enable the successful implementation of the curriculum.

Throughout the study, educators conveyed the need for real-life concrete examples towards implementing the ELA CCSS. Considering the relative newness of the standards, the examples that exist through professional organizations, other states' departments of education, and those deriving from various texts have the potential to neglect the realities of the classroom setting. Of course, these instructional strategies and philosophies serve as a starting point for teachers, but the success of these strategies lies in student learning and achievement. Teachers must have time to share strategies that have worked for them, and to share strategies that have not worked in their classroom. Recently, I have embraced professional learning community constructs that have enabled teachers and school leaders to engage in meaningful professional development that enables the staff to learn from each other.

Prior to this study, I served as a principal that largely delegated all curriculum development and implementation responsibilities to department supervisors and assistant principals. Whereas, I supported teaching and learning from a managerial standpoint, I seldom directly involved myself in matters related to the classroom. The professional

development that I designed and implemented usually took the form of lecture, and had little to no examples of concrete instructional practice and strategies. Through my doctoral studies and through this dissertation, I have come to believe, espouse, and act upon the idea that "educational change depends upon what teachers do and think" (Fullan, 1982, p. 107). As an instructional leader, I now determine and plan for an implementation process that considers what teachers and other administrators must understand and carry out in order to foster student learning in the classroom. Overall, in order to affect change at the classroom level I now personally attend to matters related to both the intended curriculum and the enacted curriculum.

Future Implications

The conclusions and discussions pertinent to this study centered on topics of policy implementation, curriculum implementation, and instructional leadership. Suggestions for future research in the area of implementing the ELA CCSS span multiple content areas and grade levels, and different stages within the policy process. Specifically, suggestions for future research include the need for a longitudinal study covering all aspects of the ELA CCSS implementation, an evaluation of the effectiveness of the ELA CCSS as measured by student achievement, and policy research as it pertains to the demands placed on organizations when experiencing multiple, often times disconnected, mandates. While some topics provide intriguing subject matter for further research, they were beyond the scope of this study. Other areas of focus extend into the evaluation phase of the policy implementation of the ELA CCSS.

Multiple phases of implementation delineate the policy implementation process including mobilization, early implementation, and late implementation (Huberman &

Miles, 1984). Furthermore, the mobilization phase alone can take over a year to complete. After collecting and analyzing data for this research study, I recognized that although all curriculum documents within the Riverdale School District met state mandates for alignment to the ELA CCSS, the district was in various stages of mobilization and early implementation regarding the ELA curriculum. Additionally, the focus of this study centered on the entire ELA CCSS implementation process within the secondary setting.

A longitudinal study centered on the complete implementation process of the ELA CCSS for a school district could provide a detailed account of the entire implementation and evaluation process across grade levels, subject areas, and even individual schools. Longitudinal studies involve examining the same processes, variables, and individuals at discreet intervals or longer periods of time (Menard, 2002). This proposed methodology could explain the problems and issues that linger in late stages of implementation due to unforeseen or neglected aspects inherent within the mobilization and early stages of implementation.

A prominent issue surrounding the enactment of NCLB involved the impact that such mandates have on student learning and achievement as determined by various indicators including performance on standardized test scores (Dee & Jacob, 2011; Kaniuka, 2009). Students in the State of New Jersey will take PARCC assessments aligned to the CCSS beginning in the 2014-2015 school year (NJDOE, 2010b). Considering that the evaluation of a policy depends upon the impact that policy has on the target population (Cuban, 2004; Fowler, 2004; McLaughlin, 1976), student achievement data represent a source of data for research in determining the effectiveness

of the ELA CCSS. Furthermore, the expressed goal of preparing students for college and careers inherent within the ELA CCSS (CCSS Initiative, 2010) provides multiple avenues for research design and data collection dedicated to determining the effectiveness of the CCSS.

Finally, during data analysis, a consistent notion of multiple, seemingly disconnected initiatives conveyed the belief by many of the participants that too much change was hindering the implementation of the ELA CCSS. The current reform agenda nationally calls not only for the implementation of a nationalized set of standards, but also for states and school districts to develop and implement teacher and principal evaluation systems that focus on student achievement as a measure of educator effectiveness (USDOE, 2010). Furthermore, the implementation of new standardized testing requirements within the setting has potential impact on both the implementation of the CCSS and the accountability measures set in place for teachers and school leaders. Fullan pronounces that under the conditions of complex and intricate change endeavors school leaders must take time within the implementation to build the will and capacity of teachers in methodical, context-sensitive, and deliberate ways (Fullan, 2007). Whereas this study focused on the implementation of one component of the current national reform agenda, a study focused on the overall culture and climate of educational organizations within the context of multiple time-sensitive mandates could inform best practices towards policy formulation, policy adoption, and policy impact.

In practice, much like the difference that exists between the enacted and the implemented curriculum (Marzano, 2007), intermediaries enact policies and mandates through a process of context-sensitive change that begins with the federal government

and ends with students in the classroom (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978; Cuban, 2004; McLaughlin, 1976). Through a continued and even long-term examination of the CCSS implementation process, researchers can provide detailed and comprehensive data and conclusions pertinent to the implementation process and outcomes of the CCSS initiative. Additionally, systematic evaluation of student achievement data derived from standardized test scores and other sources may provide educational leaders, lawmakers, and society with information regarding whether or not the CCSS meets the goals and objectives as originally intended (Anderson, 2011; Cuban, 2004). Within the context of this study, the programmatic change of implementing the ELA CCSS did not occur in isolation and instructional leaders and teachers must seek to understand and successfully navigate educational change within the framework of multiple, sometimes conflicting, mandates.

A Hybrid Model of School Leadership

In today's educational climate scholars, authors, and researchers expound upon and extol the virtues of the principal as an instructional leader (Doolittle & Gallagher-Browne, 2011; Leithwood et al., 2010; Robinson et al., 2008). However, just as the implementation of a policy, curriculum, or educational change initiative represents a mutually adaptive process between the implementers and the setting (McLaughlin, 1976; 1987), so too is the principalship shaped by the context of the environment. Oliva (2001) contends that the principal either makes curricular decisions directly, or he or she delegates these responsibilities to teachers, supervisors, or other administrators within the organizational hierarchy. As a result of this study and my coursework, I propose a mutually adaptive model of instructional leadership. The principal's beliefs, actions, and

his or her interactions with the school community ultimately shape the leadership style he or she will employ.

Consider for a moment the principal of an elementary school or small high school with 400 students, who works either alone or with an assistant principal. He or she may immerse himself or herself in curricular and instructional decisions out of sheer necessity, or out of a drive to remain focused on teaching and learning. Alternately, that same principal could develop systems of delegation, whereby teachers design, align, and implement a curriculum with little to no input from the principal. In another scenario, consider the principal of a large school with 2,000 students and multiple levels of school governance including supervisors, assistant principals, and teacher leaders. For this individual, there exists a greater opportunity to delegate responsibilities related to classroom practices, the curriculum, and student learning. Despite the organizational hierarchy, in order for a principal to engage in practices related to instructional leadership, he or she must both delegate responsibilities and attend directly to matters related to curriculum and instruction.

Instructional leadership includes practices that involve the allocation of resources, developing and implementing the curriculum, supporting capacity- and knowledge-building activities, attending to matters of learning in the classroom, and fostering the use of effective instructional practices (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011; Holliday & Smith, 2012; Oliva, 2011). Furthermore, school leaders and principals are often times at the receiving end of mandates, state standards, and even curriculum, which derive from central office, the local government, the state government, and even the federal government (Glickman et al., 2004). In analyzing the roll of the principal in bringing

about change, I have found that the principalship lies at the center of an hour-glass (see Figure 10). In this analogy, the principal does not represent the focal point of change, but does represent a critical factor in bringing about change. Within this model, the principal must find ways to work collaboratively and collectively with parties from both sides of the organizational structure to engage in instructional leadership.

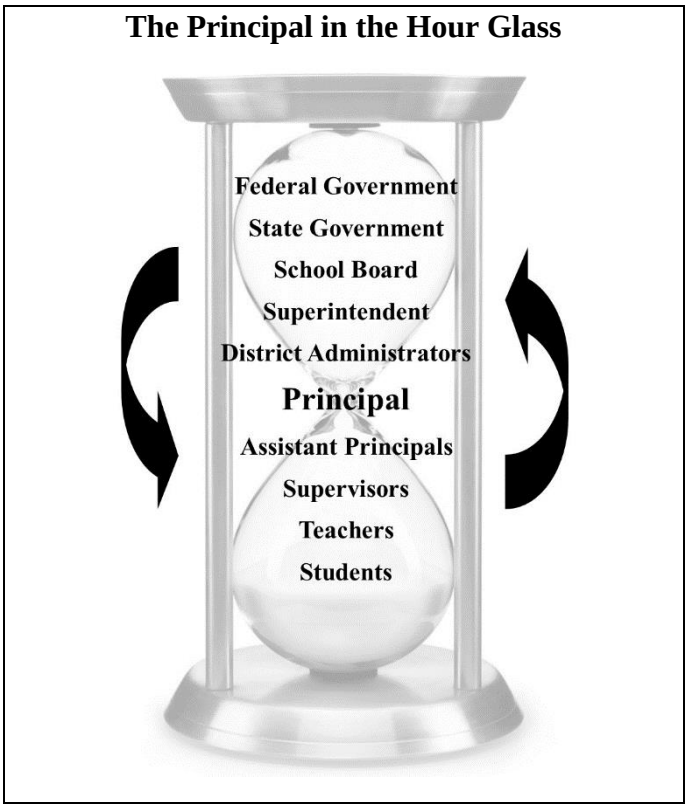


Figure 10. An analogy of the principal's role within the organizational. This analogy provides a basis upon which to describe the hybrid model of instructional leadership.

In the hour-glass analogy, the principal serves in the capacity of receiving information, insight, resistance, mandates, new programs, and various resources from the teachers, administrators, students, the superintendent, the government, and from both sides of the hour glass. The principal must consciously take the time to participate in

activities focused on teaching and learning in the classroom, which transcends the principal at the center of the hour-glass or at the top of school governance. The principal must partake in curriculum writing with central office administrators and teachers, must engage in activities related to teaching and learning in the classroom, and must remove himself or herself from the hub of activity in order to embrace instructional leadership. In my own professional practice, I work with teachers, supervisors, and central office administrators to evaluate instructional practices, develop curriculum, lead professional development on the CCSS, and attend to matters related to teaching learning. Of course, I delegate many curricular and pedagogical matters, but instructional leadership involves staying connected to the classroom, the students, other administrators, and the curriculum in order to support educational change that positively affects student achievement at the classroom level.

Summary

A rationale for conducting a case study centered on the implementation of the ELA CCSS within the secondary school setting, and stemmed from the need to identify strategies of policy and curriculum implementation that may or may not work in similar settings (Yin, 2003). The data analysis from interview transcripts, archival documents, and field observations conveyed ideas and notions of resistance, capacity building, motivation, cooptation, and mutual adaptation towards implementing the ELA CCSS within the secondary setting. The data collected and analyzed within the study highlighted those conditions affecting educational change, which ultimately depends on the beliefs of teachers and the instructional strategies employed in the classroom setting (Fullan, 2007).

A dominant source of resistance within the setting stemmed from a belief by teachers that the increase in non-fiction, as required by the implementation of the ELA CCSS, would entail a loss of teaching fiction. School and district leaders addressed this concern by espousing beliefs of spreading out the non-fiction text requirement across content areas, and by aligning curriculum documents to the ELA CCSS in the areas of science, history, social studies, and technical subjects as those documents came up for revision according to a schedule. Additionally, teachers noted a lack of concrete and specific pedagogical examples in professional development and capacity building activities as a source of resistance in implementing the ELA CCSS. The archival documents and interview transcripts clearly depicted early support measures geared towards providing teachers an overview of the ELA CCSS without providing the ELA teachers much collaborative and meaningful work towards implementing the standards. However, teachers, school leaders, and district administrators began working collaboratively, collegially, and in professional learning structures through faculty meetings, curriculum writing committees, and implementation committees in implementing the English I curriculum.

Cooptation within this setting, whereby teachers and administrators linked the ELA CCSS to previously implemented curriculum documents for compliance purposes largely represented a planned strategy that enabled the district administration to begin mobilizing resources, as a first step in the implementation process, while still meeting state implementation deadlines. The idea of cooptation as expressed by study participants, as noted in field observations, and as depicted in archival documents clearly showed little to no change in instructional practices. However, knowledge building

towards understanding the language of the standards, the use of the standards in lesson plans, and the alignment of standards to school goals depicted increased familiarity by staff and school leaders in the utilization of the standards.

Across all subunits of analysis, and regardless of the level of English teachers taught, the use of a common language pertinent to the ELA standards and the belief by study participants that the ELA CCSS represent a necessary pedagogical shift in society depicts a change in beliefs and a conveyed will to implement the standards by policy the intermediaries. Professional development, feedback, and other support structures provided the necessary scaffolding and knowledge building necessary for the teachers to develop a common language and the motivation for implementation of the standards.

Throughout the study, teachers noted multiple changes in instructional practices towards implementing the standards including utilizing literature to teach ELA skills development, an increased use of non-fiction text, the analysis of complex age- and grade-appropriate text, and the citing of evidence in writing. Interview transcripts and field observations described the adaptations that occur in instructional strategies across individuals. Moreover, in the absence of a well-articulated and authentically aligned curriculum, teachers tended towards finding their own third-party resources for lesson planning and classroom instruction while still expressing the inclusion of classroom strategies aligned to the goals of the ELA CCSS. When the district rolls out the next set of curriculum documents in the 2014-2015 school year for grades 10 and 12, many of those grade-level teachers may have differing philosophies, beliefs, and goals towards teaching their classes, which may or may not align with the district's philosophy of teaching a curriculum aligned to the ELA CCSS.

Successful implementation of a curriculum, policy, or program constitutes a "mutually adaptive process" between the teacher and the educational setting (McLaughlin, 1976, para. 8). Within Riverdale High School, district administrators and school leaders have taken a purposeful and deliberate approach to implementation. The early stages of implementation included conformity and compliance measures, but school and district leaders utilized this early period in the implementation process to build knowledge about the standards, to expose teachers to the standards, and to mobilize the necessary resources for implementation of the standards. During the mobilization phase of implementation, teachers, school leaders, and district administrators recognized and dealt with sources of resistance and began collaborative work towards developing authentically aligned curricula. As the district and school work through the early implementation phase of the English I curriculum and continue into the early implementation phases of both the English II and English III curricula, they must continue to facilitate a process of support and collaboration towards effectively implementing the ELA CCSS as determined by the skills, strategies, and beliefs of the teachers in the classroom.

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Appendix A

NJDOE SGO Template

Blank Student Growth Objective template, utilized by teachers in the Riverdale School District. I have redacted a portion of the header, in order to maintain anonymity of the school district.

[redacted]

[redacted]

SGO Form (Simple)

Rev. 20131023

Grade	Subject	Number of Students	Interval of Instruction	
			Full year ☐ Semester ☐ Other:	
Name of Final Assessment			SGO Type	General ☐ Specific ☐

Rationale for Student Growth Objective
(Please include content standards covered and explanation of assessment method.)

Student Growth Objective

Baseline Data
(Please include what you know about your students' performance/skills/achievement levels at the beginning of the year, as well as any additional student data or background information used in setting your objective.)

Scoring Plan

Objective Attainment Level Based on Percent and Number of Students Achieving Target Score

Target Score	Exceptional (4)	Full (3)	Partial (2)	Insufficient (1)

Approval of Student Growth Objective

Teacher _____ Signature _____ Date Submitted _____

Supervisor _____ Signature _____ Date Approved _____

Principal _____ Signature _____ Date Approved _____

Results of Student Growth Objective

How many students met the final assessment target?	Score _____ Date _____	Teacher Signature _____ Supervisor Signature _____ Principal Signature _____
#		

Appendix B
Interview Protocols

Interview Protocol: Teachers

Script:

Hi, my name is Adam Angelozzi. I am in the dissertation phase of my doctoral studies at Rowan University, and I am conducting a study on the implementation of the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards in a high school setting. It is my hope that this study will serve to highlight the conditions and practices towards implementation of the standards that may, or may not work in similar settings (Patton, 2002, p. 224). This interview should not take any longer than one hour. If you are still interested in participating in the study, I have an informed consent form here that I would ask you to please read and sign before we get started. Also, please know that you will get a copy of the final interview transcript, and if there is any part of this interview that you do not want included in the study results it will be omitted.

1. Please tell me about your teaching career.
    - How long have you been teaching English?
    - How long have you been teaching English at this high school?
    - How many other schools have you taught at?
    - What levels of English have you taught?
    - What levels of English are you currently teaching?

2. Please tell me what you know about the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards?

3. To what extent do you utilize the standards in your lesson planning?

4. What professional development have you received on the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards?

5. In what other ways have you been supported towards the introduction and use of a curriculum aligned to the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards since the 2011-2012 school year?

6. Throughout the course of the past two school years, and up to this point in time, tell me about where you saw resistance towards implementing the standards.
    - How was this resistance addressed?

7. Tell me about how your beliefs have changed regarding teaching English Language Arts over the past two school years and up to this point in time.
    - Why do you feel that this change in beliefs occurred?

8. To what extent, have you changed your instructional practices in the classroom as a result of the implementation of the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards?
    - Why do you feel that this change in actions occurred?

9. Within the school and the district, explain how you could have been more supported during the introduction and implementation of the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards?

10. Last question: Is there anything more that you would like to add or talk about?

Script:

Thank you for participating in the study. At this time, I would like to make sure that I have the correct contact information for you as I will be contacting you in order to get approval for use of the final interview transcript. Additionally, I may need to clarify responses to some of the interview questions and/or ask additional follow up questions (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). Thank you once again for your participation in my study.

Interview Protocol: Administrators

Script:

Hi, my name is Adam Angelozzi. I am in the dissertation phase of my doctoral studies at Rowan University, and I am conducting a study on the implementation of the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards in a high school setting. It is my hope that this study will serve to highlight the conditions and practices towards implementation of the standards that may or may not work in similar settings (Patton, 2002, p. 224). This interview should not take any longer than one hour. If you are still interested in participating in the study, I have an informed consent form here that I would ask you to please read and sign before we get started. Also, please know that you will get a copy of the final interview transcript and if there is any part of this interview that you do not want included in the study results it will be omitted.

1. Please tell me about your career in education.
    - How long were you a teacher?
    - What subject(s) did you teach?
    - Where did you teach?
    - How long have you been an administrator?
    - In what capacities have you served as administrator?

2. Please tell me what you know about the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards?

3. To what extent should teachers utilize the standards in their lesson planning?

4. What professional development have you received on the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards?
    - What professional development have you been involved in giving on the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards?

5. In what other ways have you supported the introduction and use of a curriculum aligned to the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards since the 2011-2012 school year?

6. Throughout the course of the past two school years and up to this point in time, tell me about where you saw resistance towards implementing the standards coming from.
    - How did you handle this resistance?

7. Tell me about how your beliefs have changed regarding the introduction and use of the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards over the past two school years and up to this point in time.

8. What shifts in classroom instructional practices need to occur in order for the implementation of the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards to be successful?

10. How could you have been more supportive during the introduction and implementation of the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards?

11. Last question: Is there anything more that you would like to add or talk about?

Script:

Thank you for participating in the study. At this time, I would like to make sure that I have the correct contact information for you as I will be contacting you in order to get approval for use of the final interview transcript. Additionally, I may need to clarify responses to some of the interview questions and/or ask additional follow up questions (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). Thank you once again for your participation in my study.

Appendix C

Codebook

The complete codebook utilized in the study, which includes the first cycle descriptive codes, the categorization of first cycle into second cycle codes, and the second cycle pattern codes.

First Cycle Topic Codes	Description	Examples from Transcribed Interviews
Accountability - General Testing	A passage that describes accountability measures as general testing. Examples could include HSPA testing, mid-term exams, and district-wide assessments.	"In reality, the fact that every year my name gets brought up when testing comes around and how well my kids did. That's the bottom line."
Accountability - Observations	A passage that describes observation or other means of evaluation as a method of accountability.	"Moving forward all of these things have to be looked at in conjunction with each other and not as isolated skills, but as a check-and-balance, that teacher evaluation is now the check-and-balance of instruction and articulation of the Common Core itself.
Accountability - PARCC	Any reference to the accountability under the new mandated testing system or the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC).	"…break it down sentence by sentence, paragraph by paragraph in order to really be able just to focus on the one objective and teach them knowing that the PARCC is on its way and the complexity of PARCC is going to be that much more difficult for them."
CCSS - Alignment	A passage describing the alignment of the curriculum (not necessarily the written curriculum) to the CCSS.	"I think that comes from especially last year when we're writing the curriculum and putting in all of these activities, yet it had to be aligned to the standards and we spent six months doing that…"

CCSS - Fit Lessons	A statement made about fitting the CCSS into plans and practices, which teachers had previously enacted under the former standards.	"The standards that are in the curriculum guide and that are adopted by all these states, it's almost like we work around them not so much for them. We find a way to make the standards fit, as opposed to here are the standards, let's find a way to teach them."
CCSS - Good	A belief that the implementation of the ELA CCSS has been beneficial to the students and their learning, or that it has been beneficial to teaching in the classroom.	"I think the kids have really flourished under what I believe is results of the common core being implemented. Really, the curriculum wouldn't have been fashioned the way that it is, without the common core; because of the very heavy focus on non-fiction."
CCSS - Language	The use of language inherent within the ELA CCSS or the rationale utilized to describe the need for the CCSS. Examples include but are not limited to rigor, non-fiction text, text complexity, and lexile.	"The emphasis is on critical skills, critical reading, being able to apply knowledge and not just memorize it in isolation."
CCSS - Lesson Plans	The use of the ELA CCSS embedded within the lesson planning process.	"I've done multiple lessons this year where I've had students cite evidence, and that's the standard. They do it in such different ways, that they wouldn't even realize they're doing the same thing again; that they're covering the same standard."
CCSS - Politics	Any reference to the politics behind the development and implementation of the standards from a state-wide or national perspective.	"Myself, doing research into it and realizing that it was all, really, politics, and that the federal government isn't allowed to control curriculum, but

		by offering a large sum of money to each state, that they were able to transform it, in that sense, was very frustrating to me."
Change - Same	A reference to no change at all, or that that the new CCSS are the same as the previous standards.	"…but at heart they're not any different than what we've already done, what we've always done. It's just a matter of almost trying to justify what you do backwards instead of having the justification and then proceeding,…"
Change - Too Much	A belief that there are too many initiatives all at once, or that other initiatives impact the implementation process of the ELA CCSS.	"I think the number of additional requirements that are put upon the staff makes it that much more difficult to do. I think the new observation system is … Every time you turn around, there's more paperwork, there's more accountability and so even though people certainly understand the reason for doing it, I think that it has taken a toll on morale in terms of the teachers and in terms of explaining it."
Curriculum - Guide	A reference to utilizing curriculum guides in lesson planning and preparation.	"…and the curriculum guides are a lot more meaningful when it comes to the day-to-day meat of what we teach if that makes sense."
Goals/Objectives	Establishing unit or lesson goals and/or objectives, in the lesson planning and preparation process, aligned to the CCSS.	"…but now that the Common Core is a part of us, I am definitely making sure that my objectives are much more paired with the

		standards.”
Instructional Shift - General	A reference to a shift in instructional practices as a result of implementing the ELA CCSS.	“…because of all these non-fiction pieces that I’ve started to infuse, that I actually end up being a math teacher at times, and a science teacher at times. I’m actually able to touch on so many more content areas, and become so much more cross-curricular with what I’m teaching; which is great,…”
Instructional Shift - Independent Work	An espoused belief of instructional shifts towards more independent reading and/or more student-centered instructional activities.	“I'm also doing more independent work, having the students do more independent reading because this is again what I am understanding what they are going to be required to do.”
Instructional Shift - Material Resources	A belief that new material resources are needed to implement the CCSS, or the use of new materials resources.	“We have a new text called The Bedford Reader. It’s a series of essays, and the non … a lot of the non-fiction resources are coming directly from there.”
Instructional Shift - Old Gone	No longer utilizing some former instructional practices in order to utilize the new instructional practices needed for the implementation of the ELA CCSS.	“Writing, using those words then writing. It's more than just … Again, I'll go back a few years, being able to use a dictionary when you didn’t know what a word meant. That's no longer necessary.”
Reality - Hierarchical Level	An examination of the reality of the current situation at the specified hierarchical level.	“The kids are coming to us, honor students unable to write sentences now. There’s nowhere within the standards for me to teach basic grammar, there literally is no

		grammar standards. Yet, the kids don't know it."
Advocacy Students	The interviewee advocates for children within the context of implementing the ELA CCSS.	"I talk about why is everything so rigid that we have no time to focus on nurturing kids and having them be creative and interact with one another, and everything is so high level."
Resistance - Change	A belief or perception that resistance comes from the idea of change itself.	"The only real resistance is the resistance that comes with any kind of change. I think people are intimidated because they have to make something different."
Resistance - Literature	Resistance emanating from the idea that implementing ELA CCSS means losing fiction literature.	"Literature is apparently not as valuable anymore is what we're being told. I don't know. It's weird. It's disheartening for me. It really is."
Resistance - Practice	Resistance is due to a perceived change in instructional or classroom practice.	"You're (the students) supposed to gain the knowledge through the skill rather than gain a knowledge through the memorization. Even applying concepts is not obviously not enough for the Common Core. That should be still on the bottom level and English teachers I know for a fact are very resistant in giving kids the passage and saying instead of asking them who are this characters, when did this take place, which one happen in which chronological order."
Support - Time	The need for time to work with colleagues in order to examine and analyze the standards for use in	"We never actually just sat for a period of time with the standards in

	lesson plans and the classroom.	front of us, though. As English teachers.”
Support - A Voice	A belief that the person wants to have his or her voice heard in the implementation process.	“I think we're never asked enough about how we would do something, and I think it's quite helpful.”
Support - Administrative	An espoused belief about general administrative support.	“We did have, I would say, probably a year where we were getting feedbacks on our lessons, pretty much regularly, almost every week. ‘You're using your standards well. Maybe think about exploring the strand.’”
Support - Ancillary Resources	An espoused belief that ancillary resources act as supports towards implementation of the new standards.	“…allowed us subscription to the New York Times. We all get through the English Department at least for New York Times articles that our students certainly have access to. A lot of people pull in those non-fiction pieces from that. Of course, we also have Acheive 3000, which have been utilized for many years in the junior curriculum.”
Support - Need for Examples	The belief or perception that there is a need for concrete examples, or that not enough real-world classroom examples are part of the available supports.	“I tell you, the biggest thing that I think was lacking was definitive substantial description of these are the changes we would like to see you make.”
Support - No Professional Development	The notion that the teachers have not received on professional development related to the implementation of the ELA CCSS.	“After that, I tell you I don’t recall any specific PD about it. It was mentioned an awful lot how to access it OnCourse and that kind of thing, but I don’t think

		there was anything else in terms of looking at it as a whole and understanding them and looking at change or anything like that. I don't remember anything like that."
Support - On Our Own	A belief that the teachers had to determine certain aspects of the ELA CCSS on their own, or that they attended professional development outside of the district on their own.	"I'm in grad school. Not grad school, but I already have my masters', so I'm actually getting my supervisor certification, and so a few of my classes have been very helpful in giving me more information about the common core. A lot of the professors will put on PowerPoints and on line resources for common core, to take a look at. That's been very helpful."
Support - PD	Professional development as a source of support towards implementation.	"I really think that, in my opinion, whoever says we did get blind-sided by that, I think we're much more well-prepared than some of the other teachers I've spoken with in elementary school, with my kids who have no idea what these terms even meant. I do think our district is doing a good job of letting us experiment with things…"
Top Down - Administrative	The belief that the administration was responsible for the new standards, or that decisions made towards implementation started with the administration.	"Until the district decides its summer reading there is going to continue to be a disconnect in the beginning of the year. The most effective summer reading was when the students got to

		read it on their own and they got to choose their book."
Top Down - State/Federal	A reference to the change of implementing the new standards emanated from the state and/or federal government.	"Yeah, I remember. It was really just a matter of all the states are jumping on board and we're trying to as well. There was a lot of talk about qualifying for whatever stake or federal aid that came down to agree to this certain standard and changes and all that."

Second Cycle Pattern Codes	**Description**	**First Cycle Topic Codes**
Support/Capacity Building	Support and capacity building towards implementing the ELA CCSS. The types of support noted took on many forms including the use curriculum guides aligned to the ELA CCSS, internal and external professional development opportunities, the use of ancillary materials for implementing the standards, and generalized support and feedback from the administration.	Support - Administrative Support - Ancillary Resources Support - Professional Development Curriculum Guide
Additional Support Needed	A pattern, with regard to implementing the ELA CCSS, of study participants needing additional supports, discontentment with current aids, and lack of meaningful professional development. The theme points to additional supports perceived as beneficial to the implementation process of the new standards as not in place.	Support - Need for Examples Support - On Our Own Support - No PD

Reality of the Organizational Level	Notions and ideas that conveyed an environment of top-down mandates, a concern for student needs, too much change at one time, a lack of understanding of the current work environment, and the always looming accountability factors emerged throughout the first cycle of descriptive coding. Thematically, these views merged into a theme that describes the reality of the working environment within the case study.	Change - Too Much Reality - Hierarchical Level Advocacy Students Top Down - Administration Top Down - State/Federal Accountability - General Testing Accountability - Observations Accountability - PARCC
Resistance towards Implementation/ Cooptation	The theme of resistance and cooptation emerged from teachers' and administrators' descriptions of compliance models of implementation, resistance to specific types of change, and practices and beliefs remaining the same.	CCSS - Fit Lessons CCSS - Politics Change - Same Resistance - Change Resistance - Literature Resistance - Practice
Successful Implementation /Mutual Adaptation	Descriptions of successful implementation and mutual adaptation conveyed ideas relevant to successful implementation of the ELA CCSS. These descriptions concern the alignment of instructional practices, goals, objectives, curriculum documents, lesson plans, and resources to the ELA CCSS.	CCSS - Good CCSS - Alignment CCSS - Language CCSS - Lesson Plans Instructional Shift - General Instructional Shift - Independent Work Instructional Shift - Material Resources Goals/Objectives Instructional Shift - Old Gone Support - Time Support - A Voice