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Teachers' Experiences with the Implementation of the Common Core State Standards

Julie A. Bryant

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Teachers' Experiences with the Implementation of the Common Core State Standards

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Studies

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Dedication

This dissertation is intended to value, honor, and thank every teacher who does the real work and has a story to tell about why they do what they do.

Acknowledgements

None of this would have been possible without the flexibility and dedication of my participants. They shared amazing stories of teaching. Some remembered good teachers from their childhood, and some remembered not so good teachers, but all of my participants teach because someone made a difference in their lives. They love their state, and they love their students. They believe in their students' success, and in their ability to overcome and fight for an education that they deserve. I will forever be grateful for the opportunity to hear about lives as teachers. Every single one of the teachers in this study deserves to be respected, trusted, and celebrated for honor and achievement. I hope that this dissertation serves them in that way.

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This is for my family, who has supported me in every way throughout my whole life. To my mom, who never put limits on what I could do. She never threw an obstacle in my way, and only offered paths for success. Her compassion guides me. Whatever I do in my life I owe to this hard-working, incredibly intelligent, generous woman. Elizabeth Plevka, my sweet sister; you are my everything. Your talents are abundant. I only hope that the last 4 years have inspired you to keep learning. There is never ending knowledge about the world to be had. Mom and Elizabeth, you inspire me to work hard, give generously, and love.

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ABSTRACT

Trust is essential in effective change, and this study examined the role trust plays in implementing policy change. This study begins to define the critical role of educator trust historically, through No Child Left Behind, and moves it forward in an exponential way as it applies to educator trust in this current wave of policy reform. This qualitative study examined how six teachers experienced the implementation of the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards during the first two years of required implementation in a southwestern state. The focus of this study examined these experiences by answering three primary questions: (a) How are teachers experiencing the implementation of English Language Arts (ELA) Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the accompanying assessments? (b) How have teachers been informed about the CCSS and the accompanying assessments? (c) How are teachers incorporating CCSS into their practice? Previous research in the area of significant policy change shows that change is a complex process that requires stakeholders play diverse roles. Importantly, this study examines the conflation of policy reforms in the experiences of these educators. Using qualitative methods of research and analysis, six teachers from six schools in four regions of this southwestern state were interviewed. Three in-depth phenomenological interviews were conducted with each participant. The teacher sample included a novice teacher, two mid-career teachers, and three late-career teachers. The findings of this study indicate that teachers are struggling with trust throughout the educational system. The facets of trust emerged in this study as teachers shared their experiences as well as their concern for their students' experiences. Assessments, curricula, and teacher evaluations were a significant factor in each teacher's experience implementing the ELA CCSS. This supports the strong relationship between trust and change and moves forward the idea that to make those two factors work in schools, teachers must play a significant role in policy change. The reinstatement of an education system that values teachers' work and knowledge of their students' needs and learning outcomes is necessary to make policy successful.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Educational reform is a difficult challenge at any level. Many recent educational policy reform and subsequent implementation practices have been done through a top-down approach. Top-down approaches are ones in which decisions are made by a single, authoritarian entity--most often a governmental organization. This hierarchical approach leaves out the stakeholders on the ground. As Elmore (2008) pointed out, this leads to confusion, mixed messages about implementation, and often a resistance to the reform itself. The top-down approach is in opposition to a bottom-up approach to reform. A bottom-up approach takes into account the people who are most affected by the mandates of the policy (Sabatier, 1986). Teachers, community members, and students would be the important stakeholders to consider when using a bottom-up approach to reform. Pearson (2013) explained how the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were created and implemented using a markedly top-down approach.

With the current climate of states taking up and then dropping different elements of the CCSS, with strong lobbies insisting that their research shows elements of the CCSS to be positive or negative, and with various organizations shifting in and out of support, it is no wonder that the teachers in the classroom are having such a difficult time understanding and experiencing the reform. The problem lies in the manner in which

policy reforms are created, implemented, and enforced. Elmore (2008) shared the paramount problem when he said, “To succeed, school reform has to happen ‘from the inside out’” (p. 3).

Purpose of the Study

This qualitative study is an analysis of the experiences that teachers have had in the implementation stage of the English Language Arts (ELA) CCSS. It describes how teachers view the implementation process, what their understandings are of the CCSS, and how the implementation of this education policy has affected their teaching practice.

My specific objective was to understand the experiences teachers had with this new, nationally focused, reform policy. Through the lens of a social constructivist paradigm, I focused on understanding the world of policy reform in which these teachers lived and worked. As Creswell (2007) pointed out, a social constructivist seeks to construct meaning in the world. In this vein, I sought to understand the complexity, not the simplicity, of different teachers’ experiences with CCSS, beginning with their teaching prior to CCSS and continuing through how they made meaning of their experiences teaching during the implementation of CCSS.

Merriam (2009) explains why a researcher does qualitative research. She writes, “Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to experiences” (p. 5). This is the purpose of this study. It also exemplifies the reason behind the questions that drove this study.

Research Questions

The following questions guided this research:

- How are teachers experiencing the implementation of English Language Arts (ELA) Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the accompanying assessments?
- How have teachers been informed about the CCSS and the accompanying assessments?
- How are teachers incorporating the CCSS into their practices?

Research Approach

This study is a qualitative study that uses in-depth phenomenological interviewing as the primary method of data collection. Seidman (2012) makes the case for in-depth interviewing as a way of “exploring the meaning of peoples’ experiences in the context of their lives” (p. 20). Using that essential understanding of why in-depth interviewing is an effective tool for understanding human experience, the in-depth interviewing followed Seidman’s (2012) framework of three separate, 60-90 minute, open-ended interviews.

Interview 1: This interview focused on the participants’ life histories. Teachers were asked to describe their lives up to the point of becoming a teacher. They were asked to contextualize their experiences. The main question in this first interview was: “How did you come to be a teacher? Follow-up and probing questions were used to reconstruct their motivation for becoming a teacher and place it within the contexts of their lives.

Interview 2: This interview narrowed in on concrete details of their present teaching experiences within the implementation stage of the ELA CCSS. The main interview questions were: “How did you come about information regarding the implementation of the ELA CCSS?” and “What support or professional development opportunities are you being given to implement the CCSS and to understand and

implement their accompanying assessments?” These questions, and the follow-up and probing questions, were used to capture what was happening to the teachers during the CCSS roll out.

Interview 3: The participants were asked to reflect upon the meaning of the experiences and stories they shared. As Seidman (2012) emphasizes, this interview should focus on the meaning, or the essence, of the connections between the teachers’ life and work. The main question was simply: “What does this all mean?” Follow-up and probing questions looked for the authenticity of participants’ reflections.

Six profiles were created. Three are in depth and look closely at the themes and categories presented by each of the participants. These profiles are presented as verbatim first-person narratives of how teachers experienced the ELA CCSS and its accompanying assessments. The remaining three are abbreviated but in no way of lesser importance.

The in-depth interviews provide information about the participants’ perceptions and experiences (Merriam, 2009). The insight gathered through this in-depth interviewing provided insight into teachers’ experiences with this sweeping reform. A qualitative approach was most appropriate because of my interest in understanding the multiple realities of teachers’ daily work and thinking.

Document Analysis. Document analysis was used throughout this research. The benefit of document analysis is that documents had already been produced. Merriam (2009) points out that documents exist before a study begins, and they do not alter the research setting. Because of this, they are beneficial to research when they can be used. In this study, the documents that I used added to the validity of the interviews and verified the participants’ experiences with the ELA CCSS.

The documents that were useful as data in this study included lesson plans, professional development agendas and handouts, district and school documents, and other materials given to the participants that explain, or give directions about, implementation of the policy reform. These documents became vital to creating a full story of the experiences the participants had while making their way through the implementation of the ELA CCSS. They were necessary for the triangulation of the study. By including these documents, the data gathered was more likely to be verifiable, accurate, and more credible (Creswell, 2007).

Participant Journals. The other document that I collected and analyzed was a participant journal. These journals were meant to be another opportunity to triangulate the data collected. Journals are a good way to collect additional insights into the participants' perceptions of their experiences (Bowen, 2009). The journals were presented to the participants at the onset of the interview series. The participants were asked to reflect upon our interviews and to add any additional thoughts or questions that might come up after the interview. It was my intent that in addition to the other documents collected, these journals would contain themes that supported, or added to, the themes that emerged through the interviews. Unfortunately, as it was the beginning of the school year when the interviews took place, the journals were not as successful as I intended, and only a few were collected. They contained little information that was new but did validate the shared the experiences of the teachers who returned them.

Researcher Perspectives

I am an experienced classroom teacher. I was a fairly new teacher during the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), known as No

Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2002. This act left many teachers, including me, perplexed as to what this meant in the classrooms in which they were so thoroughly invested. It came soon after our school district had spent hundreds of thousands of dollars investing in book sets, book rooms, and professional development materials that focused on engaging students with these sets of books that were meant to provide differentiated instruction with real literature. Before we knew it, the books and the book rooms became obsolete. Shiny new boxes, or kits, of core literacy programs, replaced them. The kits included everything it was believed we would need to instruct students in authentic literacy practices.

These authentic literacy practices included reading out of a teacher's guide and using book sets written by the publishers themselves. As the school district readied these kits and the implementation of these kits, I had just finished a master's degree in education with a reading endorsement. I was prepared to teach reading using authentic reading practices and strategies. I was not prepared to use this new literature and the accompanying manuals to teach students how to read. I was not prepared to teach reading to students needing extra support by using remedial reading programs that came in a whole different box. These boxes were the reason I left my job as a literacy specialist. I was not prepared to teach using a direct instruction, supplemental program that had students "repeat after me" as the primary method of "catching up" to their peers. I was outraged to be going backwards, to erasing years of investment in good literature and professional development that included focusing on practices that seemed to be working, and to have little say-so in whether my professional expertise was honored and valued.

I was also involved over several years in developing both statewide standards, based upon the requirements of NCLB, and grade-level expectations (GLEs) for the school district in which I was teaching. This was one of the hallmarks of the NCLB requirements. Teachers and community members came together with state-level and district-level administrators to create the learning standards and expectations for their students. While there were many other flaws in this legislation, that is one thing that NCLB did: It honored, to an extent, the input of the people on the ground. However, the idea of different standards for different communities and states became part of the catalyst behind the CCSS. Creating one standard for all, a standard that would keep students competing on a global level, was the basis of the CCSS (CoreStandards.org, 2014).

Researcher Assumptions

As a former teacher who has experienced significant educational policy reform, I bring a set of assumptions to this study. I also bring a set of assumptions related to my stance in social constructivism. These assumptions may or may not be warranted, and I am fully prepared for this study to bring out important issues in how teachers experience the educational policy reforms that are bound to occur multiple times in their careers. I also am completely aware that my own assumptions about the participants may be incorrect. I was open to their experiences being different from what I expect. The data, not my assumptions, tells the stories. The first assumption I am making is that educational policy reform is difficult for teachers in the classroom to process. It often comes at teachers with little warning and with little input requested. I believe that the significance, or impact, of the reform is not often immediately felt, or it is felt with

immediate dread and fear. The impact of the CCSS policy is many-fold. Many teachers in the midst of this movement are feeling the fear of the impact that student test scores will have on their own careers. In an ever-increasing atmosphere of high-stakes testing, in many states, including this one, teachers are living with the unknown. It is unknown how this round of policy will affect their jobs. In previous policy reforms, student test scores being tied to teacher jobs was not as immediate of a potential outcome. I believe because of this fear, teachers are experiencing this round completely differently from teachers during previous reforms, including myself.

The second assumption of this study is that the way in which this particular educational reform was introduced to teachers goes against decades of educational reform research. Pearson (2013) describes different approaches to policy implementation. He described the idea of top-down and bottom-up approaches to policy and policy implementation. Without a doubt, this latest educational policy reform is one of a top-down model. In top-down models, policy comes from a hierarchical, governmentally dictated approach. This is in opposition to the bottom-up model in which the other stakeholders, in this case, teachers, have a hand in the design and implementation policy of the reform (Sabatier, 1996). Pearson cites research that shows that this could be one of the downfalls of the CCSS. The idea of teacher beliefs and efficacy was ignored, and even though the policy itself said teachers have a great deal of control over decisions of curriculum, it is unclear if that will be the result.

Rationale and Significance

Teachers play the most significant role in the success of any reform measure within educational systems. Cohen and Hill (2001) showed that teachers have a

significant impact on policy implementation. They used their study on implementation of a new math curriculum in California to show that how teachers learned about the implementation, the assessment practices, and the opportunities to learn how to implement these policies in their classrooms was a significant factor in the policy's success. Those opportunities for learning were an essential link in the chain that connected teacher classroom practices with policy implementation. How teachers experienced this reform was critical to its success.

How teachers experience this reform is contingent on the knowledge they have gained throughout their lives and in their classrooms. From a social constructivist point of view, this understanding of the construction of meaning from multiple perspectives has the potential to impact how policymakers create and implement educational policies in the future. Policy in the past few decades has been driven by standards. Student achievement in relation to those standards has been the defining factor that policymakers have used to judge education as a success or a failure. Little attention has been paid to the role that teachers' own understandings and experiences play into the success of the implementation of the standards. With the clear admittance that teachers have had very little input into the creation of the CCSS, such systemic reform was bound to fail (Rothman, 2012).

Organization of Dissertation

Chapter Two of this dissertation provides a review of relevant literature. Following the literature review, Chapter Three gives the reader an overview of the methodology used in designing the study, conducting the research, and analyzing the data. Chapter Four communicates the findings of the research and analysis in the form of

verbatim narrative profiles and analysis of the profiles gathered from in-depth interviews. Finally, Chapter Five presents a discussion of the findings, conclusions, and suggestions for further research.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

The purpose of this study is to examine how teachers understand and experience the ELA CCSS. The study further examines how teachers have been informed about the CCSS and the accompanying assessments, how they incorporate the CCSS into their classroom practice, and how they evaluate the ELA CCSS, the accompanying assessments, and their implementation. By looking at how teachers experience the changing external forces that are meant to shape their internal classroom practices, educational policy reformers can better understand how to implement these changes systemically.

This literature review takes a critical look at educational policy and the history of the federal government's presence in educational reforms that focus on high stakes accountability and how that impacts teachers. To answer the question about teachers' experiences with CCSS and its accompanying assessments, I provide a review of the history of the CCSS, including how it came to be, what the publicized intentions were, and who had a hand in the creation. I also examine and analyze the literature on how educational policy and its implementation have occurred historically in education. In light of this, this literature review looks at how teachers' practices and education policy reform functions.

Finally, I explore the concept of professional capital (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012), and apply it to teacher practices and education policy reform. Professional capital is a combination of human capital, social capital, and decisional capital. It applies how

teachers use their experience, expertise, and drive to continually learn and work with their colleagues to better serve the needs of their students.

History of Educational Reform

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act. On April 11, 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed legislation that signaled a new generation of educational reform (Brademas, 1987). The bill he signed was called the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Research about the creation of the ESEA shows that the act was a result of unrest in the legislative and executive branches of the federal government in regards to poverty and the impact it had on the social, educational, and employment opportunities of its citizens. The ESEA was seen originally by many as a way in which the neediest citizens could be helped through educational programs. It enjoyed fairly nonpartisan support in its inception, but overtime the ESEA has become more partisan, more contentious, and more complex. It has been reauthorized many times, each time with more oversight, more emphasis on standards and assessments, and more emphasis on accountability (DeBray, 2006).

According to DeBray (2006) the ESEA went through three major phases. The first occurred at induction and lasted until approximately 1980. In this phase, there was much that was confusing and unknown about the act. Reports found misunderstanding about its purpose, its use, and whether it was aimed at eliminating poverty or was a way for the federal government to intrude on education in the form of financial incentives. What occurred during this phase was a general working out of the problems. Amendments were passed, lists and directives were written, and clarifications ensued. All of this was done in an effort to maintain the original intent, to ensure that children living in the poorest

conditions in America were being given the education they needed to eradicate poverty. DeBray reports that many education administrators continued to struggle with the act *not* being a general aid to education and that its resources and funds were strictly to be used for those in the neediest circumstances. I would argue for a fourth phase, one that begins with NCLB and is discussed in this study.

The second phase of the ESEA followed during the 1980s. At that time, during the presidencies of Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush, DeBray (2006) reports that the ESEA did not maintain the strong support it had during the first phase. Because of this, there was no considerable attention, funding, or student increases in achievement, and the act began to cause what Elmore and McLaughlin (1988) refers to as a “fracturing” of school cultures. The way that schools used the funds that were allocated from the ESEA generated considerable strife. Federally funded Title I programs and programs for the disabled often were in conflict with the general education programs within the schools. However, a game-changing report was issued during this phase that said that the education system in the United States was not living up to its potential and was failing its students.

A Nation at Risk. Despite a lack of Reagan administration support in this second phase, a report came out in 1983 titled *A Nation at Risk* (U.S. Department of Education). This report, which was put together during a two-year process by a specially formed commission, argued that education in the United States was severely at risk. It showed ways that the fractured system was failing its students. This report informed policymakers, educators, and the public that students were not being challenged, that classes being offered in math and science were deficient, that students had less homework

and less work in general than students in other nations, and that grades were being inflated across institutions (U.S. Department of Education).

Prior to *A Nation at Risk*, during the 1970s and 1980s in particular, the focus was on providing an education in “the basics.” After the report, more attention was brought to the idea that more rigor was needed in how we teach and learn in our schools. The discussions of education reform began to look at pedagogical practices and student achievement. States were pressured to increase their attention to student achievement, assessments, and more intellectually challenging curricula (Cohen & Hill, 2000). These changes brought rise to the third phase of the ESEA.

The third phase was dominated by the changing conceptualization of the original intent of ESEA in two primary ways. The two major shifts that occurred were the realization and evaluation that the act was not working for the students it targeted. Because of this, applying the act to all students opened up the act. Title I language was changed under the administration of President Bill Clinton to “support the same academic expectations for all students” (DeBray, 2006, p. 28). While DeBray declares that there hasn’t been a significant impact of the ESEA, or Title I, on students’ achievement, an important study was done that looked at this from a different light. During this phase, there was a major push by the Clinton administration to create national standards. It didn’t go far because of a major pushback on the idea of federal involvement in education by the majority Republican Congress.

The other major change in teaching practice and policy during this phase was the intensification of what could be called the standards movement. During the late 1980s, policy discussions intensified in state legislatures, as did efforts to refine standards for

teaching practices and learning criteria (Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002). It was at this time that a paradigm shift began to occur in the way that teaching was viewed. Geijsel and Meijers (2005) describes this period of teacher practice research as one in which teachers went from being the targets of curricular decisions to agents of change. The idea of teachers becoming decision makers and collaborative, driving forces behind change is important for this study. It is teachers who are the implementing agents of reform. The way teachers engage in policy reform in their classrooms is critical to understand for policy reformers, especially in this era of high-stakes, assessment-driven reform.

No Child Left Behind. This brings me to what I assert is the fourth phase of the ESEA and of educational reform. This phase of high-stakes, data-driven accountability is one that has changed the way that teachers practice and the way that they interact with reform policies. Over the past several decades, reforms have focused on accountability (Elmore, 2008). In 2002, President George W. Bush signed the latest reauthorization of the ESEA; the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001. This act was the work of the administrations of Presidents Bush and Clinton and focused on accountability, which was the center of both of their education agendas. According to DeBray (2006), President Bush did not initiate this reform; he just made it more of a solid construct. He finished the work that was started by Clinton in the 1990s during Phase Three. Prior to NCLB, only nine states tested students in both literacy and math. By the 2005-2006 school year, NCLB required that all states test yearly in both literacy and math. NCLB also required that by the 12th year after the implementation of NCLB, all children enrolled in Grades 3-8 in public schools be 100 percent proficient on these yearly, high-stakes tests. This hasn't happened, and the stakes once again have been raised in terms of accountability.

Race to the Top. The administration of President Barack Obama has worked, to no avail, to reauthorize this latest version of ESEA, purportedly by giving more flexibility to schools. The ESEA act, as of 2014, was more than a decade overdue for reauthorization. According to Arne Duncan, the Secretary of Education in the Obama administration, “No Child Left Behind has given the country transparency about the progress of at-risk students. But its inflexible accountability provisions have become an obstacle to progress and have focused schools too much on a single test score” (ed.gov, 2013). The administration has given states an opportunity to receive a waiver in which they have alternatives to accountability measures.

These accountability measure alternatives are housed under the Obama administration’s Race to the Top (RTTT) Fund. This fund was authorized under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). It was not a reauthorization of the ESEA but is a fund to support competition between states to close achievement gaps and get more students into colleges. Many of the states use funds from grants afforded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to hire consultants and prepare for the application of the RTTT funds (Kovacs, 2010).

The RTTT initiative supports four key reform strategies. These strategies, according to ed.gov, are (a) adopting more rigorous standards and assessments; (b) recruiting, evaluating, and retaining highly effective teachers and principals; (c) turning around low-performing schools; and (d) building data systems that measure student success. While there is still acrimony over the issue of state, federal, and local control over education issues, RTTT has been funded by Congress each year since its inception (ed.gov).

While the CCSS are purportedly voluntarily adopted by the states, McLaughlin and Overturf (2012) disclose two facts about CCSS and RTT. The first is that to get needed education money through RTT, states had to adopt a common curriculum, that being the CCSS. Secondly, states could extend the standards by 15% and make other modifications such as name changes. The most common name change was to add the states name to the CCSS title. Some states added literature standards and cultural competency standards to their CCSS.

Common Core State Standards. The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) (National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010) are a broad effort on the part of stakeholders across the spectrum in terms of interest in educational outcomes for students. In an effort to remain a state-led movement, the standards were created by two organizations, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association (NGA). The two organizations, as two organizations separate from the federal government, created two separate teams. One was for English language arts; the other, mathematics (Applebee, 2013).

While the ELA CCSS is clear on the specific standards that are required for each student to be college and career ready, the documents of both math and language arts CCSS specify that teachers should use their own knowledge of teaching pedagogy and curriculums to teach the standards. In fact, in the ELA CCSS document there is a section heading in the introduction that says “A focus on results rather than means” (p. 4). This says that teachers, curriculum developers, and states should determine how the goals of the ELA CCSS are going to be met, as long as the goals are achieved. This is an important piece to remember for this study and the experiences of the teachers.

Specific to this study is a need for an overview of the ELA CCSS document itself. The ELA CCSS are the specifics to the broader foundation of the College and Career Readiness (CCR) standards. The CCR standards are 10 standards that outline what students need to be college and career ready. Out of the CCR came the more targeted and detailed CCSS. Each standard of the CCSS is across a grade band. The grade bands are individual grades in k-8 and then in two-year bands in grades 9-12. The CCSS document calls the CCR “anchor standards” (National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). The CCR anchor standards were developed prior to the CCSS. The CCSS is an extension of the anchor standards and according to the document, are scientific research based, in line with what a student needs to be ready for college and career, are rigorous in expectations and outcomes, and are compared and aligned with international standards and expectations.

The ELA CCSS is a three-part document. The first part of the document is the “Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects: K-5.” This is an inclusive section that puts responsibility for these standards with the general education classroom teacher. In contrast, the second and third sections for grades 6-12 are divided in recognition that different subject teachers will be attending to the different standards. This second part is the “Standards for English Language Arts: 6-12.” This section is geared towards language arts teachers in the middle and high school levels. The third part is the “Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects.” This section is aimed at subject area teachers at those levels. They are the literacy standards applied to the subject matter at hand.

Following these three sections are three appendices. “Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects: Appendix A: Research Supporting Key Elements of the Standards Glossary of Key Terms” has extensive documentation in the format of short literature reviews of both peer-reviewed and non peer-reviewed research used to support the different parts of the ELA CCSS. Significantly, and one of the most talked about pieces of the ELA CCSS, is the explanation and in-depth discussion of the text complexity shift in the standards. The authors of the ELA CCSS put a great deal of effort in explaining their reasoning behind the shift to what they consider text complexity. In this section of Appendix A, there are charts, graphs, examples, and analysis of sample texts in support of the shift. Following the detailed coverage of the text complexity shift is a thorough framework of the Reading Foundations. The next piece of Appendix A is a treatment of the writing standards complete with a concise review of the research behind the focus on three types of writing: argument, informational/explanatory, and narrative. Special attention is paid to the research behind why argument writing is a focus of the writing standards. The remaining standards of the ELA are briefly covered, followed by an extensive reference list and a glossary of terms used throughout the document.

“Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects: Appendix B: Text Exemplars and Sample Performance Tasks” is the second appendix. In this appendix there are text exemplars for each grade level and suggested genre in the CCSS and, as is evidenced from the title, there are sample performance tasks. The lists of tasks, and exemplar texts are just that, examples. The introduction to the document makes it clear that these

exemplars and sample performance tasks are just a small example of what can be expected from the rigor of the standards.

The last appendix “Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects: Appendix C: Samples of Student Writing” has a wide variety of writing samples spanning the grade levels and writing genres within the ELA CCSS. The writing samples show just how the writing standards can be met across the grade levels by sampling exemplary writing with an analysis of the samples in relation to the ELA CCSS Writing Standards.

As is evidenced by this organizational examination of the ELA CCSS, it is a complex document. As McLaughlin and Overturf (2012) point out, teachers need time to examine, understand, and plan out how they are going to teach the standards to their students. The authors point out that the CCSS is a shift from the previous state created standards. They aren't meant to be a list of what to do. To effectively work with the standards, there needs to be a systematic look at the standards and their links to each other and across grade levels. McLaughlin and Overturf stress the importance of taking the time and having adequate professional development opportunities for proper implementation.

In 2010, the standards for mathematics and English language arts were released. The standards were a swing away from the NCLB mandates of individual state standards and toward a truly nationalized standards movement (Porter, McMaken, Hwang, & Yang, 2011). According to the *Brown Center Report on American Education* (Loveless, 2012) CCSS are standards that show what students should learn in English language arts and mathematics from kindergarten through Grade 12. The standards are meant to prepare

students in American schools to be competitive at an international level and to ready them for college and career.

Overall, The CCSS are meant to accomplish three things. According to the *Brown Center Report on American Education*, these are to raise the quality of education. Supporters and authors of the CCSS purport that the standards are of a higher quality than the splintered standards of the states. The second accomplishment is that the CCSS provide higher expectations than the state standards already in place because of NCLB. Thirdly, by standardizing expectations, the CCSS will create a more efficient education system. By creating standard textbook requirements and standard assessments, the CCSS will create a more centralized way of spending funds for education (Loveless, 2012). These assumptions are contested in the research literature; however, they are the intent of the CCSS and its creators.

Because this study examines the way in which teachers experience the CCSS and its assessments, the research on the impact of the CCSS assessments cannot be ignored. In 2010, two consortia were given federal grant dollars to create assessments that would be aligned with the then newly created standards. The assessments were to be comprehensive, taken on a computer, more complex than the previous individual state-created assessments, and would require students to comprehend and respond to more informational texts. The states eventually would take over the maintenance and continued testing requirements, but at the onset, the states would be awarded grants to work with the consortia (Doorey, 2012).

These standards have been adopted by a majority of states, as well as by the District of Columbia and various territories. As of this writing, 44 states, the District of

Columbia, and four U.S. Territories have approved and implemented the CCSS (“Standards in Your State,” 2014). Most recently, Indiana withdrew from the initiative, the first state to do so. Gov. Mike Pence indicated that Indiana wanted to make the decisions for its students based upon recommendations of the citizens who live and are invested in the state (Wong, 2014).

Additionally, not all of the states that have implemented the standards have partnered with the two state-led consortia to develop and implement high-stakes testing instruments for their students. Several originally had partnered with the consortia but over the past several years have withdrawn in favor of creating state-centered tests (Lu, 2014). The significance of this even for the purpose of this study is that this uncertainty of the impact, or depth of a given policy, often leads teachers to be hesitant in investing in policy implementation. This is evident in the research on teacher practice and education reform.

Teacher Practice and Educational Reform

There is a long history of research academy about the intersection of teachers’ practice and educational policy reform. Much of the research has been done on how educational reform occurs and how teaching practice situates itself as an agent of change. One significant study in which a fundamental mathematical curriculum change was taken on focused on California (Cohen & Hill, 2001); it showed that for educational policy and teacher practice to be successful and influential on student learning, certain factors must be in place.

Cohen and Hill (2001) set out three key factors that played into the success of the cohesion between teacher policy and math reform in California. These are important to

note for this study because of the newness of the reform effort being studied. First, there should be clarity between the differences in the policy itself and the implementation tools needed to make the policy successful. The researchers found that this was accomplished through opportunities for the teachers to see, and interact with, the specific goals of the new curriculum.

Teachers in Cohen and Hill's study had abundant opportunities to learn about the assessments and how the assessment results could, and should, drive instruction. They also had access to curricular materials that allowed for the students' learning to be increased. Most importantly, teachers were given learning opportunities for the particular curriculum, its materials and its assessments, and the time to see how it all connected to student learning. This clarity and opportunity for seeing student learning as it applies to reform policy is important for teachers. The clarity of what is expected in terms of policy, curriculum, and assessment is an issue that arises throughout the body of research discussed in this literature review.

Secondly, consistency between the policy instruments was critical. Curriculum, assessments, state and district documents and mandates, and professional development activities must align. While the CCSS document states that teachers should use their professional knowledge to choose and deliver appropriate instruction, there is a growing sense of disconnect about what is being communicated. In 2011, a guide for publishers was issued that used fairly divisive language on issues such as pre-reading and text engagement. Quickly, a revised document was released in 2012 that is a guide for publishers to create the materials for the CCSS. The *Revised Publishers' Criteria for the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Literacy, Grades 3-12*

(Coleman & Pimentel, 2012) outlined criteria for matching curricular material with the standards (Shanahan, 2012; Pearson, in press). This disconnect is an example of where reforms have failed (Cohen & Hill, 2001).

The third factor for success was that of giving learning opportunities to the teachers involved in the reform. Teachers were given the opportunity to delve into the learning of the students. They saw how the curriculum and the assessments worked to increase student achievement. Most importantly, the teachers were given ample opportunity to learn and internalize what the policy meant to them, their teaching, and their students' learning. Cohen and Hill (2001) emphasize the interrelatedness of policymakers' intent, curriculum, and teacher learning: "If learning has an important influence on the implementation of policy, those curricula could form a key connection between policy makers' ideas, on the one hand, and teachers' practice on the other" (p.32). In this statement, it is apparent that all three components must be in evidence for a reform to succeed.

Studies show that successful educational reform cannot occur without the commitment of the teachers involved in the implementation of the reform (Elmore & McLaughlin, 1988; Cohen & Hill, 2001; Elmore, 2008; Day, Sammons, & Stobart, 2007; Fullan, 2007). Most reform in the United States has been about policy. This policy emanates from a top-down structure in which policymakers, politicians, and corporate interests come together to disseminate the rhetoric of policy (Sabatier, 1986). However, policy and practice have been disconnected for decades (Cohen & Hill, 2001; Elmore, 2008). Elmore (2008) presents a picture of reform and practice as parallel structures. These two formidable, interdependent structures must combine to be successful.

Elmore (2008) summarizes the main challenge of any policy reform movement and states that “increasing performance in schools is complex and difficult work—much more difficult than simply changing policy” (p. 217). This works to explain his idea of parallel structures that must find a way to connect teacher practice and education policy in a more efficient manner. This connection, this interdependence, cannot be fostered until there is deeper and more practical support for practice (Cohen & Hill, 2001; Fullan, 2001; Elmore, 2008). Teachers must have clear directions and goals in regards to exactly how the policies should and will affect the learning challenges in their classrooms. The need for clear communication has vital in this era of frequent, and often conflicting, reform measures (Fullan, 2007).

Spillane, Reiser, and Reimer (2002) use the theory of social-cognition to explain how different teachers experience and interpret policy reform in dissimilar manners. This can be attributed to several causes, including the attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge (Rokeach, 1968; Ableson, 1979; Pajares, 1992; Calderhead, 1996; Fang, 1996; Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002) of each teacher. Each teacher, even those in the same building, will experience differences in interpretation. Even in situations where teachers may be in the same department, school, unit, or district, there are wide varieties of experiences and understandings (Hargreaves, 1994; Spillane et al., 2002; Datnow, 2011; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2007).

Elmore (2008) further extrapolates that teachers’ knowledge must be incorporated into developing education policy. One challenge of the California mathematics reform was that the math curriculum was new, in that it introduced completely new ways of teaching. One idea that various researchers have expanded upon is that teachers should

have the opportunity to learn from each other. Many researchers noted that this cannot be done with unnatural, forced learning opportunities (Hargreaves, 1994; Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002; Fullan, 2007; Datnow, 2011; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Spillane, Reiser, and Reimer (2002) refer to the importance of this when they talk about unclear, or conflicting, ideas about policy. When teachers have opportunities to clarify, talk aloud without repercussions, or think about others' viewpoints and experiences, they are likely to be exposed to and process these different viewpoints in a manner that gives them more time for reflection.

For decades, the importance of collaboration or collegiality has been expressed in the research on educational change and teacher practice. For teachers to experience change in the way in which they process their pedagogy and beliefs about teaching, several factors must be present. Hargreaves (1994) stresses the importance of collegiality that is informal, more spontaneous, and less driven and directed from the top. He cites the need for this collaboration in the age of data-driven, high-stakes, standardized teaching. Fullan (2007) uses the term "primacy of personal contact" to explain this further. Teachers need more than one-shot workshops. The model of one-day, externally contrived workshops won't work in this new era of reform. Teachers need time to talk to each other, to learn about what each is doing in terms of student learning and achievement and to create learning opportunities together in a social manner (Hargreaves, 1994; Geijsel & Meijers, 2005; Fullan, 2007; Datnow, 2011).

In line with the idea of collaboration, the intent of flexibility is important for teachers in the process of educational policy change. Datnow (2011) showed the importance of this when teachers in her study reported that they needed flexibility in the

spacing guidelines that are part of most, if not every, curriculum change. The teachers reported that they needed more time with the data, more time to reflect upon pedagogical strategies in order to determine what actions to take with the data and the students' learning. In other words, they needed time to socially construct, or reconstruct, the meaning of these assessments.

Researchers have recognized that teachers tend to exist in isolation, and when they are allowed and encouraged to work together informally, there are advantages for student learning. Educators need to share their knowledge to construct solutions for learning and teaching challenges, be they policies, assessments, or instrumental decisions. Given this information-- the idea that collaboration, learning opportunities, and sense-making are vital constructs in successful policy implementation in terms of teaching practice-- the notion of high-stakes assessment takes those two constructs up a notch in critical importance (Fullan, 2007; Coburn & Russell, 2008; Datnow, 2011; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

There is also scholarship on the issue of high-stakes assessment, data-driven reform, and teacher practice. Datnow (2011) reinforces much of Hargreaves' (1994) work on collaboration and contrived collegiality. In her study of schools and teachers taking on a data-driven assessment reform, she analyzed data that led to a positive correlation between honest collaboration and positive education change in her case study of urban schools across the United States. The teachers in her study expressed concern that they needed to be able to work with the data to determine the proper course to take. Teachers expressed concern that time with the data, without the inflexibility of pacing guides that most often come with policy reform, and the ability to work with each other in

collaborative environments, are required elements of successful data-driven reform movements.

According to Brown (2004) there are four ways in which teachers conceptualize high-stakes assessments. First, he explained conceptions serve as ways of interacting with an experience. In this case, for teachers it would be the ways they make sense of the data-driven, high-stakes assessment reform movement. The four ways demonstrate the complexity, knowledge, and background that teachers bring to each decision they make in regards to assessment. He notes that these conceptions are not necessarily independent of each other. They are interrelated and often overlap or are added to the complexity of the understanding and interaction with assessments.

The first conception is that teachers relate assessment to student learning and instruction. The second conception is that assessment serves to compel students to be accountable for their own learning. The third conception is that teachers and schools are held answerable to the assessments. This was seen in the era of the No Child Left Behind Act where schools were being graded, teachers and administrators were susceptible to job loss or transfer, and students were given opportunities to leave schools that did not score well on high-stakes assessment. The fourth conception has to do with the significance of the assessment validity (Brown, 2004).

The idea of sense making in processing through policy reform is frequently discussed in the literature. In this review of literature, sense making is the process by which teachers, or a group of teachers, engage cognitively with policy interpretation (Louis, Febey, & Schroeder, 2005; Spillane et al., 2002). Datnow (2011) explains how policy implementation, in terms of data-driven decisions, is successful when teachers are

given opportunities to employ these sense-making cognitive strategies “by defining the purpose of data use, stressing the importance of using evidence, and emphasizing improvement efforts” (n.p).

Geijsel and Meijers (2005) use the construct of sense making to explain that reform can happen successfully when teachers are given the opportunity to learn about the reform and what is most successful for students in terms of learning. They emphasize that this social construction needs to be paired with ample opportunity to individually make sense of the policy. For individuals to make sense of issues in policy, the literature always brings it back to the group, the collaboration of teachers, and the collective. These learning groups, sometimes called learning communities, are essential for success (Louis, Febey, & Schroeder, 2005; Spillane et al., 2002; Coburn & Russell, 2008; Datnow, 2011).

To summarize, teachers need to be given the opportunity to change, the capacity to manage the change, and the allowance of their profession to continue to develop as change occurs (Fullan, 2007). Additionally, as Cohen and Hill (2000) showed in their longitudinal study of the California mathematics reform mentioned throughout this literature review, when the curriculum or reform for teaching and learning involving teachers is intersected with learning and assessments for students, education reform is more likely to be successful.

Teachers’ Professional Capital

The idea of capital is one used frequently in education research and is most frequently associated with Pierre Bourdieu. He specified 15 types of capital that a being can possess. His idea of capital is based in the fact that a person lives in a social,

multidimensional world. He deemed it impossible to quantify the social world without the workings of this notion of capital. Capital is an act of amassing and using labor in different forms. Humans are identified, or defined, by this capital, or labor (Bourdieu, 1986). Some of the more common forms of capital, as defined by Bourdieu, include social, cultural, and economic capital. Other theorists have added new forms of capital to Bourdieu's original research.

Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) devised the notion of professional capital. They use the idea of professional capital as an umbrella term for three types of capital. These types of capital are human, social, and decisional. The interrelatedness of these forms of capital is critical for the success of seeing the education profession as a profession.

Hargreaves and Fullan's (2012) interpretation of professional capital, as stated above, is the umbrella for three forms of capital. First, the notion of human capital is the idea that we can increase the skills and knowledge of teachers by investing in their learning and teaching. Teachers illustrate the idea of human capital through the development of skills and knowledge by knowing the content areas, knowing the students, knowing how students learn, and the capitalizing on all of this as a teacher.

Cohen and Hill (2001) show the importance of marrying policy and practice by changing the way that educators were given opportunities for professional growth. They advocate for a different model of professional development that included seeing how students learn, how a particular skill applies to the students' learning, and how the assessments involved can inform learning. Hargreaves and Fullan emphasize that this idea of human capital is very intertwined and cannot be practiced in isolation. It must relate, or translate to the social, to the group; this is true especially in teaching. Working

with other colleagues is a truly valuable resource, and without it, likelihood of success is lessened.

Social capital is how, and how often, one relates in social interactions with others. It gives access to other's knowledge and skills, a necessity in education. Social capital in schools is applicable especially in light of the vast number of buildings, rules, regulations, norms, and expectations that come with being in a school building. It's important that teachers work together as colleagues, form groups (while avoiding group-think mentality) with common ideals and a range of levels of expertise and experience (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). When teachers' expertise is threatened, this can cause a great deal of pushback. The idea that constraints on their expertise often are shown through reactions, and not through good reactions, is one that must be considered when valuing social capital (Staw, Sandelands, & Dutton, 1981; Olsen & Sexton, 2009).

Teaching is a vocation that requires one to make many decisions. Every second of every day is filled with multiple decisions. Decisional capital is the notion that as professionals, teachers are vested in making what Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) refer to as "discretionary judgments" (p. 93). Decisional capital is accumulated through a variety of experiences. It accrues through social interactions, professional collaboration, learning experiences, and most certainly the time spent in the classroom with students. Teachers' decisions and experiences can vary for countless reasons. One is the phase, or stage, they are at in their career.

Professional capital is a necessary component of quality teaching practice. Teachers need to know they have the autonomy to learn, together, about what is best for their students. They need to be valued as individuals and as part of an organization, and

they need to have the empowerment to make decisions about teaching and learning that are based upon their experience and the experience of others in the classroom. When teachers are faced continually with deprofessionalization (Olsen & Sexton, 2009), either from policymakers and corporate interests or from colleagues, parents, administrators, and the community, their professional capital is hindered. For learning to occur, for teaching to occur, professionalization must be encouraged.

Summary

This literature review covers just a small piece of the history of educational reform, teacher practice and policy, and the notion of professional capital. Viewing all of these ideas together will lead to an understanding of how teachers experience education policy reform. In seeing that there is a long history of reform and that policy in itself isn't successful without the practice of teachers in classrooms, it is possible to understand how and why teachers experience reform differently, depending on their beliefs about life, classrooms, learning, and pedagogy.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction and Overview

The basis for this study is my interest in the stories and experiences of teachers who are in the process of implementing the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards and the accompanying assessments in their classrooms. Additionally, and most importantly, this research is intended to answer questions about how teachers experience policy reform. To best inform policymakers about how their policies affect the people doing the implementation, this study aims to add to the body of literature in this regard.

To answer the questions that drive this research, I have designed a qualitative study. My overarching question is: “How are teachers experiencing English Language Arts Common Core State Standards' (ELA CCSS) implementation and the accompanying assessments?” Within that question lies an inquiry into how the teachers participating in the study have been informed about the ELA CCSS and the accompanying assessments. Also relevant to understanding the teachers’ experiences is how they are incorporating the ELA CCSS into their teaching practice.

This is a qualitative interview study using a phenomenological approach to inquiry and analysis. Seidman (2012) articulates this approach as one that “...focuses on the experiences of the participants and the meaning they make of that experience. While focusing on human experience and its meaning, phenomenology stresses the transitory nature of the human experience” (Seidman, 2012, p. 16). This approach gives participants

the opportunity to search their experiences to tell their stories in a way that is relevant to the way they make meaning of those experiences. A phenomenological interview approach tells these stories through the participants' words and the researcher's experience working with the interview data.

A qualitative approach contains several primary characteristics. Each fits well into the design and purpose of this study. Merriam (2009) describes these characteristics as (a) a focus on meaning and understanding; (b) the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection; (c) the research process is inductive; and (d) the research product, the dissertation in this case, is full of rich description. My own epistemological stance as a researcher and learner is social constructivist. In looking for how the participants make meaning and understand this latest educational reform, I hope to get to the lived history and the experiences of these participants so that policymakers can understand what is happening in the lives of the teachers who are enacting their policy mandates. Schwandt (1994) shares the belief that at the heart of constructivism is the concern for the lived experience, or the world that the participants live and move in, and how the participants understand it. This is significant in this particular study because it aims to get at those experiences and to tell the story of those experiences, without the interjection of my own experiences with educational policy reform.

As the one and only researcher on this study, I was the primary instrument of data collection and analysis. Therefore, bias, instrumentation, and interpretation concerns are addressed in depth. Awareness and management of potential researcher biases was an ongoing process throughout the study. The interview procedure for this qualitative study is a valid and well-tested technique.

The process of interpreting qualitative interview data was a strenuous one, and was carefully checked by me, my dissertation committee, and the participants as partners in the data collection. According to Merriam (2009), the task of a phenomenologist is “to depict the essence of basic structure of the experience” (p. 25). This is a formidable job for a novice researcher but was accomplished through integrity, attention to detail, and living in the data.

Inductive reasoning is discussed at length in this section. What is important to remember about inductive reasoning is that data is gathered first, and themes and concepts are gathered from, or induced by, that process; they are not laid out beforehand. Merriam (2009) explains this process as using the data gathered and the time spent in the field to develop theory.

Rich descriptions are strategic not only to a qualitative study such as this one, but also are a tenet of a social constructivist research paradigm. By collecting rich descriptions, this research study uses the idea that knowledge is a social construct to tell the stories of these participants, in their own words, and with their own experiences in their lived worlds. The data gathered came primarily through interviews, discussed in length later in this section, and also through a few participant journal entries kept leading up to the initial interview and until one week after the final interview. Finally, artifacts that support and illuminate the teachers’ experiences were gathered during the interviewing sequence and after as they became available. The individual teacher profiles were written in the first-person narratives of the participants, and the balance of the dissertation contains quotations and other significant insights into their experiences as part of the larger discussion.

The primary instrument of this qualitative inquiry was a series of in-depth interviews with each participant. This method, developed by Seidman (2012), uses a three-stage approach to the interviews.

Knowing that reform is difficult, the intention of this study is to characterize how teachers from a variety of communities across the state have experienced the ELA CCSS implementation process. Additionally, this study examines how teachers understand the ELA CCSS themselves and how the CCSS as a whole affects their beliefs about their own teaching and learning.

Research Sample

The participants in this study were selected using criterion sampling. This purposive, nonprobability sampling is used most frequently in qualitative research. The participants were chosen for a specific purpose (Creswell, 2007). The participants all have experienced the implementation of the ELA CCSS in their schools and classrooms. This purposive sampling gave way to selecting participants that were best be able to give the data that answers the research question.

Creswell (2007) suggests studying a few sites or individuals. For this study, I selected participants from different school sites throughout the state and collected extensive descriptions of experiences from each participant. Dukes (1984), as cited by Creswell, recommends three to 10 participants. In accordance with that recommendation, the ideal number would be a minimum of five.

The participants in this study are current, or recently retired, classroom K-12 teachers who have implemented the ELA CCSS in their classrooms. To collect a range of experiences, the teachers were selected from across the grade levels within the K-12

educational system; they have various amounts of teaching experience. Teachers were contacted for participation through word of mouth and referrals. The variety of experiences and schools were beneficial for this study because it allowed for contrast.

The interviews were conducted in safe and quiet areas, varying from private rooms on campus, to local libraries, to private homes, or wherever participants felt most comfortable in sharing their stories. After the participants agreed to the study, I began to build rapport with each one. This was done by making a phone call and setting up an informal meeting where I covered more details about the study, their role in it, and reviewed the consent form. After the consent forms were signed, I called to confirm each participant's meeting times and places. These important administrative steps were useful as well for rapport building, which is a critical piece of the success of any qualitative interview study, especially an in-depth interview study.

Seidman (2012) talks in depth about the balance of rapport and notes that the interview relationship must be one of respect and suitability. The beginning of the relationship is one in which these boundaries are set, and the researcher must maintain the balance throughout. Seidman recommends erring on the side of formality as one way in which to maintain the necessary balance. Another way, and one that is relevant to me, is for the researcher to keep his or her own "stories" to a minimum as to not affect the information the participant shares.

As part of the exit strategy, I followed Seidman's (2012) lead in which he talks about a graceful exit. I offered to share the pertinent findings and the personal narrative profiles with each participant. Before the study was concluded, the participants were

familiar with the information contained within the profiles, so they were not a surprise. As a final gesture, I sent a thank-you note to each participant.

Data Collection

Interviews. The primary method of collecting data for this study consisted of three in-depth interviews. This method interview research was developed by Seidman (2012) as a way of “exploring the meaning of peoples’ experiences in the context of their lives” (p. 20). By looking at the way in which the participants make meaning of their experiences, this study provides data that looks at how these meanings interact with their contexts, i.e., the classroom. Within each interview, I asked for artifacts to support the participants’ experiences and interpretations. Additionally, participants were asked to keep reflective journals during the interview process. Only a few of these were completed and collected.

According to Rubin and Rubin (2012), interview questions can be systemized in three ways, all of which I used. First, interviews started with a main question, which is the link to the research questions. Then, as a way to collect more in-depth information and thought from the participant, probing questions were employed. These questions often led with expressions that encouraged the participant. These expression included phrases such as: “You said *this*, what else can you tell me about *this*?” Probing questions, unlike the main questions, cannot be pre-planned. They are organic in nature, occurring as a result of the experiences, conversations, and stories born from the main question. Finally, interviews generally had a follow-up question. These follow-up questions came at the time of the interview or later as I analyzed the data. I often emailed or texted the participants as I analyzed the data and needed clarification or more information. The

purpose of a follow-up question was to attain better understanding of the participants' experiences and to clarify shared information from previous or current interviews.

Each of the interviews served a different purpose. The first interview worked to determine the context of the participants' experiences. It was important to encourage the participants to re-create as much of their experience of becoming a teacher as possible. By asking participants how they came to be teachers, I hoped to gain an understanding of the experiences in their families and in their own schooling that may have led them to the profession of teaching. These fundamental events that led up to the core of why they are teachers are important to understanding their narratives.

The second interview delved further into details of their experiences in the present climate of the ELA CCSS policy reform. In this interview, the purpose was to listen to experiences that are within the context of the ELA CCSS at the present time. Questions examined how they are processing the new reform policy. Questions also asked about what types of support and information they received, and are receiving to best implement the ELA CCSS in their classrooms. While the questioning was organic in nature, it started with asking the teachers to talk about their experiences.

The third interview was one of reflection. The participants were asked to make sense of their experiences. By looking at the experiences leading up to teaching and the experiences they are having with the ELA CCSS, the participants could examine and reflect upon the interaction between the different factors in their lives. Main questions in this interview revolved around reflection and connection. Questions that asked about the interconnection between their own schooling and the schooling they are providing in the name of the ELA CCSS in their classrooms assisted in meaning making. Essentially, this

reflection interview gave the participant an opportunity to make meaning of their experiences with ELA CCSS.

Each of the three interviews took 45-90 minutes. The interviews were spaced approximately three to seven days apart. This was critical to the process because, as Seidman (2012) reveals, “This allows time for the participant to mull over the preceding interview but not enough time to lose the connection between the two” (p. 24). This also allowed, in context with the entire interview procedure, a relationship to develop between the participants and myself. Follow-up, with the idea of member checking for accuracy and clarification, was done through phone calls, texting, and emails. This was done as unobtrusively as possible and with as much expediency as was necessary to avoid further time on the part of the participants.

Documents. In this study, I used documents as a way to triangulate the interviews and corroborate the teachers’ interview data. Document analysis, as described by Merriam (2009), is beneficial for qualitative research in several ways. First, it is a helpful source of data in that documents may be easier to gather and provide better information than interviews in specific areas. Secondly, the data from documents can be used to increase the descriptive information provided. Thirdly, documents already have been created. Therefore, there is a high level of stability because documents don’t change the study in its intent. These advantages to using documents clearly apply to the documents that I collected; however, there are disadvantages.

Merriam (2009) cautioned that documents also could be considered limiting in qualitative research. First, the documents that were collected were not created for research. Therefore, the documents gathered from the teachers had the potential to not

always be useful for supporting data during the analysis phase. Second, the documents collected had the potential of not supporting the data that emerged from interview analysis. Third, the accuracy of the documents needed to be measured. I tried to be conscientious of these limitations when I gathered and analyzed documents; however, because of my researcher stance as a former classroom teacher, I had a high level of familiarity with documents that are indicative of a classroom and school culture. Therefore, I was able to take extra precautions with this element of data collection.

Participant Journals. Teachers were asked to keep reflective journals during the interview sequence. During the initial meeting with the individual teachers, the journals were introduced as a way to reflect upon our interviews. Teachers were encouraged to begin journaling before the first interview as a way to think about what the interviews and the research study meant to them. After each interview, the teachers were encouraged to spend a few minutes reflecting on the interview and add anything they may have forgotten. Journals could have been particularly helpful in this type of study because of the nature of journals. Merriam (2009) depicted documents such as journals as a way to untangle perceptions of participants. Bowen (2009) showed how documents, and in this case, journals, can be used to further assist researchers in inducing information and insights of the participants. Unfortunately, the participants in this study were just beginning their school year and the journals were the least of their concerns. Other than a few perfunctory entries, the journals were not as useful as anticipated.

Stages of Conducting an In-depth Interview. Kvale (1996) detailed seven stages of the in-depth interview methodology. They are thematizing, designing, interviewing,

transcribing, analyzing, verifying, and reporting. In the following descriptions of each stage, I explain the process in the context of this study.

Stage 1: Thematizing. In this stage, I established the purpose of using in-depth interviews for this study. In-depth interviewing is an effective way to categorically delve into the experiences of each participant. By using this method, I captured the changing, or evolving, experiences of the participants. In-depth interviewing is reflective and naturalistic in nature, which allows for the necessary meaning making of this study to occur. According to Seidman (2012):

If the goal is to understand the meaning people involved in education make of their experience, then interviewing provides a necessary, if not always completely sufficient, avenue of inquiry. Interviewing provides access to the context of people's behavior and thereby provides a way for researchers to understand the meaning of that behavior (Seidman, 2012, p. 10)

Stage 2: Designing. In this stage, I planned the interviewing and created an interview guide (See Appendix A for Interview Guide). There was a separate interview guide for each interview and for each participant. While each interview had the same main question, the probing questions and the follow-up questions came more naturally as the interview progressed.

Stage 3: Interview. Conducting a good interview is certainly an art form. Rubin and Rubin (2012) use the term “conversational partnership” to ground the interview process in a trusting relationship between the interviewer and the participant. Because the root of this study is firmly grounded in exploring the experiences and insights of the participants, the conversational partnership concept worked well. Without building the

relationship necessary to reveal deep insights and understandings about the ELA CCSS, the study would have lost its validity. The responses to the questions are valid only if they are thoughtful and if the participants trust the process of the interviews.

Another significant component of trust and relationship building occurred in setting up the interviews and building a rapport in the initial stages of the process with the participants. In doing this, I ensured that the participants were comfortable in the setting of the interview and that the conversations that occurred were kept confidential. The interviews took place in convenient locations for the participants. Three in-depth interviews are a big commitment, and I was as flexible as possible with where they took place.

One of the key parts of the in-depth interview process is that of letting the participants guide the interview, which helps reveal their unique insights and understandings. To do this, the interviewer must let what the conversational partner says in the interviews shape probing and follow-up questions, a key component of these interviews (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

The interviews were conducted using a audio recording device. Pen and paper were utilized for additional note taking. A high quality recording device was used during the interviews. This required specific consent to ensure the participants of the intention of the recording, along with the proper storage and security. It was important to safeguard the recordings for confidentiality and trustworthiness. Merriam (2005) points out that audio-recording interviews assists the interviewer in assuring accuracy and that everything is then preserved for the most accurate analysis of the data collected. One thing Merriam (2005) mentions, and which resonates with me in particular, is that

listening to the interviews, which are audio-recorded, allows for the interviewer to reflect upon their techniques and questioning strategies. This was important in this three interview strategy, as it allowed me to analyze my questioning and interactions so that in the next interview, any weaknesses was improved upon.

Data Analysis

Stage 4: Transcribing. Interviews were transcribed and checked word for word to ensure accuracy. Merriam (2005) describes a format in which the identifying information is at the top of the first page. To ensure confidentiality, each participant was asked to provide a pseudonym, the use of which ensured that I am the only person who knows his or her true identity. The participants were asked to identify their journal with these pseudonyms as well. I used the margins on the side of the paper for taking notes during all stages of data analysis.

The margin notes were where I kept track of questions that arose during analysis. Furthermore, I used the margin notes to keep track of themes that begin to emerge while I analyzed. Rubin and Rubin (2012) refer to this as memoing. They encourage the use of “notable quotations” (p. 191). In doing so, I was able to capture concepts and themes from the exact words of the participants that are relevant, or add to, to the research questions. All files were kept on a cloud drive that was password protected, as well as on a secure external hard drive that was kept in a locked drawer in my office.

During the transcription review stage, it was important to note which compelling themes emerged across the participants’ interviews. I looked for evidence of the themes in each participant’s interviews, the collected documents, and the journals. During the

second and third interviews, I often followed up on any questions that came up during the previous interviews.

Stage 5: Analyzing. The analysis was done through an inductive process. My understanding of inductive reasoning is most consistent with Strauss and Corbin's (1997) description: "The researcher begins with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the data" (p. 12). In maintaining constant contact with the research questions and the specific evaluation objectives, this analysis allowed for themes and concepts to emerge that gave me a clear picture of what the data said.

Profiles of each participant were created. First a narrative of their experiences was put together and shared. The narrative is in the participants own words, and in each profile, the participants voice is maintained and heard throughout. After each narrative, an analysis occurs of their experiences.

Analysis of Individual Transcripts. I used adaptations of several analytic approaches. One was created by Creswell (2007) and uses a general analytic approach. In combination with this tactic, I applied pieces of analysis used by Alexiadou (2001) and Seidman (2012). The approaches have qualities of phenomenological analysis.

Stage 1. I began by understanding my own experiences with school reform, namely that of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002. This first step in analysis was particularly important for me because of my own bias in regards to sweeping school reform. It was an attempt to face, and put aside as much as possible, these experiences so that I could concentrate on the analysis of the experiences of the participants in my study. This was an ongoing battle that started before the research began and continued to the end as I reported my findings. As Alexiadou (2001) explained, this can be most closely

achieved by taking these four precautions: (a) making sure that the theoretical foundation for this research is clear and is maintained throughout the study, (b) uphold the research plan and follow the procedures as outlined in the design of the study, (c) throughout the study, continue to abide by the validity procedures outlined in the design of the study, and (d) make extensive use of member checking to check for the accuracy of the interpretations made as the analysis progresses. I did each of these to the best of my ability.

Stage 2. I began to bracket segments of the transcripts that were especially interesting to me. Seidman (2012) wrote: “What is of essential interest is embedded in each research topic and will arise from each transcript. Interviewers must affirm their own ability to recognize it” (p. 121). I did not throw out data; all data was revisited at different stages of the analysis. From these large segments of data, I focused on the data that I initially believed worked best to make meaning of the research question.

Stage 3. I began to pull out the statements and phrases that explained how my participants are experiencing the ELA CCSS. This important stage created an inventory of significant statements from the interview transcripts. These were put into spreadsheets according to emerging themes. Creswell (2007) referred to the horizontalization of data in this step. It is where I laid out the data and looked at it impartially. This was important, especially in phenomenological analysis; it is important that the essence of the research data be treated equally.

Stage 4. At the heart of qualitative data analysis is the concept of coding (Thomas, 2006). Rubin and Rubin (2012) discuss coding as a way to look for emerging themes. Themes are “summary statements, causal explanations, or conclusions” (p. 194). They

link statements and concepts that arise in the data. These themes may be connected to the research question, of special interest to the researcher (Seidman, 2012), or may be related to the literature review. Because this coding was done primarily by hand and through the use of the “find” feature on a word processing program, I believe I was cognizant and fluid in my own thinking about the themes as they arose in this stage. I initially attempted to use a qualitative data analysis program but found it cumbersome and difficult.

This stage is where the significant statements began to be grouped together into themes. Alexiadou (2001) refers to this as the process of capturing the meaning of the talk. More specifically, Alexiadou asks, “What does this statement tell me about the phenomenon I want to explore?” (p. 58). At this point in the data I began to think about what themes were predominant.

Stage 5. After the themes were coded and entered into the spreadsheets, I began the work of analyzing the themes. I read the data segments and statements repeatedly, and the idea of *what happened* in relation to the participants’ experiences with the implementation of the ELA CCSS began to emerge into a narrative. Rowan (1981) referred to this process as a dialectical one in which the data from the participants begins to interact with the intuition and expertise of the researcher.

Stage 6. Once *what happened* was established, I considered *how it happened*. Creswell (2007) calls this the structural description. I looked at how the context of the participants’ experiences played out in the pre-established themes, and in those that emerged from this lens of context.

Stage 7. Here, the profiles of the individual participants were created. A clear rationale for the participant profiles is that they offer a product from the research data that

tells the stories that I was interested in sharing with my readers. I have shared six stories in the form of the narrative profiles. The profiles create a clear picture of the complexities of *how it happened* and *what happened* in these experiences in the words of the participants. This is the heart of this study.

One important, even critical, piece of the profiles is the way they are presented. At all costs, the stories are told anonymously. This included changing not only the name of the participants, but other identifying data as well. Seidman (2012) discusses changing the grade level, the community, and even the subject that the participants teach. Preserving the self-worth of the participant was a priority for these narratives. These in-depth interview profiles portray the true experiences of the teachers who are on the ground, the ones in the middle of this reform movement. I believe the way that I present these narratives honors their experiences and shares them honestly and with trustworthiness.

Document and Journal Analysis. The documents as well as the journals are secondary data sources. I collected a few lesson and unit plans, some emails, and a variety of informational flyers and workshop announcements. I analyzed them as support for the themes that emerged from the interviews. In an attempt to support the themes that emerge from the interviews, Bowen (2009) suggests that documents and journals be mined for corroborating evidence. Bowen describes a method of analyzing documents as a version of content analysis that does not quantify the data. The process that Bowen shares involves skimming the documents, reading the documents closely, and finally interpreting into themes the data that emerges. While no new themes emerged from the documents, they supported the teachers' experiences.

Stage 6: Verifying. Verifying involves checking the validity of the data gathered and analyzed. Creswell and Miller (2001) explain validity as the accuracy with which data gathered is shared and represented in the study. This was done in several ways including member checking. Member checking occurred constantly by questioning the participants when inconsistencies came up in my analysis of the data. Another way was to keep my lens of social constructivism in the forefront of the analysis.

Stage 7: Reporting. The analysis was reported through participant profiles, told in a first-person narrative format. The analysis of the profiles and other data from the interviews were shared after each narrative. This last stage of the process is where I examined the findings and determined what meaning I had made from the work of the study. As Seidman (2012) points out, this important piece of the study should lead “to propose connections among events, structures, roles, and social forces operating in people’s lives” (p. 131). With this goal in mind, my intent was to keep those questions of *what happened* and *how it happened* in the forefront of the research analysis and reporting.

Researcher Stance

I was interested in this research study because the stories of how and what is happening in the name of the ELA CCSS in the lives of the teachers who are on the ground is of great interest to me. Widespread education reform is difficult for teachers; it was hard for me as a teacher during No Child Left Behind in the early 2000s. Although it was hard, the school district I was teaching in offered a great deal of support and encouragement. Additionally, I was working through my own master’s degree in

education and had the benefit of a cohort of fellow teachers who likely were sharing the same implementation experience. This is where my interest is a factor.

I realized that even though we were all in the same school district, working on the same master's degree together, we all had vastly different experiences during the implementation. I realize now that I don't know why that was happening. This study is a way to look at experiences of teachers in a position similar to those in which my colleagues and I found ourselves and to learn how they are experiencing this latest wave of reform.

At the beginning of my studies in the doctoral program, just when the CCSS were being implemented in select schools and districts, I remember a classmate talking about how excited she was about the CCSS, how they would give her so much more freedom, and how they would allow her to be a teacher again. This was fascinating to me, and I haven't forgotten it. In another experience with a group of teachers working in a cohort together, I was interning throughout the length of one of their courses. Their discourse surrounding the CCSS was quite different. They seemed angry and as a whole seemed to feel only frustration, disappointment, and a sense of powerlessness. This is another reason this research is intriguing to me.

I have reflected a great deal on how the experience with NCLB, a doctoral study rich in sociocultural theory and critical inquiry, and the experiences with various teachers I've encountered reflects on my own biases and assumptions going into the study. I believe that during my interviews, I will need to remember to keep these experiences to a minimum and not to share them with my participants. I will share my experiences with being a classroom teacher, working through a master's program while working full time,

and my general love of teaching. That will lend not only credibility to what I am asking them to participate in and share with me, but it will help to build rapport with the participants.

Chapter 4

Findings

The purpose of this dissertation study was to understand the experiences teachers across this southwestern state were having as they proceeded through the policy implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and its accompanying assessments. What emerged in a dominant way throughout the analysis of the interview data were stories. The teachers I talked to had amazing stories about why they became teachers, why they are teachers, what they faced as teachers, and what happens for them next. In this chapter, I will share these stories through verbatim narrative profiles of the six participants and a subsequent description of their experiences through analysis. These profiles are stories of how very different teachers are, both similarly experiencing the implementation of the CCSS and how they are differently experiencing the process. What is obvious in each story is that any policy implementation is a difficult road to travel.

These verbatim profiles follow a theory that says that humans lead lives of story. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) say: “education is the construction and reconstruction of personal and social stories; teachers and learners are storytellers and characters in their own and other’s stories.” As I composed the verbatim stories of the participants I often found myself taking interview texts and reconstructing, albeit in their own words, the stories to fit into a chronological manner. Often the participants would remember important parts of their histories during the second or third interviews, and as the sculptor of these stories, I worked to fit those recollections into a manner that honored the place and scenes of their stories. Connelly and Clandinin raise the notion of a personal agenda

within the researcher as they listen and craft the narrative. This was something I was clearly aware of and fought throughout the process.

Throughout this study, I maintained Kvale's (1996) seven stages of in-depth interview methodology in combination with Seidman's (2012) process for in-depth interviewing and creating participant profiles. Kvale's process of in-depth interviewing comprises: thematizing, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analyzing, verifying, and reporting. Throughout the process, I supported my work with Seidman's reasoning and theory behind why creating profiles was a relevant and important way to present research findings.

In creating the profiles and thematic analysis that are the foundation of this chapter, I aimed to portray the true experiences of the teachers (every name and school is a pseudonym) who gave me their time, experiences, and memories. I wanted these profiles to preserve the voices of the participants. I used their words and created a narrative for each one that gives the reader a true picture of what they are experiencing. The profiles that are put together were taken from the two to four hours of recorded interviews that were transcribed and carefully crafted into what is seen here in this chapter.

There are points within these written narratives and the analysis of the evidence that follow where standard punctuation and grammar is not used. This is done to maintain the voices with honesty and honor. However, before beginning the profiles, I provide an explanation of the themes and categories that emerged across the six teachers.

Themes and Categories

This section provides an explanation of the two primary themes and the categories of experiences that the participants had during the implementation of the ELA CCSS. The themes and categories emerged from the qualitative analysis of the phenomenological in-depth interviews. Under the theme of “trust,” five categories emerged. Not all participants expressed experience with each of the categories, but the categories were predominant in the majority of the participants. The second theme of “change” has four categories that emerged in the qualitative analysis. The following describes the themes and categories as they related to the experiences of the six participants:

Trust: All of the teachers in this study discussed issues of trust. The issues of trust ranged from the experience of feeling as if the people who make decisions were the experts and knew best, to uncertainty about what the evaluation system meant as it applied to the assessments of the ELA CCSS and even to feeling like state education department decision makers didn’t trust them as professional educators. This theme has five distinctive categories:

- Teacher trust of principals: This category of experiences refers to how teachers feel their experiences with their principals affected their teaching and their ability to best serve the needs of their students.
- Teacher trust of state education department: Teachers shared their experiences in how the state education department has made, and continues to make, judgments about the quality of their teaching, the materials they use to teach, and how and when their students are being assessed.

- State education department trust of teachers: Here, the teachers shared how their experiences in the past few years left them feeling as if their profession was not valued and the decisions being made by the state education department showed a lack of trust in the teachers' decision making and knowledge of students and teaching.
- Students' trust of teachers: Decisions made by the state education department, by administrators, and by other policymakers directly affect the students' impressions of schooling. Because teachers are on the front lines of what education is to students, they are the ones with which students affiliate schooling experiences.
- Trust in the standards, the assessments, and the curriculum: The participants discussed how the standards, assessments, and curriculum often were a cause of uncertainty in what was expected. In this category, discussion of the teacher evaluation system and its connection to the assessments dictated by districts and state education department was evident in every teacher's interview. The novice teacher experienced curriculum decisions differently from the mid- and late-career teachers, especially in terms of uncertainty of what curriculum best aligned with the CCSS.

Change: Change was woven throughout the interviews and stood out as its own theme because of the impact it has had on the experiences of each of the teachers. Change is occurring at a rapid pace. With change comes uncertainty and questioning of intentions.

- **Materials:** The novice teacher in particular expressed concern for not having materials they needed to teach the requirements related to the ELA CCSS. The other participants shared concern about the amount of time it took to learn new material and the amount of time they spent finding materials to meet the CCSS.
- **Collaboration:** Each of the participants expressed concern about the changing experiences of collaboration. They said collaboration is about data, CCSS, and assessments. The change they experienced related to the focus of collaboration having moved away from the sharing and learning about teaching and best practices with each other.
- **Professional development:** Like collaboration, professional development has changed in that it is no longer about teaching and learning for them and their students but is focused on data, CCSS, and assessments. Professional development they receive from their district focused solely on issues related to CCSS.
- **Student Learning:** Many of the participants described how they believe the CCSS has affected their ability as teachers to impact student learning.

Full Profiles

This next section begins with a brief introduction of the six participants. Then, in-depth narrative profiles of three of the participants are shared. Next is an analysis of the themes and categories that emerged during data analysis. In addition to the data presented in the narrative profiles, other data is presented during the analysis.

Participants

The sample for this study mirrored the criteria for selection that was outlined in the study's Methodology chapter. In total, there were six participants. Every participant and their schools, school districts, and other identifiers are completely masked. Pseudonyms and other changes were appropriately changed. All were teachers in this southwestern state and have experienced at least one full year of the implementation of the CCSS. They spanned the spectrum in subjects, grades, and state regions. Three participants were late-career educators, two were mid-career educators, and one was novice educator. One teacher had unexpectedly retired as I began my interviews and was not returning to the classroom. As part of their experience with this policy reform, the issue of retirement and career change came up in all of the educators except with the novice educator. Each of the midcareer educators said they had never considered retirement until they finished the first year of the implementation of CCSS.

One factor I did not expect was that each participant taught at a schoolwide Title I school. Each participant noted the high poverty level as an issue in making the implementation of the CCSS more difficult, mostly in terms of assessments and curriculum. Each participant believed their experience implementing the standards was more challenging in light of the documented and undocumented realities of their students.

For the in-depth profiles I shared in this study, I chose a participant from each of the early, mid, and late career educators. These profiles were compelling and seemed to best answer the question of this study: How were teachers experiencing the implementation of the English Language Arts (ELA) Common Core State Standards and the accompanying assessments? I wanted to know how they had been informed about the

CCSS and the accompanying assessments and how they were incorporating CCSS into their practices. Table 1 gives an overview first three participants demographics.

Table 1 Participant demographics

Name	Career level Years taught	Grade/subject taught	School/district information	Summary
Teresa	Late 36 years	Library and literacy Middle school	Southern region, urban, schoolwide Title I, high transient and second language English population, state grade D	Librarian and literacy teacher for entire career, last 2 years as half-time librarian & half-time literacy teacher, graduate degree in library science, activist for her profession, first time in career measured as minimally effective on evaluation
Jeff	Mid 17 years	Language arts Middle school	Northern region, rural, schoolwide Title I, high transient and second language English population, state grade B	Same middle school for entire career, highly collaborative team, graduate degree in language arts, first time in career measured as minimally effective on evaluation
Becky	Novice 1 year	Kindergarten	Eastern region, suburban, schoolwide Title I, state grade B	Kindergarten teacher for 2 years, waited until her children were in middle school to finish teaching degree, undergraduate degree in accounting and education, graduate courses towards TESOL endorsement, first time minimally effective evaluation

In-depth Narratives and Profiles

In this section, I share the three in-depth narratives. I present the verbatim narratives through the voices and words of the participants. It is important to note that in some places their words and voices were not altered for sentence structure and punctuation. Seidman (2012) reveals that “by crafting a profile in the participant’s own words, the interviewer allows those words to reflect the person’s consciousness” (p. 122). In order to tell the stories, I crafted the narratives based on their interviews and included excerpts to lend authenticity to their experiences as they told them. Each story tells how each arrived at their current station in the teaching profession, how they experienced the implementation of CCSS, its assessments, and the teacher evaluations aligned with the CCSS assessment.

The three full-length profiles I share are those of Teresa, Jeff, and Becky. Every name and location is a pseudonym in order to protect the teacher’s identities. Teresa is a late career middle school literacy educator and librarian. Jeff is a mid-career middle school language arts teacher. Becky is a novice educator at the beginning of her second year teaching kindergarten. Each profile is a verbatim account of experiences that reflect their concern over trust and a changing education landscape. Each teacher expressed concern for how the implementation of CCSS affected their students and their standing as a professional.

It is important to note before the profiles are read that while this study is regarding the participant’s experiences with the CCSS, there is an overriding concern with what parts of the current policy reforms are related. The participants in this study seem to often blur the relationships between the various reforms. In this state there is

more than CCSS being implemented. Teacher evaluation systems are being reformed. At the time of this study, the teacher evaluations were not related to CCSS. Teachers in this study mention their school grades. School grades are not connected to the implementation of CCSS. The lines are blurry, and with the rapid wave of reforms, it is difficult to separate the reforms from each other.

Teresa. This narrative, put together from the three in-depth interviews, tells the story of an experienced, late-career middle school librarian's experiences with what is the latest of decades of education policy reform she has witnessed. The analysis that follows is based on Teresa's profile and my analysis of the transcripts and the interview as a whole.

A Narrative Profile: "We have taken so much away from the children."

Becoming a Teacher and Librarian. In this first part of Teresa's profile, she describes the reasons she became a librarian, including her deep connection to the library, to books, and to feeling like she was important as a student herself.

I hope this doesn't sound dorky, but Miss Harrison of Steel Elementary School in Denver was... When I was in second grade and we would go into our library at Steel Elementary, I would think this is what I want to do. I want to be surrounded by all these wonderful books, and she was so incredible. It was like we were the only student in that school. Once a week, we would we would go into the library, and she had little orange cards, and she had this fountain pen and this beautiful handwriting. She would sit us down and ask us about the book, and it was like you were the only person in the world at that moment. From second grade, I knew what I wanted to do. I wanted to be a librarian.

My family hated hearing about her because it was always Miss Harrison, Miss Harrison, Miss Harrison. Then, in middle school, we moved to Japan for a couple of years on an Air Force base, and Miss Anderson was the librarian. In sixth grade, I got to be the class library helper. It was a ploy to go help her shelve books. One day, she wasn't there, and a first grade class came in, and I panicked. I was very shy then, but I just took a picture book off the shelf, and I read it to them. It was a first grade class, and they loved me, and so it was like then I loved reading picture books to little children.

I went right from my bachelor's degree in French to get a master's in library science. I met people from all over the world who wanted to be librarians, and USC was a great school. We had great intern opportunities. I did an internship at the downtown library in Los Angeles, and it was wonderful, wonderful. The clientele was so unique and so varied. I worked in a public library for two years, but then I was drawn back to the schools. That is where I have been for 37 years. Helping people get the information they want, and to lead them there is honorable. I am honored to have been doing this work.

Being a Teacher and Librarian. The second part of this profile reveals changes that Teresa has seen happening in education now, especially in the library, and in her role as a librarian. She discusses the deep connection between the library and the school as a whole. She shares her experiences with collaboration and the profound change that collaboration took in the past several years.

You know, 37 years ago the emphasis was on appreciation of literature, of reading. That no longer comes up in our standards. It was book talks. We were trained to do book talks and have different book contests. We did bookmark contests and dressed up as an author or book character. All of that is passé. It just doesn't exist. I haven't done a

book talk in years. It is more how to find information and how to cite your sources. The love of reading is not built in any longer. You know, previously at all the schools I was in from elementary to middle school, I saw the students every week. I gave book talks, and I taught them how to use the library. Now it is not even about using the library. It is more about search engines and how to find facts quickly. The appreciation for literature, it is just gone.

Now students only come to the library to use the computers. It is really rare that they come in on their own time to check out books. It is more to play computer games. During school hours, they come in to check out books. That has even changed so much. Circulation is down. It is drastically down. Students don't have time, and I think they come in just to play games. They are so tested out; it is just so different now. You know, they are being taught to test, test, test so they are taking a break, I think. So they mostly come in at lunch and play games. Self-selection of books is just not there. Self-selection was such a natural thing for me that it shocks me that students don't self-select books.

In the past, the underlying standard for librarians was teaching critical thinking, teaching students to be critical thinkers. That was in every standard from kindergarten through Grade 12, really. That was the number one standard: lifelong learners that were critical thinkers. That was what all of our standards were based on, that and literature appreciation. Now it is really how to read a graph, how to determine if an Internet site is valid. This is not critical thinking.

It is just the stress. The stress has changed. There are still as many readers as there were 37 years ago. I really believe that, you know. Not everyone was a reader 37 years ago either. So the amount of readers hasn't changed, but how we teach about

loving books isn't there. Teaching the love of reading isn't a standard. It's not a requirement. I think it was just kids are tired, and they are tested out. The self-motivation is not there and the support of the school is not there. The principal said I could bring it back this year. I can do it after school and have some funding even to buy books. I can't expect students to buy the books. It is really coming back this year.

Collaboration used to mean we would sit down and do project-based lessons across the board. We'd sit down, and we'd say the library is going to support in this way. In language arts, we will write Greek fables and Greek myths. In social studies, we are going to talk about the Greek mathematician. Curriculum across the board, project based. We would design whole units a couple of times a year. Literacy was right there. Literacy was across the board. Now we don't do that. We really don't. I have to say, I miss the way it was. I miss what used to be, the reason I went into this. It is not there anymore. The whole collaboration between librarians, and between teachers and librarians, is gone. There are several schools where librarians are just part-time librarians and part-time teachers. So the whole professionalism of sharing and collaborating is gone. Collaboration is gone. The focus is not on students. It is on a lot of data collecting. Collaborating with colleagues is looking at where to place students according to data. It is really all about data. It has shifted. It used to be about pedagogy. It was about teaching. It was about best practices. It was about discussing students. Not their test scores. It was knowing the students and what they needed. Now it is about test scores, not the whole student.

Collaboration is less and less because, honestly, testing has trampled everything we used to do. I had a meeting last week with other librarians, and we talked about how

we used to do things. You know, we would do the pyramids, the ancient Egyptians. The math department and the science department and the social studies department would all come together and plan. This doesn't happen anymore. We are segregated, and we are very departmentalized, and we don't see each other a lot. We just don't. The whole collaboration time is gone. I see teachers less and less. I, as a librarian, used to see every teacher, all the time. The last two or three years, it has just not happened. Teachers don't have time to work on the same project. The project-based learning, we are just not doing that anymore.

When teachers come in, it is really only to sign up for the 30 computers in the library so they can test. We've become testing centers. Last year, there was an email from the library services talking about how many hours libraries were closed in the district for testing and test practice. Every time I turn around, we have a test, and then we have to shut down the library so they can use the computer lab. It is such a strong presence. If the social studies teachers want to come in and do research, it is like "sorry, we will be testing." It is too bad. It has been hard to see. You want kids to come in and learn about the ancient Greeks and get excited about that. Now that is less and less. This year, we are testing something like 80 days. Everything is on the computer now. All tests will be taken on a computer. There is a computer lab in the library, five in our school. They should be used for research, learning how to determine evidence. We should be working on that and not closing the library for 80 days of testing.

Teaching was less scripted before. We were free, and we were trusted to be in the classroom and to teach. I think the trust was there, we were responsible, we were accountable. We didn't have the paperwork and the testing to show that. Now, to show I

am accountable is just outrageous. I don't know. The system that we upload our lesson plans and our unit plans has been horrible. I download pictures of my students' work. It is just so time consuming. I think it's a lack of trust.

Part of the profession of being a librarian is book selection. To have the education secretary and the state department of education checking our book orders. . . . I don't know. I am thinking they don't trust us. Who knows their community better than the librarian in that community? That is what we were trained for. It is what we do. We know about choosing books. I am much more of an expert on that than someone in the department of education. That is very discouraging.

I have always believed the library is the center of the school. We are getting less and less. I believe we support the teachers, we support the curriculum, we support the students, we even support the community, and this is less and less. Last August when I went back to school, for the first year ever there were no new books. That has always been the best part of going back. You go back several days before, and you look at the books you ordered. It was such a ritual. I would tell everybody that I got to be the first one that smells the new books. You put them on the bookrack, and you take a lot of them home to read. It was such a ritual for 37 years, and last year we had no new books. I took a picture of this empty bookrack. I kept looking. Maybe there was a little box, maybe something, you know? I bought books over the summer whenever I would see something on sale in a bookstore, just to have. I got what it is that they like, "Diary of the Wimpy Kid." Sixth graders like that.

We had boxes and boxes of these textbooks from Pearson. \$89 for these horrible, horrible literature textbooks. We don't even have textbook selection committees anymore.

Adoption is Pearson brands. Period. I have all these pictures of boxes of Pearson textbooks stacked to the ceiling. It was heartbreaking to me last year. It was like no new books. So for the first time ever in my life it was a big wake-up call. There were no library books, but we were paying Pearson \$89 for a crappy literature book in sixth, seventh, and eighth grade. It's a bad selection of readings, you know. I thought, 'Why would anybody pay?'" There are even authors you don't know. It's just bizarre. It was awful and just ridiculous. I just found it offensive, but we have boxes after boxes after boxes. That is heartbreaking.

I feel sorry for our kids because they deserve better. They shouldn't be denied things that the policymakers get. President Obama and Arne Duncan are working on all these improvements, and their kids go to these fabulous schools that have all got libraries. I want the same thing for my students, for my community. They shouldn't be deprived or have things taken away from them. I read a blog by Stephen Krashen. He said that schools of poverty should not have libraries cut. Our vulnerable kids don't have access to literature. They really don't. Of all the places to cut, don't cut the libraries for vulnerable kids to pay for literature textbooks and \$100 something per student tests.

What this all means. This important last piece of Teresa's profile connects why she became a teacher and a librarian with what she is experiencing as a teacher and librarian now. Taking what Teresa said about why she became a teacher, and what teaching is like now means that Teresa sees how she can stay true to the reasons she started all of this in the first place.

I am really sad that we have taken so much away from the students, so much out of the curriculum. They don't have vibrant, well-rounded choices, you know. We have

taken the joy out of it. I think seeing the kids this year, I thought, 'How much longer can we do this to these children?'" They are being jerked around, and I think, seeing their fresh faces, and their new backpacks and their excitement, I feel bad for them. That is where my concern is right now. The students, they are being jerked around.

This sounds terrible, but this past week, I thought I am going to go back to school and I am going to like going every day. I always have. For the last several years, less and less, and last year not at all. It was sad for my colleagues, for the students, for the district. This year, I think I am taking back that feeling. I don't know if it is because I am getting to the end, but I thought I am going to go back and get that feeling I had as a young teacher where I was excited, not every day, but most days. I was glad to walk into that school. I think that I am going to take that back.

I am going to stay in teaching for a few more years and fight for what is good for students. I have decided I am going back to where it worked. We were doing book talks. I don't care if they are not tested. I am doing a book club after school. We are going back to why I became a librarian, to talk about good books, to talk about genres, to share, to get kids excited about reading, that is what I am doing. Like I don't care, I am going to do what I was trained to do, what I wanted to do. I am going to be with the students and we are going to find out how to get information that we want, how to ask, 'Is that a reliable source?'" We are going to do it, and I am going to leave everything else out, you know. We are not going to worry about data. I am not going to worry if students didn't pass a test, if they are not at grade level, that is not what I am going to worry about, and that is what I am going to focus on. I am going to go back 37 years ago, when that excitement was there. I am just going back, and fire me, I mean just fire me.

Analysis: Teresa's Conception of Trust and Change, and the Effects on Students. Teresa has strong and passionate recollections of her childhood and how the experiences with her librarian led her to where she is today. She remembers Miss Harrison and the relationships she built with her students; even to the point where Teresa recalled feeling like the only student in the room. Miss Harrison loved books and shared that experience with her students. Teresa became a librarian because she wanted to do the same thing; she wanted to bring the life of books into the lives of children. Teresa has been through many policy reform movements. This one seems to be making the most impact, in a negative way, on teachers, students, and the library as an institution within the organization of school. In this first analysis, the theme of trust and the subsequent categories are analyzed.

Teacher trust in the state education department. Teresa has had decades of experiences with different styles of leadership within the state education department. What she sees now is a department that is doing things to schools, teachers, and students that negatively impact their learning, sense of community, and belonging. Teresa believes that decisions made by the department are based upon students as data.

Contributing to Teresa's feelings of a lack of trust in the education department is its department-imposed teacher evaluation system. The evaluation system is directly tied to test scores of the students. According to the state education website, 50% of a teacher's yearly evaluation is fixed to these scores. This affects Teresa in many ways in her role as a librarian and in her role as a late-career educator who other educators look up to for mentorship and advice. This is important to consider because in the past, Teresa has welcomed evaluations. She said:

I have always welcomed them, always. You know, from my first year 37 years ago, it was, 'Please tell me what I can do.' They never bothered me. I wanted to improve; I wanted to know if I was on the right track. They guided me.

The worst day of teaching in 37 years occurred last year when she witnessed teachers opening their evaluations on the last day of school. Teachers were devastated, and teacher emotions ran high, she said. This contributed directly to her belief that the decisions that are being made are intended to punish teachers.

Teresa believed that the intention of the leadership of the state education department was to rid the state of the veteran teachers and replace them with younger, less costly, and more pliable teachers. In addition to the evaluation system, which seems punitive and irrelevant, there are the private and public remarks that show a disdain for teachers made by the current administration. One such statement, made by a prominent government official was caught on tape and released to the public by several news sources, including the National Education Association. The official says:

During the campaign, we can't say it, I guess, because it's education, but I really keep going back to that . . . keeping the teachers from feeling the pain when they already don't work, you know, two and a half months out of the year or three months out of the year but earn salaries at the same rate of people who do work 12 months a year.

This display of intentions toward teachers supports the idea that Teresa discussed in her interviews that the current administration and the state education department have little personal regard for teachers and the work they do with children. The intentions of others, as a key tenet of trust, are clear in the statement made by the administration.

State education department trust in teachers. Much of what Teresa reported was based reciprocally upon the evaluation system and her feelings that the education department does not trust what teachers are doing in the classroom

For the most part, Teresa gave examples based upon her own experience as a librarian: what has been and what is now. A significant part of her education and professional development for 37 years was the skill and strategy of choosing the right books for the students in the school in which she was the librarian. This important element has been removed from her job in several ways, she said. First, she was experiencing this through the budget process. She explained:

It was the first year ever last August when I went back to school, the first year ever there were no new books, and that was always the best part of going back, you know, you go back several days before, you know, and you are looking at the books that you have ordered, you put them out on your bookrack, and you take a lot of them home to read, and it was such a ritual for 37 years. Then last year we had no new books, and so I took a picture of the new bookrack empty. We had boxes and boxes from Pearson of textbooks. \$89 for these horrible, horrible literature textbooks, in my opinion. They were horrible, \$89, we don't even have textbook selection anymore; adoption that is all you get.

The ability to choose the books students read that are relevant to their community and lives is one that is important to librarians. The feeling that the state education department did not trust them enough to make this selection was evident in another area.

Teresa said that for the first time in her career as an educator and librarian, the state education department scrutinized their book orders. She gave an example of other

librarians having their book orders rejected by the education department, which was a new phenomenon. Librarians are under scrutiny like never before, she said. In fact, she said, “Our profession is what guides our book selection, and to have the secretary of education and [state education department] people checking on our orders is very discouraging.” These factors contributed to Teresa’s belief that the education department did not trust teachers. The notion that this was part of her formal role responsibility and has been taken from her led Teresa to question the intention of state education department in regards to teacher longevity.

Student trust of teachers and the education system. Teresa explained how she thought the erosion of trust by students of their teachers and the school’s ability to provide them with the education they need was a critical factor in her experiences with the implementation of CCSS. Students are the “true victims” in the implementation of the CCSS, she said. Not only that, she said, the assessments that are accompanying the implementation did nothing but make the students a number. This impacted her experiences because she often repeated how she felt “sad” for the students.

She told of an experience recently taking a group of students to the state legislature during the annual session. The students visited with a local legislator and asked the legislator about a recently state-reported school grade of D. She shared part of the exchange between the group and the legislator:

My students were like, ‘What does that mean? We are working really hard.’ The legislator tells the students to not worry about the grade, to ‘forget about that.’

The students were like, ‘OK, she said forget it.’ But they internalize, they want to know what they have done wrong. It’s kind of like when I tell teachers who are

minimally effective to forget it. But it still says they are minimally effective. It is hard to ignore it when you see it in writing and when you are told.

Student trust of the system of education is critical for success of schooling. As with any punishing designation, this grading system is one that has Teresa concerned for how her students feel about themselves as students and learners. This also ties into the idea that students who are at risk, which many of Teresa's students are considered, need more support in and out of school.

Teresa repeated several times that much of the curriculum and texts that have been adopted and were supposedly aligned with the standards were not relevant to the students' culture and lives in and out of school. In her example of the students reading and responding on an interim assessment to a text written in a German dialect, she said this:

And [it] was written in German dialect, the German accent. We had, in this one class, three Saudi Arabian students, a girl from the Congo, I don't know how many from Mexico; none of them speak English, let alone throw in a short story all in German or German dialect. It totally confused them. The kids were crying because they were little sixth graders, and they don't speak English very well, and then you throw this at them. And so that is why teachers were leaving the meetings in tears. Their students who were frustrated and crying, that made them angry, and they just wanted to go back to what they had. They wanted to go back and just teach, that is what they wanted. And it was absurd, it is really bordering on the absurd, all of this, it is just absurd.

With this anecdote, Teresa revealed that teachers were crying, “because they are frustrated.” She believed students’ needs were getting “squeezed out.” The students at Teresa’s school, and in the majority of schools of the teachers in this study, are students who are experiencing higher needs in terms of language sensitivities, cultural awareness, and considerations for unique learning demands.

Teresa follows a blog by Stephen Krashen. He is a professor at the University of Southern California and talks about libraries and their importance to students, especially students living in poverty. She repeated that he found that the strongest indicator of a school’s success is related to the quality of its library. Factors in the library’s quality include how students access it, its hours, and the number of books students check out. Teresa believed that the students at her school, who were vulnerable and fragile and many of who lived in unstable conditions, need access to literature. It was at this point that she said she just wanted her students to have the same considerations that the policymakers’ children have.

Teresa wanted to go back to teaching and schooling the way it was before NCLB, when students were considered beyond their ability to test and provide data points. She wanted a place, once again where students’ individual situations were the most important consideration. She wanted to give her students a safe and secure place in a “rough community.” She said, “I want to make it a safe place for them, a place they want to be. Because honestly, when you hear some of their stories, it is like you don’t want to hear them. We have parents who can’t come to conferences because they will be fired.” She told of parents and students who are so poor that to be charged for a lost book would mean one less meal for the dinner table. She told me about students who needed this safe

place as a respite. Regarding policies that teachers are expected to enact, there is a disconnect between the reality of her students' lives and the decisions made for them. She reported that policymakers in the state do not understand and consider the effects of poverty on their students. In expressing this, she said:

The system is rigged against poor people. You know every time the secretary of education says 'That is an excuse. You are making an excuse. Poor teachers make an excuse.' You know, we have kids that, and it is so stereotypical, but it is so true; we have kids that their father was arrested the night before. We have kids that don't know where they are going home literally when the bell rings."

In sharing this anecdote, she also said, "When you are hungry and you are kicked out of your motel in the middle of the night, you really have a hard time learning fractions. You have to get that taken care of before you can teach." Her fear that students are being "jerked around" by the education system because of cuts to funding, a focus on testing, and a competitive structure brought on by Race to the Top was one that she assured me was echoed by many teachers.

Her feelings of the past few years and what she intended to change in the coming school year was summed up with these words:

The last few years [in this state] have been really hard on my colleagues and my students. It has been very sad to see. I am going back to what I was doing and what worked. Having data wars and shaming kids who don't get proficient; that is not what we do. We don't do that, we don't humiliate.

It was important to Teresa to be able to do what works, to ensure that what the organization of schooling has promised, that what teachers are there to do, happens. She

said many times that she wanted to “bring back the joy” and make school a “safe place.” I think, for Teresa, this was the experience she has had with the implementation of the CCSS and its impact on students.

Trust in the standards, assessments, and the curriculum. Teresa had positive experiences with the actual standards of the CCSS in relation to the library. She said the standards were clear on the expectation of research, which is a newer focus than in the past. “For research, they are great. They are great for research and comparing and using different sources,” she said. About teaching how to do research, she said, “I really love teaching classes about research and where to find sources and what is a good source. I love that, I love teaching the research process.” She added that in her library, the ELA CCSS were “not really much different from the standards and the curriculum I used 37 years ago in the library.”

The American Library Association supported the CCSS, she said, and that in her school the standards themselves were not a problem as a whole. Parts of the initiative were problematic, she said, but there were not many complaints. She also said she believed that the national teachers union she is involved with supports the CCSS. She recalls a conversation with her local union president. “She says that if teachers were coming by the bus loads or calling the office, or if she was getting emails about CCSS, she would look into it,” Teresa said. She ended that part of our conversation with this: “This attitude may change in the spring when we are going to give the PARCC for the first time.” The PARCC is an assessment tool of a consortium of states that have banded together to create tests purportedly based upon the CCSS. Teresa and many of her colleagues will wait and see.

Teresa was clear that she believed that the policy reforms of the past decade have worsened, that they were more punitive toward teachers. She called the reforms “personal.” She said:

No Child Left Behind was wrong, and I don’t agree with the way it was done, I don’t agree with anything about it. I remember the day it happened. Race to the Top is even worse. It is far worse. Who would have known that No Child Left Behind could get worse? Race to the Top is punitive, and it is personal to me because I worked hard to get the man responsible elected.

Teresa said she was let down over the policies being implemented, mainly in how they affect teachers on a day-to-day basis and how students have become data points.

Teresa talked about the use of the library for assessment purposes. She said the library should be a place for the “love of books.” Additionally, she wanted to be able to use the numerous computers to teach the standards that deal with research and source reliability. She said:

I am sorry, we are using libraries as test centers. We are not test centers. I think this year we are testing for something like 80 days. That is 100 days I can teach in the library and 80 days I am shut down for testing. The [library computers] should be used for research, for writing papers, and that is it. They shouldn’t be for testing.

This concern for testing taking time out of instruction is echoed by Teresa and the other participants. Technology is a considerable piece of CCSS, but when library computers, or other school computers are being taken away nearly half of the time, that is something

to be concerned about. This also connects clearly to research that shows students, especially in at risk populations, need more resources to be successful.

Teresa noted throughout the interviews “the focus is not on students, it is on data.” Data gathered from assessments throughout the year was a theme in her concerns about the assessments related to the implementation of the CCSS. When discussing how teaching used to be, she said, “We had always known our students. Now it is looking at the test scores and not at the whole student.” Teresa described a school that served a population of students that needed their teachers to consider them and their circumstances.

Teresa told me how the experience with budget cuts due to money being put into testing materials and fewer teaching staff has affected her ability to do her job, as well as her students’ ability to become critical thinkers. She said, “They didn’t have the library experience that I think is so important as critical lifelong learners. They need to have that background, that knowledge, that experience.” One statement that reflected Teresa’s experience with the implementation of CCSS was this:

All students learn differently, all students learn at different speeds. Teaching has to understand and work with that. One size does not fit all. Every student is different entirely in how they grasp, how they get information, and how they retain [information]. We know that as educators. We are not standardized, we are individuals.

As a librarian, she felt locked out of what once made her job one in which children came first. Her job has changed dramatically in this area. She worried that the testing was tied into too much. She was not trusted to select books, and teachers were not being trusted to

determine what their students needed. She felt like “we are being set up. I truly believe we are.” Her experience was that the CCSS had “leant itself to more testing, and we don’t need more testing.” The trust in education has been taken away.

Analysis: Teresa’s Experience with Changing Education Priorities. The following discussions I had with Teresa regarding her experience with the implementation of CCSS led to the theme of change emerging throughout the three interviews. Teresa believed her experience with change were not positive. She is a veteran teacher and has seen other reform efforts. However, this change seemed to hit home. She likened the implementation of CCSS to something she heard from a colleague, through the metaphor: “It’s as if you are on a plane in midair and you are building that plane as you are flying.” The changes in CCSS meant different materials, a different model of collaboration; a changing landscape in professional development, and learning that did not meet the needs of her students.

Significantly, as Teresa described the changes in the education field that she was experiencing, many of her concerns and experiences revolved around, and interact with, the theme of trust. It was clear throughout this analysis of change that Teresa was attempting to recapture the past and the ways that teaching and learning worked for her, her colleagues, and her students.

The categories and evidence that emerged from the theme of change were closely related to the theme of trust. There were times in this analysis where it seemed like there was a fine line between the two themes. They emerged separately in my analysis because they were two contextual frameworks that fit perfectly into the study.

Materials. It was apparent throughout Teresa's interviews that her concern was with not only the materials she had, or did not have, in the library but with the infrastructure needed to conduct the assessments for CCSS and the impact this would have on the students and teachers.

Teresa knew that teachers needed materials to teach their curriculum. In her role as a librarian, and as a leader in her school, she felt that books and access to computers were being "jerked away" from the students. She said that her ability to order the quality of books needed for students to learn, the high-interest books that align with the curriculums or units that teachers teach, was being eroded. As the number of assessments that the district and the state education department require rose, the availability of the computers in her library declined. "It's all computerized," she said. "I am not the only librarian in the district who is saying that this is wrong. We need to say to the district that we are not using the libraries as core testing centers." Much of the CCSS that applied to her position as a librarian depended on her ability to have the students on the computers. That was where she taught research skills and the process of research.

In terms of the books that Teresa was accustomed to buying and providing for her students, this material was dwindling. She has ordered fewer books each year since the implementation of No Child Left Behind. She said that last year, no books were ordered other than books and materials from Pearson, a large corporation involved in much of the creation of materials that support the CCSS and its implementation across the country. While she had no new books last year, she said, she does have a small number of new books this year. "We do have some new books, and gosh, a lot of empty display stands.

Students love displays, and they will ask about and check out the books on the display stands.” She recalled coming into the library on the first day of school:

I have all these pictures of boxes of books from Pearson stacked to the ceiling, and that was heartbreaking to me last year. It was like no new books. So that first time ever in my life. That was a big wake-up call; there were no library books. This lack of materials and lack of purchasing power affected how she experienced her job. “I just found it offensive, but we had boxes after boxes after boxes, and that has changed a lot. That is heartbreaking, we have, you know, our budgets are cut and cut in libraries.”

Collaboration. For the past 37 years, before the increased emphasis on data collection, Teresa enjoyed collaborating with her colleagues. She felt “honored” to have been part of teams that created entire units and lesson plans around such important topics as historical Greece and civic duties such as voting. She wanted to go back to that, creating curriculum geared towards the needs of the students in their school, and doing it as a group.

As for what collaboration looked like now in her school, she said it was about data. The last Professional Learning Community (PLC) she worked with was one that spent two hours working on student placement based upon the previous year’s Standards Based Assessments (SBA) scores. In particular, Teresa said:

It has changed. It has changed dramatically. It used to be, without a doubt, about pedagogy. It was about teaching; it was about best practices; it was about discussing students, yes. But it was what they needed. It was knowing the students, not their test scores. It was knowing what we thought as a team about

what the student needed. We had always known our students, so that was part of the collaboration. Now it is looking at the test scores, not the whole student.

In that quote, Teresa expressed her frustration about what was and what is. Teaching has always been a profession about students. What Teresa is experiencing in her profession is a departure from what she knows is good teaching.

The awareness was apparent in the effects that the increased testing has on collaboration. Here is what Teresa said about that belief:

It is just not there anymore. We are segregated, and we are very departmentalized, and we don't see each other a lot, we don't. I know that is amazing, but the whole collaboration time is gone, I see less and less. I, as a librarian, would see every teacher all the time, and I would say the last two, three years it is just not happening; teachers don't have time to do the same project, the project-based projects. We are just not doing any of that anymore, and when they come in, it is really to sign up for the 30 computers in the library so they can test.

Even with librarians across her school district, she was seeing a decrease in collaboration. She again, faulted the emphasis on testing as the reason. "I knew her from when librarians collaborated, now we don't do that even, librarians are either . . . they are either in several schools, or they are teaching, or they are part time, so that whole professionalism of sharing, of collaboration between, is gone." The overriding idea that money being funneled to testing materials and preparation was evident in her thoughts on the experience she was having in collaboration, not just with other teachers but with librarians as well.

Professional Development. Teresa's idea of professional development was not much different from her idea of collaboration, because so much of what teachers do to best serve their students involved both entities. Teresa did say that a considerable amount of professional development for teachers, and she was a half-time librarian and a half-time teacher for the previous two years, was spent talking about data. That was what occurred in collaboration as well much of the time.

Teresa added that the professional development provided by the district was focused on informing teachers about the implementation of the CCSS and its accompanying assessments. She said that the staff learned through the instructional coach at their staff meetings and in their professional learning communities. "Through our instructional coach, who goes to the district trainings and then comes back with what she has learned. [Also] through in-service trainings in our faculty meetings. They have now become that." Teresa discussed how other than learning how to "ace our evaluations," professional development was about CCSS, testing, and data.

Teresa, who is in the last few years of her teaching career, plans to stop fretting about evaluations, testing, and data—all integral parts of the CCSS reform movement. She vowed to stick with being a librarian and going back to "what worked for me all those years." She wants to continue to fight for education at an advocacy level until things are "right again." Her experiences with the implementation of CCSS and the assessments related to the standards have been ones of heartache. The heartache came from seeing what the evaluations and assessments were doing to teachers and students.

Jeff. What follows is the presentation and discussion of Jeff's experience. His narrative profile begins by telling about becoming a teacher. It continues by describing his experiences with implementing CCSS in his language arts classroom. Finally, his profile finishes with a concern for the future of what it means to be a classroom teacher and the effects of a data focus on student achievement.

A Narrative Profile: *“Let me look at my students and see what they really need.”*

Becoming a Teacher. In this first part of Jeff's profile, he discusses his difficult experiences in school. He experienced some of the things his own students today experience, and this has influenced his own teaching. He wants his students to have a teacher who cares about them as individuals.

There's a couple of things that made me [want to be] a teacher. It was the good teachers, and it was the bad teachers. It was the mixture of the two that actually got me to become a teacher. I remember my kindergarten teacher. I came in on a wrong bell from recess, and she drew a circle on the board, and I had to stick my nose in it on the very first day of school, because I came in on the wrong bell. I had a second grade teacher that was just amazing. Very understanding. I don't remember what I learned in that class, but I remember that she connected to her students. She was very, you know, just very positive when I was having a rough time. So that was something I always dreamed. I wanted to be like that teacher. I wanted to be that teacher that makes a difference to somebody. That was a huge influence. It was very positive.

I had difficulty reading. I struggled. In the first grade, I couldn't read at all. I remember the devastation of being taken out of one group and put into the low group. It

was just—all the kids knew. It was just devastating. It was pretty horrific. I mean going to a new school, and you are trying to make friends and do all the stuff to feel like you are part of a group, and then all of a sudden you're labeled as, "Oh, you're in the dummy group." I just shut down completely. I got so frustrated, and I guess my ego was so crushed that I was just didn't care. I think my second grade teacher probably helped me start to get the basics. I just remember her being so nice and kind and helping me. I finally started to read in third grade or fourth grade. I got hooked on Walter Morey. He's an author, and he writes about adventure. He wrote 'Gentle Ben,' so I got into those. I just took off then because those were books I could get hooked on, on my own.

I had a ninth grade English teacher. He was really big into literature, and he had humongous expectations for us, and he expected us to read way beyond our reading levels, so he challenged me to read books that I probably would never read, you know, really deep, you know.

Another big influence was a bad teacher that I had in high school, my senior English teacher; he was horrible. At that point I was getting to the point of deciding about what I would do with my future. I said, 'Well, if I could be a teacher, I want to be one mainly to make sure that teachers like that don't exist.' He took pride in failing students; he wanted to see how many students he could fail.

I always wanted to help people. I really thought I would be a veterinarian because I loved animals so much. Then I helped our vet operate on one of my cats on the kitchen counter. It was like the smell and everything. I was like, 'Maybe I don't want to be a vet.' So then I thought I really wanted to help people. I thought I would be a

counselor. Then I realized almost all that counselors do is paperwork. They don't really counsel kids. They do schedules; they don't really do counseling.

When I felt I wanted to go to college, I knew at that point I wanted to go into education. I figured it was the best way to help people. I thought. 'Where can I do the most good? Where can I help kids the most?' I felt it was as a teacher. So that's why I am teaching.

Being a Teacher. For Jeff, being a teacher now is difficult. Things have changed in his school and district. He has been in the same school, teaching middle school English language arts for his entire career. He described changes in collaboration, a distrust of the intentions of his principal and the policymakers, and a student demographic that needs more consideration than it is getting.

When I got my first job, the assistant principal walked into my room and hands me a literature book. I asked him where the curriculum was. I was handed a student edition anthology and was just told by the assistant principal, 'Here, go teach language arts. It's up to you.' So there really were no standards. I had a couple of short stories and poetry, and so I looked to see what the other teachers might be using. We were in teams at the time so we did a lot of planning together as teams, and so then, 'Ok, well, the history teacher is doing Civil War right now so then we'll I need to make sure I supplement that in my language arts class and do Civil War kind of things and use literature or go find stuff on Abraham Lincoln and things like that to help supplement what he is doing teaching.' So we did a lot of that kind of thing; there were no standards to say by the end of eighth grade, these kids should know this, this, this.

So my first year I was completely free to do whatever I wanted and what I saw that kids needed. I had tons of freedom. I could teach novels and the aspects of figurative language through poetry and things like that. I loved that. It was the most creative time I had. I think my kids probably learned the most because I was probably the most excited.

We worked in teams. We were in middle school teams, which we don't have anymore. They decided to go back to departments, but then we were in teams. We had a language arts teacher, a social studies teacher, a science teacher. We had family like teams. We had team prep. We met as a team and developed lessons and units as a team. So the social studies teacher was doing the American Revolution, and then I decide that they can read 'My Brother Sam is Dead,' a book about the American Revolution. We could tie it all in. That was part of my best years of teaching. I loved teaching so much because we planned these units, and I was able to have the freedom to work with other teachers from other disciplines and develop these interdisciplinary units. That was great.

We had team meetings where we would meet every day, and we talked out the kids, our lessons, the interdisciplinary lessons; we planned things. We just dealt with everything ourselves. We never sent anyone to the principal. We talked about discipline with our kids. We were the model for teaming in this area. Some of the middle schools around came here to observe what we were doing. We talked about different strategies we were working on, what was working, and how we can help our particular kids that we shared. We collaborated a lot.

Now everything is so data driven and test driven. I feel like much of the teaching has been taken out. We spend so much time testing, preparing for tests, and testing again. We have pre- and post-tests all the time, and that's all we are doing. It seems like we

aren't doing enough teaching anymore. What we're doing is testing, and test, test, test to make sure that they are ready for the next test. The expectations on me are to make sure that my kids do well on the test. If my kids do well on the test, I'm OK. That's the whole expectation of teaching. It doesn't matter what kind of teacher I am as long as my kids do good on the test. It doesn't really matter if my kids connect with me personally, or, you know, they don't care if the kids are robots. They just wanna make sure they do well on the test. That bothers me.

You can see the little changes in the last seven years. In the last couple of years, it's been really bad. The last three years have been the worst, but we saw it coming about seven or eight years ago. They just started putting more emphasis on the tests. Before, the kids got the SBA, or whatever the state tests that they used were at that time. Then all of a sudden, it was they were grading the school based on test scores, and now it's more they are grading teachers individually on student test scores.

We started feeling a shift a little as they started emphasizing the test scores a little bit more, a little bit more, and they kept telling us 'Don't worry. You'll never be evaluated on test scores.' They came to us and flat out told us, 'You'll never be evaluated on test scores.' All of the teachers started talking. We knew something was coming. We just knew at that point that it was coming. Then when No Child Left Behind came, it just took a nose dive from there. They started really emphasizing test scores more and more and started like putting a lot of pressure on us and ranking our school. There was nothing we could do about it. We didn't do much about it. We just go in there and still kept trying to do our job as best we could with all of this. I mean, there really wasn't anything we did about it because I'm not sure what we could do as teachers at that point.

Two years ago, one of my students got thrown in prison for trying to kill her cousin. She tried to commit suicide in the jail. I mean, those are the kids I've had and I'm going to be expected to make sure they all do good? They don't care about the test. They are just trying to survive. That expectation is really hard to uphold. I mean, we don't have perfect students. We don't have that whole basket of perfect apples to work with. We have to deal with kids that are just trying to survive, their parents, too. School is the last thing on their minds. Lots of parents are intimidated to come to school. Some of them are not residents of the United States, and they are afraid to come to school because we might ask for their papers, even though we can't. We're not going to. That's not our business, but you know parents are intimidated by the educational system.

Last year we spent a lot of time relearning the standards and what was expected of us. I guess the biggest change I have seen with this change is more accountability. The data that is required from us, it's like we are dataticians instead of teachers. They just tell us that they need this data so they expect us to produce more to prove that the students are learning or getting the Common Core. I don't think the people at our district level know about it either so they can't really explain it to teachers because it is new to them too. So they just kind of say, 'Here, this is what it is, this is what we expect of you, and do it.' We are kind of on our own, and if we don't do it, then we are held accountable for it.

They are asking for a lot more testing. They want to see that the student is showing growth. They are asking us to create more assessments and give those a lot more frequently. They want to make sure that we are addressing Common Core. We do benchmarks, we do DRA, and we have to put them in a bar graph. It shows that the students are growing. We have pre' and post-tests. We constantly are having to input all

this stuff, creating spreadsheets and graphs of all the concepts and creating assessments that go with the Common Core, that we are still unfamiliar with.

With the Common Core, there is more to cover. I think they are more specific than the old standards used to be. I don't think that is bad. I think having standards, or a goal to shoot for, I mean, I think it is OK. I think there isn't anything wrong with that. I think the way they are assessing it, and assessing the schools and the teachers, that is bad. I think the whole process is flawed. If it was up to me, we would do more multi-measured kind of assessments. More like portfolios, those kinds of things. That is what we used to do, like a rite of passage. The students had to create a portfolio; they had to bring samples of not necessarily their best work but the stuff they had learned. So they could have failed something, but if they showed growth and that they learned something, they could explain that. So they had to do an interview with all of us teachers. They presented the portfolio, and we had their parents there. It explained what they learned in each class. They had evidence with them. With their portfolio they could show their learning.

When our teams went away and we went to standardized kinds of tests, the portfolios went away. Our principal, he wants everything standardized, everything you teach. He wants to walk into my classroom in the morning, or whatever time, on Monday, and know that I am doing this, no matter what. He wants to go to the teacher next door and know he is doing the exact same thing I am. Everything needs to be standardized. He wants all our tests to be standardized. Even if my kids don't understand the concept and my neighbors do and she can move on and I should go back and reteach, he doesn't want to see that. He wants to see everything standardized, but we are supposed to go back and

reteach these concepts that are missing. He still wants us to be standardized. We still haven't figured a good process for that because he wants it so standardized.

I don't feel like I am doing as much teaching as I used to, which is taking effect on my teaching now. If there is anything that has happened, I think they have us doing so much paperwork and data and trying to show things that we are doing that we are actually not able to do the things that we should be doing for our students. I can't keep up with the data I have to do now; it is very difficult. I get behind sometimes, and I think our teachers struggle. We are trying to keep up with all the stuff they want, this graph and that graph and showing this and showing that and showing this growth on this particular thing and, you know, and this test and that test and coming up with their own Excel program to show that data. Most of us are language arts teachers, you know, we are English teachers, we are literature teachers. We were never taught statistics in college, and even when I did my master's, I was never taught to be a data-trician. I never took those kinds of classes. I never took a statistic class, and I never even took computer classes, you know.

I think the shift now is like, well, they still expect us to know all different things, but they don't give us the creativity to teach it, you know. They are just saying. 'Here, just give this test, this test, this test, this assessment,' you know, and see if they have got it. We haven't had a chance to teach it, or if we do have the time to teach, it is very structured. It doesn't allow we as teachers, at least in my district, to have that flexibility to say, 'Oh, you know what? These kids could learn it better this way or if I use this' – because they want everything in a certain way. It is just very difficult for the teacher to [not to] look at the students and their needs and say. 'OK, you know what? I need to

spend a week on this, not two days.' You know, I need to come back next week and touch base on this because we have such structure, the thing that we are supposed to be covering in so much allotted time. We are supposed to cover it before the next assessments. I think we lost the personal connection.

What this all means. Here, in this final piece of Jeff's story of his experience, is uncertainty about not only the future of education but also where he stands as an educator. He worries about what the focus on data was doing to the students he works with every day.

I have thought about why I am in teaching and how much has changed and about how teaching to me is about the students, about the kids, about making those connections so that they can get it, so they can go on and move on beyond my classroom. Now I don't feel like we are making those connections at all. I think they are just seen as a piece of data now and not as people, not as a live person sitting there learning. I mean, they are just numbers. That is kind of what I have seen over the last few years.

A lot of us teachers are fed up, you know, we work really hard as teachers, we are really there for our kids, and now we are being, I think, slapped down. I don't know how else to say it. I mean, we are just being put down, and we are saying. 'You know what? People are getting fed up with this whole thing, the pressure is getting bad.' I know some of our language arts teachers; the pressure is so high at our school for the language arts teachers. The principal really, I guess, picks on us and just disowns us all the time and wants all this paperwork and data and stuff, you know. She doesn't do as much to other subjects, and I know we have the language arts teachers leaving all the time because the

pressure is so high it is not worth it, you know. So, I think that teaching is turning into [a] very negative [experience] in the last few years.

We are still teaching kids. The kids' world is important, and I feel like we have gotten away from that and that is all we are. We are data managers, data collectors, and I don't think we are addressing the kids at all anymore, and that is the thing which has been coming up over and over and just is very frustrating as a teacher on my part. I guess that is where my frustrations are because I am not able, I just don't feel like we care about the kid anymore; we don't care about individuals, not the student anymore. That is the thing that, as a teacher, it is the most frustrating because I don't feel like we are doing our job anymore. I don't think we are doing what we are trained to do, what our passion is, and why we won't be teaching in the first place.

I want them to let me be a teacher again. I don't care if they give me standards and say, 'Your kids should know this by the end of the school year,' but let me be a teacher, let me do it, let me do it my way. Give me some resources so I can do it, you know, and then just let me do it. Let me do it my way, let me look at my kids. Because you know what? In my first period, I need to present in a certain way, and in my third period is when I am needing to present something another way. It just depends on the kids. Let me do it, and let me do it my way. Let me look at my students and see what they really need and how to get to the essence. That is how I wish I could teach.

When I first started teaching, and even 10 years ago, I never even thought about retirement, never even thought that I would, you know. Whatever, I thought I am going to teach until I don't feel healthy enough to teach anymore, but yeah, with all the stuff and all the pressure now, I am seeing I have six years, I have five and a half years. I am

starting to count down, it is almost like, and I see this amongst our teachers. It is almost like prison, they are just putting in their time now, and I feel like I am starting to say, 'Oh my god, I have six years left before I can retire,' and you know, I don't want to be that teacher, you know, I never wanted to be that teacher. But I am not enjoying the job as I did even five years ago.

Analysis: Jeff's Desire to be Trusted to Know what his Students Need. Jeff became a teacher to help students. His realization that he wanted students to have teachers who care about them, who see them as individuals, and are kind, led Jeff to teaching. Jeff knows that one size does not fit everyone in education. He is keenly aware that each student needs something different. The effects of standardization in education are disheartening to Jeff. His students needed something different than the students in the room next door. He wants to be able to adjust his lessons to ensure that each student is being taught in the way they need to be taught. He worries that teaching has become about testing, data production, and standardization. As a teacher who has experienced exceptional collaboration, he worries that there is no continuity in teaching. This lack of continuity shows in the fragmentation of subjects, skills, and expectations. Creativity is important to Jeff, and he believes this is gone from the classroom. Teaching takes creativity. He believes it is slowly being eroded and that the standardization is making it more difficult to reach each student.

Teacher trust in district and the state education department. In Jeff's discussion throughout the interviews, he often discussed the disconnect between the state education department, his school district, the school administration, and the teachers. Most frequently, this was related to expectations and communication. In his experience with

the implementation of CCSS, he found that he couldn't trust that the state education department, the district, or the administration were on the same page, or that everyone at the state education department, the district, and the administration level understood what they were supposed to do to carry out the implementation. This caused, and still causes, uncertainty in his day-to-day role as an educator.

Jeff told me about spending time after school and in the summer preparing for the new requirements, and he recalled multiple times having the requirements change. One in particular hit hard: The language arts teachers in his school spent their own money and time during the summer preparing for the implementation of a new language arts program prescribed by the district. This is what he said about that:

Actually, last summer we were all asked to go through training on our own--voluntary, you know, no pay--because they wanted to go with Laura Robb, who is I think from New York or something. They wanted to go with Laura Robb, with basically her model, so we all went down to a training at our central office, you know, spent three or four days of our summer going down, not paid at all, and central office for me is 50 miles away from where I live. So you go down there for three or four times, you know. So we did that, and the district said. 'Oh yes,' so we bought the books, personally, we bought the Laura Robb books because this is what they told us that we are going to start using. School started, and they said, 'No, throw out Laura, we are going to do Lucy Calkins.'

Because the group of teachers that Jeff works with wanted to be well prepared, they spent their own money to buy the books in anticipation of the district adopting the curriculum. In addition to the time spent in training for the implementation, the group spent the

summer meeting and developing a year's worth of unit plans for the middle school language arts classes. This showed a lack of trust as Jeff further described his frustration about that experience. He said, "[The] first week of school, they come and say, 'No, no, no. We are throwing that out, and here, go do this.' So we had to start completely all over." Because Jeff is a language arts teacher with many years of experience using different curriculums and programs, this disconnect between what the district, state, and administration expected and mandated led to a disconnect within the way that Jeff and many in his language arts group dealt with adapting new curriculum.

Jeff and the majority of teachers in this study expressed confusion about who mandated the assessments that the students take, the impact of the assessments on teacher evaluations, and the number of assessments the students take throughout the school year. This was expressed as a lack of trust in all three of these elements. A basic tenant of trust is the ability to understand policy decisions, trust that the decisions are made with benevolence, and that they are being made to benefit the recipients of the policy. As do all of the participants in this study, there seemed to be some degree of uncertainty about the assessments, according to Jeff.

Jeff talked about the assessments as being mandated by the state education department when he said, "I don't know if all of the assessments are because of the Common Core, and that is part of the frustration." He went on to question "all the assessments and stuff, and accountability from the state just saying, 'Hey, we need to do something because now we are being measured against everybody else because of the Common Core,' I don't know." This is a common question not easily answered.

Like the other teachers in this study, Jeff expressed distrust in the evaluation process that the state education department implemented and was directly tied to the implementation of CCSS. He said:

The evaluations that I got from my principal when she came to observe me were all very positive, very good, you know, but then the state comes in, and they didn't give us, they gave us papers saying this is your evaluation, but they didn't break it down and say how they got to that evaluation, what did they use, how did, you know, 30 percent of it is the test scores. I understand that, but how do they do that, I mean, they didn't give us any type of explanation at all.

This was a concern of the majority of the participants in this study. Evaluations arrived in their school mailboxes on the last day of school without explanation. As Jeff described his experience with this, it was obvious that this works to further distance teachers from the policymakers.

Part of the distrust of the administration on Jeff's part was the notion that perhaps the district wasn't doing the job of a district. Jeff shared this impression when he said, "I mean, we are doing central office's job by developing curriculum, developing assessments for that curriculum, but we are also still supposed to do everyday tasks as a teacher plus deal with all the issues of common teaching." As was evident in that statement, Jeff believed that when the district mandates more assessments, it also should create or provide the assessments. Jeff said he and his colleagues spent time figuring out the assessment expectation. That meant not only were they creating assessments and giving assessments, but they also were frequently attempting to align assessments with the ELA CCSS. He said, "We constantly have to input all that stuff, create, you know,

spreadsheets and graphs and stuff like that to be able to show the students are getting all the concepts. [We are] creating assessments to go with the Common Core that we are still a little unfamiliar with.” He talked about being unclear about how to align the additional teacher-created assessments required with the ELA CCSS, but it was clear in his conviction that his ELA team worked hard at getting it done as best it could. He believes that aligning assessments and creating assessments was the job of the district and the people who are creating the requirements.

Teacher trust in the principal. Like many experienced teachers, Jeff has seen a number of principals come and go at his school. With new principals came new policies, curricula, foci, and personalities, among other changes. The current principal at Jeff’s middle school came in with the beginning of the implementation of the new standards. Jeff described her as “highly emotional.” He recounted times when she bullied, played favorites, and even gave the silent treatment to different individual or groups of teachers over the uncertain atmosphere of the implementation of the CCSS. He realized that she was under pressure to raise scores and performance of the students at the school, but he also believed the staff cannot trust her to act with competence and honesty about expectations.

Jeff described an incident where there was discussion about the expectations of a new policy related to the ELA CCSS. His principal was their (PLC) and he said:

Our principal had been talking to us, and it was constantly yelling at us; very negative. I don’t know, that is her personality, she doesn’t know how to talk, she just knows how to be negative, she doesn’t know how to be positive at all, her people skills are just awful. So everything that comes out of her is negative, and it

is like yelling at you, you know, she is always displeased with whatever we are doing. So it is a very negative experience at our school right now.

Jeff realized that part of the principal's outbursts were a reaction to pressure she is under.

He said:

Most of the time it is her yelling at us because she doesn't like the way we are doing things, or she doesn't think we are doing the things the way the district wants us to do it, or I think she is feeling like pressured. I don't know how else to say it. I think she is getting pressure from central office, from her bosses, her administrators, to do certain things. So, I think she is just passing that frustration and that tension down to us, and we end up being the stop so we get it all.

Jeff saw the various corners from which the pressure on the principal was coming. He knew she was being pulled in different directions. It would make all the difference if the teachers knew she was on their side. Like he said, "If I am teaching, and my students are scoring low on an assessment I give them, I know I need to reteach something, that I am doing something wrong. I think it should be the same for administrators and the state." Instead of raising her voice and reacting negatively, Jeff said he believed she should look critically at herself and her methods to learn how her teachers feel about the atmosphere in their school.

The state has a system of grading schools based upon test scores. This past year, the grade of Jeff's school was considerably raised, which was perplexing to Jeff and his colleagues, he said. When Jeff asked his principal for an explanation, she didn't have one.

The conversation went like this, he said:

She is all excited, and I say, ‘How can our school get a B yet probably close to almost all of our teachers got a bad evaluation from the state this year?’ All of us were either ineffective teachers or really close to whatever that second to last one is. ‘Yeah,’ she goes, ‘I don’t think those evaluations are right, I think there was a typo.’ That was the response my principal made to me yesterday. Evaluations are based on test scores last year.

Teachers want to trust that their principal understands the policy and implementation that is being imposed. It was evident that the principal of Jeff’s school did not understand the connection between test scores, teacher evaluations, school grades, and the impact it had on teachers, he said.

Student trust in education system. Jeff describes many instances in which he felt that the pressure of the implementation, the uncertainty of the curriculum, and the assessments were doing little to impart confidence of their schooling in students. In particular, Jeff said he believed that the assessments that are part of the implementation have impacted the teaching that occurs in the classroom. Teaching has become about preparing for assessments, assessing, and then putting data together, and analyzing it.

In his school, teachers were responsible for reporting on data. Jeff said, “I am just so hung up trying to get this data in different kind of things, assessments done for administration that I feel like I am leaving a lot off for my students.” He used this example of a regular occurrence as a concern for students, “I know we struggle harder with this group, because I didn’t, I was so busy trying to teach them the standards and teach them through this Lucy Calkins and do certain things that I didn’t always have that personal connection so I had, I think I struggled a little more this last year with the kids in

general than I ever had in the past.” Jeff felt that relationships with students, especially the student population that his school serves, are important.

Relationships with teachers “keeps students in school,” he said. Jeff had experiences in school himself, especially with reading, which made a difference for him. The relationships that teachers built with him gave him the nudge he needed to move from being a reluctant reader to being a voracious and excited reader, he said. “I wanted to be like, you know, I wanted to be that teacher that makes a difference in somebody. You know, so that was a huge influence,” he said. He remembered a teacher who had time to find books he might like. He has spent a career building up his classroom library so that he could say, “Here, you might like this book” to a student. That is important. That connection. In fact, he summarily said:

Teaching to me is about the students, about the kids about making that connection so that they can get it, so they can go on and move on beyond my classroom, and I don’t feel like we are making those connections at all. I think they are just seen as a piece of data now and not as people, not as a live person sitting there learning and trying to turn this child into something like productive citizen later. I mean, they are just numbers.

One thing Jeff prided himself in was his connection to his students. He said some of his students invited him to their graduation, sent him wedding announcements, and brought their babies into school years later to show them off. That was what is important, and that was what told him he did his job.

Jeff summed up his feelings about how the implementation of CCSS has affected the students he teaches. He said:

I don't feel like I am doing as much teaching as I used to, which is taking effect on my students now. If there is anything that has happened, I think they have us doing so much paperwork and data and trying to show things that we are doing that we are actually not able to do the things that we should be doing for our students.

This failure of the system to give students what they need contributes to a lack of trust on the part of the students to be educated in a manner in which Jeff believes should be a requirement of schools and teachers. Schools should be invested in students at a level beyond looking at them as points on a graph.

Trust in the standards, assessments, and the curriculum. For Jeff, ELA CCSS were more difficult because there were higher expectations associated with the implementation. There was a great deal of uncertainty attached to the standards. He felt as if no one really knew what to do with the entire process of implementation. He said:

I don't think it is positive, because I don't think they know what they are doing. So when you ask questions about exactly how would you like us to do this or what resources are you going to give us to help us do this, they are lost. I guess they were mandated by the state, and they said, 'We are going to do this,' but they haven't thought it through. And then [they came] out with these expectations of these assessments and how they are grading the schools and the teachers. And at the same time, I just don't think they thought this through, so it has been instead of a nice transition, or it could have been a positive experience of saying, 'OK, this is what we want our kids to learn,' it has been a very negative experience I think for almost everybody in the state. That is my opinion.

Jeff said he believed the standards were haphazardly prepared and implemented. He questioned the preparation of everyone involved, including teachers.

Jeff questioned the focus on strategies. He had always taught in units. Some of his most successful units have been mythology, fantasy, and the Holocaust. He said this of the ELA CCSS focus on strategies and lack of attention to content:

I know it is very difficult to teach strategies without any content if you don't get the kids' interest, even the language arts. I mean, if I take out the Holocaust, and I just find all these random things just to teach certain kinds of ideas and strategies in there, it is not going to mean anything to them if they don't use some of that content. So as their teacher, that is what I do. I use the content to help support whatever strategy I am teaching.

This concern over taking the content out of teaching literacy strategies is shown here and again as he discussed the struggle the content-area teachers are having with teaching literacy strategies. Jeff has spent a career teaching literacy, content-area teachers often have not. He said:

If you look at the Common Core standards, science and social studies have a lot of literacy standards that they are supposed to be covering, and they don't. And I don't know if our district and our principals, our administration, they don't know how to get them involved doing that and because especially in middle school, their emphasis is teaching the content. If they are teaching world history or early U.S. history, then that is what they want to teach them. It is very difficult for them to go and use these strategies that we use in language arts to teach that because they have never been part of [the training], and they are still not being part of that.

Teaching strategies lacking the context in which they are housed, or a context that is important to the students, is one expectation of CCSS that bothered Jeff. The ELA CCSS that applied to the content-area teachers was difficult. The statement he made emphasized the importance of proper teacher training. ELA CCSS teachers were trained and experienced in teaching what the content-area teachers have never been trained in. It also did not appear that they were getting specialized training to implement ELA CCSS in their content work.

Jeff cited examples of when the standards were difficult to assess. His school district had the teachers creating ongoing assessments in addition to the interim assessments, prescribed reading assessments, end of unit exams, and the annual standardized summative assessment. Jeff saw a disconnect between the standards and the assessments the teachers were asked to create and the ones that were created for them. It was a struggle to create and find assessments for ongoing formative purposes, he said:

We can never find a good enough assessment to [assess the standard]. That is why we are struggling, because we are not being able to find an assessment to show exactly what they are supposed to know from the standards.

This disconnect between mandates from the state, district, and the school administration to have more data and the standards adopted by the state caused tension. The unknown and uncertainty that exemplified the experiences that Jeff had was evident in this statement about this disconnect: “Supposedly this year we are going to PARCC, but we don’t know. They told us even though we are being assessed on the old state stands to go ahead and start using the Common Core.” There seemed to be mixed messages about what to teach, assess, and incorporate into practice, he said.

Much of the distrust of the district and administration was related to the implementation of the prescribed language arts curriculum. For Jeff and his colleagues, the quick replacement of the *Teaching Reading in Middle School* curriculum written by Laura Robb with the *A Curricular Plan for the Reading Workshop: Grade 8* and *A Curricular Plan for the Writing workshop: Grade 8* written by Lucy Calkins was disheartening. By all accounts on the part of his administration, the Lucy Calkins curriculum was strictly aligned with the ELA CCSS. However, there were problems with the implementation of the Lucy Calkins curriculum. The distrust that arose over the implementation came not only from the unexpected change but also from the suitability of the sequencing of the curriculum and the requirements by the administration of standardization across the language arts department. Jeff's principal required that each teacher be at the same exact point in the curriculum as the teacher next door.

Jeff gave an example of where his distrust for the suitability for the prescribed language arts curriculum arose. He recounted the experience in the first year and the questions that came up. He said, "We went from having these stepping stones kind of built into it. The way she does things she doesn't really do all those different little stepping stones, you know." He explained that the curriculum they were using "doesn't seem to build as well, and it kind of jumps around. It doesn't seem to flow as well." Jeff said he has worked hard throughout his career to make things relevant to his students. He built his entire year to start with the students learning more about their own lives and families. They did research by interviewing grandparents and built upon skills throughout the year. They would generally end the year with a major research project on the Holocaust. This curriculum had them doing a 12-page research paper in the fall. This was

where the question of suitability arose. The lack of flexibility and relation to the students' lives was concerning. Jeff explained his feelings about distrusting the curriculum:

It seems a lot more sterile, I don't know how else to say it. I mean, it is just like: So what you are going to do? It doesn't connect to anything; it doesn't connect to your life, but we have to do it, and it is very choppy. I tried really hard as a teacher before to make things flow in my classroom and have things build upon each other so that they would grow through the year and they could do more complicated stuff by the end of the year. I tried really hard and made things that were of high interest to them so that they would be interested in doing it, and want to do it, and be excited about doing it.

Jeff made it clear that he believed the Lucy Calkins curriculum was purported to be aligned with the ELA CCSS, but his experiences in implementing it were wrought with misgivings about its suitability and relevance to his students. This opinion was clear throughout the interview. He was not opposed to the standards, he said, but he was concerned about the experience of implementing them, about their impact on his students, and on the mandated teacher evaluations. Was the best curriculum for his students, he said he wondered.

Analysis: Jeff's Experience with changing and becoming a "datatician." In the following analysis, the reader will understand how the teaching profession has changed for Jeff. The way that teachers are collaborating has changed for Jeff, and the way that students are getting the tools they need to learn in a way that is best for them.

Teaching practice. Teaching has become a data-driven endeavor for Jeff. His teaching practice deteriorated to the point where he believed he was teaching solely for

countless mandated assessments, which led to incessant data review and reporting. All of this took away from the time that needed to be dedicated to teaching.

As for how Jeff incorporated the ELA CCSS into his teaching practice, there seemed to be frustration. While he was prescribed the purportedly ELA CCSS aligned Lucy Calkins curriculum, he vacillated between trying to work with it because the district wanted the language arts teachers to “follow it like it’s the Bible” to working with his team to figure out ways to work with it while still getting students what they needed. He said:

We were trying to rearrange it so that it would fit our students better, so they would be more successful but, because we noticed they expected a research paper and Lucy Calkins expects, I think it is a 10-12-page research paper for eighth grade, you know. That is kind of what she like talks about here, and so that is what they want us to do. Our kids are learning how to read.

This was an important occurrence to consider. Jeff said the students in his district “struggle with reading, all the way through high school,” and he considered the 12-page research paper a bad choice. He said it was not a part of ELA CCSS but was an example of that disconnect between ELA CCSS and the curriculum. Recall that the school district required the schools to follow the Lucy Calkins “like it’s the Bible.” Jeff felt like in the past, teachers were allowed more professional discretion in terms of how long a research paper should be for eighth graders. The teachers could determine that based on the needs of the individual student.

Assessment and data have played a significant part in what Jeff considered the changing of his teaching practice. This is what he said about data and its impact on his teaching practice:

So that is the thing that just keeps coming back to my head, the way I used to teach, the creativity, the being able to get out and really teach and get into the kids' heads and you know, find out what makes them tick. I don't have time to do that anymore because I am much too busy collecting data and putting it on a graph for somebody to see that most people don't even care about.

The erosion of teaching time and preparation was evident throughout the interviews as he lamented the loss of creativity, the attention to data, the inordinate number of assessments required throughout the school year. What was lost was student time; time to make sure that students were learning. Jeff believed that especially in his population of students, taking the time to make connections to students helped them learn most. That is disappearing, he said.

Jeff talked often about the heart of his teaching being about creativity, about making connections, and about discerning what each student needed. He said, "I guess it is the belief, the way I did it when I first started teaching, my beliefs in the way students learn. I think they are people first. I think you need to make that personal connection." This was important to Jeff, to generate practices that reached his students.

Assessment practices. It was no secret that the age of RTTT and CCSS ushered in more assessments in schools. It is important to mention that this state did not receive funding through RTTT for K-12 education. However, as mentioned earlier, RTTT and CCSS are part of a rapid wave of reforms and are often confounded with each other, as

well as additional reforms happening at similar times. Whether it was the district, the state, or the school administration, there were many more assessments given in Jeff's school. He, his colleagues, and the students were being forced to endure more assessments than before. Jeff said:

They are asking for a lot more testing. They want to see that the student is showing growth, so they are asking us to create more assessments, and give those a lot more frequently, and that [they] are addressing those Common Core standards.

Jeff explained the assessment changes he has seen with the implementation of ELA CCSS. In every section of this analysis, there is a reference to how the assessments and the required data reporting changed his teaching in a significant way. Plainly said, teachers in Jeff's school gave more tests than before CCSS.

Jeff offered a clear snapshot of what testing he was required to do as part of the implementation of ELA CCSS. It is worth noting that it wasn't just the administering of the tests that was concerning to Jeff. It was the reporting of the data that also caused anxiety:

We do the DRA, so we have to put them on a graph, like a bar graph. It shows that these students are growing. Same with the MAPs testing: We have to show the graph showing the growth because we [administer] that test three times a year. Then we have our unit tests that they want us to also graph and show; so we have a pre- and post-test. So we [are] constantly like having to input all that stuff, create, you know, spreadsheets and graphs and stuff like that to be able to show

the students are getting all the concepts besides creating assessments to go with the Common Core that we are still a little unfamiliar with.

The Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) is a diagnostic assessment that measures comprehension, fluency, and accuracy in reading behaviors. It is generally given on a quarterly basis. It is most common in elementary school assessment programs. Jeff reported in his interviews that he felt his students had been doing the same assessment since kindergarten. The MAPs test is an interim assessment, which is given three to four times a year. It measures English language arts in a more broad way than the DRA. Looking closely at the number of assessments and data reporting required in the above example shows the amount of time that Jeff feels is misappropriated not only from teaching, but also from learning. Jeff voiced these concerns repeatedly.

He acknowledged that he always had taken grading home, as do most teachers. However, this excessive data gathering and reporting took even more time out of his planning and prep periods. He said of the data analysis and reporting:

I spend every prep doing [data]. I come home and do planning for lessons and stuff. So I spend all my prep, I go in before school, I spend a lot of time, you know, doing that kind of stuff. Because I don't grade papers at school, I bring home things like that. So all of my school time is devoted to doing that [data] stuff.

Part of the issue for Jeff was that he felt like "I don't understand [the data] as well as I should. I'm not sure how I'm supposed to use the data to help find out what the kids are lacking in or have what has been successful for them." A common thread during his interview was about the lack of preparation that he and his colleagues were given in the

area of data reporting. As a long-time language arts teacher who prides himself in having had great units of study, great connections with his students, and a love for what he was doing, the data collecting and reporting has generated misery over the past several years.

Jeff said he knows that students needed something different from the student next to them. Additionally, each class needed something different from teaching and assessments that were given by the teacher next door. In Jeff's school, the principal mandated standardization of teaching and assessments. This caused consternation for Jeff, because he believed that he has always made great connections with his students. The standardization and the time taken with assessments and data reporting have taken that away from him and his students. He said:

She wants all our tests to be standardized even if my kids don't understand the concept and my neighbors do, and so she goes on and on about that. Even if I have to go back and reteach, she doesn't want to see that. She wants everything standardized, but we are to go back and reteach, and we have to [figure out how to] show that.

The concern for how to implement what Jeff believed were the best teaching practices demanded by principals for standardized teaching and assessments was a recurring personal debate for Jeff. He and his team tried to work around this but kept coming back to "showing" what they were doing, and what the principal wanted to see was standardization.

Jeff and his team often used to do multi-measure types of assessments, assessments that involved learning and were more formative in nature. He has never agreed with this one-type-fits-all assessment practice that he now sees. He said:

I don't think test scores are a very valid measurement of the kids' success, you know. I think there [are] a lot of other ways that we could, and we talked a little bit about doing portfolios before and how we used to do what we call the 'rites of passage' where the kids came in, they brought a portfolio, they had to do a live interview with the teachers and their parents. There was a lot of different ways we can access the kids' knowledge besides standardized tests.

His points here fit well with what he experienced in the standardization of assessment practices. He used the example above to show that because there are so many standardized assessments they not only were tasked to give but often to create as well. Yet there was little time for the assessments that previously gave them authentic evidence of student learning. His ELA team was tasked to create, give, buy, attain assessments that mirrored only the PARCC exam, or last year, the multiple choice SBA that was given during the first few years of implementation of ELA CCSS.

One of Jeff's final statements about the changes he experienced said volumes: I guess the biggest change I have seen with this [implementation] is that because of Common Core, because of more time, [and] more accountability, is just the data that is required from us, you know, we are dataticians instead of teachers.

Jeff credited his team in the work it did in this arena to alleviate the pressure from each other as individuals. Someone on his language arts team was familiar with Excel and was able to help the team build some of the charts and graphs required by their principal. Such team collaboration was one thing they have been able to hold onto during the past several years. However, that was not without some change.

Collaboration. Jeff has held onto his language arts team's ability to withstand too much change, but it was getting more difficult to do so. Time that was assigned as PLC time became the place where their principal or instructional coach kept them informed about expectations of the implementation of ELA CCSS. He called them mini-staff meetings instead of collaboration and learning time.

We have department meetings all the time. We also are supposed to have PLCs once a week; basically, those are like mini staff meetings where she disseminates information, but it is supposed to be a learning community. That is what it is supposed to be; now it turns out to be mini little staff meetings and basically this is kind of how we found out, that here is the book, this is what the district wants us to do, this is the unit of study that we are supposed to be following so you need to create your units and as a grade level based on Common Core.

Jeff and his team managed to maintain a high level of collaboration that is meaningful. From the beginning of the implementation, the principal had tried to change the direction of their meetings. All during the first year, he said, "Basically, she would put a computer up on the smart board, you know, to display it and then turn on the videos. That was her idea of having a PLC." Jeff and his team used other time to work together.

At school, we are so busy going through stuff as a department and our department works really well together, we work really hard. I mean, I think the teachers on our staff; they are amazing because they are willing to give up a lot of time. We met in the summers, you know. We met last summer at people's homes to try to help get us prepared with this stuff and to try and get us started. We had started to write these unit plans so we would have an idea, at least a map, you know, even

though we are all going to use different resources, at least some map of what we would do, so we kind of sort of [would] be on the same page.

Being on the “same page” in terms of units and themes was important to his team. There always had been a sense of teamwork among the language arts team. Even though they would teach different things, based upon the needs of their students and classes, they worked to be on the “same page” as they moved through the semester. They created assessments together as well, working to align them with the requirements of ELA CCSS. Jeff said that in spite of this erosion of collaboration, sometimes they managed to do what they believed was necessary. He said:

When we meet as the language arts department we work on plans, we work on assessments, we work on things like that together, and we don't have an agenda and so we just throw out ideas. We talk about everything [including] what resources we are using, because a lot of us [are experienced], and the new teachers aren't getting support.

One of the greatest changes in collaboration that Jeff saw was the elimination of the model of houses or families. This was where teachers across content areas would team up to create units of study. For instance, Jeff would team with social studies, a science, and a math teacher to create a seamless, contextually based study on the Holocaust or Greek mythology. This would allow a paper written about the Holocaust to reach across content areas, which is one of the facets of the ELA CCSS. Teachers of content areas were expected to collaborate with each other to integrate literacy strategies into their practice. Jeff said:

We used to do it on our own teams, and we used to work really well together.

Then when we went to departments, you know, I have a lot of kids go to different history teachers so I can't work with just one teacher and say, OK, this is kind of what we are going to do. So it is very difficult. So a social studies teacher may have, his kids may have three or four language arts teachers, and my kids may have two or three different social studies teachers, so it is really hard to have that consistency of what is expected and who is doing what.

He also said, "I am not sure what is aligned anymore because really we don't have teams anymore, we don't really communicate. They have separated us, and they want us to work basically as individual entities." With policymakers doing one thing and saying another was a consistent pattern in Jeff's experience. Administrators would say standardization but they also would say don't collaborate. They gave the teachers PLC time but filled it with information about the implementation of ELA CCSS. There was a disconnect.

Student learning. In the ELA department, the mandated Lucy Calkins curriculum for both reading and writing caused questioning on Jeff's part. Whether its alignment with ELA CCSS was dependable or not was irrelevant for Jeff. It was a question of timing and suitability. Made clear throughout Jeff's analysis of the difficulty of the required research paper, were its timing and appropriateness.

There was more to it than the research paper. Jeff believed the timing of the curriculum was "so disjointed, and that disconnect is for all my students. It is difficult, and if they don't have any interest, what do you think they are going to do in class, they

are not going [to be learning].” The concern was that the ELA CCSS and the Lucy Calkins curriculum in particular did not consider the student population of Jeff’s school.

Jeff has always worked to keep student interest by building up their background knowledge so that a new concept isn’t completely new. He introduced new topics by building their background knowledge, and this seemed to have been forgotten in the ELA CCSS. In particular, Jeff said:

If you don’t have that background information, yeah, you have got to know about stuff. You have to know about mythologies, you have to know about different kinds of things to be able to write a good fantasy. I mean, if you look at any fantasy book, I mean, they don’t just write a story. I mean, they tap into some major stuff.

Lucy Calkins has a fantasy unit. However, it is placed in the curriculum in a place Jeff did not find appropriate. This affected the students’ learning because Jeff did not have an opportunity to build up what they needed to know. This made the fantasy writing more one dimensional and less meaningful to the students. Going back to the requirement to follow the curriculum “like it’s the Bible,” Jeff found it difficult to believe his students were making a connection to the content.

To conclude Jeff’s profile, the assertion by Jeff was telling about his experience with this implementation as well as with the impact on his students’ learning. He said:

If you can’t make those connections with your students, and they remember you, and they remember you when you talked to them years later and they say, ‘Can you remember that time in your class when we had to go into hiding, or remember when we talked about mythology?’ They remember those things, and they

remember learning about that stuff. I mean, those are the special moments more so than anything right there in the classroom. So that is what keeps you going as a teacher.

Teaching is more than curriculum and standards. To Jeff, it was about connections with students and being a part of a community of teachers who are committed to teaching and learning. He believed these sorts of things were systematically taken away as a result of the attempts to implement CCSS. He was dedicated to fighting for them found it more difficult to do so difficult all the time.

Becky. What follows in this last in-depth profile are the experiences of a novice teacher with implementing the ELA CCSS. Becky is a first-year teacher. The idea of trust coincides with her experiences as she tries to figure it all out. Her questioning the appropriateness and fairness of the program is closely tied to her not knowing what to do. Not knowing a different system serves two purposes for Becky. First, she can more readily accept this new manner of teaching, which is heavily weighted in assessment. Second, she cannot question this new way of thinking about teaching because she doesn't have a history of teaching to fall back on. In other words, she doesn't know what worked or didn't work in the past.

For Becky, nothing has changed. She didn't have a theme to reflect upon. As for collaboration and professional development, she had some insight to share. These insights were in line with the way the previous two teachers thought, albeit, more narrowly. Collaboration was new to Becky. She did not have the experience of the other teachers in that she had not collaborated before this first teaching job.

A Narrative Profile: "This is what I know. I don't know anything else."

Becoming a Teacher. Becky describes being a second language learner and her struggles with that, as well as being a quiet child. She was bewildered at the battery of tests her school administered because she always felt smarter than everyone thought she was.

When I started school, elementary school, I didn't speak very much English. Spanish was our first language, and I don't really remember school very much at all. I don't know if it is because I couldn't communicate well. I never had any teachers that influenced me very much. I was very quiet as a student.

I remember third and fourth grade. Every year, they would take me to be assessed. They would pull me aside one day and give me all these battery of tests to see how my English was. I remember thinking, 'I am fine, why do I have to keep doing this?' Obviously, I wasn't if they kept testing me. I guess I did struggle. I remember specifically having to stay after school in third grade on how to write a complete sentence. Like if the question were, 'What color is the car,' I would just say black. I couldn't figure out to say 'The car is black.' I remember staying after school to work on that, so I must have struggled with some issues. I think that is sort of why I wanted to become a teacher, to make sure I reached all the kids, even the quiet ones. The louder ones are the ones that usually get all the attention.

This was in English, because in Spanish I was fine. I went to the same school from kindergarten through third grade. In that school, I was a C student. I was average. Satisfactory. That is how they graded you back then, satisfactory or unsatisfactory. I was fine, but when we changed schools in the fourth grade, I was above average. I don't know

what happened. I got tested, and I was in the above average classes in math and in English and in everything, so I don't know. I always remember thinking I am smarter than what they think I am, and I remember thinking I was smarter than all the boys, especially in math for some reason.

So then when I went into college, I was an accounting major. I realized I didn't like it, so I went into education, and I was going to do bilingual Ed. I was taking a lot of Spanish along with my education classes. I was ready to start student teaching, and then I decided I didn't want to be a teacher. I wasn't ready. I just graduated with the Spanish degree because I had all these Spanish classes. I was a paralegal for 10 years, and then I had children so then I stayed home with them. Once they were older, I decided, 'I think I am ready to go back and do the teaching thing', ' so that is when I went back.

Being a Teacher. Becky began teaching during the first year of implementation of CCSS. She didn't have a great deal of mentoring or direction, as everyone in her school was figuring it out themselves. Being a new teacher, she spent a great deal of time looking for ways to meet the standards without a core curriculum or guidance about how to teach ELA in her classroom. She felt like she was figuring it out. The overwhelming amount of testing for her kindergartners was an issue that bothered Becky, but she believed that in kindergarten there is really only one-direction students can go anyway. She described her feelings about the chaos of the evaluation system:

When I started student teaching, that was the first time Common Core went into the classrooms, so I think Princeville started a little bit earlier than Honeger did. In my student teaching [seminar], we really didn't talk about Common Core. The classes for my certificate just were terrible; they weren't helpful at all; the only good one was the math

one that I took. [The literacy] ones, they really weren't helpful at all. I don't think we did at all. In my master's class, we never talked about Common Core either.

When I started student teaching and they really didn't have the curriculum setup, I think they were a test school that was testing out Common Core, and the only thing they did was they had a new language arts curriculum, Treasures, and the principal just wanted her to use it with fidelity. It was her first year using it, and I liked it. At the time, I thought it was good. When I started in my school, they were like, 'that is not good enough. Treasures does not meet all the standards that are needed.' I thought, 'It really does.'

Treasures doesn't meet hardly any of the requirements for Common Core, so all we are given for ELA is just a scope and sequence. Like for quarter one, 'this is what we want you to have done. However, if you want to do it, it is up to you.' So I had to create everything for myself, which is good; we can pick out our own books. As a first-year teacher it was very hard.

[The instructional coaches] are busy; you really have to go looking for them, you know. I did a little bit at first when I didn't understand what the scope and sequence wanted me to do. You really go to your team that you are working on, so I used other teachers a lot, and I did use Treasures my first year because I didn't really know what the sequence of teaching phonics and reading was. Now I understand. I did use Treasures for the phonics and the phonemic awareness; and I did use all their books, but the writing wasn't sufficient with Treasures. We had to come up with our own writing because Common Core expects a whole lot more.

I mean, that was the beauty of coming in then and saying, 'This 'this is what I know.' I don't know anything else; to me it is you weren't teaching Common Core; it must have not been a very good curriculum because I like the curriculum. Yes, I think for kindergarten, they do expect a lot; you really have no time for them to play; we are doing a lot of work almost right away, and it is not great for them. That is why we have so many behaviors issues.

It is easier than I expected, I was really worried. I said, 'How am I going to know what to teach?' I didn't know that they gave you a scope and sequence, and this is what you teach. I was very happily surprised when it was like, 'Oh, OK, I can do this.' I spent a lot of time researching and creating my own materials. I created everything, buying stuff off teacherspayteachers.com. So I have spent a lot of money and a lot of time, but I think this year I won't have to spend this much time and money. I just have to look back on my lesson plans from last year and tweak them. I am doing things a little differently this year. I am going to spend more time explaining what readers workshop is. I think I just jumped into it is like OK, today you will read, you know, this year I am going to do it slower. I did learn stuff like that you have to explain step by step, which I don't think I did enough. Most of the kids get it fine, but there were those few that needed the step by step.

Last year, because it was my first year, it was more intense, more stressful for me, I guess. Because I didn't know if they could achieve this, you know. By the end of the year, they want them to be writing. I wasn't sure. This year going in I am so calm. I am so excited because I know we will get there

In kindergarten, we see so much growth; they come in knowing not even the whole alphabet; most don't. By the end, they are writing; they are putting letters and sounds together. So in kindergarten, it is very exciting. In the classroom, I think it is fun, and it is exciting. But being an employee and having to be evaluated, that is not fun, because you don't know what your principal expects from you. I like having advice; what is that called, positive criticism; that is fine with me.

My principal only came in twice to my room, both times for my evaluation. He never came in before to give me any encouragement, you know, or 'You should do this instead of that.' My first evaluation was great; I did really well. My second one was not so great. There were things that I didn't even know that were wrong. It was like I thought we were doing great. If he had come in more often and told me, you know; by the time it was evaluation time, maybe I could have worked on those things. I don't think he should be picking on me on my evaluation; do you see what I am saying? I think the only time I am not satisfied is when someone comes and evaluates you and tells you what you are doing is not great without telling you how to improve. I think they are wrong. I think they are just flat out wrong.

The [language arts standard] that I struggled with was the speaking part last year. I really didn't know; how do you work on following agreed-upon rules for discussion other than just; it was more like this is what you do; how do you assess it so during one of my PD things that I went to they suggested showing to us how one teacher did it so not just bring whatever toy that you want but kind of a designated show and tell for every student has a different date, and the parent knows in advance and what they need to bring, so it is like that show and tell, like one man might show and tell about what

you want to be when you grow up, and so they need to bring something that reflects that, and then they need to stand up and talk about it, and so you ask the parents to have your child practice at home first; I might ask them, 'Why do you want to be that; what do you have to do to be able to be that'; what can they tell me about it. And so I can see who is having trouble speaking. So those are kindergarten topics, I think. And that leads to being able to write about it. So I am going to do a lot more of that. We did a lot of writing, but I think this year we are going to do more speaking and acting out and retelling and then go into the writing. I kind of skipped over it; I forget that they really need that.

I went to [the training] and paid for it by myself, you know. There [needs to be] good quality professional development. I guess I am not getting anything; the only professional development the school pays for is my transition team that I get to go to once a month. Which is helpful because it breaks [Common Core] down, and I know what I am supposed to teach, but it doesn't help on how to teach it. So I am not getting anything on how to teach. I would like more on how to teach, being a new teacher.

Once a month, I went to those transition teams, and part of your evaluation is that you are dinged for being absent; every single one was counted against me. Like a 0.4. Our principal said, he had totally said he'd look into it, and I don't know that he ever did. So I got that ding for being absent once a month, and I never called in sick once. I got zero points, and parents had to fill out evaluation forms and submit them. They lost mine; the state lost mine so I got zero points for that. So I got 'minimally effective.'

I have lots of good days; really every day in the classroom is a good day. One specific day was when one of non-bubbles could recite the whole alphabet. I said, 'Wow,

she got it.' Those are good days. When your lower students are finally meeting the goals, or when a student comes in with something she drew for you over the weekend. It's like they are thinking about you. When they call you mom, 'Mom, oh, I mean Mrs. Galvan.'

What this all means. As a second language learner herself, Becky knows the value of oral language in the classroom. Now that she feels like she has a better handle on CCSS and its implementation and expectations, she spent a great deal of time and money over the summer finding games and hands-on activities for her kindergartners. Her goal for the new school year was to have fun. She described wanting to have fun with her students, and she wanted her students to have fun learning.

Language is so important, and I think I didn't get enough of that as a child, so I would like to do that more in my classroom, lots of language. I think we all learn by doing, and so a 5 year old really has to spend a lot of time with concrete objects, which is easier for math. Math is counting, so we spend a lot of time just using actual physical things to count. Writing and reading are not so much concrete. I have turned it into like different games for this year, [there is this] parking lot game where I put a sticker of an A on a car. So it is sort of making it interesting to them. I use clothes pins, like either wheel with uppercase alphabet and then clothes pins are lower case, and then they just have to match them. Just making them repeat phonics, sounding out, and reading is not very concrete.

I just told my husband that I am so excited, but I don't feel like I have enough time to use all these fun games. I have spent so many summer hours looking up stuff. I used my own money with card stock, my own ink. If I wanted them in black and white, I could

print them at school, but I want them in color so this is my own ink. I bought a laminating machine, and I laminate at home.

I think this year I want to have more fun, and I think that is what it means to me, to learn through fun, to learn while having fun. I want them to look forward to... I want them to think education is fun; it is not just sitting and writing and sitting at a table all day long. I do want them to move around more; I do want them to remember that education can be fun. So for me it means being aware in part of what they need to learn but in a planned, meaningful way.

I am hoping at the beginning of the year to make it happen. The stress of testing doesn't really happen till the end of each quarter when you have the DRA, DIBELS, and MAPs. Also, at the end of the year. But most of the first quarter, you are free to do what you need to do. Yes, you do DIBELS once a week and even several times a week for progress monitoring, but I am hoping that I will figure out how to make it fun this year so it is fun for all of us. I don't want Amalia to tell me she doesn't want get up anymore.

Analysis: Becky's distrust of the evaluation system doesn't discourage her.

Becky entered teaching just as the CCSS was being ushered into schools in her district. She said her supervising teacher during student teaching was piloting CCSS, and that was when she first used the Treasures reading program. Treasures is considered a core reading program and is published by McMillan McGraw-Hill. A core reading program is one that is meant to be comprehensive across the language arts continuum. The school she student taught at used Treasures and Becky believed it was aligned to ELA CCSS. However, when she started in her own classroom, the administration and staff informed her otherwise. Her first year chaotic as she learned to adapt ELA CCSS into a nonexistent

reading program, grabbing from whatever resources she could to pull together a language arts program. Becky held contrasting feelings over her experience in not only her first year of ELA CCSS but her first year as a teacher as well. She felt anxiety over not knowing how to really move a reading program along in accordance with CCSS, but she loved teaching kindergarten and felt connected to her students. She was thankful to be on the transition team for her school but felt dismayed and disappointed that on her evaluation she had points deducted. The narrative above gave a good sense of a first year teacher's experiences in this implementation.

Teacher trust of principals. Becky believed that her principal did not support her in the evaluation process, either by not understanding it himself or by not following through in undertaking a correction to a bad evaluation. Becky, a novice teacher, described her first experience with the evaluation:

So my principal came in twice to my room, both times for my evaluation. He never came in before to give me any encouragement, you know, or [to say] you should do this instead of that. So my first evaluation was great. I did really well. My second one did not go so great. There were things I didn't even know were wrong. It was like I thought we were doing great. If he had come in more often and told me, you know. By the time it was evaluation time, maybe I could have worked on those things. I don't think he should be picking on me in my evaluation. Do you see what I am saying? I didn't like that.

Here, Becky described a situation where she needed support, and she was not getting it from the leadership in her building. As a new teacher, she was willing to improve; she wanted to do better. She felt let down by her principal. As for her willingness to do better

and to do what was expected with what constituted best practices in delivering instruction aligned with CCSS, Becky believed her motivation and intent were there. But she saw her principal as being punitive.

There were specific things in that second evaluation that especially concerned Becky, and she was “dinged” for them.

I had four or five really developmentally delayed students, and he didn’t realize how much growth they had made from the beginning when they wouldn’t even join us on the carpet. They were sitting [on the carpet] really quietly, but they did have a dry erase board with them and they had a marker. We were doing a lesson where they were writing, and most of them had everything on their lap or on the floor. These kids were kind of playing with it, but they weren’t distracting me. So he really dinged me on that.

Again, Becky expressed concern that her principal was not evaluating her fairly. This affected her overall evaluation. While the principal’s evaluation is not the biggest part of the evaluation system in this state, being penalized by a principal in an instance where she did not feel supported by him affected her experience in trying to implement CCSS. While CCSS does not require a teacher evaluation, again, teachers often confound the two reform efforts. CCSS, a set of standards were adopted by this southwestern state to prepare students for college and career. Teacher evaluations, something that has long been a piece of teaching, are currently being reformed in many states. Each state education department determines the process and requirements for their evaluation system.

Becky is a very conscientious and careful educator. Years before her children were born, she was in school to be a teacher. She was about to embark on student teaching when she realized that she “just wasn’t ready.” This shows that Becky wanted to do what is right and was open and asking for the help she needed to implement ELA CCSS in the way the school was asking.

As an active member of her school community, Becky volunteered both her first and second year to be her school’s transition team representative at the district wide monthly meetings. In this role, Becky spent one day a month away from the school. Part of the annual teacher evaluation was teacher attendance. Becky discovered at the end of the year that she got zero points in the attendance category. “I never called in sick, and I was only penalized for those meetings,” she said. She said her principal told her: “He said, ‘don’t worry, I’ll take care of it.’ I don’t think he ever did, and I think he only wanted to take care of it because it looks bad on them.” Becky has shown uncertainty in regards to her principal’s ability to follow through with intentions.

Another area of distrust in her principal that Becky revealed was his priorities as a principal. She said, “He is all about test scores and test scores and test scores. So if we are meeting test score [goals], he doesn’t care. If we weren’t, he would be in our face, I am sure.” While Becky was concerned about the appropriateness of the number and type of tests that her kindergarten students were participating in, she did not think her principal concerned himself with such things. As long as they are meeting “test score goals,” things would be OK, she said.

Teacher trust of the district and the state education department. Many changes in education policy start at the top. The adoption and implementation of CCSS is one

instance where reform is directed from the top. Education, as an organization, is generally top heavy in terms of how decisions are made and who is involved in making decisions. Teachers, who wear the boots on the ground, are generally directed, even mandated, to follow through and implement the policies of those at the top of the hierarchical pyramid. In this study, most of the teachers expressed distrust of either the soundness of the policies coming from the top or in the policymakers themselves.

With Becky, most of her distrust of the state education department was with the uncertainty of the evaluation process and the appropriateness of the myriad of assessments in which her kindergarteners were mandated to participate. She said that the “only time I am not satisfied is when someone comes in and evaluates you and tells you that you are not doing great without telling you how to improve.” She was referring to the evaluations received in her teacher mailbox at the end of the year, which were mandated by the state education department and were based upon not only the principal evaluations but on what she referred to as a “confusing” mix of other items she did not feel she could control with kindergarteners.

The first piece of the evaluation that muddied Becky’s beginning year of teaching was the confusion about where the scores came from. As stated above, Becky was penalized for participating in an ongoing district wide learning opportunity. Additionally, there seemed to be no explanation or understanding of what was scored. At the end of the year, in fact, on the last day of the school year, the teacher evaluations were delivered to teacher mailboxes without explanation. Her principal could not explain the evaluations to the teachers.

One aspect of the scoring system that befuddled Becky was the parent input. She said, “I got zero points [on parent input]. Parents had to fill out evaluation forms and submit them. They lost mine. The state lost mine. They emailed the district, and whatever they were supposed to do to, they didn’t.” This lack of clarity and follow-through was discouraging, especially to a first-year teacher. Becky asked for help from her principal, but there was no follow-through. She said:

I am sure it looks bad on the school too. It reflects on them. You don’t want your teachers to be minimally effective. I was sure he was working on it, only because it affects them. I don’t feel bad because my principal said, ‘Don’t worry, I am working on it.’ I had seen the evaluations the parents gave me; they were good.

They liked the communication; they liked everything.

This confusion about losing pieces and then scoring a zero even though there were emails that said they were lost was part of the distrust. Becky said that other than some of the special-needs students in her classroom, progress was achieved by all students on the assessments that were part of her evaluation. She participated in professional activities, such as the transition team, and took part in all the after-school family-type of nights.

Student trust in education system. For Becky, having two of her own children who went through the same school system in which she taught was the compass she typically used to judge whether things were going well for her students. There were several pieces of the implementation that she saw as a disservice to her students.

However, not everything was bad. That was clear in her interviews. She said, “It isn’t all bad; it’s good to have goals. Common Core is a set of goals.” This is a common

sentiment in many of the participants in this study. They, like Becky, show that they are not opposed to standards.

The parts that she believed did not serve her kindergarteners appropriately were the levels of stress that were caused by goals that were perhaps unrealistic, and the assessments. She wanted kindergarten to be a fun atmosphere. She said, “I want them to think education is fun. It is not just sitting and writing, sitting at a table all day long.” In this statement, Becky reflected on the push to make sure students were getting everything they needed to meet CCSS. Sometimes, especially for a novice teacher trying to follow the rules, this meant a long time sitting at tables for her students.

Becky believed that children should learn through hands-on activities. Her first year was spent “trying to figure it all out” and piecing together her ELA curriculum through old materials she found in her classroom, things she got off of teacherspayteachers.com, a website where teachers share things they do that are related to CCSS, and Pinterest, another website where teachers share ideas and plans in relation to learning and classrooms. Though, because of this first year frenzy, she believed she didn’t have her students “spending a lot of time with concrete objects.” She worked to remedy this over the summer and thus believed that her students the next school year would benefit from mistakes she made during her first year.

The assessments that her district required also have caused stress for her students. For example, she said:

Yes, by the end of the year they could take the test, but still they hated it. It was an hour long for them. They were crying. ‘I am done,’ they say. I know they couldn’t be done. ‘You have to do well.’ If they do bad, it reflects on me. You

have to do good. We start bribing, you know, like, ‘If you do good, we can have donuts. I will bring donuts tomorrow if you sit and take the whole test slowly.’

In addition to the stress the assessments caused the students, Becky reflected upon her sons’ kindergarten experience. Both of her children went to kindergarten reading. She knew that this was an exception, but with her background in education, she worked with her children regularly. She was keenly aware that many students in her classroom do not have the privilege of learning to read at home, or experience a good early-childhood education, and they come into her classroom often being far behind in expectations. The expectations are expectations about things they should already know. In a sense, they come “already behind.” She worried that this lack of early-childhood education was not taken into account when kindergarten standards were written.

Trust in the standards, assessments, and the curriculum. This piece of the trust issue was where Becky leaned toward “not knowing any different.” However, there are major factors to consider when looking at these three elements in which Becky vacillates between thinking things are working well, to describing specific times and places in the first year where her trust for the standards, the assessments, and the curriculum were in question. Some of the trust issued overlapped and connected with other trust issues that emerged from her interviews. Trust of her principal and trust of the district and the state education department each contained evidence from the interviews that could be traced to these three elements connected to the implementation of the ELA CCSS.

As for the ELA CCSS, Becky questioned the appropriateness of some of the standards. She compared what her own children needed to know as they entered kindergarten to what her students needed to know in the era of CCSS. At the same time

that she was excited about the strides her students made by the end of the year, she also wondered what long-term effects of pushing students who never had preschool or any type of formal school preparation had on these students. She said that her first year was “stressful for me” because she was unsure whether her students would meet goals for kindergarten that are set by the ELA CCSS. They did, for the most part, and which made her feel accomplished as a teacher.

Another part of her distrust of the standards stemmed from being a novice teacher and not having been properly prepared at the certification level, or at the novice teacher level, to meet the standards. She cited examples of being in teacher preparation classes where “I guess because it is so broad with people going into teaching kindergarten to high school in the same class.” This made her feel that she didn’t have enough practice with teaching specific strategies for the age group. She talked about not knowing how to teach what the standards required. She gave an example of having to move students from knowing and writing sight words to writing multiple sentences. “My lowest [student] was writing one sentence; everyone else was writing two or three sentences. It’s totally doable; you just have to teach a lot of sight words,” she said. At first, she said, she didn’t think that was possible, but by the end she saw a wide range of sentence-writing abilities. So while her distrust of the standards was strong at the beginning of the year, that subsided as the year went along and she saw her kindergarteners succeed.

Becky does acknowledge the factor of kindergarteners coming in with a “blank slate.” She talked about them only really having “up to go.” She gave an example of her principal comparing the kindergartener’s growth. “I did hear a rumor that first grade got mad at the principal because he was comparing them to kinder because kinder met their

goals. He said to them, ‘Why didn’t you guys meet your goals?’” Overall, she said the ELA CCSS are much easier than the math standards to teach in kindergarten. For example, she said:

The hardest part of Common Core, I think, was math more than literacy, because they had to be able to add up to 10. They have to show all the different ways to make 10: 2 plus 8, 3 plus 7, 5 plus 5. Yeah, that was much harder than writing.

As was stated throughout Becky’s profile, her surprise at what her kindergarteners could do was brought on by this statement: “I really didn’t know. I wasn’t expecting anything, I didn’t know.” This was an approach to standards that shows there were no preconceived notions or tarnished viewpoints about expectations that often were seen in more experienced teachers.

Where the distrust that was evident in Becky’s interviews was is in distrust of the assessments. As weaved through this profile, Becky questioned the wisdom behind the number, type, and frequency of assessments that her students were required to administer. Additionally, Becky questioned the impact of the assessment on her teacher evaluation.

The previous year, her school implemented the MAPs testing, which is an interim assessment administered three or four times a year. Becky believed that her evaluation was based partly on the students’ scores. She also questioned the appropriateness of 5 year olds trying to test on a computer. She gave this anecdote of an experience with the first administration of MAPs:

Kinder has never taken it because they can’t read, so last year they took it with headphones. It would read the questions to them; it is like we said it is like games they get at home, ‘You got it, try again,’ but this wasn’t a fun game. It would ask

them the question, and they would answer and move the cursor. They wouldn't really know what is going on, and some kids at the beginning of the year don't even have computer [experience]. One kid, the computer told them, 'Drag the picture and drop,' so he dragged his mouse and dropped it on the floor, he didn't know what to do.

This experience went hand in hand with that of the students crying out of frustration and the unknown while taking the same assessment. Becky did not feel the assessment was an authentic measurement of a kindergartener's growth. As a matter of fact, she said, "They don't know the importance of it. That is how we are evaluated, by those tests." For Becky and many other teachers, the evaluation was a recurring theme in their opinions on the implementation of the assessments required under the guise of CCSS.

Becky's experience with the assessments boiled down to this statement:

I really think that MAPs is really just a teacher evaluation. It has nothing to do with the students; they don't get held behind, you know. It is more like, 'Are you teaching?' Are the students showing growth? How else are they going to show growth without a test? So they are being forced to do this test; they are forced to give up classroom time to take these tests.

Other than in this statement, Becky did not often mention the assessments taking time away from teaching and learning. "This is what I know. I don't know anything else," she said. Not having experience with teaching and learning time as opposed to assessment time could be the key for novice teachers to accept a new way of educating.

As stated during the interviews with Becky and throughout this profile, she did not oppose the ELA CCSS. In fact, she said, "I don't think Common Core is the problem.

I think it is the state testing that is the problem. We have to do all this testing to see if I am teaching enough.” As stated in other areas of this study, there seemed to be an inordinate amount of miscommunication and misunderstanding about why teachers were required to administer the large number of assessments they are required to assess. Some faulted the state education department; some faulted their district; and some faulted their administrators. No one seemed able to clarify for teachers and students why they were frequently involved in assessments or who indeed was requiring these assessments.

Becky recalled her experience with Dynamic Indicators of Basic Literacy Skills (DIBELS). DIBELS is an assessment that measures acquisition of early literacy skills. It is an assessment she thought was useful but flawed. She explained:

But DIBELS I like. I just wish that it wasn't timed. Can they sound out words? You have to show them a word, and they sound out. You know, can they sound out words? Can they rhyme? Can they produce their own word? That seemed very appropriate. When there is a timer, it is more stressful. Do they have to do it in 30 seconds?

Becky questioned the appropriateness of this assessment being timed, in addition to the amount of time the DIBELS took away from instruction. She said, “I would do like two or three a day during maybe my small group instead of having my small group.” Taking away from instruction time was a concern.

Becky talked at length about the suitability of the DIBELS; another assessment administered at predetermined intervals and followed up throughout the year with what was termed progress monitoring. Progress monitoring was required of students who are

not making a set amount of growth. All of this was done in place of instruction during the school day. She described this story of one of her students:

It is not developmentally correct: How many alphabet letters can you name in 30 seconds; that is not fair. If it could be slow, I would like it. I don't like the timed aspect. Like the CDC words: Can you sound nonsense words? I actually liked that; a lot of teachers don't. I like it; it is just I don't like the timed aspect. I had one girl who was [on the] yellow [level] just because she ran out of time. Oh, she was excited. She was like '*wab*...that is not a real word.' It is like she wanted to comment, but it is like, 'You don't have time to comment, keep going, keep going,' and I knew she could do every single word. But we ran out of time, and so she got a yellow, and I had to keep progress monitoring her for it.

As was apparent, Becky was conflicted about the assessments she was required to administer, the MAPs and the DIBELS. Her apprehension came from the timing aspect, the computer piece of the MAPs, and the question of how they were used at the administration level. The amount of time taken away from the classroom was a major concern as well.

This is also an example of the frequent misperception teachers are often experiencing with the distinction between current assessment requirements and CCSS. CCSS doesn't have an assessment directly attached to it. States, districts, and schools have assessments they require as part of other reform measures that are concurrently being implemented, but CCSS, a document, does not have an assessment piece.

In her school, kindergarten students were given an end-of-unit exam after each unit of learning. They took the DIBELS assessments multiple times a year and more

often if they needed progress monitoring. They administered the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) at the end of each quarter. Finally, they took the MAPs assessment four times a year. All of that added up to many hours taken out of instruction time.

As far as curriculum was related to trust, again, there was evidence throughout this profile to show how Becky was uncertain of what curriculum she was using. She circled around Treasures, but was aware it was not aligned with the ELA CCSS. There were pieces of it she used, such as the letter cards and the small books that came with the packaged program. She spent a great deal of time and money pulling materials off of websites and just “figuring it all out.” She discussed pulling more oral language into her curriculum and not really knowing how to do that during her first year. However, she felt confident that after attending professional development programs over the summer, she would be able to tie that into her curriculum this year.

Like many of her questions about the curriculum, she believed she had a better grasp on it this year. She was starting to trust that she knows where to find the materials she needs. Additionally, she knew the word fidelity was an important concept in her student-teaching experience where her mentor teacher used the Treasures program “with fidelity.” She said this about that concern for sticking to a curriculum in a standardized way: “Yes, we don’t have a curriculum we are using in language arts, so I don’t have to worry about teaching with fidelity.” The idea that a novice teacher was floundering with designing a curriculum was an intriguing one in that, for Becky, she believed there were other things to worry about. She shared her excitement about an adopted math program and wished for the same thing in language arts. She said, “We finally chose [a math program], and it is going to be great. I am not creating anything. I am going to follow the

curriculum; it is just open it and follow it. It is what they want us to do.” Becky, perhaps as a novice teacher, did not have an aversion to what often are called “canned programs” by experienced teachers. She believed one would alleviate the pressure and uncertainty of pulling together a program from a myriad of sources.

Becky had an almost frenzied experience with the implementation of CCSS. It was hampered by the fact she was a novice teacher and just did not have any other way of teaching, or being a teacher, to compare it to. She showed that sometimes, a simple fix would make things better, and sometimes it was a systemic problem that was more difficult. Overall, Becky was optimistic about the future of her teaching career and her classroom experiences.

Analysis: Becky’s experience with a collaboration and professional development that isn’t. In the following analysis, Becky shared her experience with collaboration and the way it affected her knowledge about what was expected of her and of her kindergarteners.

Collaboration. Becky had minimal experiences with collaboration in her first year of teaching. Her feeling toward how that affected her implementation of ELA CCSs was neutral. This went along with the idea that teachers were doing what they had to do just to keep up with the requirements they were expected to meet “just to get by.” She said:

Our kinder staff didn’t collaborate very much. At the beginning of the year, we were supposed to come up with a lesson plan as a team. So we started doing that but sort of like we would teach fiction first, and we would use these books. How we taught it and what we did with it was still up to us. Then it turned out that

Teachscape didn't require us to do that so we stopped making the lesson plans as a team. And so really we didn't do much as a team.

Teachscape is a system used by the state education department to collect evidence and data for teacher evaluations and observations. Teachers are invited to upload documents that show they are meeting, and exceeding, the professional teaching requirements required by their state. Numerous states use the system. Collaboration documentation is one thing that can be uploaded as evidence of professional service. Becky describes how her collaboration led to a great deal of learning, but the team chose to stop doing it because it wasn't required as part of the evidence for their evaluation within the Teachscape system. Becky said that about her own students and how she "uses peers to learn from each other." She believed that by learning together, students would grow even more in their knowledge. It was not applied in the collaboration style at her school.

As the others in this study professed, most of the collaboration that was being done was done in the name of data collection. For example:

Really, our only collaboration was looking at the assessments and where they needed to be at the end. We really didn't plan as a team. We were required to meet together as a team and talk about data, like, 'How are you guys doing with this?' We wouldn't plan, because we had to talk about data and assessments.

Becky would have liked more time with experienced teachers to plan and learn from their knowledge and understanding of the way children learn. She appreciated the assessment and saw the purpose for the data, to a point. This year will be better in that she will have more to share, she predicted.

In fact, she said she did take the information she acquired from her transition team service to her kindergarten team and to the school as a whole. She saw this as an advantage, because she believed it was the only way she would be informed about the expectations of the CCSS. She planned to continue her participation in the transition team and to continue to share what she learned there with her staff.

Professional development. Becky said in her interviews that she did not receive adequate professional development. For this, she blamed the district. She said:

I guess I am not getting anything; the only professional development the school pays for will be my transition team that I get to go to once a month. It is helpful because it breaks this all down. I know what I am supposed to teach, but it doesn't help on how to teach it. I am not getting anything on how to teach. I would like more on how to teach, being a new teacher.

Being a novice teacher is a challenge, one that Becky took on with gusto and enthusiasm. More professional development, "quality professional development" as she described it, would be beneficial for her students. She has reached out on her own, attending conferences and reading as much as she can. This has helped and has given her the confidence to be prepared for a challenging time for teaching.

Becky also experienced what is a reduced professional development schedule in her school district. She felt "really fortunate" because in her first year, the district offered DIBELS training. It was extensive and gave her a good foundation upon which to build her DIBELS assessment practice. She said this worries new teachers who have not had the assessment training yet were expected to administer DIBELS without the depth of training she had the previous year. She said:

We have a new teacher coming in this year. They are not going to teach DIBELS training again. How is she going to know how to assess using DIBELS? We can help her, but she is not going to have the same training.

As a new teacher herself, Becky empathized with the new teacher, especially with the DIBELS assessments being so time consuming and the requirements included in the progress monitoring. Becky also mentioned the issue of the evaluations. She felt concern that the new teacher would be evaluated upon her DIBELS scores, yet would not have the proper training to apply the assessment protocol in accordance with the other teachers who have had the extensive training.

To conclude Becky's profile, it cannot go without noting that while Becky was a novice teacher, she has had experience in schools, both as a volunteer and as a parent. One time, Becky was introduced by someone at a social function as, "This is Becky, she gets to teach kindergarten, she is in Disneyland all day." Becky thought about that comment in light of the changes that have occurred in kindergarten since her own children were in kindergarten, and especially since she student-taught the year before CCSS was implemented. She did not think kindergarten should be "Disneyland," but she did want her students to have positive views of school. Becky said that to her, school should be fun too. She said, "I want them to learn while having fun. . . . I want them to think education is fun." Her first year in CCSS, she said, was tougher than she thought it would be when starting the year. She had no plans of giving up and looked forward to a new year with a new attitude about teaching, especially now that she believed she knows what to expect.

Abbreviated Profiles

In this section of the findings chapter, I have compiled three additional narrative profiles and analyses. They are abbreviated and are briefer in length and analysis than the first three—and in no way does this diminish the experiences of the participants. This section is meant to carry on the conversation of the teachers’ experiences, just in an abbreviated form. Their stories are as relevant, as important, and as astounding as the first three. Table 2 is an overview of these 3 participants’ demographics.

Table 2 Participant demographics

June	Late 22 years	Biology High school	Southern region, urban, schoolwide Title I, state grade B	Has taught PE and science in middle and high school, graduate degree in education, first-time evaluation measured as minimally effective
John	Late 27 years	4 th grade	Northern region, urban, schoolwide Title I, state grade B	Taught in a dual language program for majority of his career, graduate degrees in education, recently retired, first time in career measured as minimally effective on evaluation
Carlye	Mid 18 years	2 nd grade	Northwestern region, rural, schoolwide Title I, state grade D	Entire career in same school, undergraduate degree in education, first time minimally effective evaluation

The first three participants were chosen for full-length profiles because, as stated at the beginning of the chapter, I wanted a range of experience levels, districts, and grade levels taught. The first three participants were a late-career teacher, a mid-career teacher, and a novice teacher. They were a librarian, a middle school language arts teacher, and a

kindergarten teacher. One teacher worked in an urban middle school, one in a rural middle school, and one in a suburban kindergarten. Like the following three teachers, and representative of the state as a whole, all of the teachers teach in a public, schoolwide Title I-funded school.

The following three profiles, like the first three, are respectful of the vulnerability of the participants. The teachers' names have been changed to protect their anonymity, along with the names of their schools, the state, the districts, and other revealing features. Some of the genders were changed. It was important to protect the participants because what they share is telling and creates a risk that I guaranteed I could protect. The participants opened up their teaching lives to tell these stories. Thus, I honored that with a full protection of names, programs, and experiences.

John. What follows is the presentation and discussion of John's experience. His narrative profile begins by the telling of a life not imagined as a teacher due to abysmal experiences in elementary school. John had many remarkable experiences as an adult that led him to teaching. What will be evident in his experiences is his concern for students, their culture, their knowing, and their right to be treated with respect. John is a self-proclaimed critically thinking teacher and believes that part of the hindrance in teaching today is the demand for systematic compliance with a national takeover of education.

A Narrative Profile: "Not all students are the same."

Becoming a teacher. John didn't intend to become a teacher. His experiences in elementary school marred his regard for schooling. But his view changed after working in an international preschool, a summer camp, and traveling to West Africa as a volunteer. By then, he had gained new respect for children and how they learn. And when he returned to the United States, he intended to become an elementary teacher.

I went to public schools K through 12. Elementary school was tedious, boring, dumbed down. It was workbooks; it was spelling tests; it was discreet knowledge; there was no critical thinking; kids were not at liberty in any way, shape or form to read what they wanted to read. You had to read out of basals and that sort of thing, which really turned me off to reading. You could not speak unless you raised your hand and then were called on; you weren't allowed to talk to anyone else; all the desks were in rows; you couldn't even turn your head and look at the person across from you or you would get into trouble. So they were basically like being in prison. Not once during that time did I ever think I would be a teacher.

That was not on my radar. I was going to be a baseball player, and then in the later years I considered touring as a symphony musician and percussionist, and ultimately I got several music scholarships to universities in the Midwest. My first year, I was still very tied into that career path and then studying with the lead percussionist at the symphony. I got disillusioned not only with the prospect of spending my life counting 64 bars of rest so that I could stand up and go boom on the kettle drums, you know, while the violins are playing the entire time. I mean, that is the life of a percussionist but also just how extremely narrow that life was.

I left the university, and I went to another university where I majored in anthropology, minored in French. While there, I needed money, and so I applied for a work-study job, and across the street from my dormitory was the preschool for the international center at the university. I think foreign graduate students at the university who had small children could send their kids to this school. So every kid in the class, this was 2 year olds to 5 year olds, every kid in the class was not from the United States. It is continental cold there, and all I had to do was to run across the street; it was convenient, that is the only reason I did it.

I started connecting what I was learning in anthropology to what these kids were doing, because they were from cultures from all over the world. They were sort of going through the Piagetian and Vygotskian (be sure those names are spelled correctly) early stages of development, and I had just learned about Piaget somehow. I can't remember what class. It was sort of all coming together, and then I really, really liked it. One day had a discussion with a girl from Israel, her name is Yalley. This is 1980, she was 4 years old in 1980, and she was telling me how the night before sitting in the car with her mom driving through the streets and the moon followed her the whole way home flying through the trees. I had this moment there when I was tempted to say, 'Oh, Yalley, the moon wasn't flying through the trees,' but to her it was. That's where the whole Piaget thing started, and I go 'wow.' And I knew by that time that I couldn't convince her otherwise, probably, and I remember thinking, 'Let her enjoy this experience, because for the rest of her life she will know that that is not true.'

That summer, I needed to go find a job so I applied at a very radical, left wing, highly political summer camp in Vermont. I worked the bunk of third grade boys for eight

weeks, and I absolutely loved it. I said, 'OK, that is it; this is what I am doing.' I finished the anthropology degree. I followed some friends down to Boston where I taught in a preschool in a housing project for two years, which was fascinating.

Being a teacher. Being a teacher for John meant growing and learning from mistakes he made along the way. Everything he did was purposeful in the way that it was the opposite of the experiences he had in school. He started a dual-language program with a group of parents and pioneered a model that he was proud of. He had a great deal of respect for experiential and contextual learning that was cued into the student. In John's experience, NCLB and CCSS were reforms that drastically changed the face of education, and not in a good way.

[Years later], I came back to the Southwest and pretty much came straight here, and then the goal was to do whatever I could to get my teacher's license as fast as possible, and in less than two years I had started teaching in the eastside. Then I moved to my current school, where I taught for over 19 years. This group of parents got together, and they had heard about dual language, so they conceived the program. I was part of the founding and the longest serving teacher in the school's dual-language program. Back then, they hired two teachers, someone to teacher K-12 and someone to teach three, four, five, and I taught the three, four, five for 10 years, and the other teacher taught one two. So these kids would come into the program and spend six years, and the program had only two teachers, [Mrs. Crangle and Mr. Pierre]. So that was that, and that lasted until about two weeks ago.

I think and I have heard people say the same: You teach the way you were taught. There wasn't a lot of how-to in the teacher induction program, but I think that was pretty

universal. It is not just here; there was not a lot of how-to. But part of that is you kind of can't do the how-to until you have a class. You can't tell a teacher beforehand what is going to happen, you just can't. Everyone understands that and that there is going to be one to five years of learning stuff. I think my own experience was typical. I made wrong assumption about things. A lot of things I guessed right, but they were still guesses so there was a lot of that. I would say that the first five years were exhilarating; it was absolutely exhilarating. I loved it; I wanted to get up and go every day.

I tell people, half jokingly, that one of the reasons I went to elementary education is because my education, you know, where I went to school was so shitty that I want to be an elementary school teacher and do it right. The whole idea of working in groups or the whole idea of that you can gather even fifth graders on the carpet and play your guitar and sing a song together, you could do this. The other thing was, you know, that you could actually speak to another student in class; students could speak together and learn together. All those sorts of prison-like expectations that were imposed on us in elementary school, I would use that as the model, the negative model, and do the opposite.

An example is the spelling test. I totally threw it out, and I haven't touched it in over a dozen years. I just did spelling tests because when you go to schools, there are bells, and there is a chalk board, and there is a hamster, and there is recess, and there is the spelling test. It took a dozen years for me to realize what a futile exercise that was. Now we study words constantly; we have a lot of fun and then grouping words and doing all kinds of activities, you know, with words, but spelling tests, spelling lists, and studying

spelling tests, what a waste of time. So those are the example of something that I simply did.

I changed it because I became a better teacher, so I would just say that I was not structured enough as a beginning teacher. I was so afraid of being overly structured and committing the same sins that my own teachers committed. So there was more of a chaotic, less focused and less sort of purposeful structure. Over the years, I became more focused, purposeful, more structured. I was just so deeply afraid of structure and all that. I didn't want to impose that on kids, you know. Now I understand that people need some kind of structure, and when you are too young to design that structure for yourself, that is where adults can be helpful. Once the structure is established, if the kids want to depart from that structure, that is fine. But a lot of teachers don't do that; they adhere to the structure no matter what, and that is what I think they need to improve. You simply say, so if the kids then feel that the structure is impeding their learning then they can adopt it and get rid of it.

One reason I wanted to be an elementary school teacher was to do it right, and one of my goals was to not turn kids off to reading by having them do activity after activity of what they read. To not talk about it all the time and to be held accountable for what they are reading all the time. When you talk to adults and they are reading and the enjoyment that they get out of it, they are not held accountable for it at all. There is no one holding them accountable for most of reading that they do. We are holding kids accountable all the time, and I just think it is a bad practice.

[Common Core] is the William Barnett, Ed Harsh model of teaching and learning, where you could conceivably write into a series of short volumes everything a

kid needed to know: math, literacy, science, and the like. It's the narrowing of the parameter of what white, wealthy men with enormous political and economic power have decided is worth knowing. They are imposing that on people with similar profiles, but also everyone else with no sensitivity whatsoever to, as I said earlier the leaning needs, the interesting inventories, you know, of children. The Common Core is a corporate scheme to simply create and train, inform workers for their corporate world, and that is actually kind of stated upfront, college and career ready. If you read between the lines, it is not just any college or any career. That means there is to be workers for us so that we can continue to get richer and richer at the expense of people around the world who are getting poorer and poorer, and we know that that is occurring. Many people naively believe that none of the stuff was taught before the Common Core came around. The credit they give for things that they find in the Common Core that they like, they give it to the corporate power structure that came up with the Common Core. Everything in the Common Core was stolen or borrowed from some other curriculum. It is just that it has all been narrowed down to something much more limited than it was before, and Common Core has left out so much of the history, and the culture, and the funds of knowledge of huge populations in this country.

I would say my best day of teaching would be any number of days where I used to lead my classes up a trail in the mountains to the hawk watch observation site. One of my hobbies is bird watching, particularly raptor watching, and so every spring I would take my third, fourth and fifth grade dual-language class up to the observation site. The whole trip involved getting there, which is difficult; public schools don't allow this anymore. The whole way up were geologic and biologic experiences led by me, and then any parent

who had expertise in that area. Also [it involved] things like how do you wear a backpack other than around school grounds? How do you wear a backpack when you are hiking and when you take off a layer and when you put on a layer? What sort of shoes do you wear? I mean, the whole things associated hiking up a mile and a half steep trail. It would be like the perfect day because I was being a teacher, but we were not in a stupid classroom. We were out there where learning is spontaneous, as well as planned because all kinds of things occurred you don't expect to occur, like a rabbit that runs across the trail. I liked what I was doing with kids, and if you like what you do with the kids by and large, and who doesn't like watching birds of prey. We also learned all the Spanish names for all those birds and things. Learning all that stuff, so that would be like the perfect day. Then coming back exhausted after six hours or something and talking about it the next day in class and debriefing and doing some activities.

Two years ago, I had the worst class I have ever had, and it was my 25th year, and it was just awful. Every day with bad kids, and the administrative decisions that led to the placement of certain kids in my class. [There were] really poor decisions on the part of the adults, placing fifth grade kids in a fifth grade language classroom who had never spent a day of their lives with instruction in Spanish. When I taught in Spanish, they were clueless. We have never had that practice before, but it happened for a variety of reasons. I predicted it was going to be a failure, and it was.

It doesn't start with children anymore; there is no child standard; Common Core is totally an adult and corporate standard, and they were making the children fit the scheme. It has always baffled me that we have to impose our education in this country. Yet, once we have compelled the children to go to school, we impose our agenda on them

forthwith, and I think that is sad. It is especially sad at the level I teach, elementary school. They are naïve. They are generally helpless when it comes to this. They don't know that they have a voice. Ownership of their own learning and all that just simply doesn't exist. I tried to retain vestiges of that in the later years, and it was difficult. It led to some of this censorship, harassment, bullying, and that sort of thing, because I was deemed as not being on message, not following the curriculum, not teaching to the standards, you know.

What this all means. John made the decision to retire at the commencement of the interviews. He could no longer participate in what he saw as the destruction of public education that the current wave of reforms has caused. The reasons he loved teaching have disappeared, and he couldn't be a part of the new process. He planned to continue a graduate program he is in and return to work in another capacity within the education world.

Today's profession of teaching no longer resembles the profession that I entered in 1987, other than the physical structure and some of those sorts of diehard routines and traditions in institutional settings. Unfortunately, the difference in resemblance is a negative one. It is like signing up 30 years ago to be a lawyer and then finding out 30 years later that you are simply a jailer or something. It is that bad; that is not an exaggeration. It is god awful, I can't stand it anymore, and that is why I retired a few weeks ago. One of the reasons is the three-legged stool of school reform. One leg being the over-testing of students and the evaluation of teachers in a very punitive way, punitive and vindictive. That is one leg. Another leg would be the privatization, corporatization efforts from part of private industry to completely corporatize and privatize the public

schools and the incredible effect that it has on teachers, students, and learning. And then the third one is the Common Core, plain and simple. Teaching is god awful for critically thinking educators. For those teachers who do think critically about their profession and the way that fits in and the cultural landscape, the political landscape of our country. I don't know teachers who would not find that thought disgusting, scary, unpalatable, and untenable in terms of being professional.

I want to stay in education. As I mentioned, I am officially retired right now. I like working. It doesn't necessarily have to be with kids. I want to take a break from kids right now. I have been working nonstop with kids since 1980, so that is 34 years. I just need a little break from that, but then I can see being involved, maybe in the future, but not as a classroom teacher. I would be interested in a position in environmental ed, maybe in music ed. If I had to remain in public schools, I think environmental, music ed, or anything with Spanish and French acquisition as a foreign language. I would love to be maybe a consultant to initiate dual-language programs around the country. We started one at the school I just retired from in 1995 from scratch; it couldn't have been more from scratch. National Public Radio has a series called "The Long View," in which they speak to people who have been in the profession for a long, long time. They ask those people to tell them the long view of how things have evolved over a long period of time. I think I have a long-view perspective that would be valuable to programs.

Analysis: John's desire for teaching to be authentic and child-centered. John came upon teaching in a way that allowed for him to see and interact with children in different settings for many years before he started working in the classroom. He worked

with international children in a preschool setting in which their languages and cultures were honored and respected. He got to know children at a summer camp where thinking and acting in a nonconformist manner were encouraged. He also experienced time on the Ivory Coast with a community outreach organization. He is well traveled, has many interests, and is a graduate student in education.

Trust in principal, district, state education department, and other policymakers.

John had concerns of trust in his relationship with his principal and the manner in which the principal tried to fulfill the demand that teachers recorded the standards on their lesson plans. John said he had resisted putting the “exact cryptic code” of standards on his lesson plans because he believed they were meaningless. He told about “cutting and pasting” hollow code numbers and letters. The principal said that that was “good enough,” ” which led John to realize that being measured in his evaluation on whether he was putting codes into his lesson plan was dishonest. He said:

It shows how false, and how fake, and how insincere, and how meaningless the whole process of Common Core is; because, if I can simply write down a cryptic code as my lesson plan to satisfy the powers that be, then that shows what a sham the whole thing is.

John believed that his principal was “toeing the party line” instead of reinforcing the teachers she was tasked to support.

An issue that is common to see in national media and blogs is one that John himself echoed. The repeated promise by educational decision makers that as long as teachers were addressing the standards, they could teach how they needed to teach. John said:

We were told under the Common Core national curriculum that as long as you are, and we were told this many times, we were promised this, that as long as you were addressing the standards, how you got there was your own business. Well, that is completely untrue. These people lied to our face, all the way down to your own principal lied to you and the [state education department] lied to you, the governor, and Obama, and Duncan, and everyone else.

This sentiment demonstrated a sense of distrust on the part of teachers. John cited as an example a newly adopted math curriculum that is aligned to CCSS as being incorporated into the program at his school. In fact, the majority of the elementary and middle school teachers in this study reported that their school has adopted, and required that they use, a math program aligned with CCSS. Only one of the teachers in the study worked in a school that adopted an ELA CCSS-aligned curriculum.

John said that the first few days back to work in the fall of 2013 were full of discussions, or “indoctrination,” as John called it, about the implementation of CCSS. The previous spring, he had arranged with his principal to have an opportunity to “broaden the discussion of the Common Core” with the staff during the week before classes started. He confirmed with the principal over the summer and said, “I worked on it all summer. I had the PowerPoint. The discussion was going to be a short presentation followed by a facilitated discussion. I had it all worked out.” During that week, the principal asked to see the presentation, and John said, “I asked him which day, and he said, ‘I am sorry, I can’t allow that.’” He said the principal told John it had to do with questioning of the implication that CCSS had on students. John is a strong believer in being a critically thinking educator, and this sudden change in direction on the part of his

principal was a stinging blow, and it confirmed what he feared was the dumbing down of education, the “brainwashing” of teachers about the “imposition of CCSS.”

One last specific statement that John made in regards to the lack of trust on his part of the state education department was what the majority of the participants also said. He talked about his concern for the evaluation system. He said, “obedience and compliance are the modus operandi of school reform.” He went on to discuss that this was what was happening at the level of state education department with this latest reform effort. John believed that the department’s intentions were to demean veteran teachers. It was that “the evaluation rubric of veteran teachers like me is insulting and humiliating,” he said. “The standards to which I am expected to stoop in order to be minimally effective, or even effective, in this environment is [embarrassing].” While he saw it as the purposeful humiliation of teachers, he also said he did not feel particularly affected because of he “has other fish to fry.” John had a disdain for the entire process and implementation of CCSS, and he paid little attention to the evaluation.

Student trust of the education system. John had concerns about the intent of the ELA CCSS. He questioned the author’s purpose for creating a “national curriculum” that expected every student in every school to learn the same thing. He said:

We are producing little automatons from our public schools who are all learning the same thing, at the same time, and expected to come out exactly the same. That is the problem with the standards movement. There is no accommodation whatsoever made for the learning styles of individuals, for the learning outside the cloud, multiple intelligences. I mean, there is no accommodation made for that at all. There is no accommodation made for things like poverty, the family’s level of

education, for school funding, for the fact that kids do not come to school on the same playing field, on a level playing field. They don't have the same starting line, yet they are put into a school where they are all expected to do the same thing at the same time.

John said he was concerned that CCSS was geared toward “white, middle class Anglo Saxon” children. We are in a nation that is less and less Anglo-Saxon, and in his estimation, CCSS does not take that into account. His concern for each one of the issues he mentioned was justified. His experience and interests showed that he was well versed in discussing these concerns with a variety of audiences. In particular, this overarching concern that students do not come to school on the same “playing field” was one to consider. It seemed to John that it was portrayed as a negative, a deficit. The differences could be honored, and honored beyond a day of potlucks and songs. Giving students the opportunity to excel in their prior knowledge was something that John wholly distrusted and that the authors and originators never intended.

He further demonstrated his concern with this statement about addressing the unique needs of many students in the state. ”The Common Core does not address the whole culture, its unique culture, Spanish culture, and the culture of poverty in rural states like this one,” he said. His concern was rooted in his experience of teaching and being with children of many cultures and unique needs. His long career in the state as an elementary and dual-language teacher contributed to a lens in which he saw beyond the rhetoric of policy change. He looked deeper into the why, the how, and the who of policy change and how it affected students. Rarely during his interviews did he talk about

evaluations or his own needs. He focused on what this change has done to teaching in the way that it affected students. For example, he said:

It is only addressing the English learning needs of kids who don't speak English as a native language. In other words, I don't think there is any Spanish literature, or South American literature, or Mexican literature. I don't think that replaces the English literature. Instead, I think it addresses their access to that English literature and that American literature written in English.

As was evident in John's own history and teaching account, giving students and families a point of equity in education, an education that prepares them to be independent thinkers, and to know about the world around them--that was what was important. This was what he deemed to be missing from the education system today. Students are being misdirected, he believed.

Trust in standards, assessments, and curriculum. John referred to CCSS as a national curriculum. He believed the standards were originated, and even adopted, in a way that privileged the White middle class. He said, "Talk about leaving kids behind, having one standard for all kids, is going to leave the same kids behind that we have been leaving behind." John does not believe that CCSS will change the way students who do not have all the considerations that middle class white students have are given opportunities to learn and grow.

As for assessments that are part of the implementation of CCSS, John paid little attention. He did not prepare his students for assessments, beyond the general issues of test-taking strategies such as how to eliminate answers in a multiple-choice exam. He generally let the students ask questions about how to attack the exam, and then he would

take a moment to answer the question with a test-taking strategy. He did not trust, as he did not trust the entire culture and expectations surrounding CCSS, that the assessments had the students' best interest at the center. He referred to the assessments that were required through the implementation as "high stakes testing crimes." The reality of taking assessments, in particular the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), that was considered a high stakes exam bothered John in that it did not do anything to serve the students and instead did more to line the pockets of the businesses that created the tests.

John had this to share about the curriculum aligned with CCSS. He considered the CCSS as actually a curriculum, not a set of standards. He said:

The district has over interpreted it. I think it had to do with the money through Bill Gates and all that. They over-interpreted it, and they came in with these things called units of study, which not only very, very down to the minute specified what you were going to teach, but followed the district calendar where the days were actually designated.

That reflects John's statement that what the policymakers said and what they did were not the same.

Analysis: John and the idea that collaboration is forced and unauthentic.

John has multilayered thoughts about how collaboration has changed as a result of attempts to implement CCSS. In his school, collaboration once was a choice. Teachers arranged their schedules with the teachers they wanted to collaborate with on issues that were important or significant to them. Their model worked so well that multiple entities were involved and essentially "damaged" what they were doing. He said:

Whatever the leaders' implementation scheme happens to be, and right now it is the Common Core, that has got to be piped directly from the feds, which is almost inconceivable to me. The federal and the state governments through your district, through your administration, get right into your PLC. I find that the process incredibly distorts and damages it.

John believed that collaboration should include the option to not collaborate, to learn what you need and want to learn for your own practice. The forced collaboration was new to his school, and it became a situation that he believed did not work.

Like the other teachers in this study, John's experience with collaboration and with PLC revolved around implementing CCSS. This was what happened in his school in the name of collaboration:

So they come in, and they decide what we are talking about today. 'Today we are going to talk about the Common Core standards in math and geometry, and then a little discussion, and so now how will we implement these in your lesson plans?

How will you be held accountable for having implemented them?'

John saw these PLCs as a way to indoctrinate teachers into a culture that he did not agree with in any way. He was assigned to a two-person PLC that he believed was ignored by his principal and colleagues. "For the rest of the year, no administrator came, there was no accountability, nothing, he said. This went back to his distrust of his administrator when he said that as long as John inserted the proper meaningless codes into his lesson plans, it was all OK, and they left him alone. As long as he "played collaboration," he was left alone, he said. This strengthened John's point in that it was all unauthentic and false.

As stated in the beginning of this profile, John retired at the start of these interviews. It wasn't something he intended to do so soon. He has been eligible for retirement for the past few years but decided to do it before the new year started due to the constraints on his teaching. The lack of attention to the needs of the students in the implementation and origination of CCSS, the censorship on the part of his ability to open a critical dialogue about CCSS, and his feelings of being harassed and bullied not only by his administration but by the teacher's union contributed to his decision. John loved teaching. He loved hiking with his students up the mountains for a day of experiential learning. He was the founding teacher of the dual-language program he taught in for 19 years. Leaving that was hard, but as was shown in his narrative, he felt like he could continue in education in other ways. He continues to be a radical thinker in a field where he feels compliance and brainwashing are the norm. CCSS has led him to look deeply into the downfall of the teaching and learning experiences that are supposed to lift up teachers and students, not push them down.

June. June's profile is unique in this study in that she is a high school science teacher in a large urban school district. She has 20 plus years behind her and is ready to retire. June took a fairly standard path to becoming a teacher. She always wanted to be a teacher, and every job she has had has been teaching or coaching. She is good at what she does and has always excelled on her evaluations, being named teacher of the year once. Her words will show that it was not the standards that were bothersome. It was effect of assessments on her students and the teacher evaluations that have her reconsidering her future.

A Narrative Profile: “The lack of value for education and educators, it is discouraging.”

Becoming a teacher. In this first part of June’s profile, she talked about how she remembered teachers who made her feel important. She became a teacher because she did not remember ever thinking she would be anything other than a teacher.

A lot of the teachers that I remember, and that I have fun memories of, first of all they were tough, they were demanding, but there are also teachers who let me know somehow, either later on in my life or sometime, that they remembered me and that I was important. Both my parents were teachers, and I guess for whatever reason I always knew I wanted to teach, and there wasn’t really a question of me doing anything else in my mind. I played basketball, and my first goals were to coach basketball and teach PE. That is what I went to school to learn to do. I kind of grew up like that. My first jobs were basically teaching and being a counselor and those types of things. I just kind of had a knack for it, and it was just something that fit me I felt. When I was in middle school my dad was a director of a camp up in the Rockies, so I would spend my summers up there for like 10 years. I was a junior counselor, and I was this, and I was that. I was able to get along with the kids and show some interest in them and have respect for them, and I just felt I related to that age group; maybe because I am immature, but it works out well.

I spent the first two years [of college] in [Merely Junior College] because I had a basketball scholarship. I went there and got all my basic stuff out of the way, and then I got a scholarship at [Middle State], and so that is when I probably started getting into more of the education classes and the biology classes. I have a physical education major,

biology minor, and then education classes on top of that. What I found when I got into the biology program was, it was basically mostly pre-med students, and so we were kind of looked down upon as education students. So when we would do well, you know, professors were kind of surprised, 'Oh, well you are not in pre-med, but you are doing pretty well in here for an education major.' So there was kind of a little of that stigmatism, but it was a great education because it was probably the premier state college for pre-med in [that state] at the time. So it was a really good biology program. As far as physical education goes, it was pretty good there as well.

Being a teacher. June wants to make her students feel important, like they matter. She believes that teaching is more than skills and strategies but gives students reasons to want to do bigger and better things with their lives. Building relationships with students was a priority for June. She shared her first experience with true professional collaboration and how exposure to teaching literacy and science in tandem changed her teaching forever.

The main, number one thing as a teacher to me is not how much you know about a subject or about unit planning. It is getting along with the kids. It is showing them respect and having interest in them and building relationships with them. You might be the only adult in their life that they have a positive relationship with. That is a skill, and it is really important. I don't think that is emphasized at all in education classes. I just mean: flat out greet them every day, ask them how they are doing, and know who is on the football team, know who is cheerleading, know who is in the music program, ask them how they are doing every day; build those relationships.

I was probably seven, eight years into teaching at this middle school where we were doing this block schedules, teams, and we had a special head teacher on our team, and she would teach sample lessons for all of us. What I loved about it was basically that she taught me how to teach more visually and how to use some of those concepts and some of those strategies that will create more literacy. So that changed my way of teaching big time. It at least opened my eyes to, 'wow there are so many other things I could be doing helping these kids build the skills that they can use in the other classes' and all that. That is kind of my first experience with literacy. So that changed my school of thought in that I could do so much of a better job than I was doing.

I [eventually came here] to teach PE and coach basketball. I coached basketball for six years, taught PE for four, and teaching PE was not very fun. I was very disappointed teaching high school PE; it was tough. I talked to the assistant principal here, and I said, 'If there comes a science opening, I would love to have it because I am ready to get into the classroom.' So an opening came, and I ended up here teaching biology and anatomy.

They give [the DBA] like every three months, so if we had to do that, then I probably have to follow the curriculum map exactly because they may be testing on ecology in that first test, and they will have to know that. But since we do the end-of-course exam, I can have that freedom to kind of switch things up as long as I cover everything. But, since my students don't take the SBA, I am evaluated on 11th graders' science SBA scores. So, you know, here I am spending two months teaching about the cell, and then, you know on my evaluation I get knocked 60 points because of our SBA [scores]. But none of my kids that I teach took the SBA. I teach mostly ninth grade, and

ninth doesn't take the SBA. They don't have science in 10th grade, and then they test them on ninth grade science at the end of 11th grade.

So it is kind of, it is a little disconcerting, and then they gave us scores for EOC on our evaluations too, but they had no baseline for the EOC so I don't even understand where that came from. So these scores that they are having for our evaluation, nobody understands what they mean, where they came from, or how they are calculated. But I am just saying it is kind of like you are getting evaluated and you don't even know what you can do to improve. This was the first year they took the scores from the SBA and evaluated us on them. I don't understand what they are doing.

Here is the issue: I mean, the tests are made by textbook companies who give kickbacks to the politicians to choose them. So we aren't really having a say. Even if we wanted to have that feedback or have that talk or whatever, there is no point because we don't design them, you know. [The state education department] doesn't design them. It is these textbook companies that design them. I don't even know how you could solve that problem, other than say, 'Hey man, you should look at our standards.' The [End of Course exams] EoCs are teacher created. There are teacher panels that help with them.

I would say I was one of the resilient teachers to some extent, but this evaluation process bothers me. If you are going to tell me I am not great at what I do well, how do I fix that, and if I understood how to fix that or why, I would be OK with it. I really would, but like how do I fix the last 60 points on this, how do I fix that, you know, what do you do? So that is kind of, it is more malicious than it is evaluative, you know. It is punitive, and that is why I think there is frustration.

I think that it is a lot more high stakes now because these kids have to pass these tests to graduate, and that was never the case before. So it is really tough, and then for us, we are getting graded on how they do. So that is tough. So there is a lot of pressure, and in some ways it is negative, and in some ways it really takes away from our teaching because there is so much time being used for testing, and that is kind of tough. But there needs to be accountability too, and I think we are held a lot more accountable than we ever were.

My best day as a teacher would be: We have an award here at East High that is voted on by students and other teachers. Basically, it is the teacher of the year award we have here, and my best day was when I won that award because that was like the best reinforcement I have ever had as a teacher, that I am doing a good job. And they write recommendations and they write out why, why you should get this award and stuff. And it was amazing some of the things that they said. That was fun; that was amazing; that is probably my best day as a teacher. It was a total surprise, and you get announced at the assembly, and you have to get up and give a speech. Everybody is there from the whole school. It is just wow; I was blown away; it was awesome. That would be my best day teaching, I mean hands down.

My worst day of teaching was the second to last day of school this year when I got my evaluation, and it said I was minimally effective. That is probably my worst day of teaching. It is interesting because there are four parents on campus that I taught their kids and I told them, 'Yeah, I got minimum,' and they are like, 'Are you kidding me?' But that was just a slap on the face because I can't even say even on tough days with kids that it has been a horrible teaching day, even on tough days with kids.

In high school, the best thing is making [school] important, making them understand that to get out of their situations, they need education. School is so much more than just Common Core, and there is so much more than science standards that we are dealing with at this level. That is the tough thing. That's what can't be tested; that is what can't be evaluated; that is not in our evaluation. So your great elementary school teacher that is minimally effective, or somebody like myself who is minimally effective . . . but we are maximally affected in that we care about these kids and we give them a good experience. That, you can't evaluate though, and that is frustrating. That is I think discouraging for a lot of really good teachers that are getting these evaluations.

What this all means. Between the four walls, June loves her job. She loves the kids and knows she makes an impact. However, the environment is wearing on her, and she is considering retiring--but not leaving the profession.

The district is giving mandates constantly from the state about different things that have to be implemented, and it is dismal. I am not trying to be negative, but it is realistic, I think, and I think that the sad thing about it is a lot of veteran teachers are leaving; they are retiring or leaving. This includes teachers that are 10, 12, 13, years in because to work in that environment is toxic. The kids are very challenging, and we get paid so little, you know. You can get a job pretty much anywhere else, and it is a little bit more rewarding, and you are valued more. You can work at Starbucks and be valued more.

I am effective in the classroom--I don't care what my evaluation says. I am an effective teacher. But, to be honest, I can retire. We have such a shortage of teachers that I can double dip. At least [I can] make more compensation for what I do for another four

or five years. I said I can't imagine myself really doing anything else, but if I am going to be devalued, I should make more money. I could live with that, a little bit more money.

Analysis: June's concern for fair testing and evaluations. June's concerns are similar to those of other teachers about well the principal of her large, urban high school can support teachers with all the additional requirements put on them prescribed by the implementation of CCSS. She talked about the excess amount of work that principals have:

I know quite a few high school administrators/teachers, and the environment in schools right now is incredibly difficult, and it is difficult because the state is having principals, with this evaluation system, do all the responsibilities as administrators but also evaluate all these teachers three and four and five and six times a day, or six times a year. Also, they have to input all their evaluations with a lot of detail on this Teachscape system. So it is putting a ton, a ton, a ton of pressure on administrators [and it is] just filtering down.

June is an experienced teacher and is married to a retired music program administrator. She has seen changes before, but this one seems to concern her because of the impact on teachers and principals and the support they need to best serve their students' needs.

Like every teacher in this study, June did not trust the evaluation process. She did not trust that the evaluation process was an authentic measure of her teaching skill and success. For 20 years, she had excellent evaluations, and last year, for the first time, she was graded as "minimally effective." This was a blow to June and one that no one understands or can explain. What it meant for June was this:

Well, I did the evaluation process, and I feel that the state, the [state education department], I think that they, and I might be really wrong, I feel like what they are trying to do is to run veteran teachers off so that they can lower the budget, and I think that is truly what they are trying to do.

When you've been a part of the same district for the majority of your career, one would expect to have built trust in the relationship. June believed evaluation process has destroyed the trust that may have been built over the years.

Trust in standards, assessments, and curriculum. As for the standards, June had no doubt that the incorporation of the ELA CCSS for science was a good thing. It was not completely new to her, and she had learned from her first mentor teacher to apply language arts strategies to her content area. She used this illustration of how she had incorporated language arts strategies and how her biology team learned about the new expectations for science teachers:

We learned about it as a staff, and we incorporated it into our lesson plans as science teachers, departmentally and actually curriculum-wise with those same people. But you know, honestly, it wasn't such a new thing coming down the pipe. Pretty much all of us did literacy strategies anyway within our classes. So it wasn't this huge jump; it wasn't like, 'Oh crap, this is coming in the pipe, and this is something new to us.' It wasn't new to us; we had been doing all kinds of literacy stuff anyway, all of us, you know, pretty much.

Several of the teachers in this study claimed the same thing. They claimed it was not markedly new to them, that they had been doing many of the things that the ELA CCSS expected. June was in a different position though, because she was a high school science

teacher. It was not widely expected that science teachers would teach ELA skills and strategies.

June claimed that the ELA CCSS focused her attention more on specific areas that she realized were important for her teaching and for her students. For example:

I do a lot more writing than I used to. I would say it is focused to what I do literacy-wise more with the standards. I do a lot more with evidence, you know. It is to where they have to really prove, not only summarize, [during their] lab work. They have to prove and give evidence to support what they are saying, and that is huge. I didn't stress that to the point I stress that I do now. [There is] a lot more evidence seeking.

June also said she used informational texts to support the ELA CCSS standards and how she saw growth in this skill in her students work.

Where this all fell apart for June was the assessment piece. June taught ninth grade biology. Students at her school do not take science during their 10th grade year. They are assessed on biology on the SBA during their 11th grade year. June believed she was being unfairly evaluated in terms of students' performance on something they were taught two years prior. She said:

I think that it is a lot more high stakes now because these kids have to pass these tests to graduate, and that was never our case before. So it is really tough, and then for us we are getting graded on how they do, so that is tough. So there is a lot of pressure, and in some ways it is negative, and in some ways it really takes away from our teaching because there is so much time being used for testing.

There needs to be accountability too, and I think we are held a lot more accountable than we ever were.

She was not saying accountability was bad, but as was evident in her other examples of unfair evaluation and assessment practices, it seemed to be punitive and seemed to target specific teachers.

The assessments seemed to June to be more geared toward evaluating and punishing teachers than to assess students. She also said the teachers don't get the results of the exam until the next school year. This was a common concern with end-of-year summative assessments, especially for June, because her teaching is not even accurately assessed, she said.

Analysis: Changing collaboration and student learning.

Collaboration. While June's biology group always was collaborative, change was apparent over the years. Required collaboration is a fairly new concept in her school, one that came along with CCSS. Before the push for required collaboration, June would have what they referred to as team planning. She and her team would work together to arrive conceive their units and other details. It was more loosely structured. At the advent of CCSS, this changed. Here is how June described a basic collaboration session:

We had a lady who was the collaboration coordinator; I don't know what her title was. She ran them, but she didn't run them. She basically would come in and say this is what the principal wants, or this is what the new district mandate is, or we are just doing test security training.

This seemed to June to be a way for the school to check the box that said “faculty collaboration.” There isn’t much purpose to the way they were structured in terms of student achievement.

Like the other teachers, collaboration, as the district or school referred to it, seemed to be a venue to learn about the requirements for implementing CCSS. June said:

When we came in the beginning of the year, our in-service was about Common Core. Then we were working on it in collaboration a bunch, not last year, the year before. We worked in collaboration on aligning our state science standards with Common Core. We did a bunch of that with collaboration, so that was helpful.

And then within that we started weaving in the AVID strategies.

The high school where June teaches is referred to as an Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) school. Lessons are built around specific strategies geared toward helping at-risk populations. The strategies and skills are intentionally taught and practiced. June and her team spent a large portion of that year aligning their science standards with CCSS and AVID. She liked this change because it provided a clearer picture of where every element interacted and actually complemented each other.

June said this about her desire to team with other content areas:

We used to team-collaborate as well. I would love to be able to team up with an English teacher or whatever and do like a research paper on a subject in science and then allow the English teacher to teach all the citations and all. But we are not designed that way; we are not designed that we share the same students; we would have to almost do it as a department, you know.

That desire to team-collaborate was one that would allow students to benefit from continuity of content. Being able to write papers in the context of other learning would be a valuable tool. June had done this before found it to be a successful endeavor.

Student learning and assessments. June has seen benefits of the ELA CCSS for increasing her student learning. It wasn't been all bad. Her students were learning to give specific citations and evidence in their writing, another benefit of incorporating the ELA CCSS into the science curriculum.

One thing in particular that June saw as a positive change in terms of student learning, and the opposite of what some of the other participants in this study found, was that of the data gathering. She saw a major benefit in the way that student data can increase student learning. She said:

One cool thing about it is just to go along with data gathering, the district has a website that has all your kids in there and all their scores. It is really, really interesting: the correlation between the end of the course grades and reading level and math level, like there is a huge correlation. My classes that had the highest reading level did the best on the EoC. So it was kind of like well, part of this is me, but part of this is, you know, just kind of their intelligence factor, you know. She also discussed how she could use the data gathered in the EOC exams, because they were graded immediately, to reteach concepts. She appreciated this change in assessment practices because it directly benefited student learning. Instead of waiting until the end of the year, or the next fall, to see how students did, these EOCs provided immediate information in a relevant time frame for student success.

June's profile is one that demonstrated the experience of a high school science teacher as the students and teachers navigated not just the CCSS but the ELA CCSS as well. For June, the implementation of CCSS has not been an extremely rocky, save for the evaluation piece of the implementation. The lack of trust in terms of who was deciding how teachers were evaluated was echoed across the study. June wanted to understand how she went from an award-winning, well-respected, well-liked teacher, to one who was deemed minimally effective. That was the hard part of this change.

June actually found great success in using the ELA CCSS and appreciated the focus on what she thought was getting students to learn more than how to "dissect a frog." Instead, they learned how to share that experience in writing. They researched the implications of dissecting frogs, and they learned how to talk about the cell beyond what they learned in class. For that, she appreciated the new focus.

Carlye. In this final profile, the reader will hear the story of a teacher who has 17 years of experience teaching in an elementary school. Carlye has always been a teacher who did her job without a great deal of problems or stress. What emerged in this profile was a teacher who had seen the stress levels of teachers and students rise each year as CCSS was implemented. Between the testing, the loss of instruction time, and the focus on what she saw as punishing teachers for factors they could not control, Carlye witnessed a decline in education as a whole. She saw the origination and implementation as wrought with problems as more information emerged about how it all came about and who was making decisions.

A Narrative Profile: “I don’t trust people who’ve never stepped foot in a classroom to make decisions for my students.”

Becoming a Teacher. Carlye took a characteristic route to teaching. She had vivid memories of her teachers, the good ones and the bad ones. She remembered the kindness of her teachers, those who went the extra mile. She did things in her classroom that she did as a student. She read the same books, gave the same spelling tests, and put the same sniff-and-scratch stickers on her students’ work. She lamented that method classes did not particularly prepare her for a classroom and wondered if she had known what it was really like, would she have chosen the profession?

Strangely enough, I remember kindergarten. I loved my kindergarten teacher. I just loved her. I never had negative feelings about school. I was very school ready. I was a good reader, and I did well in school. I always, I guess, played school. I would play school with my brother; he was not the most willing participant. I always say this: The reason I am a teacher is because I said I would never be a teacher, do you know much they make, and blah, blah blah. I know that is why God placed me in this position, because I said I will never be a teacher. You know, I don’t know really what guided me. I had started out for nursing and then just really it wasn’t my cup of tea. I just thought about the hours. I thought about being mother. I thought about a good career to be a mom, and it seemed like teaching suited me. Strangely, I never subbed. I was working at [Bristol Labs], and so I never subbed. I mean, everybody else was subbing, and I went from [Bristol] to teaching. That was a big shock, and I think had I subbed, I might not have gone into the teaching profession. So it was a big shock for me.

I can name all my teachers. I can name them all. Mrs. Frederick, she was my third grade teacher. Darlene Frederick, I mean I just adored her. Something I took away from her . . . she used to give us scratch-and-sniff stickers, and to this day on spelling test my students get a scratch and sniff. It is like the highlight. They can't wait to see, and that is how I was. I was like, 'Did I do well in my spelling test,' you know, get the scratch-and-sniff sticker; that was such a treat, a scratch-and-sniff sticker. So and it is funny you do pull things from your experience as a student, you know, the things that brought me joy ultimately I ended up using and I still do in my classroom.

My first grade teacher, she was a screamer. She was a screamer, and my mom remembers her screaming. I never scream at my students. My second grade teacher, she was strange; I was afraid of her; she was strange. I also remember another teacher, my fourth grade teacher, William Bell. I remember him reading 'Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing,' and when I started teaching fourth grade, I remember laughing, because I read that to my class. I read 'Fudge and Super Fudge.' I just loved Judy Blume. They instilled that love for those works, and then I read everything that Judy Blume wrote after he introduced me to her. But those were really significant things that I do remember.

I remember all my teachers. Susan Friedman in fifth grade; I just remember; it is funny the things you remember. It was so hot here, and I remember she would wash our cloths for all of us. She would wet them at night, roll them up, freeze them, and then give them to us in the afternoon to like cool off. It was so hot in our classroom. So just little things; those things stick with you. I remember my sixth grade teacher taught us how to wrap a gift, and she was so intricate about it. So every time I am wrapping Christmas gifts, I think of her when I am making my creases. Oh yeah, I remember all my middle

school teachers, even the horrible ones. Those ones that remind you what not to do, you know. They teach you what not to do, how not to make a student feel, definitely. I think I take a lot from them, just as much as I do from the ones that I learned what to do.

Being a Teacher. Being a teacher for Carlye is a remarkable venture. She has seen many different cycles of teaching strategies and methods come and go and come again. She has hope that what is happening now will cycle itself out. Carlye was always comfortable teaching with basals and other types of core curricula. She prefers knowing what to reach for in terms of standards and strong curriculums. Carlye was as overwhelmed as were her students with the amount of testing that was required. She taught second grade, and while there was no official “high stakes” tests in second grade, there were plenty of other required tests. Carlye misses teaching social studies and science and laments the loss of that knowledge for her students.

It is funny because things shift. At the time that I went to school, it was integrated, integrated, integrated curriculum. They wanted us to integrate everything. They wanted us, like if you were studying Africa, they wanted everything integrated. That really stands out in my mind. I had some really good professors. They were very tough, you know. Classes were small at the college, and they were really on us, you know; it wasn't like these huge classes where they push you through.

Then when I was in my methods course, it was, 'You don't do reading groups because that is tracking,' and then they kind of came back saying, 'Well, it is not tracking if there is movement, if you can move these students in the groups.' Now reading groups are back, and we're highly encouraged. Everything comes in circles, everything, you know.

I think you could be in a million method courses, and nothing will prepare you probably like subbing, which I did not do. I don't think I was prepared in that sense. Just actually being in your own classroom will prepare you because even if you are student-teaching in somebody else's classroom, at the end of the day it is somebody else's group of kids. They do teach you things in methods courses, but I don't know, I am just kind of like a hands-on person. I guess when you are doing lessons and you are coming up with the projects, you are always preparing for the most ideal situation, and then when you are teaching, the situations are not always ideal. That is where you have to be flexible when you are teaching, especially in a public school.

I have seen so many changes, I can't even begin to tell you. I was very green my first year, and that is what I mean. You are kind of thrown to the wolves. I didn't know about starting with a kid with an IEP. They don't really teach you that when you are in your methods classes. You show up just completely unaware. Now I am so knowledgeable in that area.

When I first started, it was the standards and benchmarks. You know, they were just so thick, so enormous. It was what we were responsible for covering. I taught fourth grade for five years. I loved fourth grade because we taught state history. Honestly though, I don't remember even looking through those benchmarks. I mean, our lesson plans were completely vague, you know. You wrote down what you were working on and the page numbers. It was vague, and it had nothing to do with the standards, nothing to do with the benchmarks. Really, you could pretty much teach whatever you wanted. Nobody really followed any guide. I mean, there was a guide, but it wasn't really followed. We taught state history, so I would do so much on state history. You taught the

kids multiplication, division, in fourth grade, you know, that is what we did. As far as literacy programs, you know, we just followed the basal. We always had the basal, and I always used what they gave me.

Even now everyone has the same basal, actually the special ed students now have a different basal; they have a different series. We use Treasures, and each school is different. It just depends, each school, like there is really no fidelity district-wide. I always followed the basal with all the stories and the readers. I still do.

Last year when they pitched Common Core, I had to do all that Common Core training in the summer; it was mandatory. So it was like my first few days of summer vacation were spent in this training. Right now I couldn't even tell you what we learned. Half the teachers couldn't even tell you what the Common Core is after that training. The one thing that stuck with me: 'Rather than teaching in a mile wide and an inch deep, we are teaching a foot wide and a mile deeper.' So it was just compressed what we have to teach. That sounded like a good pitch to me, like condensed. But now when you look at the standards, I mean, the standards for kindergarten are just bizarre. They are just bizarre to me, and the way they are written, it is like instructions for the kindergarten, I am like really. When I started teaching, kindergarten was half day, and they learned the numbers to 20, this was, now they are doing so much in kindergarten, too much.

It is very stressful right now, very stressful. I think we are still trying to get a handle on Common Core, and we are trying to just understand it more because we were just kind of thrown into it. If it is not in the curriculum, you don't teach it. Something that we always did in second grade were dinosaurs. Even though it was nowhere in the curriculum, we did it. So just little things like that. We used to do science and social

studies. They have all but gone out of the window; if it is not tested, it is not taught, basically is what it is. I teach second grade, so my kids don't take standardized tests, so I don't see it so much in my grade, but the focus has really shifted. There is no focus on science and social studies with the blocks that we have. We have 90-minute blocks for math and reading that swallow up a lot of the day. We were told to incorporate our science and social studies into the 90-minute reading block, because it is nonfiction.

That is a real issue with Common Core; they want 50 percent of the reading to be literature, 50 percent nonfiction. The kids like the fiction, especially for the young readers. That is where you can tell that people who have never been around children, who aren't parents, who aren't in the profession, created a lot of these standards. So it is just not fun to teach anymore. A lot of those fun things, we have just done away with because we are just focused on testing. We test so much, especially with the DIBELS; we do DIBELS, and that is our standard; that is how we are I guess graded on evaluations.

We do Discovery Ed and DIBELS. Discovery Ed is four times a year. DIBELS is depending on how they score, you know. If they are in the red, then you should [progress monitoring] weekly, and it is impossible. I don't do it, I can't. There is just no way I can get it done. I started with 25, 26 kids. There was no way I can get the progress monitoring done, so I didn't do it. It is just so much for them too. Plus, we do Star testing and the Accelerated Reader program.

I am not crazy about testing in a minute for DIBELS. I don't think that that is a good gauge. One minute does not tell me a whole lot. I just think it depends on how good of a reader they are or how fast they can decode. I just don't think that tells me if they comprehend. Sometimes, even now as an adult, if I am reading the newspaper, I go back

and I reread because I have to reread just to let it sink in. When students are still gaining skills, and like I said, their brain isn't, you know, it is still developing. It is still grasping a lot of those skills. I just think it is ridiculous to ask them to comprehend in a minute.

A lot of what Common Core is, you know, is talking about vocabulary. That is just a big issue that we have stressed in our district, talking about vocabulary. It is language; that is the basis of what our students need to know. Those who were exposed to less language don't really do as well because their understanding isn't as great. That all comes down to parenting and how often you speak to your kids. It is very important to speak to your kids and ask them how their day was, just simple little things like that.

Now they have taken three of our mornings. Now three days are for staff meetings or PLCs. That has been a real issue because they have taken our time away. That was our time to prepare. Now we are stuck in these PLCs, which suck. I mean, we hate them. You know, they turned into bitch sessions. We are going to try to make them more productive this year and get our lesson plans done and collaborate as a grade level. We should be doing this as a grade level. So honestly, you know, we have just been doing what we always did, and quite honestly, we use our Common Core flipchart, and we just modify what we have to do. You know, we word it how we think they want to hear. Quite honestly, I mean, that is what I feel my lesson plans have come down to. I am writing [lesson plans] for them, not for me anymore.

My biggest concern is that the people making the decisions are not educators; that is my biggest concern. They don't know what it is like to have their child tested to death, not wanting to go to school. My son also had to take part in the PARCC samples. Not only did he have to do all the testing all year, he had to do the PARCC, which was

just a pilot. So he is just tested to death. I felt really bad for him. I felt bad for my students and all the kinder, first and second graders that lost all that computer time, because the labs were taking up all the testing. We missed out on that instruction. These are people that think that by raising the standard you are going to help education, and they just don't get it. That is like telling someone who is blind, 'If you try really, really hard, you can see,' you know. It is just ignorance. I guess what bugs me is the ignorance. I just hate when people don't have any knowledge on the subject and they are sticking their nose and making decisions. It would be just like me going to the medical profession and telling a surgeon how to do his business.

What this all means. What is important about teaching to Carlye: the students, making a difference in a child's life, those things are still there. Carlye thinks it is critical that teachers be at the table in decision-making. She wants teaching to be respected again. The bottom line for Carlye is that she can't imagine doing anything else. She'd just like to see teachers be a part of reform efforts.

I think [good teaching] is probably more important now because the profession isn't attracting college students like it used to. Like I always say, they expect you to go make cookies and they give you very generic ingredients. They don't give you the best ingredients to make the best cookies. It is a societal issue. How do you fix this societal issue, you know? Teaching, I think it is very noble profession. We have delved into so many parts of our students. They are family, and I think that is just so important. I don't know, it has changed.

I had a former student of mine, she is a colleague of mine now, and she came with her baby to my class today. She told me, 'I am so nervous about setting up my classroom

for the first time.' To me, that was just a complete validation of why I am doing what I am doing. She finished school, you know, and she had a baby during her student teaching, and she still finished. I am so proud. This is the reason why I do what I do, and you know, I think kids have taken things away from my room. I know they have learned, you know. Some will tell me, 'Remember we learned a lot about the state history' or 'Remember that,' you know. I really believe they have walked away with knowledge and, for the most part, I would say I think I have made an impact on them.

The problem now? It is the reforms; it is definitely the reforms. It is the teacher evaluation, no doubt. It is what is expected of us. It is the PLCs. It is just so much, the paperwork we have to do. There is just a lot expected of us. It is just too much pressure; the pressure is so great that it is just not worth it. People aren't going to take it. That is basically what it is; it is the reforms. If you can ask most people, they will tell you the same thing, reforms.

I think what is best for the children is for teachers to make the decisions, for teachers to be consulted, for people who work with children; they need to ask those that know. Consult those that have been in the classroom. Unlike the secretary [of the state education department]. Arnie Duncan is another one, never has been a teacher, but they are making decisions. Bill Gates, really, this computer nut, really? That is what really bothers me now. What I think is best for children is to ask teachers. Bring them to the table, include them, they need to be part of the decision-making process. They need to have a seat at that table, and they are the experts, you know, they are the experts, you ask the experts.

*At the beginning of last year, I was ready to leave teaching. When I was like, 'I can't believe I have all these DIBELS tests to do.' I was by myself; they did not get us any help, so I had no aide, nothing. I was trying the DIBELS tests in the hallway. I was thinking, I can't leave the kids alone, you know, the other kids. I am trying to give them things to do or keep them busy. To me, that is just cruel. I was going home I am like, 'F**k this.' I was like, 'This is baloney.' Oh my God, I was ready to quit. I was begging, I was begging, I was just thinking where can I get a job? I was like ready to apply at [Bristol]. In fact, my son's third grade teacher, she applied at the beginning of the year and she got in in March. She got into [Bristol], and she asked them if they could hold off until SBAs were over. She finished testing, and left. She left the profession. She had had enough. She put in 10 years, and she was done. I was like 'what am I doing here?' I just, I don't know, it becomes a part of you. I can't even identify myself as not being a teacher.*

Analysis: Carlye's distrust of the origination, intent, and implications of the CCSS.

Trust in principal, district, state education department, and other policy makers.

Carlye started off with a strong statement about trust and how it has affected teachers. She said:

It has been nasty, it has been terrible, the teachers do not trust their administrators, and they do not trust the school board. In one district, they are trying to recall the entire board. As far as me trusting [the state education department], I have no faith in [it], zero. I never had an issue with [the department], I never even thought of, never had issues; never had qualms until this administration took over. We have seen all these changes, you know, when Elizabeth Perez was there, we never

had an issue. It is hard to trust someone when they have no knowledge, when they don't have the experience and the knowledge. I guess I have no faith or trust because she has no experience and knowledge in this field.

Teachers have long held the view that under this administration, no one knows who is responsible for what directives. The statement about teachers not trusting their administrators, as Carlye shows in further statements also stems from not knowing who is directing what.

According to mandates imposed by the state education department as part of the implementation of CCSS, principals must be in the classrooms of their teachers' 60 percent of the day. For whatever reason, it did not appear that additional provisions were put in place to cover the other duties of the principal.

Carlye said she was concerned about the impact the new requirements would have on her new principal's ability to support her teachers. She said that she believed principals were just as "confused about what is expected" with the teacher evaluations and what the principals' role would be in the new configuration of evaluations. She said:

Administrators got a lot more work to do with teacher evaluations and trying to figure out what is expected of us as teachers with these standards. You know, they are supposed to be in the classroom 60 percent of the time. There is only one elementary in the district that has an assistant principal. Our principal is dealing with discipline and parents and just tons of stuff, I mean, just school drama, just whatever. So there is no way she has been in there 60 percent of the time. It's not possible unless you have an assistant, and she doesn't.

Carlye had concerns that principals were required to “look for flaws, or find flaws.” She said teachers believed that principals were expected to “put a number of teachers on plans of improvement every year.” Carlye had a good relationship with her principal and believed that the implementation of CCSS and the assessments and evaluations have “put us all on the same side, the administrators and the teachers.” She believed that because of the confusion and uncertainty about the entire process, everyone was in the same situation.

Carlye said throughout the interviews that she believed no one knew what was going on, and she often felt less than invested in CCSS because it might be something else soon enough. She said:

That is what I mean; it is all these like, mind games. Is it going to be this year, you know, let us roll the dice. What is it going to be this year? That is what I mean. That is why I think we are just going to outlast all this stuff, you know. I usually don't sweat it, but seeing that this is a nationwide change, this scares me. CCSS is a significant policy change that has taken root across the United States. As previously mentioned, it is one reform that was implemented among a wave of wide reaching reforms across education systems across the United States. It is regularly seen as an umbrella for all the reforms happening in education at this time. Teachers, politicians, parents, and others frequently lump the reforms together.

Carlye also believed that the state education department, the U.S., Department of Education, and the authors and supporters of CCSS want to replace experienced teachers with young, more malleable teachers. She said:

To me, this implementation of Common Core makes me feel discounted. Like that anybody can do my job. I think that is the goal, that they want to get rid of us veterans, and they just want to bring in new people that didn't teach prior to Common Core, and they are just like Common Core robot teachers. Do you know what I mean? I think that is the goal.

Carlye said she was concerned about using teachers who don't know "teaching and learning" strategies to teach students to be "little testers." This relates to not trusting that the state education department or policymakers in general know what is best for students. Carlye emphasized this when she said, "We are not creating learners; we are making testers." In Carlye's estimation, this was why getting rid of veteran teachers would make the goals of creating test takers and data producers much easier.

One thing that makes it hard to trust a policy reform is the constant recycling and renaming of programs, methods, and the like. Carlye gave many examples throughout her career where a program was scrapped and then reintroduced with new name years later. She recalled:

One thing about our district, and I don't know if it is common with districts all over, they don't do a lot of things with fidelity. It is fly by night. We were Baldrige, Baldrige, Baldrige, and that is when we had one superintendent. Then he left, and Baldrige went out of the window, and so did all those thousands of dollars of training for all of us.

Carlye talked about how publishing companies and testing companies tended to take over education. She was concerned about the amount of money that goes to testing and publishing companies. She used the above example of the cycle of educational trends and

the control the publishers have over those decisions. In particular, she cited information publicly available that pertinent decision makers in this state were linked to both publishing and testing companies. Her thoughts in regards to such a situation:

Here I am finding out, like when you find out that it is nothing but Pearson, Pearson, Pearson, they have cornered the market on everything. They even own Scott Foresmen, Macmillan McGraw Hill. The government blocked AT&T from obtaining another cellphone provider, but yet education has pretty much been unregulated. Our secretary of education is a contractor for them but yet she said it does not have any effect on what happens in the state. Yet, we pay Pearson. Power School is by Pearson, the software program that we use is created by Pearson. There is something wrong here. I just think no one should have such power, like too big to fail, you know. That is what bothers me.

It should be noted here that while Pearson did acquire Scott Foresman, they are not listed as the parent company of Macmillan McGraw Hill. Carlye was a regular advocate for students and teachers and often could be seen at a rally or on a political float at a parade. She was no stranger to digging deeper and figuring out what it all meant. She was determined to keep fighting for more transparency and more accountability on the part of policymakers.

Student trust in the educational system. Carlye worried most about the effect of stress on students. She saw it in her own children, and she saw it in the students at her school. She felt like ELA CCSS broadened out the curriculum and that students were not getting anything taught in a thorough manner. Students were not getting any science and social studies, although part of the push was to integrate those content areas into ELA

instruction through informational texts. While students in kindergarten through second grade did not take the PARCC exam, they did take a multitude of other tests. In Carlye's school, they took the DIBELS, the Discovery Education interim assessments, end-of-unit exams, Stars tests, and Accelerated Reader tests.

Discovery Education is a new mention amongst the participants. It is an interim assessment that broadly measures language arts and mathematics and is aligned to assess the progress on CCSS. Accelerated Reader, owned by Renaissance Learning, Inc., is a web based reading assessment. It measures a student's reading level and consists of quizzes for a set book list. Carlye talked about how the assessments, many of which were computer based, take computer instruction time from students. In today's hi-tech world, this is a much-needed skill.

Even though Carlye was a second grade teacher, the kindergarten CCSS bothered her the most. She said that up until she reviewed those standards, she didn't think they were outrageous.

Her concern was that kindergarten students entered school with expectations that were too high. Here was her take on the kindergarten ELA CCSS standards:

I felt bad for the kindergarten teachers, what they were expected to teach or what the kindergarteners were expected to come in knowing, and then having to make up all that ground when they came in not knowing how to hold a pencil and now knowing how to stand in line.

She followed that with her idea that this put many of them behind the starting line from the beginning. Going along with her notion of stress, the standards had such a high

starting point that they were bound to stress out the students. Children do not learn well under stress. That was a concern of Carlye's.

Trust in standards, assessments, and curriculum. As was obvious in her above statements, Carlye found it difficult to trust the standards as being suitable in the kindergarten. Other than that, she did not find too much about the standards as being different. She repeated the term used in the initial information she received as the standards being “deeper, not wider.” She did not actually think this was true and found that there were a lot of them, and there were many to cover. She did not have to administer the PARCC exam, so the issue of high stakes assessment did not directly affect her classroom teaching. She did tell of a fourth grade teacher who was so stressed out about making sure she taught all the standards that she ended up cramming what was normally covered in March, April, and May into February and March. She said that caused a lot of “disjointed teaching” for her colleague.

She recalls that in the first year of CCSS implementation, her students were taking the MAPs tests on the computer, and she “did a crash course on really quick what I knew was going to be on the test, but that is not teaching, you know. Me remembering what was on Maps and giving them a crash course is not teaching. To me, that is not teaching. That is teaching them to do well on a multiple-choice test so I look good, and my scores look good, so that to me is an empty victory. They have since done away with MAPs in her school, but the sentiment remained in much of what she said in relation to trusting that the assessments were purposeful and meaningful.

The idea of the uncertainty around the evaluations and the underlying purpose of the student assessments became clear in Carlye's statement:

That is another unfair thing about testing because those kids do typically test lower, do you know what I mean, so that is not fair as far as my testing goes; you are going to want the highest kids. At the time when they were testing growth, you wanted all low kids because they show the most gains. You have to be very strategic. You have to question what they are looking for. Are they looking for growth or are they looking for the highest test scores? So I don't know. But I have seen shifts, you know. Like after a little while, they were like, 'Focus on the bubble kids, focus on the bubble kids,' you know.

This uncertainty about the reason for assessing, and who to target for class lists, draws out a lot of distrust and competition. In her words, Carlye clearly focused on how the students' test scores would look for her evaluation. If they were scoring on growth, then she wanted low-scoring kids so she could score higher on that portion because she was certain there would be growth if the students were low enough. If the state was scoring her evaluation on achievement, then obviously she wanted to fight for student placement in her class of students who scored high on tests.

Carlye was using Treasures as her primary ELA curriculum. She created her own writing curriculum, saying this:

Well, to teach writing, we pretty much do our own thing. I mean, I feel horrible that I don't teach a lot of writing because we are still teaching our students how to form a good sentence. It is hard to get them to write paragraphs, you know. I am still trying to get them to use a capital I for the word I.

In the second grade ELA writing standards, there was a lot of focus on putting together of ideas, including writing informative and opinion pieces. Carlye's experience of continuing to focus on sentence-level production and the conventions of language and writing might have signaled a misunderstanding of what the ELA CCSS were indicating were writing standards.

All in all, Carlye demonstrated a high level of distrust in the policymakers from the state to the national level. She did not take offense in a significant manner with the standards of her grade level. She found the assessments excessive, time consuming, and punitive when it came to how teachers were being judged on student test taking success. Carlye found the most significant problem with the implementation of CCSS to be that teachers were not part of the decision-making, origination, or policy determination.

Analysis: Carlye's dislike for the way collaboration is being forced upon teachers in a meaningless way.

Collaboration. Collaboration in Carlye's school used to be one where teachers in her grade level worked together to create lesson plans and activities to do together. What changed, like all the other participants, was that collaboration turned into PLCs and was a place where teachers had to have a formal structure, a reporting out piece, and it had to be tied into CCSS.

Right now [collaboration is] part of the whole Common Core. This whole shift is to PLCs, and so we are having to collaborate. We have lost our teacher prep time, and it is being used for PLCs. Last year was the first year, so they basically took three of our mornings away for these PLCs, and we were not happy. Rather than collaborate, it turned into a bitch fest on what else we could be doing. We weren't

getting anything done, and then basically we just pretended. So my principal is like, ‘That is not going to happen this year.’ It was her first year; she got thrown in mid-year, and so you know what I mean. She is being held more accountable too this year.

This was relevant when one compared how collaboration has changed. Carlye said she had been through various stages of collaboration in her career and found that in the past, collaboration worked or didn’t work based on “personalities and what we wanted to work on.” Now collaboration is forced, monitored, and driven by administration.

Basically, the word from her administrator was that they will use the time this year to create lesson plans based on CCSS, align with each other across grade levels, and work on other implementation elements. She said, “We are going to collaborate, and they say, ‘You are going to do lesson plans together,’ but these lesson plans they want are just unbelievable. The lesson plans were addressed earlier in this profile. They were meant for administrators and were not useful for teachers in the classroom. The teachers gathered and, like many other participants stated, just threw in some codes, some standards, and turned them in. Carlye said her principal “never even has time to read them.” So to Carlye, this was a reason to not put too much time and energy into another constantly changing requirement.

Summary

With these profiles, I have provided an opportunity to hear the voices that best tell the experiences teachers are having resulting from the ELA CCSS implementation process. While these stories were individual, they shared common themes and emerging categories. The analysis of the rich data their stories provided will never be fully

complete. There is much to be talked about as time goes on. The teachers in this study professed distrust in the way that the implementation of ELA CCSS has taken place. All participants were concerned about the impact student assessment data had on their teacher evaluations. All teachers were particularly concerned about the current and long-term impact the focus on testing will have on student success, not just in school, but in life as well.

The evidence that was shown throughout these findings showed that teachers did not believe their experiences with the implementation of ELA CCSS was positive. There was uncertainty tied into their job security, a key tenant of being a teacher. Not only did teachers not know how the assessments were scored in terms of their state evaluations, but also they did not know what the long-term impact of the evaluations would be on their career stability. Every teacher in this study was a teacher with intent. They focused on student learning, relationships, and making sure that school was a positive and safe experience. Many showed that a mysterious evaluation system did not change what kind of teachers they were.

Another concern in the stories of the teacher's experiences is the seeming crushing of the myriad of elements in the implementation into a confusing web of connections and misunderstandings or miscommunications. The assessment and evaluation confusion is relevant as it is one of the biggest concerns of the teachers in this study. What assessment is part of the value-added-model which calculates scores from the assessments and other measures of student achievement into the teacher evaluation system is a mystery to teachers, and has been confusing to most. Teachers in the study also expressed frustration and confusion over the system in which they uploaded

documentation for their evaluations. More than one teacher in the study reported they did not upload any of the suggested documentation, but were also unclear as to whether it effected their evaluation rating. These are all pieces of a system that seems to be precariously hanging on to reform efforts that may or may not be working.

Generally, teachers feel like their experiences with this implementation involved an uncertain landscape of trust, a changing landscape of what makes school work, and an organization of schooling that is under stress. It is a necessary note here to see how the issues associated with educator trust are not new. In fact, this latest round of reform has exasperated educator trust to a new level. This goes from the students, up through the teachers, and into the administrative structure. In the following chapter, the concepts of trust and change are further explored and examined through a cross-analysis of the teachers as a group of teachers all teaching in a southwestern state in the process of implementing ELA CCSS. The overall findings of this study are discussed, as well as what they could mean for future research.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Study Overview

Four relevant findings emerged from the data:

- Trust issues in the school organization
- Significant change in teaching and its expectations
- Information regarding implementation comes in the form of staff and collaborative meetings, professional development, and social media
- Incorporation of ELA CCSS into their teaching practice has been uncertain and has consumed a large amount of time, both in terms of teaching and assessing

Trust. Each participant identified numerous components in the school that they distrusted. These included principals, district administrators, the state education department, and U.S. Department of Education officials. Teachers shared experiences in which they believed the innate trust students had in schools was being eroded. Finally, teachers shared their distrust of standards, assessments, and curricula that have been integral in implementation.

Change. Five of the six were experienced teachers who clearly articulated changes they saw in materials, collaboration, teaching and assessment practices, and student learning outcomes. While the novice teacher did not have the years to compare, there

were some definitive experiences with collaboration and assessment practices that shaped her view on teaching right now.

How informed. Participants shared the manner in which they were informed about the ELA CCSS, and each believed that this generally occurred in staff meetings, often in place of genuine collaboration, and through required professional development events, and even through social media, blogs, and websites.

Incorporation into practice. Incorporating ELA CCSS into teaching practices was a mixed bag among the participants. They variously responded that the standards were nothing new and therefore were not a problem to use, to the standards being out of reach of their students and their needs. The biggest complaint by the majority of participants was the amount of time incorporating all the components of the implementation took from actual preparation for teaching and from instructional time.

Conclusions

This research study asked four questions. All sought to get at the essence of the participants' experiences in implementing the ELA CCSS in their individual classrooms.

Research Question 1. *How are teachers experiencing the implementation of the English Language Arts (ELA) Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the accompanying assessments?*

Trust

This issue emerged from data analysis. This wasn't a theme I was expecting to be as prominent in the teachers' experiences as it was. Many scholars have noted the importance of trust in school organizations. In this study, trust can be framed as a construct in which groups of invested parties involved in the organization of schooling have a certain level of confidence that one party, or group, is acting in the best interest of other parties (Tschannen-Moran, 2014; Forsyth, Adams, & Hoy 2011). This can mean, in the relation to school organization, that teachers have confidence in their administrator's ability to relay important information about policy to them so that they can implement said policy.

Another way to look at trust, and one that is relevant to this study, is that of relational trust. Relational trust is as Bryk and Schneider (2002) described, reciprocal. When relational trust, a key tenant of trust within a school organization, is present, there are "relational trust perspective views" occurring with each exchange between parties. In schools, teachers must trust, and vice versa, that their role in the relationship prescribed by the culture at school is one that is seen as trustworthy. Each member of a school group, be it administrator or teacher, must act in a way that shows their intentions are not going against the perceived role they have taken on in that school organization. In these profiles, the participants said they questioned the intentions of many of the parties involved in the school organization, not just for themselves but also for their students.

Teachers are experiencing an unparalleled sense of distrust as they implement the required components of the ELA CCSS. Every teacher in this study had a degree of distrust for the administrators tasked to create and execute an evaluation system that is

tied into the assessments and implementation of the CCSS. Additionally, the teachers distrusted communications between school administrators and teachers, the state education department and teachers, and between the administration and state education department. While the participants differed in the extent of their distrust for the differing levels of administrators, it is nevertheless a predominant matter in this study.

As stated, every participant recalled a first or second year of CCSS implementation that involved a strong distrust of the associated evaluation system. Teresa, Becky, June, and Carlye expressed not necessarily a perceived malicious intent on the part of their principals but more of a concern that the principal did not have enough time, understanding, or follow-through with the evaluation system. The overarching consensus among these three participants was that their principals were overwhelmed with expectations and accountability measures. This led them to believe they did not have the time to evaluate them based upon the requirements imposed as a part of the implementation of CCSS. Each participant stated that their principals were doing the best they could do with all the other expectations added onto their required duties as administrators.

All of the participants cited their principal's lack of understanding as a cause of distrust of the evaluation system as a whole, not just the administrator's role as an evaluator. Jeff's recollection of the conversation he had with his principal in which he questioned a significantly improved school grade in light of the majority of the staff receiving "minimally effective" on their state evaluations was telling. According to Jeff, the principal acknowledged not understanding what happened, or how the grade was determined, and added that perhaps the evaluations had been calculated incorrectly.

Becky expressed similar dismay when her points were reduced for what the principal admitted were mistakes. Not only could her principal not explain how the mistakes happened, he was unable to reverse the decision.

Fifty percent of the evaluation system in this particular state is dependent on what is called a Value Added Model (VAM). A VAM is a statistical tool that state education agencies are using to evaluate the effectiveness of teachers' instruction on student achievement. According to Darling-Hammond (2015), VAMs have the possibility to be an effective measure under three primary conditions. These conditions begin with the question are the assessments being used are an accurate measure of learning, are students truly assigned to teachers in a random manner, and is the teacher being measured the only teacher contributing to the students learning. These are questions the teachers in this study raise throughout their interviews in regard to their own evaluations. Darling-Hammond is strong in her concern that these conditions for effectiveness are being breached in schools throughout the United States.

VAMs seemed to increase in popularity during Arne Duncan as the U.S. Secretary of Education's time in office. The discourse on school failure expanded as it became clear the policy of NCLB in which 100% of all of America's public school children would become proficient in reading and mathematics would not be reachable. This discourse shifted to a solid blame on teachers for the perceived failure of reaching this goal. Holloway-Libel and Collins (2014) tie the prevalence of VAM systems used in teacher evaluations directly into the education reform policies of NCLB and RTT and the increased discussions around accountability. They show that researchers continue to find fault in the reliability and validity of VAMs.

Darling-Hammond, Amrein-Beardsley, Haertel, and Rothstein (2012) discuss the question of reliability by pointing out that the VAMs cannot measure all the factors that influence student achievement. School factors such as class size and intervention staff cannot be measured within a VAM system. Home factors such as high mobility and uncertain housing, lack of support for homework and school readiness, and safety and security cannot be measured within this system.

Holloway-Libel and Collins (2014) conclude in their study that time and research will show education stakeholders how VAM based evaluation policies will effect policies and practice. This study moves that forward by showing teachers and administrators are uncertain and distrusting of a system that has yet to prove effective. The concern raised by Holloway-Libel and Collins that the VAM based evaluations are meant to punish teachers is legitimized in the stories of every teacher here.

Both Jeff and John expressed a sense of distrust of their principals, not just in terms of time or understanding of the evaluation system or the implementation of ELA CCSS; but in their attitudes and trust of them as teachers. Jeff showed this in multiple statements when he attributed the need to standardize the pacing and lessons of both Lucy Calkins purportedly ELA CCSS aligned *A Curricular Plan for the Reading Workshop* and *A Curricular Plan for the Writing Workshop*. He directly attributed the standardization to the principal, not to the district or the state education department. Jeff expressed concern that he was not allowed to slow down, go back and teach concepts, or to consider individual needs of his students. This was because the principal insisted on walking in and for “all our tests to be standardized. Even if my kids don’t understand the concept and my neighbors do, and I have to go back and reteach. She doesn’t want to see

that, she wants everything standardized.” Trust was not necessarily eroded by the idea of standardization but rather by a teacher’s perceptions about a particular bureaucratic rule (Hoy & Sweetland, 2001, 2001; Forsyth et al., 2006). Jeff demonstrated this here as he perceived the imposition of “being on the same page at the same time” as having a negative impact on his ability to teach and on his students’ ability to learn.

It is worth noting here that the publications *A Curricular Plan for the Reading Workshop (2011)* and *A Curricular Plan for the Writing Workshop (2011)* were written by Lucy Calkins, who has been a longtime proponent for the workshop method of language arts instruction. She also has written several books about CCSS. Calkins’ role in these books has been one that has been politically charged, particularly in the New York City schools. Calkins and her group out of Teachers College have been active in curricular decisions for years. Proponents of other methods of language arts instruction, in particular, have questioned her interpretation of the ELA CCSS. According to Wall (2014), the issue was over interpretation and intent of the ELA CCSS and Calkins’ work on the curriculum and lessons associated with the lessons. While Calkins was a proponent of children reading at their own level and working up to level reading, the ELA CCSS insists that children read at grade level and above. This philosophical issue is deeply rooted in reading theory.

In Jeff’s school, a matter of interpretation of Calkins’ work must be approached. Calkins is a proponent of children working at a level at which they can succeed. She was a strong proponent of children building up and bringing background knowledge into their reading and writing events. Jeff said in his interviews that this was not the case in his school. His principal’s interpretation of the intent of Calkins’ work, as well as Calkins’

interpretation of the ELA CCSS in her work, was an important consideration. If her curriculum guides were asserted to be aligned with ELA CCSS, yet the foundations in the ELA CCSS wanted students to interpret and read literature using close reading, and not outside, background knowledge, there likely was a disconnect.

Jeff reported that his principal's lack of communication, and communication style, was a problem in his school. Jeff focused on not just a lack of communication but a highly defensive and emotional communication style as being predominant in the school. Tschannen-Moran (2001, 2014) and Bryk and Schneider (2002) discussed how principals earn the trust of their staff through communication and openness. It is important for principals to communicate plans and share information that comes to them. When this doesn't happen, environments can be caustic and stress levels can be high as teachers tend to feel less valued and invested in decisions. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000) showed that teachers will trust their administrators when teachers know what to expect. In Jeff's circumstance in particular, he believed he did not know whether to the principal would attend a collaboration meeting or his classroom screaming or smiling.

In John's case, the lack of trust for his principal was related more to the belief that his principal lacked good intentions toward teachers, himself in particular. John was well acquainted and highly conversant with what he experienced in regards to the "imposition" of the ELA CCSS. In his desire to open up a critical dialogue with his colleagues, he believed his principal shut him down. The principal's command to cease the conversations that he was attempting to have with his colleagues was a demonstration of a lack of perceived integrity, a necessary component of faculty trust in their principals. John's principal had guaranteed over the previous several months that he could start a

dialogue with colleagues about CCSS. When school started, he retracted that guarantee. This lack of connection between words and deeds was an illustration of distrust among key players in a school organization (Tschannen-Moran, 2014).

John exhibited a high degree of suspicion of the intent of his principal. This idea of relational trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2002) showed that when teachers cannot depend on their principal's actions or intentions, the trust lessons. This occurred not only as a result of that disconnect in the opportunity to dialogue with his colleagues but also in an instance when the principal physically moved his body between a colleague and John when the colleague asked John about an additional required assessment the school was employing as a condition of ELA CCSS. John's distrust was apparent throughout his interviews. He presented himself in a fairly unique manner within this study, given his number of years in a doctoral program rooted in education and theory of learning. His years in the school in which he works, more than 19, and his understanding of the history of educational reform were, according to Bryk and Schneider, one of the most important factors in relational trust.

Every participant expressed distrust in the way students were being affected by the education system that was charged with educating them, all the while preparing them to be citizens in a larger world. The idea that an institution that was duty bound to gain the trust of students may be failing in their primary mission was one that each of the participants addressed in their interviews. Each one of the teachers in this study discussed relationships with their students as being an important facet of their teaching life. June went so far as to say, "If you develop relationships with your students, they will respect what you are trying to teach them. I think that is the most important thing that I

can do, and the icing on the cake is they learn curriculum.” With trust, the relationship that school organizations and teachers develop with their students is a critical to school success. For students, they must have trust that the teacher, or institution, is doing what is best for them. If students, like teachers, feel uncertain about the environment in which they operate, they are less likely to learn. Tschannen-Moran (2014a) pointed out that students who trust their teachers are more apt to be less restricted in how much of the school culture and learning they are willing to take in. I add the institution of schooling to that equation. In this study, teachers said what they were doing in the classroom in the name of CCSS was affecting their relationships and ability to teach students what they need.

Teresa said it effectively when she said the policymakers’ children weren’t being affected by these changes in education. They were still getting new books, had libraries, and had choices of classes and interests. She felt “their kids go to fabulous schools that have got libraries. I want the same thing for my students, for my community. They shouldn’t be deprived and have things taken away from them.” When students sense that their community is strong and have a strong sense of connection and pride in it, regardless of socioeconomic status, they are more likely to achieve and identify within that community (Tschannen-Moran, 2014a).

Each teacher conveyed questions related to their trust of the origination of standards, assessments, and curriculum. Most teachers have a degree of information, either correct or incorrect, about the people and organizations behind and in front of the implementation of the CCSS. The sense that the standards, assessment, and curriculum associated with the implementation were not created in the best interests of the students,

or of the teachers, was evident throughout during the interviews. Carlye talked about all three concerns in regards to Pearson, a multifaceted company that has interest in all three aspects of standards, assessments, and curriculum. She said there was something wrong when “it is nothing but Pearson, Pearson, Pearson; they are like the mode of education. They have cornered the market on everything.” Teachers have an investment in standards, assessments, and curriculum. Carlye especially felt that teachers “should have had a seat at the table” in this current round of policy decisions. Teachers invested in the way a school works feel less stress. Teachers who were less stressed teach with more honesty and investment than did teachers who were uncertain about standards, assessments, and curriculums (Tshcannen-Moran, 2014).

As Zancanella and Moore (2014) explained in their investigation into the origins of the ELA CCSS, they were a result of several years of speeches, testimonies, and money given as incentives by The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Teresa, Carlye, John, and June expressed their apprehension about this issue. As June pointed out, “Their tests are made by textbook companies who give kickbacks to the politicians to choose them.” John also pointed out that he was certain that the companies that made the tests, made the standards students are being assessed on, and made the curriculum created to meet the standards. For Teresa, the fact that over the past two years her entire book budget was folded into ordering textbooks published by Pearson was an example of the intricate connection. Teachers realized this connection and do not trust that government entities that decide to follow along with the “scheme,” as John referred to it, have the students’ best intentions in mind.

Teachers also believe the CCSS are not sensitive to the unique needs of the student population. Every one of these participants teaches in a schoolwide Title I school. Their poverty levels are high, there are high numbers of English as second-language learners, and students come from cultures or situations that may not have the means to prioritize education. These are just a small sampling of conditions students in their classes experience. Teresa questioned how it can be expected that one standard, one assessment, and one curriculum can fit all of her students. She gave examples of students who do their best to come to school when the night before their dad went to jail and they were not sure where they would be sleeping that night. The teachers felt that this was not factored into the creation and implementation of CCSS.

The final factor frequently mentioned in relation to the implementation components was that of them being aligned too closely with teacher evaluations. This was a significant issue in many ways, for each participant. Each participant, save Becky, the novice teacher, had a career of exceptional evaluations. It is important to mention here that the implementation of CCSS is not the same as teacher evaluations. They are not the same policy reform. The state education department is now using a value-added model in which numerous factors are considered. In the past, evaluations were based predominantly on several visits to the classroom by the school principal. When the state education department took over, it added factors that teachers, and countless administrators, did not seem to understand or trust.

This factor was where teachers expressed distrust. As June said, she always wanted to know where she could improve. However, not knowing how a student's assessment scores directly related to her evaluation was disconcerting. She talked about

students in 11th grade being asked one question on the previous version of the summative assessment regarding a topic they studied two years prior with either her as their teacher or another instructor. Yet, her evaluation was based on that student's standardized assessment scores. This was her understanding, and like every teacher in the study, this was not a fair evaluation standard.

Dworkin and Tobe (2014) show that shifts in teacher accountability systems, such as the one in this state, are cause for high teacher fatigue. Teachers who are in education systems that go from being what Dworkin and Tobe call organic, to one that is high-stakes in a short time span, tend to report higher job burnout. When teachers are devalued as appropriate and accurate evaluators of students' learning, they are no longer being trusted to do their jobs. Each teacher in the study gave examples of how the high-stakes standards, assessments, and curriculum built this sense of distrust for either a principal, a district, or a government official. When high-stakes accountability was tied to high-stakes job security, that was bothersome for the teachers in this study. These authors tied all of the issues with high-stakes accountability into teacher burnout. Teacher burnout is an appropriate ending to this section as, again, save Becky; each one of these experienced teachers shared their desire to retire, sooner rather than later. Like students, teachers need to trust the intentions of the school organization. When this happens, schools succeed. When this doesn't happen, schools do not succeed (Tschannen-Moran, 2014).

The Question of Standards, Assessments and Curriculum. In this section, I cover an issue that is of importance in this entire national conversation in regards to three critical components of CCSS: standards, assessments, and curriculum. I chose to address the three conversations here because they are politically charged, and that cannot be

ignored. What else cannot be ignored, and is one of the roots of discord among the stakeholders, was the inaccurate information that not only was part of the general discussion but also was a component in this study. In this section, I cannot address all the inaccuracies, but I can address what was factual information.

Standards. While much has been said in the literature review and throughout this study about the CCSS and how it came about, there is an important connection to consider. The CCSS itself, and how it came to be, is a dialogue taking place in spaces throughout the country. As was evident by the participants' words in this study alone, the understandings were diverse. Zancanella and Moore (2014) clearly describe a group of entities that gathered over a number of years. Those involved include individuals and foundations concerned with education, assessment companies, and groups formed in the name of Common Core State Standards. It began with Sir Michael Barber, an education reformer from the United Kingdom. After speeches he gave in the UK and in the United States began to give him credentials in the United States, Bill Gates and his foundation, The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, began to be more vocal and prominent in the discussion. The "working group" of CCSS is heavily weighted with representatives of assessment companies such as Achieve, ACT, and The College Board (Zancanella & Moore, 2014, p. 276). Consider closely Barber, who brought to the United States a model of centralized, top-down national education that he was instrumental in creating in the UK. As of 2014, Barber was the chief education adviser at Pearson. Was there a connection between Pearson and the creation of the standards? While Pearson did not have an official representative on the panel, the connections were not completely transparent.

Assessments. Assessments are a complicated consideration, especially in the experiences of the teachers in this study. As every teacher demonstrated, the assessments were one of their top concerns. Each teacher stated clearly and repeatedly that the mandated number of assessments in their classrooms or schools was taking away from instructional time and was causing undue stress on students and teachers, the tests were not always linked to classroom learning, and the correlation between student assessment results and teacher evaluations was difficult to understand.

The question arose about who was mandating the bevy of assessments any given student must take. This is unclear. There are tests mandated by the federal government as part of NCLB. These tests are summative in nature and take place generally at the end of the year. They are administered at the state level by a directive of the state education department in any given state. This is undisputed. State level education agencies are obligated to assess students using these standardized assessments. Whether states adopted CCSS or not, and whether they took RTT grant money or not, students in public schools in the United States must take end-of-the-year summative, standardized assessments. The U.S. Department of Education gave RTT grant money to two consortiums that were tasked to write assessments with participating states that were unlike any given in the public school system. The two consortiums were the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SMARTER). PARCC in particular, as it applies to this southwestern state, was given from grades 3-11 and was computer based (The Aspen Institute, 2010). It can't go without repeating that whether or not districts or states have adopted CCSS, they still

must participate in standardized assessments. That is part of the 2002 NCLB requirement for federal education funding administered through the state education department.

Knowing that those standardized assessments are required, the question that seems to be remaining in the experiences of teachers in this study was the reason, guiding force, or decisions behind the multitude of other required assessments. In this southwestern state, the secretary of education made public statements in regards to the only test required by the state education department was the PARCC. This seems to be a chasm in understanding. Often, assessments are required by school districts that are not required by the state-level administration. Additionally, often assessments are not required by school districts but are required by building-level administrators or leadership teams.

In this southwestern state, most elementary schools require their teachers to administer the most current, computerized version of DIBELS, the DIBELS Next assessment. The grades within the school that are a part of this requirement vary from school to school and for different reasons. Is this mandate coming from the schools? That is a complex question. It is a fact that many of the grants managed through the different state education department bureaus require the administration of DIBELS Next as a measurement of the effectiveness of various grant programs. DIBELS Next is an assessment that is given at intervals throughout the year and is a diagnostic measure of student progress. Teachers in this study report that they administer DIBELS at the end of each quarter and then more frequently for students who are not meeting predetermined levels. DIBELS is administered and recorded on a computer, ideally away from the interruptions of other students. One of the concerns of the elementary teachers in this

study was the authenticity of this assessment protocol when they often were trying to manage a class of students inside the classroom while they were in the hall with a laptop or iPad administering individual assessments. Additionally, according to this southwestern state's website, the DIBELS Next is a required assessment.

Other assessments that the elementary and middle school teachers reported using in their schools ranged from the interim assessments DBA or MAPs, to the DRA and even Becky's reported use of the End of Unit assessment in her kindergarten classroom. The query lies in who is mandating these assessments. They are not on the state education department's list of required assessments. Where does the requirement of these assessments originate? All participants reported that they were unsure of whether these assessments in particular were part of their evaluation, yet they were certain that the student scores on the PARCC, the DIBELS, and the EoC's were part of their evaluation points and determination of effectiveness. Another concern was that other than the PARCC, the teachers themselves scored each assessment. No teacher in this study reported knowing who mandated these other assessments listed above. Whether they come from the district or the school level administration was an uncertainty that no teacher seemed to understand fully.

According to the state department of education's website, in addition to the PARCC, high school teachers were mandated by the state education agency to administer interim assessments as well as EoC exams. The interim assessments occur at the end of each quarter, and the EoC occurs at the end of each semester. In addition to this, teachers have their own assessments they administer at the end of units; at the end of each week, in June's situation; and at any other manner of timing, depending on expectations of the

content area. As June explained in her interviews, she used the weekly quizzes to inform her instruction for the next week. Jeff also said this was a regular practice at the middle school level, doing a more formative assessment at the end of each week to inform instruction for the next week. In the middle school, Jeff reported the use of EoC for other content areas.

The secretary of education's public statements that the state education department was requiring only one assessment, the PARCC, were misleading. It was easy to see where the dominant question of trust was a concern among teachers in this study in the area of assessments. This confusion was apparent not only among teachers but also by parents and the community. There seemed to be no documentation in any artifact provided by the teachers to lead to what level of administration required which assessment, outside of the PARCC. Most likely, districts were requiring an interim assessment. In the elementary teachers in this study, that came in the form of the DBA or the MAPs. The DRA was questionable in mandated application. Three of the four elementary teachers and one of the middle school teachers reported using the DRA. The high occurrence indicated that it likely was a district-level decision.

Curriculum. While there were conversations among the different stakeholders about who required the mandated assessments, there also were conversations in different stakeholder groups related to curriculum. Curriculum was one conversation that appeared to be common in this study, as well as over social media and popular media.

Concerns in this study ranged from the application, in Jeff's case, of a curriculum prescribed by his principal as being aligned with ELA CCSS to no core curriculum in place at all. In John's case, the use of terms such as "national curriculum" and "federally

mandated” were not ones he spoke alone. This concern was echoed in speeches of politicians and other stakeholders throughout the media. The fact is it is against federal law for the U.S. DOE to order a state, district, or school to adopt a particular education curriculum. The misunderstandings, or misstatements, by politicians were numerous. Republican Bobby Jindal of Louisiana uttered one in particular reported by the Associated Press. He said, “Common Core has become another tool for the federal government to try to dictate curriculum to local schools here in Louisiana” (abcnews.com, 2015). State boards of education, districts, or schools generally are given the task of adoption of curriculum. Any curriculum that a school has adopted was not technically prescribed or directed by the federal government.

A piece of factual information in regards to the creation and connections involved with CCSS is that David Coleman, commonly referred to as the “architect” of CCSS partnered with another person intricately related to the authoring of CCSS, Susan Pimentel. They wrote the “Revised publishers’ criteria for the Common Core State Standards in English language arts and literacy, grades 3-12.” In this document, the authors gave publishers interested in creating curriculum guidelines in their development. This document, seen by many as a tool to dictate curriculum development, invited publishing houses to create ELA core curriculums and other materials aligned with CCSS. As an example, Pearson (2013) called for schools to maintain the initial promise of allowing teachers to select their own instructional tools in the implementation of the ELA CCSS. John, in particular, pointed this out in his interviews, saying that one of the promises of CCSS was that teachers could use what they knew to teach the standards.

In California, decentralization has been a focus of education reform. A report by McLaughlin, Glaab, and Carrascho (2014) showed that decentralization could be difficult when adopting curriculum in particular. Many issues arise, one being the wealth of the districts; another being the rapid rate of adoption of the standards and the uncertainty of how alignment can be checked for accuracy. Additionally, a matter that the report conveyed and also was relevant to this state, was the different methods and timelines associated with the way that districts approached curriculum. As publishers rushed to develop curriculum, the idea of de-centralization and cost was one that prompted important conversations among partners and stakeholders.

Change. Fullan (2001) says this about change: “Change is a double edged sword. Its relentless pace these days runs us off our feet.” Change is hard. Research shows this time after time. Change in an educational setting is even harder. Teachers in this southwestern state were experiencing change in a way troubled them. In regards to change, five of the six participants in this study experienced degrees of change in the past several years due to the implementation requirements of ELA CCSS. The greatest change they saw came in the form of materials, collaboration, professional development, and student learning.

The change in materials that teachers have experienced in terms of the implementation of the ELA CCSS included new textbooks, lack of textbooks, lack of curriculum materials, or less money to buy library books. Every participant discussed this change as it affected their experiences delivering what they believed were the best instructional practices to their students. Jeff was the only participant who set language

arts curriculum imposed upon his teaching practice. He said that in prior years, he was unrestricted in how he reached toward the state language arts standards. John said one of the promises of the CCSS implementation was that teachers could choose how they reached the standards, as long as they were being used. For Jeff, this was a huge blow. As shown in his profile, his school had intended to use one curriculum, yet switched the week school was to start to a curriculum that had to be followed “like a Bible” by the language arts teachers at his school. Jeff also said that officials in his district came into the school and removed all materials that they didn’t interpret as being aligned with the ELA CCSS.

McLaughlin, Glaab, and Carrasco’s (2014) report on the efforts of de-centralization in California showed that teacher’s frustrations with not enough materials available that are verified as aligned with CCSS was consistent with participants’ experiences in this study. That issue also was relevant to this state. One of the issues that their report brought forward was the issue of district funding. Some districts have a difficult time doing full-scale adoptions, depending on several issues, but one in particular would be money. Full-scale adoptions are expensive and require not only purchasing a massive amount of curriculum but extensive professional development as well. Districts in this southwestern state, particularly rural districts, struggle with funding sources and low tax bases. This is something that can be considered as teachers experience this change and the subsequent struggle with appropriate and readily available materials.

The teachers were mixed about the lack of a core curriculum, yet all of the participants who didn’t have a core language arts curriculum said their language arts

program was made up of a hodgepodge of resources. Teachers have access to the Internet in a way that they didn't have prior to the years of CCSS. Every teacher, to varying degrees, cited websites, blogs, other web 2.0 tools as ways to obtain resources to build their language arts curriculum in the wake of not having a specific curriculum in ELA. Jeff, who has a set language arts curriculum, used web 2.0 tools to supplement, and more particularly to build the additional assessments required by his administration.

While John appreciated the ability to build his language arts curriculum in a fashion he believed was sensitive to his students' needs, Carlye lamented the lack of a core curriculum. Becky, the novice teacher, would have appreciated a core curriculum as well. Both Becky and Carlye said they preferred a curriculum that put them more in synch with their grade-level colleagues and cited the newly adopted math curriculum as a model for a more stable path to follow when determining what to teach. John had a complete different philosophy about curriculum, especially the core programs designed to be aligned with CCSS. In his school, like the schools of some of the other participants, they had adopted a math curriculum. He declined to adhere to it and instead built a math curriculum based upon experience and years of knowledge about what worked for his population of students.

For Teresa, the lack of new materials of interest to her students presented itself in her lack of ability to purchase new library books for the first two years of the implementation of CCSS. She said her students did not have access to a part of schooling that was seen as a critical element of school success: access to books. Krashen, Lee, and McQuillan (2012) showed that access to books is a substantial factor in student success, chiefly as it applies to students living in poverty.

Change occurred in teacher collaboration for all of the teachers in this study, except for Becky. Even though change did not occur for her because of her novice status, her experiences and feelings about her experiences with collaboration echoed that of every participant. None were enthusiastic about the tone that collaboration took on in this era of CCSS. Each teacher reported that the purpose of collaboration, or PLCs, was to talk about, deal with, and report data. Some teachers, such as Teresa, Jeff, and Carlye, used words such as “dataticians” instead of professional teachers to describe their feelings.

Many local education agencies, be it a school or a district, require teachers to collaborate as part of their implementation plan of CCSS. As Datnow, Park, and Kennedy-Lewis (2013) revealed, a common trend in the collaboration groups was their formation for the sole purpose of making decisions based upon the massive amounts of data they collected through a variety of assessment practices. Teresa, Jeff, Becky, and John especially spoke to their frustration about using that time for data and not for collegial collaboration. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) referred to this as contrived collegiality and showed that it was damaging to the professional capital of educators.

The teachers in this study expressed a sense of loss over a time when coming together to collaborate meant they planned lessons, built activities together, and came to know their shared students. Jeff said this concisely when he said, “They are just numbers.” The other teachers echoed this as well. Becky was aware that as a new teacher she would benefit more from a collaboration that was built on teachers sharing their knowledge and understandings about teaching with her. Sometimes she felt like she knew

what to teach but not how to teach it. A more authentic collaboration model would have helped with her confidence and growing teaching professionalism.

Both John and Carlye thought the forced collaboration was a detriment to their own professional learning and more importantly, to their time. John thought that teachers should have the option to not collaborate, even going as far as referring to required collaboration as part of the implementation of CCSS as a “brainwashing” and “indoctrination” into the culture of CCSS. June, while appreciating the chance to work on the data with her group, thought the money spent on the required collaboration model would be better spent reducing class size. June has appreciated using data; as a science teacher she had never paid much attention to the data in the past. She reported that data actually has helped her go back and reteach concepts in a way that she had never done before.

Teresa and John, both late-career teachers, experienced the most change in collaboration. Along with Jeff, they said collaboration should not be about someone else’s agenda. Jeff and John gave evidence in their experience with their principal as well as with their instructional coaches coming into their collaboration meetings with agendas, videos, or plans for what should be accomplished. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) wrote that true collaborative cultures do not involve the shoving of one person’s, or entity’s, agenda onto the learning and commitment of teachers in regards to what they believe needs to happen for increased student learning.

Data collection and review is easily interpreted as falling under the original intent of teacher collaboration: that of increased student learning outcomes. The teachers had mixed feelings on that specific component of collaboration. Teresa, Jeff, John, and Carlye

reported that too much time was spent on data, taking away from looking at students and learning about them as people. Becky did not talk about the data, but would like to have had more time with her colleagues to gain knowledge and pedagogical expertise. June liked the data review and saw it increasing her students' learning, but she also would like to see it be less of a requirement and more of a choice.

Teresa, Jeff, and June talked the most frequently about the changes in professional development opportunities in this time of implementation. Becky discussed it as well, obviously not in terms of change, but in terms of occasions of professional development provided by her school or district. All of the teachers said that professional development is not about choice of learning but about implementing components of CCSS. Jeff and June have gone to professional development workshops that have focused solely on an implementation of CCSS. Jeff said that while his group got no professional development on the implementation of the Lucy Calkins curriculum, the group did spend several days the previous summer in a training session about the implementation of a different curriculum, one that was unexpectedly replaced with Lucy Calkins. June has attended professional development workshops focused around designing lesson plans that incorporate CCSS. None of the teachers were provided professional development that was not directly related. Becky reported that she paid for her own professional development, which was a conference about teaching kindergarten. The conference was where she acquired many of her pedagogical practices. That is what professional development was in the past for many teachers in this study--a time for pedagogical improvement and learning. Like collaboration, district- or school-provided professional

development has become more of sessions to disseminate information about the implementation of CCSS.

Predominant in each of the experiences of these participants was that professional development opportunities have been cut. Monies allocated toward professional development have been redirected toward other implementation costs associated with CCSS. Teresa and Carlye shared that concern when they described how much money they believed was being allocated to the myriad of assessments being required. Teresa, Jeff, John, June, and Carlye talked about the money they believed was coming from Bill Gates and to Pearson for implementation components, including money for professional development. Like Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) found, many of the teachers in this study believed that the focus on turning teaching into a business, a corporate controlled culture, was dangerous. Hargreaves and Fullan found that none of the most successful school systems in the world applied business capital to educational practices and policies, yet it is rampant in the United States in policy reform.

Finally, student learning has changed in the past several years. This can be shown in the participants' discussion of turning students into what Jeff calls "data points on a graph." Each participant gave examples in the change in what students are learning, the suitability of what they are learning, or the depth of what they are learning. Carlye cited a training where she was first introduced to CCSS and said the trainer told the group that what CCSS does is require students to learn deep and wide, discounting what has been student learning in the past as being shallow. Jeff gave an example of students having to write a 12-page research paper as part of a new requirement. While in the past, students

learned to write with depth and to use information and sources. With the new curriculum, length was more important than actually learning.

Actual learning was a concern of John's as well. He said he had freedom to get students into the outdoors, learning experientially. Now he was relegated to the "imposition" of curriculum and standards that have taken students' culture and interests out of the equation. While John had refused to take CCSS, particularly the ELA CCSS, into account as he planned his teaching, he did take into account what his students needed. As described, John took the opportunity before the opening of the school year to retire. His refusal to give into the requirements related to CCSS was one of his primary reasons.

Becky, while a novice teacher, also touched upon the changes she saw in student learning outcomes. Prior to teaching, she was an active volunteer in her children's classrooms. She saw what her own children learned and what her kindergarteners now were learning. Play was no longer a part of her early childhood curriculum. She talked about taking it back, taking back the fun part of kindergarten in her second year of implementation and teaching. Her remark about not wanting her students to not want to come to school was echoed in one way or another by each participant. Whether it was the manner in which implementation took away relationship building with students, or whether implementation took out the students' lives as a factor in teaching, student learning has been affected. Jeff showed the way he used to be able to build his writing curriculum around the students' lives. Now, it is more "sterile" and generic. Students in Jeff's class were learning about their place in history. Now they write assignments that are disconnected and not relevant to their lives.

Summary. The answer to the first research question is complex. The rapid adoptions and implementation of a multitude of policies have caused them all to become nearly, or in some cases, totally, indistinct from each other. Teachers and administrators are often unclear about which actions are a requirement of which reform. Each teacher was experiencing trust and change in this round of nationally levied policy change. The implementation was done with a great deal of oversight and negative discourse from the state education department. The discourse that made its rounds from that level played out poorly in the experiences of these teachers. Most of the teachers expressed discontent and confusion about who was giving what directive. For example, while the state education department claimed to not be requiring as much testing as the districts were employing, there was distrust in who then was requiring the assessments that seemed to be defining the lives of teachers and students in the classroom. Without fail, every teacher named this as one of their top concerns. No one denied the need for assessment, but every teacher questioned the way it was being done, the number of required assessments, the data collection, and the data reporting. In line with this concern for assessments was the overwhelming agreement among participants that the experiences they were having with these assessments were linked to their evaluations without a clear understanding of how, why, and with what formula.

The level of stress that both administrators and teachers were experiencing directly correlated with student success. Without trust at varying levels within a school organization, student learning suffers. As many of the participants demonstrated, not feeling trust within the relationships and duties of the state education department, the

administration, and themselves was affecting how students were being regarded. Claims that students were “numbers” or that their culture and unique needs were being ignored were widespread among the experiences of the teachers. This effect on learning outcomes was negative and could not be ignored.

In regards to change, it has been drastic, in the words of the teachers. Only one teacher looked at the changes differently, and that was Becky. As a novice teacher, she did not know any different, for the most part. She joined in on lamenting what to her was a lack of appropriate materials, collaboration, professional development, and student learning outcomes. To the veteran teachers, the change in these necessary components of teaching have forever changed the landscape of their profession. Everything seemed uncertain to them. They demonstrated this with narratives of defeat. They seem beaten down. The veteran teachers have been through numerous policy reforms in their career. They were taking this one personally. Several felt like CCSS was a direct attack on the profession of teaching. Teresa, Jeff, John, June, and Carlye said it was their impression that ultimate goal was to rid the profession of expensive veteran teachers. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) validated this as they showed through their years of research that such focus on a business and corporate reform in education often was the result of looking at education as a short-term profession, one that can be easily acquired with minimal training and experience.

Teachers are experiencing significant distrust. They are experiencing change in their profession and in their ability to do the job they wanted to do in their hearts. All of the veteran teachers talked about retirement, about a profession that no longer was valued or focused on improving student learning in an authentic and relevant way. Teachers in

this study viewed the intrusion of corporations into education policy in a way that focused on making education something that needed to be rescued, devalued, and even nonexistent. They were not unaware of the political machinations and negative discourse around teachers, student success, and the organization of schooling.

Research Question 2. *How have teachers been informed about the CCSS and the accompanying assessments?*

Teachers in this study reported a multitude of ways in which they have been informed about expectations related to the implementation. The most common way was through staff meetings, required professional development, collaboration meetings, and through other colleagues.

The teachers described staff meetings, required professional development, and collaboration meetings that started out with either a principal or instructional coach giving them new information or a directive about the implementation requirements. Each teacher reported beginning and mid-year in-service sessions that focused on new and repeated information.

Some of the teachers provided emails and other documents that demonstrated some of the ways in which they were informed about the implementation of CCSS. One district's ELA instructional coach regularly sent out tools for lesson planning for grade levels. The tools the coach sent out came from organizations such as Pearson, The Common Core Institute, and other entities or companies that created materials aligned with CCSS.

One school district has what it refers to as a change team. One of the duties of a member of the change team was to report back to their school during staff meetings and collaboration meetings what new requirements or information were shared. Some participants said their school had a grade-level representative who gathered information from meetings with administrators and brought that information back to the grade- or content-level meetings.

Every teacher in this study reported gathering information from colleagues, blogs, news sites, web 2.0 tools, and social media. The information gathered from such resources was more of the unofficial nature. This information might be about such issues as where CCSS originated from, the extent of the involvement of Pearson or Bill Gates, or opinions about testing and evaluations. Teachers shared blogs and other sites with me as evidence of how they learned information that was not shared by their school administrators or by district and state officials.

Several of the teachers in this study invited me to review their Facebook, Twitter, and blogging accounts. I discovered that these were popular places for teachers to exchange information about the implementation. Not all of the information was necessarily accurate, but it was a place where the teachers expressed their frustration, the latest buzz, and even tales of their own experiences. The teachers seemed to speak freely and shared frequently their thoughts and information they were hearing or receiving in other spaces.

One participant shared an email sent by a state-level administrator that laid out some responses to public statements made by a variety of people involved in education. The email took on each statement and made “corrections” to the statements that the

official claimed were false. This seemed to be a common course for state-level administrators, as they frequently are seen in the media defending their positions and decisions, as well as making statements to contradict reports of how the implementation was being conducted.

Not all of the participants were involved heavily in their teacher union, but a few have been. Those teachers reported that they received information about expectations or implementation practices from their union or from union representatives and other colleagues involved in their unions. This was an important piece of information, because it must be considered that a teacher involved in a teachers union might have more or less of a bias toward a state education department, depending on the relationship between the two.

Summary. Teachers were informed about the implementation of ELA CCSS and its accompanying assessments in a myriad of ways. As shown throughout this study, many of those ways included taking over staff meetings, collaboration meetings, and even professional development events in the name of informing teachers about CCSS. The teachers shared experiences with getting information written by Pearson or other Common Core-gearred organizations. The majority of the teachers in this study questioned the intent, benevolence, and honesty of the different administration levels in the information provided about the implementation. This raised questions about sustainability of the reform, and in particular, questions about the reform policy that was CCSS.

Research Question 3. *How are teachers incorporating the CCSS into their practices?*

As the analysis of the data that was gathered proceeded, it became clear to me that the majority of the teachers believed they were incorporating CCSS in a manner that went against the grain of good teaching. They were reaching into a reserve within themselves that was saved for this very instance. They were doing their best to maintain good practices while trying to figure out how to incorporate CCSS in a manner that would be reflected in student assessments, which directly affected, and continues to do so, their high-stakes teacher evaluations.

Each teacher in this study incorporated the standards codes and languages into their lesson plans. Some schools required a weekly lesson plan with the standard language and codes, and other schools required a plan for the entire unit of study. Teachers were provided some sort of “cheat sheet” for the common core, replacing the need to refer to the entire document. Generally, these were a laminated document that was considered similar to a flip chart, created for quick reference. Teachers throughout the state were required to submit some documentation, whether it was the weekly lesson plans or the unit plans into a state-mandated web-based system that compiled and archived these plans. Teachers were unsure if these plans were part of their evaluation system, who looked at the plans, or what was done with the plans once submitted.

In considering the curriculum that was part of incorporating CCSS into their studies, the teachers had different ways of approaching this integration. The majority of the veteran teachers were thankful that their schools did not have a core language arts curriculum and that they could continue using their own methods of teaching. They did

not believe that would happen for long, because every participant's school had recently adopted a CCSS-aligned math core curriculum. Several of the elementary teachers were attempting to continue using all or pieces of Treasures, a core reading curriculum that was suspected of and reported by participants as not being aligned with the ELA CCSS. They all reported the use of websites and other web 2.0 tools as ways to incorporate other peoples' work on ELA CCSS into their own practice. Pinterest.com and teacherspayteachers.com were reported by the majority of teachers as places where they could borrow CCSS-aligned activities and lesson ideas to incorporate into their own teaching practice.

Summary. Teachers are doing their best to incorporate the requirements of CCSS into their teaching practice. Most of the veteran teachers asserted that much of what they were being asked to do went against pedagogical knowledge and tried and true practices. One teacher, June, appreciated the new focus in her science curriculum of the language arts strategies, but other teachers did not appreciate the manner in which they were asked to change how and what they teach. All of the teachers were doing what was asked in incorporation of CCSS, save one who chose to retire instead of continuing to go against the core of his beliefs about how and why students learn and grow in schools.

Limitations and Implications

There are two limitations in this study. However, these limitations lend themselves to future study. The first was the relatively small number of participants. The study had six participants from one state. Because of time and other logistics, the participants were kept at a small number. While I believe this was not a detriment to the

study, it is worth noting that a larger sample size and perhaps a wider sampling of participants with varying characteristics would enrich the information produced.

The second limitation was the novice status of myself as a researcher. While the research questions were carefully crafted and modeled on a protocol that had been tested over time and space, my novice status was apparent in some of the probing and follow-up questions asked during the three in-depth interviews. With more experience and perhaps with a pilot study, these problems would be resolved in any future study using the same protocol.

The implications of the findings in this study confirmed what research has shown for decades: teachers need to be involved in policymaking decisions. When they are not, they feel devalued and question the intent of the policy. In teaching, one cannot control all variables. Teachers are the experts about the variables in their own classrooms, and this needs to be addressed in any policy renewal. There needs to be seats at the policy table for teachers. Without their input and buy-in, policy cannot be successful. History and time has shown this to be true.

Teachers desire to be treated like the professionals they are. Through experience and the gradual wearing away the value of the teaching profession in the past decade, their professional standing has been eroded. To ensure success of students, professional capacity building of teachers, and the reinstatement of an education system that values what these teachers see as actual education, these teachers' words and experiences must be taken into consideration.

Recommendations

Throughout this study, it became more and more apparent to me that the teachers in this study had rich, important stories they wanted to tell. Going in, there were questions about whether they would want to share some of the experiences they had as students themselves and as teachers. It was important in this study to vigilantly protect the identities of the participants, and I was concerned that that protection might somehow compromise data quality. None of this occurred. Teachers shared openly, honestly, and with compassion.

Because of the richness of teachers sharing experiences, this study is powerful. The words and experiences of teachers cannot be discounted. What they experienced cannot be changed or devalued by a secretary of education's press. When a governor says that teachers work only part of the year and yet are paid for a full year, this cannot lessen the impact and importance of their stories.

One avenue of teacher interaction is social media. I would consider an investigation of teacher's social media sites to be a valuable indicator of how teachers are experiencing this policy reform. The open platform of social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and blogging offers teachers an opportunity to be more open in their exchanges. Social media offers a certain anonymity that would be valuable in further understanding how teachers are processing through CCSS. The vulnerability of having an interviewer ask questions would be subtracted from the equation. The insight would be constructive to collect teachers' honest feelings and practices.

Many of the research studies that look at the issues of trust and change in education do not look at individual teachers; they don't examine and listen to teachers'

words. Many of the current studies use sound research methodologies, such as surveys and other measurement tools. These are important studies and are the basis for what was confirmed through the interviews of individual teachers in this study. For further study in this field, I believe a broadening of participants would be useful.

A larger number of participants taking part in a state-by-state examination of how teachers are experiencing this impactful policy reform would be a highly informative study. Time, space, money, and logistics would be critically important factors in such a study, but it would be incredibly rich and telling about the state of teachers in America. In my experience as a teacher in a different state and that of the teachers who are former colleagues and current friends, it is obvious that the position of this southwestern state's educational system has a great deal to do with the disconnect between the state education department, the districts, the administration, the teachers, and the students they profess to put first. Looking at those factors across states would be valuable in building a genuine picture of teacher experiences.

Another recommendation for further study of the impact of policy would be to do longitudinal studies of student experiences. Finding out whether students feel as impacted as teachers and policymakers portray them to be would go a long way in determining whether policies such as the implementation of CCSS actually reach the human side of education. Education now, as the teachers in this study professed, seems to be about students as numbers. Whether this can be sustained in the long term is questionable.

Time will determine the impact of CCSS and the increased number of assessments on student achievement. As the veteran teachers in this study showed,

generations of policy changes and reforms have purported to redirect educational outcomes. Few have succeeded. Policymakers need to carefully examine the great number of research studies that show the impact of trust and change on school success. Without that, these two issues will continue to produce stories like the six in this study.

Appendix A

Interview Protocol

The three-interview series

In the examination of teachers' experiences with the English Language Arts (ELA) Common Core State Standards (CCSS), an in-depth, phenomenological, open-ended interview series as proposed by Seidman (2012) will be employed.

This qualitative interview method combines life experiences and in-depth interviews. This approach, as explained by Seidman (2012), uses open-ended questions during three separate interviews. The interviews are spaced three to seven days apart, and each will last 60-90 minutes. The intention of the series of interviews is for the participants to reconstruct their lived experiences related to the topic of study--in this particular study, they are the experiences that teachers are having with the ELA CCSS--and the accompanying assessments.

During the first interview, participants will be asked to reconstruct their early experiences. I will ask them to tell me as much about themselves as possible, including how they became a teacher. I will ask: "Tell me about your life" This question gets at important biographical details that explain so much of why and how we experience things. I also will ask: "How did you become a teacher?" These events leading up to where they are now as teachers will be used to reconstruct their experiences. This first interview will set the grounds for their beliefs about teaching and learning.

The second interview will focus on prompting them to focus on the now of their teaching experiences as it relates to the ELA CCSS. The initiating question: "What is it like to be a teacher right now?" I also will ask them to describe a typical day in their teaching life. I will ask for the stories of their relationship with the ELA CCSS, eliciting narratives from them about how it is working for them and their practice.

The third interview is meant to focus on the meaning of their experiences. I will ask them to reflect upon the context of the first two interviews. This interview will be an opportunity for the participants to think seriously about what their history and their experiences teaching now mean. I will start by asking: "What does it mean to be a teacher right now in light of your experiences? This last interview will address the connections of emotion and intellect in their work and life.

Guiding Questions

First interview: Focused life experiences

- Tell me about your life.
- How did you become a teacher?
- What brought you to be teaching in a school that requires you to use the ELA CCSS?

Second interview: The details of experience

- What is it like to be a teacher right now?
- Describe a typical day of teaching. (This will allow for the opportunity to look at shared teacher experiences across the participants.)
- Tell me about your best day and worst day of teaching.
- Are there stories about your experiences that you'd like to share?
- What are the reasons that contribute to your desire to stay, or leave, the education profession?

Third interview: Reflection on the meaning

- What does it mean to be a teacher right now in light of your experiences?
- When you became a teacher, how did you feel about the curriculum, standards, or expectations that were in place?
- Tell me about the experiences that encompass your beliefs about teaching and learning.
- Given what you have said about your life before you became a teacher and given what you have said about your teaching life now, where do you see yourself in the future?
- Is there anything I have not asked during these three interviews that you would like to share now?

Appendix B

The University of New Mexico

Consent Authorization to Participate in Research

May 22, 2014

Introduction

You are being asked to participate in a research study that is being done by Dr. Donald Zancanella, who is the Principal Investigator and Julie Bryant, from the Department of Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Studies. This research is studying how teachers in New Mexico are experiencing the implementation of the Common Core State Standards and its accompanying assessments.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a classroom teacher in New Mexico who has experienced at least one year of implementation of the Common Core State Standards in your own classroom. 7 people will take part in this study at the University of New Mexico.

This form will explain the research study, and will also explain the possible risks as well as the possible benefits to you. We encourage you to talk with your family and friends before you decide to take part in this research study. If you have any questions, please ask one of the study investigators.

What will happen if I decide to participate?

If you agree to participate, the following things will happen:

1. Participate in 3 in-depth interviews
2. Keep a reflective participant journal
3. Provide de-identified documents to corroborate information provided about experiences

How long will I be in this study?

Participation in this study will take a total of 3-4.5 hours over a period of 9-21 days.

What are the risks or side effects of being in this study?

There are risks of stress, emotional distress, inconvenience and possible loss of privacy and confidentiality associated with participating in a research study.

What are the benefits to being in this study?

No known benefits are related to this study. However, it is hoped that information gained from this study will help policy makers and policy implementers better understand how teachers experience policy reform.

What other choices do I have if I do not want to be in this study?

You have the option not to take part in this study. There will be no penalties involved if you choose not to take part in this study.

How will my information be kept confidential?

All data will be kept on a password encrypted external hard drive in which the student investigator is the only person with the ability to access the data. In addition, only pseudonyms will be used in all data.

We will take measures to protect the security of all your personal information, but we cannot guarantee confidentiality of all study data.

Information contained in your study records is used by study staff and, in some cases it will be shared with the sponsor of the study. The University of New Mexico Institutional Review Board (IRB) that oversees human subject research and/or other entities may be permitted to access your records. There may be times when we are required by law to share your information. Your name will not be used in any published reports about this study.

What are the costs of taking part in this study?

There are no costs for taking part in this study.

Will I be paid for taking part in this study?

There is no compensation for taking part in this study.

How will I know if you learn something new that may change my mind about participating?

I will ask you for confirmation of continuing consent before and after each interview is conducted, and again at the end of the interview process.

You will be informed of any significant new findings that become available during the course of the study, such as changes in the risks or benefits resulting from participating in the research or new alternatives to participation that might change your mind about participating.

Can I stop being in the study once I begin?

Participation is voluntary in this study and you may withdraw at anytime. You may also request that your data not be included in the study.

If at anytime, the researcher feels that the participant is experiencing emotional distress from the reflections and emotional issues brought up during the interviews, the participant may be withdrawn from the study. All data will be excluded from the study.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You have the right to choose not to participate or to withdraw your participation at any point in this study without affecting your future health care or other services to which you are entitled.

Whom can I call with questions or complaints about this study?

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints at any time about the research study, contact the PI at 505-277-7782

If you need to contact someone after business hours or on weekends, please call and ask for Julie Bryant, 505-205-2320.

If you would like to speak with someone other than the research team, you may call the UNM Office of the IRB at (505) 277-2644.

Whom can I call with questions about my rights as a research participant?

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you may call the UNM Office of the IRB (OIRB) at (505) 277-2644. The OIRB is a group of people from UNM and the community who provide independent oversight of safety and ethical issues related to research involving human participants. For more information, you may also access the OIRB website at <http://irb.unm.edu>

CONSENT AND AUTHORIZATION

You are making a decision whether to participate in this study. Your signature below indicates that you/your child read the information provided (or the information was read to you). By signing this consent form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights as a research participant.

I have had an opportunity to ask questions and all questions have been answered to my satisfaction. By signing this consent form, I agree to participate in this study. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you.

Name of Adult Subject (print)

Signature of Adult Subject

Date

INVESTIGATOR SIGNATURE

I have explained the research to the participant and answered all of his/her questions. I believe that he/she understands the information described in this consent form and freely consents to participate.

Name of Investigator/ Study Team Member (print)

Signature of Investigator/ Study Team Member

Date

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