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Barriers to Effective Curriculum Implementation

Erica Nevenglosky
Walden University

Walden University

College of Education

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Erica Nevenglosky

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Review Committee
Dr. Christopher Cale, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty
Dr. Sunddip Aguilar, Committee Member, Education Faculty
Dr. Barbara Schirmer, University Reviewer, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
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Abstract

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Erica A. Nevenglosky

MA, Anna Maria College, 2007

BS, Worcester State University, 2003

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Abstract

An administration of a private school located in the south reported the problem of a lack of curriculum fidelity to a new phonics program, which created a need to identify barriers preventing full curriculum implementation. Using the concerns-based adoption model (CBAM) as the conceptual framework, this qualitative case study identified concerns and barriers teachers report when implementing a new curriculum and used the. Data were collected from 10 participants (8 teachers and 2 administrators) through a questionnaire, interviews, and observations. Participants were interviewed to identify any barriers experienced with curriculum fidelity of a new phonics program. Teachers were observed to determine which components of the curriculum were present in or omitted from their lessons. Participants completed a questionnaire to determine their levels of concern when asked to implement a new curriculum. Results indicated that teachers required additional information before the expected implementations occur and an understanding of demands on their personal time. Common themes showed a desire for professional development (PD), peer-collaboration, and access to curriculum resources, which served as the basis for the project. The resulting project integrated PD to address concerns connected to reoccurring themes. Implications for social change include change at a systematic level by providing administrators with data to support teachers during curriculum changes and substantiation for the benefits of understanding concerns prior to a change for improving curriculum fidelity.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my husband Joseph and my daughter Ava. Thank you for your encouragement, understanding, and love throughout this journey. If not for your constant support, I would not have made it this far. I also dedicate this to my parents, Paul and Norine. Thank you for your prayers and faith in me. I am grateful for my family and blessed to call them mine.

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Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

Both public and private schools in the United States continue to experience rapid and regular changes in their curricula (McShane & Eden, 2015; National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2017). These changes require teachers to possess the skills and knowledge to implement curricula with fidelity (Wiles & Bondi, 2014). Adopting new curricula requires teachers to feel confident in the delivery and purpose of the materials they use in order to ensure accurate implementation (American Institute for Research [AIR], 2016; Early, Rogge, & Deci, 2014). Identifying reasons that support or prevent teachers' effective implementation of a new curriculum may provide direction for helping them with curriculum changes. According to Lochner, Conrad, and Graham (2015), teachers are central to whether a curriculum is delivered consistently, effectively, and with efficacy to enable the support of student progress and growth.

In a study the NCES (2017) conducted on curriculum fidelity and professional development, teachers self-reported fidelity rates when implementing an English language learner (ELL) program. The authors, who used a log to rate the level and amount of time spent on using the curriculum as prescribed, found that 16% of participants recorded decreased levels of fidelity, 51% recorded average levels of fidelity, and 30% recorded consistent fidelity of implementation, as prescribed by the curriculum

developers. Previous researchers have shown a need to identify the factors that contribute to teacher concerns and which barriers prevent full curriculum implementation (Lochner et al., 2015; NCES, 2017). Understanding the barriers to complete implementation of a new curriculum could provide education administrators with tools to address teacher concerns and could provide vital training for successful implementation (AIR, 2016).

Definition of the Problem

The problem at Southwest Private School (SPS, a pseudonym) is that a new phonics-based curricular program is not being implemented with fidelity, according to the SPS principal (personal communication, May 23, 2016). Administrators have not acted to identify or understand the practices, concerns, and barriers to curriculum fidelity (SPS principal, personal communication, May 23, 2016). The existing gap in practice is that teachers are not implementing the curriculum faithfully; as a result, which concerns teachers report when implementing a new curriculum remain unknown. This gap extends to a lack of offerings for professional development (PD) and classroom observations to remedy the problem (SPS principal, personal communication, May 23, 2016). In general, implementing curricula consistently supports student growth of knowledge and academic preparedness for the next grade levels (Polikoff & Porter, 2014).

At SPS, however, the administration recently purchased a phonics curriculum, but the teachers have chosen not to implement it as directed, thus creating inconsistencies (SPS principal, personal communication, May 23, 2016). Teachers and parents have cited the lack of fidelity in curricular implementation as a contributing factor to the students' unpreparedness for the next grade levels, because the curriculum is no longer vertically aligned (SPS headmaster, personal communication, August 31, 2016). (As discussed below, vertical alignment has to do with similarities in instructional practices and the fidelity of curriculum use and implementation between previous and following grade levels [Wiles & Bondi, 2014].) With teachers not faithfully implementing the curriculum, it is difficult to determine which objectives are taught before students enter the next grade. A need exists to understand the reasons that either support or prevent teachers' faithful implementation of a new curriculum.

Concerns about the teachers' lack of curricular fidelity existed before the purchase of the new phonics curriculum at SPS. The curriculum purchase took place to help remedy the alignment concerns that various stakeholders, including parents and teachers, shared (SPS principal, personal communication, May 23, 2016). The administrators chose the Saxon Phonics and Spelling program (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017) to replace the Bob Jones phonics program that was previously used in kindergarten through grade 3. The Saxon Phonics and Spelling program (henceforth

"Saxon") presents a research-based method focused on phonics, decoding, spelling, and fluency. The design of the program allows for pattern building within the structure of words and sounds to promote greater fluency and transfer of patterns into everyday spelling. The Saxon program differs from the previous program in terms of the different instructional strategies and teaching techniques involved in delivering the curriculum.

Previous researchers have asserted that teachers should implement curricula with fidelity to meet various objectives for student preparedness (Levi-Keren & Patkin, 2016; McShane & Eden, 2015; Stellar, 2016). The results from the NCES study (2017) mentioned above indicated that 80% of teachers who implemented the curriculum with high to moderate fidelity reported significant improvements in teaching practices and strategies useful for supporting student learning. In addition, the literature offers data in support of the need for consistency in using a curriculum for maximum benefit to the students (McNeill, Katsh-Singer, Gonzalez-Howard, & Lopez, 2016).

Research on identifying the barriers to the full implementation of a curriculum is needed. Understanding the barriers involved would require determining teachers' experience when facing a new innovation or change (AIR, 2016). With the 2017 introduction in the United States of the Every Student Succeeds Act, or ESSA (US Department of Education [USDOE], 2017), state and administrative expectations for accurate and faithful curricular implementation have become paramount for student

success, regardless of individual academic needs. Because one of the goals of ESSA (USDOE, 2017) is student preparedness, achieving an understanding of what prevents teachers from faithful curricular implementation will require evaluation to improve student success (USDOE, 2017). Identifying teacher concerns connects to the current proposed study because of the need to understand barriers that may inhibit teachers when they must implement a new curriculum change. Addressing these concerns both before and during the curriculum-implementation process will increase the success rate by giving administrators the proper tools they need to support teachers through curriculum changes (AIR, 2016). This study also calls attention to possible reasons to explain why full curriculum implementation does not occur, in addition to addressing the barriers that teachers often report.

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

At SPS, administrators have noted that teachers are not faithfully implementing the curriculum, and previous efforts to align teacher practices from one grade to the next have not been successful (SPS headmaster, personal communication, August 31, 2016; SPS principal, personal communication, August 31, 2016). The administration at SPS fears that the perception that the curriculum is not aligned vertically is causing a barrier to teachers delivering expected learning outcomes for students' success in the next grade

(SPS headmaster, personal communication, August 31, 2016; SPS principal, personal communication, August 31, 2016). The same administrator has received several complaints from parents regarding a gap in content, objectives, and expectations among kindergarten through Grade 6.

Teachers in Grades 1 through 4 have also raised concerns during informal grade-level meetings about a lack of fidelity with the curriculum, which, according to the teachers, has caused problems with student preparedness for the next grade level. To address this concern, a representative of the curriculum company provided PD to introduce materials to the teachers. Although the curriculum company sent the teachers an online code and access to the materials via email in April 2016 (according to school records), none of the teachers participated in or requested follow-up PD to address their concerns (SPS principal, personal communication, May 23, 2016). For the reading curriculum, the allotted time (March through April 2016) provided an opportunity to improve content and instructional knowledge to support alignment, which offered an agenda outline documenting the progress made in each meeting, although time was not allotted for the phonics curriculum. Teachers have complained that students are not being prepared for the following grade levels because the phonics objectives for the following grades do not align (SPS headmaster, personal communication, July 26, 2016).

Evidence of the Problem in the Literature

The literature has suggested that faithfully implementing and following an aligned curriculum supports objectives for student academic readiness. Ahmed Hersi, Horan, and Lewis (2016) and Causarano (2015) have indicated various benefits to teacher support through curricular and instructional change to improve fidelity in implementation. Supporting teachers and ensuring alignment between grades can help stabilize student performance (Ahmed Hersi et al., 2016). Yurdakul (2015) also supported Ahmed Hersi et al.'s (2016) research in terms of how teachers interpret and implement curricula with fidelity. Student performance and preparedness are hindered when teachers do not implement the curriculum with fidelity (Yurdakul, 2015). According to Yurdakul (2015), teachers maintained fidelity with the curriculum through instructional practices adapted into a specific classroom context. In general, administrators and parents expect teachers to demonstrate competency in understanding the curriculum and how it connects to student learning (Yurdakul, 2015). Paralleling the curriculum with instructional practices supports alignment but requires proper teacher training for teachers to feel confident in their ability to implement the curriculum faithfully. A lack of fidelity, as Yurdakul (2015) posited, clouds which student outcomes have arisen from the actual curriculum versus those that have arisen from teacher adaptations. This situation highlights the need to understand what prompts a deviation from the prescribed curriculum as well as how to support teachers based on their concerns (Castro Superfine, Marshall, & Kelso, 2015).

One purpose of the proposed qualitative case study is to investigate teachers' experiences and practices in implementing the new phonics curriculum to identify the motives behind why some teachers have not fully implemented the curriculum. In addition, the study aims to develop an increased understanding of the barriers and concerns that teachers report during this process and to understand how teachers are (or are not) using the new curricular and instructional resources.

Definition of Terms

This study uses the following definitions.

Concerns-based adoption model (*CBAM*): The CBAM is a model designed to assess the concerns experienced by employees who participate in an innovation or change at different stages, with the purpose of mitigating the anxiety and concerns workers experience (AIR, 2016).

Curriculum alignment: Curriculum alignment is the matching of learning activities with desired outcomes, as connected to a school's objectives (Wiles & Bondi, 2014).

Curriculum: Curriculum is described as the complete enterprise or program developed for a school or student body that encompasses their experience and knowledge expectations (Wiles & Bondi, 2014).

Curriculum fidelity: Implementation of a curriculum in the way the authors or developers intended the materials to be implemented (National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning [NCECDTL], 2017).

Horizontal and vertical alignment: Horizontal alignment refers to similar instructional practices and curricula used among teachers in the same grade level (Wiles & Bondi, 2014), while vertical alignment addresses similarities in instructional practices and the fidelity of curriculum use and implementation between the previous and following grade levels (Wiles & Bondi, 2014).

Saxon Phonics and Spelling program: A research-based method focused on phonemic awareness, phonics, decoding, spelling, and fluency that provides detailed instructional directions for each area (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017).

Stages of concern: Derived from the concerns-based adoption model (CBAM) to address the levels of concern experienced by those who are going through an organizational change (Derrington & Campbell, 2015).

Significance of the Study

The significance of investigating the barriers to teachers' full implementation of curricula may help administrators better understand how they can support teachers through curricular changes. The need for conducting this study relates to supporting student preparedness for their next grade levels. Understanding and identifying teachers'

perceived barriers, concerns, and practices could provide better support for student growth and preparedness (Lambert, Velez, & Elliot, 2014; Lochner et al., 2015). Administrators, teachers, and parents care about this problem because of the negative effect on student growth and preparedness if teachers fail to implement a new curriculum (Cobanoglu & Capa-Aydin, 2015; Levi-Keren & Patkin, 2016). Identifying any barriers, concerns, and practices will potentially provide insights into how best to promote increased student performance in the current and following grade levels (Wiles & Bondi, 2014). This project's case study may also provide improvements through PD and professional learning community (PLC) opportunities in support of communication between teachers (Ahmed Hersi et al., 2016; Battey, Neal, Leyva, & Adams-Wiggins, 2016; Early et al., 2014). The justification for studying this problem is echoed in the existing literature. Understanding teacher curricular and instructional practices is important for new curricula and is related to vertical and horizontal alignment in primary grades (Ahmed Hersi et al., 2016; Claxton & Lucas, 2016; Early et al., 2014).

By studying the implementation of the phonics curriculum and investigating the reasons that prevent teachers from fully using the newer, more aligned curriculum, this study may provide information that could lead to improved alignment within the curriculum. The interviews and observations the researcher completed for the case study will help to develop an understanding of why teachers often fail to fully implement a new

curriculum. This understanding may lead to administrative intervention and a plan to support fidelity in new curriculum implementations, thus leading to better vertical alignment and student success.

A wide variety of beneficiaries, including teachers, parents, administrators, and curriculum coordinators, may be interested in the findings of this study. Some of the benefits to administrators and teachers include identifying trends and patterns that show areas of concern and that may be addressed through training or PD. The data from the study may provide insight into curricular and instructional practices to allow administrators and teachers to target weak areas by offering opportunities for relevant training (Wiles & Bondi, 2014). Students may benefit from improved implementation of a vertically aligned curriculum, which will then allow them to be fully prepared from one grade to the next and will improve academic growth. The results of this study may be helpful to private schools that hope to increase vertical and horizontal alignment for instruction within the school's curriculum, thereby producing consistency and reducing learning gaps. If the problem of inconsistent teacher implementation of new curricula is remedied, then this study's contributions to social change may include increased student achievement and preparedness for the next grade levels. Preparedness is an important consideration, because gaps in learning often cause students to fall behind and struggle academically (Wiles & Bondi, 2014). Identifying barriers could improve curricular

implementation by providing the tools necessary to identify barriers as well as collaborative training opportunities for teachers.

Research Questions

The study's research questions (RQs) focus on understanding the reasons that either support or prevent teachers' implementation of a new phonics curriculum. These RQs were developed to understand why teachers have chosen not to implement the new curriculum with fidelity. The study will investigate the teachers' experiences and practices with their implementation of the new curriculum. The four RQs are as follows:

RQ1: What concerns, successes, and barriers have teachers reported during the implementation of the newly purchased phonics curriculum?

RQ 2: What resources do teachers believe are necessary to achieve a more successful implementation of the new phonics curriculum?

RQ 3: What types of staff support have administrators reported being included before and during implementation of the new phonics curriculum?

RQ4: What components of the phonics curriculum do teachers include or omit in their instructional practices?

Literature Review

To support the purpose of this qualitative case study, an analysis of the literature from current, peer-reviewed studies and articles was conducted to provide further

information on the topic. The related literature substantiates the problem and highlights perspectives for understanding the barriers to complete implementation of new curricula and how teachers view available systems for curriculum support.

The keywords used for locating peer-reviewed articles included: *CBAM*, *teacher instruction and alignment*, *curriculum implementation*, *curriculum fidelity*, *primary curriculum and instruction*, *vertical and horizontal alignment*, *teacher roles*, and *concerns*. These keywords were selected based on their connection to student preparedness for the next grade levels. The themes presented from the literature include: (a) the conceptual framework, (b) curricular implementation, (c) curricular alignment, (d) understanding teacher roles, and (e) administrative and professional support.

The Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for the proposed study is the CBAM (AIR, 2016). The concept or phenomenon grounding the study within the CBAM includes a resistance to change and perceived barriers to organizational change or innovation. The choice of this framework developed from the value placed on preparing educators for change through organized methods of data gathering and an action plan for support during the process.

Hall and Hord (2015) developed the CBAM to address concerns about the implementation of major changes in an organization. The history of the CBAM began in

1965 when the US Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA) passed, which called for educational reform (Hall, 2015). In developing the CBAM, Hall and Hord (1987; 2015) emphasized that educators should be helped to weather changes by proactively addressing their concerns and fears before the onset of any innovation, challenge, or change (such as curriculum implementation), which is a similar approach to that used in the current study.

The constructs of this research-based framework include innovation configuration, stages of concern, and levels of use. *Innovation configurations* provide administrators with detailed directions necessary for teachers to achieve optimal implementation strategies. This stage resembles a map or path that features the steps necessary to reach the goal of high-quality implementation of the new curriculum. The various *stages of concern* consist of a process that allows administrators to discover teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and values about a new curriculum. In the current study, a questionnaire, several interviews, and various open-ended statements gave teachers the opportunity to share their concerns and any perceived barriers connected to the implementation of the new curriculum. Finally, *levels of use* are the actions and monitoring components necessary to determine implementation success as well as the remediation of barriers based on data from the stages of concern.

Al-Shabatat (2014) and Derrington and Campbell (2015) used the CBAM for the assessment of teacher concerns for improving change integration. Using the Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoCQ) and subsequent interviews, Al-Shabatat (2014) determined which factors concerned teachers within the six stages. Staff within stage 0 (Awareness) expressed the desire to know more about e-learning, whereas many teachers in stage 2 (Information) felt uninformed and required more clarity on the procurement of resources to see such implementation success. Information revealed from both studies provided administrators the direction necessary to address concerns proactively.

For this study, the focus was narrowed to stages of concern (see Table 1) to determine what concerns existed in connection to new curricular implementation. The choice of this framework is appropriate because this study centers on the need to identify the reasons that teachers are prevented from successfully implementing the new phonics curriculum; this identification occurred through the constructs of the CBAM (AIR, 2016). Logical connections among the key elements for this framework emphasize the need to understand and identify the barriers, practices, and concerns teachers experience when implementing a new curriculum, all of which serve as the purpose of this study.

Table 1

Stages of Concern

Stages	*Concerns*

Stage 0	Awareness (unconcerned about the change)
Stage 1	Information (requires additional information)
Stage 2	Personal (personal effects of change on roles)
Stage 3	Management (focus on tasks for change)
Stage 4	Consequence (concerns about impact of change)
Stage 5	Collaboration (concerns for opportunities for group problem-solving)
Stage 6	Refocusing (seeking better ways to use the innovation)

Note: table adapted from information from two studies on the stages of concern (Al-Shabatat, 2014; Derrington and Campbell, 2015).

The CBAM relates to the qualitative study approach because of the in-depth data potentially generated, which is a key component for qualitative studies (Yin, 2014). The framework also connects to instrument development and data analysis procedures. The SoCQ, the interview questions, and the observation protocol align with the purpose of the study as well as its framework. The design of each instrument highlights the identification of concerns, barriers, and practices that may affect the implementation of an unfamiliar curriculum. The data analysis procedures, in line with the CBAM, focus on coded themes and patterns linked to the concerns and barriers teachers report.

Review of the Broader Problem

Curricular Implementation

Curriculum implementation refers to how teachers deliver instruction and assessment through the use of specified resources provided in a curriculum. Curriculum designs generally provide instructional suggestions, scripts, lesson plans, and assessment options related to a set of objectives. Such designs focus on consistency to help teachers successfully implement and maintain the curricular structure in order to meet various objectives (Wiles & Bondi, 2014). As noted earlier, Wiles and Bondi (2014) defined horizontal alignment as similar instructional practices and curriculum use between teachers in the same grade level, and vertical alignment as similarities in instructional practices and fidelity of curriculum implementation between the previous and following grade levels. Having curriculum alignment between the same grades and the preceding and following grades levels offers consistency in supporting learning objectives and expectations designed to promote student preparedness and growth (Tweedie & Kim, 2015). The literature in this section of the project study offers further insights into teachers' implementation and alignment beliefs.

Understanding the beliefs and concerns of teachers can provide insights into whether curriculum implementation will meet with success or failure. Algers and Silva-Fletcher (2015), McNeill et al. (2016), and Rakes and Dunn (2015) have all substantiated this notion by addressing the impact of teachers' beliefs about given objectives in science

curricula. McNeill et al. (2016) and Algers and Silva-Fletcher (2015) found that teachers' beliefs significantly influence their decisions for instruction. If beliefs play such a vital role, then taking time to learn about teachers' concerns, values, and perceptions should improve the implementation process by proactively addressing these areas (Al-Shabatat, 2014; Rakes & Dunn, 2015). One of McNeill et al.'s (2016) primary recommendations included preparing teachers through PD and collaborative opportunities; specifically, professional development should make sure that teachers fully understand the objectives and receive time to try the new curriculum with a class to support teacher learning. The need for teacher understanding and efficacy when implementing a new curriculum is apparent, especially considering the impact of these factors on student learning.

To ensure that curricular innovations are implemented with fidelity, instructional practices should be aligned to the specific learning goals provided in the curriculum (MacDonald, Barton, Baguley, & Hartwig, 2016; Phillips, Ingrole, Burris, & Tabulda, 2017; Vold, 2017). Curricular implementation encompasses different components, including the delivery of the curriculum through resources and instructional practices. To implement curricula with fidelity, instructional practices must align with the curriculum as well as support the individual needs of the students (Causarano, 2015). In addition, teacher preparedness for curriculum implementation plays a vital role (Battey et al., 2016;

McNeill et al., 2016). Battey et al. (2016) specifically found this to be true through a study evaluating the quality of math instruction in an urban school and the impact on student-teacher relationships. The findings from their study supported the need for teachers to know the curriculum well to strengthen instructional practices. Content instruction depends on the quality of the explanations the teachers offer (Battey et al., 2016; MacDonald et al., 2016). Battey et al. (2016) reinforce the need for quality instruction and commitment through their recommendation that PD should help teachers deliver the prescribed curriculum.

Mohyuddin and Khalil (2016) found a link between teacher content knowledge and student performance; this finding falls into the category of teachers having strong content knowledge and the confidence to teach the prescribed curriculum. Mohyuddin and Khalil identified the misconceptions of elementary mathematics students and found that teachers' insufficient knowledge of the curriculum hindered student understanding and progress (MacDonald et al., 2016; Phillips et al., 2017; Vold, 2017). Because a teacher's confidence in a subject has a direct impact on student performance, understanding the perceived barriers for fully implementing a curriculum is necessary (MacDonald et al., 2016; Phillips et al., 2017). Other authors who supported Mohyuddin and Khalil's (2016) assertions included MacDonald et al. (2016), who found that teachers navigated the challenges of curriculum change best if they proved resilient, flexible, and

willing to learn. Phillips et al. (2017) agreed that teacher beliefs, receptivity, and consistency directly affect preparedness, but as Vold (2017) points out, consideration must be given to ensure that the gaps between teacher training and curriculum expectations are bridged to best prepare teachers and support the traits necessary for successful implementation.

Sometimes the problem with implementation results from a problem with the curriculum itself (Caropreso, Haggerty, & Ladenheim, 2016; Marsteller & Bodzin, 2016). Bell (2015) analyzed the advantages and disadvantages of an English grammar curriculum—specifically, the guidance and directives provided to support teachers. Though Bell found the curriculum to be accurate overall, he found that the materials lacked pedagogical guidance to help teachers understand the lessons accurately enough to teach them. Bell pointed out another necessary component when considering the adoption of a new curriculum, but he reinforced how proper training played into implementing the curriculum with confidence (Battey et al., 2016; Caropreso et al., 2016; McNeill et al., 2016; Mohyuddin & Khalil, 2016). Bell found that a lack of training or guidance for curriculum hindered accurate delivery to students. Once again, this type of barrier has been found to influence student growth and learning (Causarano, 2015; Stupans, McGuran, & Babey, 2016).

Implementing curricula with confidence contributes to student gains, but researchers have found that stringent pacing expectations come with many new curricula (Baumi, 2015; Diaz, Nussbaum, Nopo, Maldonado-Carreno, & Corredor, 2015), which affects the implementation process. In some instances, such pacing causes conflicts among teachers between teaching quickly and covering the objectives as they are paced versus slowing down to ensure skills mastery (MacDonald et al., 2016; Phillips et al., 2017). Baumi (2015) found that novice teachers struggled with new curricular resources, particularly the pacing guides for meeting objectives. Robertson and Pfeiffer (2016) also support this idea; they found that certain pacing for students proved incompatible for their learning needs outside the required objectives. This situation means that teacher preparedness and student needs are not aligned with the pace of the chosen curriculum. Whereas many new teachers appreciate the guides and resources included in new curricula, study participants often feel that the pacing proves unreasonable as well as developmentally inappropriate (Baumi, 2015; Diaz et al., 2015; Robertson & Pfeiffer, 2016).

These data provide one example of why teachers often choose not to implement a curriculum as prescribed; they frequently cite the primary reason as the fact that the need to support student learning proves more important than covering the material. Baumi (2015) referred to this scenario as "principled resistance," because teachers' choice not to

follow the pacing guides is derived from their desire to do what they believe to be best for their students. Baumi (2015), like Bell (2015), has identified resistance as a barrier to teachers' experience when implementing a new curriculum. Teachers who are held to strict pacing guides, with the expectation that they will cover objectives specified in the curriculum, often struggle with teaching according to the students' needs or from following district guidelines for fear of administrative punishment (Baumi, 2015; McNeill et al., 2016).

Curricular alignment. Having curricular and instructional alignment between grade levels is necessary to support student achievement and to meet learning objectives; in turn, alignment is supported when teachers choose to implement the curriculum with fidelity (Ahmed Hersi et al., 2016; Battey et al., 2016; Early et al., 2014; Wiles & Bondi, 2014). Research on schools in various states has shown that a lack of fidelity with the curriculum hinders alignment between classes in the same grade and grade levels and creates instructional inconsistencies among teachers (Ahmed Hersi et al., 2016; Early et al., 2014). Early et al. (2014) and Wiles and Bondi (2014) showed low student performance and gaps in the knowledge necessary for the following grade level. Curriculum alignment refers to how well a curriculum measures objectives through instructional and assessment materials as well as the consistency of implementation between teachers. To build on prior studies of curricular implementation (Battey et al.,

2016; Baumi, 2015; Caropreso et al., 2016; Causarano, 2015; Marsteller & Bodzin, 2016; McNeill et al., 2016), curriculum alignment requires the consideration of meeting curricular goals.

Numerous researchers have identified the need to clarify which factors support or prevent alignment (Ahmed Hersi et al., 2016; Causarano, 2015; Early et al., 2014; Polikoff & Porter, 2014; Tweedie & Kim, 2015). Curriculum alignment has proven to be important for student success based on the values and needs expressed by students (Tweedie & Kim, 2015). Tweedie and Kim (2015) found various areas of misalignment, as perceived by students; their findings called attention to areas not covered in the curriculum that then created learning gaps. Certain aspects, such as social acculturation, proved to be overlooked by instructors and curriculum planners in the process of learning English, which was something students rated as vital to success in school (Tweedie & Kim, 2015). Such exclusions point to an area of misalignment that prevents students from fully connecting to and understanding the objectives of the curriculum.

Alignment includes the connection between instructional practices, assessment protocols, and student learning outcomes. The curriculum that Tweedie and Kim (2015) assessed showed several missing components and a lack of instructor knowledge for meeting those needs. A need exists to understand what barriers cause this gap and to gain

input into how best to support instructors in improving content knowledge for student support (Baumi, 2015; Tweedie & Kim, 2015).

Prior research has shown that breakdowns in alignment often occur because of barriers caused by teachers (Ahmed Hersi et al., 2016; Early et al., 2014). Ahmed Hersi et al. (2016) identified one hindrance to alignment from teachers who struggle with conflict during collaborative opportunities. The authors discovered that even though collaborative opportunities existed, skills for negotiating challenges or conflicts proved difficult for the participants (Ahmed Hersi et al., 2016). These findings provide two important points: (a) the concerns of teachers require evaluation before beginning collaborative co-teaching groups, and (b) this unpreparedness hinders alignment because of conflicting roles in student support.

While Ahmed Hersi et al. (2016) indicated teacher unpreparedness as a concern, Early et al. (2014) also found that accountability for alignment and instructional quality created questions about the barriers to effective curricular implementation. Early et al. argued that assessing teachers' instructional practices can provide credible data to help administrators understand where breakdowns occur in meeting student learning objectives. Early et al. found that teacher alignment was connected to predictors for instructional quality, similarly to what Tweedie and Kim (2015) found for the role of teachers in supporting alignment. Instructional quality stands out because of its

relationship to curriculum implementation and the need for alignment in that area. Having the ability to assess instructional quality helps narrow down the barriers to consistent curricular implementation, which in turn will support student preparedness (Ahmed Hersi et al., 2016; Causarano, 2015; Early et al., 2014; Polikoff & Porter, 2014; Tweedie & Kim, 2015). To relate these findings to prior research, determining any gaps in instructional practices allows for understanding why gaps occur and how the problem may be remedied through understanding any perceived barriers.

Causarano (2015) offered a different perspective on how teachers view curriculum alignment and preventative barriers; he argues that teachers' self-reflective practices improve curriculum alignment and instruction. Other researchers, however, have found that curricular and instructional quality and teacher preparedness influence alignment (Ahmed Hersi et al., 2016; Early et al., 2014; Tweedie & Kim, 2015). The need for self-reflection determines what aspects of a literacy curriculum (for example) align accordingly in order to prepare teachers with the tools necessary for preparing students. Causarano highlighted the need for alignment as well as increased understanding into the requirements for teachers to effectively implement curricula and align instructional practices. The promotion of self-reflective practices, according to Causarano, offered further insight into the barriers to the successful implementation of a new or revised curriculum. Causarano argued that because the effects of a lack of

alignment will potentially harm students, teachers' abilities to reflect on their practices should be supported.

In contrast to the literature that Polikoff and Porter (2014) presented in their study on the connections between alignment and implementation, the authors (2014) found no evidence of an association between teacher effectiveness and instructional alignment. These findings later supported Causarano's study (2015). Polikoff and Porter (2014) explored the possible connections between instructional alignment, pedagogical quality, and student learning and state-mandated benchmarks but found no connection. This surprising result created questions about how to effectively measure these categories and whether or not instructional alignment between standards and delivery of the curriculum are connected to pedagogical quality. Because no evidence supports a connection, the question also arises about how to effectively measure alignment as it is connected to the role of the teacher.

This question leads to the next section of the literature discussed below, which highlights previous research that has been conducted on the roles of teachers in curriculum implementation and alignment.

Teacher Roles

The roles of teachers remain instrumental in the success or failure of a curriculum (Buxton, et al., 2015; Loflin, 2016). In many cases, researchers have supported the need

to thoroughly understand teachers' roles and concerns during the implementation of a new curriculum (Hall & Hord, 2015). Of the many roles defined in the literature, teacher fidelity stands out as being important but also for being inconsistent among teachers (Buxton et al., 2015; Yurdakul, 2015). This section of the project study reviews the literature on teacher fidelity while teachers are implementing a curriculum and the concerns they experience during the implementation process.

Similarly to Thorn and Brasche's study (2015), Jess, Carse, and Keay (2016) found the need to prepare and train teachers to meet the objectives of a curriculum; specifically, the authors' focus was on the curriculum-development process and the role of the educator. Jess et al. (2016) argued that teachers need the capacity to design developmentally appropriate learning tasks that are aligned to curricular expectations. The focus of training and professional development requires an emphasis on teaching how best to interpret the curriculum so that students' needs will be aligned with appropriate instructional practices (Jess et al., 2016). One way to support this situation, as Jess et al. (2016) recommend, includes allowing teachers primary involvement in curriculum development and the process of alignment as it pertains to knowing student needs, and then instructing accordingly. The authors found that understanding how teachers perceive their roles in curriculum development and implementation provides insight into teachers' concerns about implementing a new curriculum (Jess et al., 2016).

Curriculum fidelity. When considering the roles that teachers take on in the execution of an innovation, it is necessary to fully understand teachers' concerns within specific areas of change (Lochner et al., 2015). One of the leading roles of the teacher includes delivering a curriculum with fidelity, which means implementing the curriculum faithfully and keeping in step with its purpose and design. Fidelity and the trust association for curricular implementation can highlight teacher attitudes toward a curriculum. Castro Superfine et al. (2015) offer insight into this problem with their study examining alignment between teacher implementation and the intended design of the curriculum. In other words, the study focused on whether teachers implemented the written curriculum with fidelity; the analysis also emphasized the vital role teachers play in successful new-curriculum implementation (Budak, 2015; Castro Superfine et al., 2015). Some curricula remove the opportunities for decision-making in teacher instruction, which ignores or minimizes teachers' skills, strengths, and experience (Budak, 2015). Considering the vital role teachers play, determining what exactly has caused a lack of fidelity could help in determining if the curriculum itself is the problem (Hondrich, Hertel, Adl-Aminik, & Klieme, 2016). Castro Superfine et al. (2015) maintain that teachers may be more effective if they are given the freedom to adapt and modify a curriculum when warranted, yet the instructional support a given curriculum

offers often supports student engagement within the specific curricular tasks the curriculum outlines.

Supporting Castro Superfine et al.'s (2015) conclusions, Cobanoglu and Capa-Aydin (2015) reported similar results emphasizing teacher roles. The researchers questioned the effect of teachers' beliefs for self-efficacy in relation to what extent curriculum implementation occurs with fidelity. In their study, teachers' beliefs served as the foundation for teaching, and the authors found that self-efficacy was the most vital component in teacher effectiveness (Cobanoglu & Capa-Aydin, 2015).

Based on teacher beliefs, teachers often choose to modify and adapt a curriculum to align with educational philosophies (Bingham, Culatta, & Hall-Kenyon, 2016; Scheeler, Budin, & Markelz, 2016). Teachers have been proven to implement curricula with fidelity more often when their beliefs are aligned with curricular objectives and philosophies. For example, Cobanoglu and Capa-Aydin's study (2015) highlighted not only the importance of teachers' roles but also the concerns and beliefs they invested into the implementation and delivery of a curriculum. Teacher beliefs about educational practices influence the actions that occur in the classroom, which can offer possible reasons for a lack of fidelity (Budak, 2015; Castro Superfine et al., 2015; Cobanoglu & Capa-Aydin, 2015). The role of fidelity in accurately determining if a curriculum has achieved its intended purpose calls attention to another reason that teachers' roles require

consideration (Wainwright, Goodway, Whitehead, Williams, & Kirk, 2016). When a curriculum is implemented with fidelity, researchers can achieve accurate insights into whether the curriculum has met its intended objectives, which can then provide a better measure of student performance (Budak, 2015; Castro Superfine et al., 2015; Cobanoglu & Capa-Aydin, 2015; Wainwright et al., 2016).

The role of teacher fidelity in curricular implementation played a major part in Hondrich et al.'s (2016) research. The authors found that teachers' beliefs, concerns, attitudes, and prior experiences all influenced fidelity in implementation. One key finding of their study was that teachers needed to feel prepared and in possession of the necessary resources for complete curriculum implementation. Hondrich et al. (2016) recommend that teachers receive adequate professional development, training, and resources to improve fidelity. Again, within the literature, this finding shows the benefits of understanding teachers' perceived barriers and concerns in order to avoid a lack of fidelity in curriculum implementation (Herrington, Bancroft, Edwards, & Schairer, 2016).

Because teacher fidelity influences student learning and the successful implementation of a curriculum, assessing fidelity requires research. Piasta, Justice, McGinty, Mashburn, and Slocum (2015) have identified four dimensions for assessing fidelity: (a) adherence, (b) exposure, (c) quality of program delivery, and (d) participant responsiveness. Fidelity is multidimensional because a curriculum generally consists of

many components necessary for full implementation; teachers often choose specific aspects of a curriculum to implement while disregarding others based on personal variables such as beliefs, concerns, or contradictions in philosophy (Budak, 2015; Hondrich et al., 2016; Piasta et al., 2015). Piasta et al. determined that most teachers who choose to implement with high fidelity experience gains in student literacy skills. This data supports the need to prepare and train teachers accordingly in order to understand the impact that fidelity has on students (Piasta et al., 2015).

When studies consider fidelity, questions often arise about the reasons that teachers choose not to implement a curriculum as prescribed. In Brighton, Moon, and Huang's study (2015), teachers reported that administrators primarily emphasized fidelity to the program, even though the program did not meet the needs of advanced readers. Teachers who strayed from the curriculum claimed to have done so to meet the academic needs of their students. In this instance, fidelity to the reading curriculum created a lack of challenge and rigor for the more advanced students; this situation then created a learning plateau for those students (Brighton et al., 2015).

Meeting the needs of all students is often a priority for administrators, while teachers often claim that exercising complete fidelity to a curriculum inhibits students' learning growth (Brighton et al., 2015; Yurdakul, 2015). This brings into question whether the curriculum has served as the best option for students. Teachers' experience,

ability, and knowledge of their students will determine whether they will choose to implement a curriculum with fidelity (Brighton et al., 2015; Hondrich et al., 2016; Loflin, 2016).

Although little evidence of the barriers teachers experience is evident in the literature, Gallagher, Courtright, and Robinson (2015) expressed a need for further research because of the difficulties in determining how fidelity plays a part in student performance. Buxton et al. (2015) and Gallagher et al. (2015) both reiterated the importance of ongoing PD and training for the implementation of complex curricula; without either of these factors, no standard for fidelity exists.

Curricular fidelity is also strongly connected to teachers' self-assessment abilities. Gallagher et al. (2015) found that implementing teacher training to help with their self-analysis processes was crucial to determining the effectiveness of instructional practices. When teachers had access to the proper supports and resource materials, their fidelity increased, which then provided better student support. Cervetti, Kulikowich, and Bravo's (2015) research shows a strong connection between teacher strategies and student learning. One of their primary recommendations is to ensure that teachers have the strategies, training, and support they need.

At times, teachers opt to revise a curriculum to better fulfill their students' learning needs (Hunt, Valentine, Bryant, Pfannenstiel, & Bryant, 2016). Teachers

generally choose to do this based on their students' needs, and they then alter instructional strategies, materials, and tasks to support student learning (Diaz et al., 2015; Robertson & Pfeiffer, 2016). Teachers often opt to add visuals, hands-on activities, and prompting for students in order to make real-life connections and to achieve a better understanding of the concepts involved (Hunt et al., 2016). Hunt et al. (2016) and Causarano (2015) have argued that teachers usually make curricular alterations with their students' best interests at heart and often feel that curricula require adjustments if they are to meet their students' cognitive levels.

Teacher Concerns

Teacher concerns play a part in the implementation of new curricula, because their concerns sometimes direct the choices teachers make when choosing to add or omit items from the curriculum (Bell, 2015; Causarano, 2015). The CBAM fits into determining what types of concerns teachers have and how to address these concerns to reduce barriers (Welsh & Schaffer, 2015). Lambert et al. (2014) explored implementation experiences and gained an understanding of the barriers teachers perceive when implementing a new curriculum. The emerging themes for potential barriers showed that (1) some teachers adapted better than others for student-centered curricula, (2) teachers liked to have content available but were unable to finish the curriculum within a school year, (3) teachers required resources and tools to be successful, (4)

teachers showed concern about collaboration and professional development opportunities, and (5) the implementation process helped teachers to refocus (Lambert et al., 2014). These themes appear consistent with other studies that have been presented in support of the CBAM for understanding the concerns of teachers (Overbaugh, Lu, & Diacopoulos, 2015; Welsh & Schaffer, 2015).

Narrowing down specific concerns for teachers who are implementing a new innovation often serves to direct decisions about how best to support the teachers. Donovan, Green, and Mason (2014), for example, documented the different ways in which twenty-first-century skills exist in classrooms using the CBAM innovation configuration (IC). In their study, an IC map consisted of a summary outlining various methods in which the key aspects of an innovation had become operational (Donovan et al., 2014). One of the leading concerns among the teachers included a lack of opportunities for collaboration and sharing among peers in support of the change. The identification of this specific concern highlights a value that teachers often place on collaboration (Lambert, McCarthy, Fitchett, Lineback, & Reiser, 2015). Determining these concerns in advance could potentially provide the administration with direction for addressing concerns before the onset of the implementation of a change (Derrington & Campbell, 2015). Being able to narrow down specific concerns offers a chance to fine-

tune PD opportunities for reducing anxieties at the onset of the change (Dailey & Robinson, 2016; Lambert et al., 2015).

In some situations, the use of the CBAM has shown concerns across more than one stage (Kwok, 2014). Kwok (2014) researched educator's concerns about the initiation of a liberal studies curriculum for secondary students in Hong Kong. The data showed an intense level of concern visible across all stages of concern, as discussed above. The teachers showed signs of high levels of stress and anxiety in each stage. In general, when teachers experience a high rate of concern, researchers often recommend singling out PD that emphasizes peer collaboration (Al-Shabatat, 2014; Derrington & Campbell, 2015; Kayaduman & Delialioğlu, 2016).

What emerges from much of the literature is the need to understand the challenges brought on by change and the need to mitigate frustration and anxiety through these processes (Gautam, Lowery, Mays, & Durant, 2016). Understanding these aspects as contributors to resistance to change could help to better support teachers and improve student experiences (Paulsen, Anderson, & Tweeten, 2015). As the current literature consistently points out, identifying teacher concerns early, before the expected implementation, will increase the chance for the curriculum to be implemented with efficacy and fidelity (Doyle, Zhang, & Mattatall, 2015).

The use of the CBAM in educational settings has proven beneficial for determining the concerns of teachers who must adopt learning management systems. In Lochner et al.'s study (2015), the stages of concern again highlighted areas where teachers felt the most anxiety from aspects that may have prevented the successful adoption and execution of the new innovation. Because the CBAM serves as a process for change, the stages in the SoCQ show pressing concerns that alert administrators to the greatest areas of need. Kayaduman and Delialioğlu (2016) also used the SoCQ to understand the concerns experienced by English language pre-service teachers as well as the changes that occur throughout the stages. Fourteen pre-service teachers participated over a three-week period in which the focus was on technology integration through the use of Wiki. Through a questionnaire, Kayaduman and Delialioğlu (2016) found that many pre-service teachers experienced the same common self-doubt, even with the provision of support and of necessary tools. These findings support the need to better understand any concerns that people should troubleshoot during the proposed change. For that particular study, the recommendation based on the SoCQ results highlighted the need for the design and development of appropriate guidance for pre-service teachers (Kayaduman and Delialioğlu, 2016).

If we consider the literature discussed in this section, many concerns and roles point to the need for administrative support and relevant PD for teachers. The next

section of the literature review highlights research connected to administrative and professional support—specifically administrative influence, administrative roles, and professional development.

Administrative and Professional Support

Researchers have identified administrative and professional support as being necessary for teacher success and the implementation of new initiatives (Bakir, Devers, & Hug; 2016; Bautista, Ng, Múñez, & Bull, 2016). Areas of support fall into different categories, but administrative influence, related administrative roles, and professional development opportunities are prioritized within the literature, thus supporting the need to highlight these areas for the successful implementation of a new curriculum (Cetin, 2016; Whitenack & Venkatsubramanyan, 2016).

Recent studies have shown that administrative support and professional development opportunities influence whether or not teachers feel supported and comfortable with new curricular implementations (Mukan, Kravets, & Khamulyak, 2016; Tondeur, Forkosh-Baruch, Prestridge, Albion, & Edirisinghe, 2016). In accordance with the CBAM, the difficulty surrounding a new change or innovation potentially increases concerns and fears among staff members. An effective curricular implementation will also rely on the attitudes of the administration and teachers (Thorn & Brasche, 2015). One method that has been distinguished through the CBAM literature includes the need

for administrative and professional support (Welsh & Schaffer, 2015). Support is available through different forms of professional development and professional learning communities (PLCs), which are designed to address any concerns that might hinder the successful implementation of a change but these factors are highly dependent on the influence and roles of the administrators (Hall, 2015).

Administrative influence. Over the years, many studies have determined the contributors to success and failure for new initiatives—specifically new-curriculum implementation—and have found that the administration's attitudes and perspectives influence teacher perceptions (Derrington & Campbell, 2015; Yoon, 2016; Urich, 2016). An administrator who presents a negative attitude toward the initiative may cloud the perspectives of the teachers and could hinder the onset of implementation (Brown, 2016). Derrington and Campbell (2015) described principals' perceptions and concerns for the implementation of policies for new teacher evaluation practices; their study, which focused on understanding which types of support the principals who implement this change desire the most, found that principals expressed a lack of time as their primary frustration. The principals' dominant concern was related to time constraints. The study's primary finding was that concerns that failed to be addressed early in the process could potentially derail the change and hinder any possible results (Derrington & Campbell, 2015; Hall, 2015).

A principal's influence during an innovation ties directly to trust building and the foundations for fostering mutual respect (Park & Ham, 2016; Torres, 2016; Yoon, 2016). Mehdinezhad and Mansouri (2016) corroborated this notion by investigating teachers' self-efficacy and principals' leadership traits. A significant relationship was proven to exist between these two areas. A principal's positive influence and support of teachers' intellectual growth stood out as key areas in support of teacher efficacy. Self-efficacy is important for principals to positively influence and encourage teachers while the teachers are experiencing changes that require action (Mehdinezhad & Mansouri, 2016; Urich, 2016). Similarly to research presented by Mehdinezhad and Mansouri (2016), Brown (2016) found trust building to be vital, in addition to principals' attitudes about setting visions and goals for establishing a positive culture that is conducive to change. Establishing a shared vision, empowering staff, and building healthy relationships all allow principals to better understand teachers' strengths and weaknesses, which then establishes trust and creates a positive influence over the staff (Brown, 2016; Torres, 2016).

Administrative roles. Several researchers (Torres, 2016; Yoon, 2016; Urich, 2016), in considering the outcomes of administrative influence on teachers, have turned their attention to the specific roles of the administration. The current literature has identified various administrator roles, including facilitating supportive partnerships,

researching and providing teachers with relevant PD opportunities, and actively maintaining a presence throughout a change (Baker-Gardner, 2016; Ng, Nguyen, Wong, & Choy, 2015). Principals' roles fall into these categories and play a significant part in the satisfaction of staff as well as the implementation of new curricula. Enacted roles include teacher support through consideration, respect, and the provision of career goals (Ng et al., 2015). As Baker-Gardner (2016) has pointed out, however, the other roles highlight additional responsibilities, such as encouraging collaboration, providing support for student behavioral or academic concerns, and developing motivated teachers for improved student performance.

But principals' roles go beyond support of the teachers and extend into areas such as budgeting, test security, curriculum implementation/monitoring, and stakeholder communication; this last item entails fostering relationships with parents and community members (Stringer & Hourani, 2016; Urich, 2016). Many recent studies, when considering the wide spectrum of roles expected of administrators, have called for leadership styles that will encourage trust among teachers but will also encourage empowerment through inclusion in decision-making, community involvement, student academic intervention, and even budgetary decisions (Torres, 2016). Some studies have found that when principals show trust and extend leadership opportunities to teachers,

teacher effectiveness and student achievement both increase (Hult, Lundstrom, & Edstrom, 2016; Stringer & Hourani, 2016).

One last area connected to principals' roles encompasses the need for effective organizational skills, follow-through with initiatives, and the protection of teachers from outside sources that could potentially threaten teacher workload or the general climate of the school (Hult et al., 2016; Leaf & Odhiambo, 2017). These areas again demonstrate trust building as a primary role for administrators who wish to provide teachers with opportunities for growth and motivation, both of which are necessary for effective goal achievement. Providing teachers with essential feedback also falls into an administrative role required for trust building and for providing the necessary direction for instructional improvement (Leaf & Odhiambo, 2017).

Whereas principal roles generally center on these areas, most studies mention the need for organized and relevant PD. The next section of this project study explores the impact of PD on teacher growth, motivation, competence, and comfort levels when connected to administrative and professional support.

Professional development. PD offerings are key for supporting teachers in new initiatives (Rezzonico, et al., 2015; Smit & du Toit, 2016). One benefit of PD includes teachers' increased comfort and skill levels for implementing new curricula. Relevant and effective PD has been found to promote confidence and a greater understanding of

objectives (Lia, 2016). Having time and conducting research to develop meaningful PD that will consider the needs, concerns, and experiences of the teacher will be valuable and likely to influence positive growth for the teacher (Lia, 2016; Wabule, 2016). Coldwell (2017) and Attard (2017) have both found a connection between teacher confidence and PD. Coldwell (2017) found that PD increased skills knowledge, which enabled teachers' confidence in specific content areas; this in turn led to increased job satisfaction and professional motivation. A vital point in PD effectiveness includes the influencing factors and concerns that could potentially direct the outcomes of the PD. PD quality, personal motivation, organizational support, and government mandates all fall under areas for teachers' concerns and barriers to implementing a curriculum with fidelity. These factors all influence how teachers respond to PD (Coldwell, 2017).

Several studies have found that teacher efficacy stands out as an area supported by effective and relevant PD (Margolis, Durbin, & Doring, 2017; Mukan et al., 2016). Drape, Lopez, and Radford (2016) assessed teacher efficacy in integrating new curriculum standards into content areas in classroom teaching. The authors found efficacy to be a primary factor in a teacher's competency level when integrating different content areas into an agriculture curriculum. They recommended ongoing and relevant PD to meet the needs of midcareer teachers. Maintaining teacher confidence and

reducing anxiety through deliberate choices in PD content both help to support teachers through curriculum changes (Drape et al., 2016; Mukan et al., 2016).

Drape et al. (2016) highlighted the need for relevant PD, whereas Kyndt, Gijbels, Grosemans, and Donche (2016) explored different types of PD and their related effects on teachers. Kyndt et al. (2016) offer further insight into teachers' attitudes and beliefs as well as the concerns they experience from curriculum implementation through informal learning for professional growth. Teacher collaboration, team planning, or even mentoring may all be classified as informal learning opportunities. Informal learning, though not organized (as formal PD is), allows teachers to work together to reduce the feelings of isolation they often experience (Kyndt et al., 2016). Perhaps most important, as Kyndt et al. (2016) note, is that experience and age do not appear to affect new learning as much as personal attitude does. Understanding the differences in attitudes could help to break down the barriers to full curricular implementation. What this situation shows is that PD does not always need to be formal; most teachers hope that PD will be relevant to their content areas and will allow them to collaborate and problem-solve.

As the literature has pointed out, understanding teacher concerns helps administrators when choosing the PD that will be most relevant to teachers (Bakir et al., 2016; Speering; 2016). Bautista et al. (2016) substantiated this notion through a study in

which they investigated teacher beliefs, priorities, and PD needs when implementing a curriculum. Bautista et al. (2016) and Whitenack and Venkatsubramanyan (2016) both found that teachers commonly showed eagerness for opportunities to strengthen their expertise in curriculum areas, and they needed PD to do so. Teachers' beliefs also influence their views of the curriculum. For example, if teachers perceive themselves as being unprepared or unfamiliar with a curriculum, then these beliefs will influence how they respond to and teach the curriculum (Bautista et al., 2016). Bautista et al. (2016) recommend that PD should require alignment with teachers' learning demands to achieve optimal effectiveness.

Professional development plays a part in reducing anxiety when implementing a new curriculum (Hall, 2015). Levi-Keren and Patkin (2016) also found this to be true when using the SoCQ from the CBAM to assess teachers' perceptions of a mathematics curriculum during PD. Cetin (2016) found similar conclusions as Bautista et al. (2016) regarding the benefits of PD. Cetin (2016) included an increased understanding of science teachers' level of use for technology integration and the effect of PD sessions designed to improve comfort and proficiency. The teachers initially showed little knowledge on the subject area and a lack of training and skills necessary for successful integration. Cetin (2016) reported that following the PD sessions for technology, 58.5% of the teachers developed increased confidence and positive outlooks about the

integration process. Cetin's study (2016) provides a concrete example of how PD improves teacher proficiency as well as alleviates concerns through the practical application of the curriculum. Teachers become more likely to implement curricula with fidelity when they feel well prepared through PD and develop the knowledge and awareness required for effective implementation (Cetin, 2016).

Supporting the need for PD and for understanding the concerns connected to a new curriculum implementation, Bandura's (1977) social learning theory emphasizes the importance of monitoring and modeling behaviors, attitudes, and emotional responses for a desired result. Bandura's (1977) theory connects to the CBAM because of the value it places on understanding emotional responses identified through the stages of concern. The importance of PD and the effect on teachers both align with the theory by directing attention to proper training for increased success in accurate curricular implementation.

Implications

A revealing implication of the present research includes the contribution of new information on how the perceived barriers and concerns inhibit fidelity when teachers implement a curriculum. The primary intent of this research is to examine and identify the perceived barriers to providing support for administrators and teachers through the initiation of a change in curriculum. Ideally, the results of this study will help

administrators in addressing teacher concerns to better support alignment, fidelity, and student preparedness for the next grade levels.

The anticipated findings from the interview data include the identification of patterns, trends, and factors related to understanding the perceived barriers teachers experience during the implementation of a new curriculum. Another implication could include contradictory perceptions of concerns and barriers presented between teachers and administrators. Feasible project directions grounded on the anticipated results include PD and training for addressing concerns as well as increasing knowledge and comfort about the curriculum (Cetin, 2016; Drape et al., 2016; Kyndt et al., 2016; Lia, 2016). Additional training on the CBAM, as well as understanding various concerns, could also result from the study (Al-Shabatat, 2014; Derrington & Campbell, 2015; Hall, 2015). Specifically, (a) training on the specific curriculum in question, (b) administration and teacher-leader observations to monitor progress, and (c) collaborative opportunities through PLCs with a provided framework will all serve as possible project directions and solutions, although the study's findings will direct further development of the project.

Key findings from the literature highlight the importance of fidelity when implementing curricula because of the direct effect of fidelity on student preparedness. Teacher confidence and preparedness play a significant part in how students receive information and perform academically. Other key findings that are directly related to

teacher efficacy with a curriculum include the vital necessity of providing quality PD and training for a specific curriculum. Whereas a teacher's role includes implementing curricula with fidelity, an administrator's role encompasses the need for accountability through the close monitoring of teachers. The literature has noted the importance that an administrator's attitude and involvement play in whether teachers are prepared and committed to faithful curricular implementation.

Curriculum alignment has proven to be another key finding in connection to curriculum fidelity: when a curriculum falls out of alignment, the effects will become apparent in student preparedness for the following grade levels. What remains unknown (but will be addressed by the proposed research) is which concerns and barriers teachers have reported that have so far prevented their faithful implementation of the new phonics curriculum at SPS.

Summary

This section of the project study has outlined the key points associated with the proposed study, including the identification of the local problem, the study's rationale and intended purpose, a review of the relevant literature, and a discussion of the study's implications. Each section has provided details on the direction of the study and the need for further research on this topic.

The local problem, as identified by the SPS principal (personal communication, May 23, 2016), is a lack of teacher fidelity in the application of an unfamiliar phonics curriculum. The gaps in practice are that (a) teachers are not implementing the curriculum faithfully, (b) which concerns teachers report when implementing the new curriculum remain unknown, and (c) the teachers lack offerings of professional development or classroom observations to remedy the problem (SPS principal, personal communication, May 23, 2016).

This section has also discussed the study's purpose, which includes the investigation of teachers' experiences with implementing the new curriculum to identify the perceived barriers and to understand which concerns are preventing full implementation. This information will be used to design training and PD relevant to the needs of the teachers to promote curricular fidelity (Budak, 2015; Castro Superfine et al., 2015; Lochner et al., 2015). The current literature has shown the importance of teacher and administrator roles for curriculum implementation and fidelity as well as the vital importance of PD and collaborative opportunities (Bakir et al., 2016; Buxton et al., 2015; Hondrich et al., 2016; McNeill et al., 2016; Torres, 2016). These factors have all proven necessary for the successful integration of new initiatives (Attard, 2017; Rezzonico et al., 2015; Smit & du Toit, 2016).

The following section of the project study focuses on the methodology; the section also provides further information on the study's qualitative design and approach, the study participants, the data collection and analysis, and study limitations. Section 2 then presents an explanation and rationale for the research design and the choices that were made for the sample size and data collection methods. Data analysis procedures and related interpretations of the data will also be discussed in Section 2.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

Choosing the methodology for a research study requires alignment with the problem, purpose, research questions (RQs), and methodology of the proposed study (Creswell, 2014; Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010). In reflecting on these components, proper alignment requires the analysis of different methods to possibly address the problem and the RQs. For the present study, the method was narrowed down based on relevancy after a review was conducted of various possibilities provided by Creswell (2014) to outline the traits of potential methodology options.

Qualitative Research Design

Creswell (2014) defined qualitative research as the need to explore a key concept, or central phenomenon, surrounding a particular problem. Developing an enhanced insight of this central phenomenon requires the use of specific characteristics for achieving a goal. Exploring the problem and using studies from the literature for justification serve as a primary characteristic, followed by a broadly stated purpose and general RQs designed to elicit participants' personal experiences (Creswell, 2014). Creswell described the next step as collection of data through interviews and observations with a small group of participants to obtain detailed insights. Data analysis, as Creswell noted, requires a description of patterns and themes using text analysis and the

interpretation of a broader meaning of the results. A final characteristic encompasses a written report to outline the findings, emerging themes, and evaluation recommendations.

Creswell (2014) described reflexivity as an important characteristic that requires reflection on personal biases, values, and assumptions as well as integration into the research. Having this type of reflection present in the research provides readers with a clear basis for the research and the personal reflections of the researcher (Creswell, 2014).

Qualitative Approaches

The qualitative design selected for this research study was directly derived from the need to provide an in-depth inquiry into a specific problem; this design supported the purpose of this study. A quantitative design was not used because the characteristics of such a study did not align with the goal, purpose, or RQs of the proposed study. Quantitative characteristics include the examination of possible relationships between variables, which receive representation through numeric data collection (Creswell, 2014). Generalizability was not a goal of this study, which instead sought a rich, descriptive examination of the specific perceptions that influence teacher behavior. Qualitative designs employ inductive techniques of reasoning, with the expectations that various viewpoints will materialize from analysis (Yazan, 2015; Yin, 2014). In seeking to find the best approach within the qualitative realm, Creswell provided a description of the

different approaches relevant to qualitative studies—grounded theory, phenomenology, ethnography, and case studies—all of which are discussed below. In the case of the present study, each approach was considered before the final selection was made. The criteria for the chosen approach are directly connected to the purpose and problem of this study. For this research, the choice of a case study approach proved to be the best fit, based on various case study design criteria (Yin, 2014).

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory designs use inductive approaches, grounded in data, to generate new theories (Charmaz, 2014; Creswell, 2014). Common methods used for grounded theory include participant observations and interviews and the aggregation of texts and artifacts. With the data derived from these methods, researchers utilize a constant-comparative method to analyze and develop a theory based on their findings (Charmaz, 2014). The current study initially tended toward grounded theory because of similar data collection techniques, but this approach was eventually found to be untenable; the development of a new theory proved unfeasible, because the purpose of grounded theory is to identify existing concerns.

Phenomenology

Phenomenology is an approach that focuses on what van Manen (2017) refers to as a lived experience. This approach concentrates on the study of a person's conscious

experience related to a specific incident or occurrence; the role of the researcher includes seeking to understand how people interpret these life experiences through different emotions, memories, and views (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; van Manen, 2017; Smith, 2013). Phenomenology did not fit the proposed study because its purpose is to identify patterns and trends through the identification of perceived barriers. Phenomenology would have been less effective for the current study, because the goal of phenomenology does not include focusing on making meaning from one person's point of view of a specific situation.

Ethnography

Ethnographers examine cultures' shared behaviors and beliefs in order to better understand how people live, think, and feel, all of which requires time in the field for a thorough analysis (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2014). According to Creswell (2014) and Yin (2014), ethnography requires the exploration of a culture within a natural setting. The present study has examined teacher perceptions. Ethnography would not have been a particularly effective approach, because the study has not addressed cultural traits exclusive to the population. The participants in this study took part in interviews and were observed, but these interviews and observations took place in a work setting versus a natural setting.

Case Studies

Case studies use detailed, in-depth analyses of bounded systems through different data collection methods (Creswell, 2014). Observational case studies examine parts of an organization, with the objective of comprehending a phenomenon and producing data to substantiate any conclusions (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010; Yin, 2014). The use of a case study approach made sense for the present study, because its goal pertains to understanding people based on a group's common patterns or beliefs that potentially develop over a span of time. This approach fit into understanding the barriers to full implementation of the school's curriculum (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2014).

This study has used a qualitative research design—specifically, an instrumental case study. Qualitative research seeks to clarify and explain viewpoints and experiences on a given phenomenon (Yin, 2014). Instrumental case studies render data that provides insight into a specific issue, potentially reworking existing generalizations (Yin, 2014). This study has investigated the concerns and perceived reasons that prevent or support teachers' full implementation of a new curriculum to gain insight into how teachers are (or are not) using the new curricular and instructional resources in support of vertical alignment. This instrumental case study has highlighted teachers' perceptions and practices through in-depth interviews and analyses (Atkins & Wallace, 2012; Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2014). Because this study has focused on understanding the reasons and

perceived barriers that teachers experience during the implementation of a new curriculum, a case study design fit the study's objectives best. The instrumental case study approach to this study's problem was appropriate because of the need to identify concerns and barriers within a bounded system to improve curricular fidelity.

Participants

The participants selected for this study include teachers and administrators directly affected by the defined problem of the study. A total of 14 teachers teach phonics at the site, and four administrators oversee school faculty and operations (see Table 2). The sample size for this study is 10 (N = 10). The originally proposed sample for the interviews (N = 10) includes eight teachers and two administrators. The deliberate selection of the sample size arose from the small school size and the desire to protect participant privacy and identity (Creswell, 2014). This sample includes two teachers each from Grades K, 1, 2, and 3. These teachers interact most frequently with the curriculum. According to Creswell (2014) and Merriam and Tisdell (2016), this sample size allows for more in-depth data without an excessive sample that would diminish the authenticity of the responses.

The inclusion criteria for the participants and timeframes include the following standards necessary for participation in the study, as recommend by Creswell (2014) and Yin (2014): (a) participants must be 21 years or older, (b) participants must teach phonics

(the subject area being studied), (c) participants must teach in grades K–3, and (d) participants must be available for two 30-minute classroom observations (60 minutes total) and one 60-minute interview. Data from the interviews and field notes from observations was analyzed using a coding system to highlight and identify similar/dissimilar themes among the participant data for reported concerns and observed instructional practices related to the phonics curriculum.

Setting

Southwest Private School (SPS, a pseudonym) is a private preparatory school in southeast Texas. SPS has an approximate enrollment of 300 pre-K–12 students. A total of 25 teachers teach at this site. Eight teachers participated in the study and were selected based on previously determined criteria. The school consists of the lower school campus (pre-K–6) and the upper school campus (7th–12th grades).

Gaining Access and Ethical Considerations

The procedure for gaining access to participants required obtaining written permission from the head of school. In order to receive permission, an explanation of the research study and objectives, including the requirements for participants, was provided (Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). After receiving permission from the head of school and receiving institutional review board (IRB) approval, I attended the weekly institute meetings for faculty. During that time, an explanation was provided of the

research study objectives as related to teacher perceptions of concerns and barriers they experience during implementation of a new curriculum. After providing the basis for the study, the researcher issued a request for participation on a voluntary basis. If more than the required number of participants volunteered, then participants were randomly selected from this group. Because administrators were included in the study, both administrators and teachers were present at the institute meetings.

After participant selection, prestudy meetings were held with each participant to establish a researcher-participant working relationship. This time was designated for asking questions and addressing any concerns. The voluntary nature of participation was emphasized, and each participant received a consent form (Yin, 2014). After signatures were obtained, a review of the nature of the study and the protocol for interviews took place individually. Participants were made aware of note taking and audio recording of the 60-minute semi-structured interviews (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2014) as well as the two 30-minute observations of the teachers, although they were told that they could discontinue participation at any point (Creswell, 2014).

Various measures to protect participants' rights, such as confidentiality, informed consent, and protection from harm, were implemented for this study. The measures included gaining approval from the Walden University IRB and providing all participants with a detailed description of the study to address the issue of informed consent. Various

steps outlined participant roles and expectations while providing assurance that the observance of ethical considerations would protect their confidentiality through the absence of any personal identifiers (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2014). Protection from harm and equitable treatment were emphasized to foster trust and to support the researcher-participant relationship (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2014).

Table 2

Teacher Experience and Content Area

Participants	*Years of Experience*	*Grade Level*	*Content Area*
A	33	1st	Self-contained
B	5	Kindergarten	Self-contained
C	30	Kindergarten	Self-contained
D	6	1st	Self-contained
E	20	1st	Self-contained
F	3	2nd	Self-contained
G	8	2nd	Self-contained
H	12	3rd	Language Arts
I	1	N/A	Administrator
J	1	N/A	Administrator

Data Collection

According to Yin (2014), an effective case study requires more than one source of evidence for the substantiation of qualitative data. In line with Yin's (2014) recommendations, the proposed case study included three modes of data collection: the

Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoCQ), 60-minute semistructured interviews, and 60-minute classroom observations. The SoCQ calls attention to the concerns teachers report and experience when implementing a new curriculum. Recorded semistructured interviews (see Appendices B and C) addressed specific questions related to the perceived barriers participants experience during curriculum implementation. Classroom observations (see Appendix D) provided insight into which aspects of the curriculum were (or were not) being implemented with fidelity.

Creswell (2014) and Yin (2014) recommend the 60-minute timeframe for interviews to allow time for audio recording, directions, and asking probing questions as well as to maintain clarity and gain rich responses. Yin (2014) discusses shorter case study interviews as a viable option when focused on a specific area and when following a protocol. Because the focus of the present study was limited to phonics instruction, Yin's (2014) recommended 60-minute timeframe was found to be suitable. The timeframe chosen for observations was drawn from Creswell (2014), who recommends conducting multiple observations over time for the subject of study. In this case, the phonics lessons generally last 30 minutes. In observing this lesson twice within two different months for each of the eight participants, the researcher gained keen insights into the patterns and consistencies associated with phonics instruction.

The next section of this project study addresses the justification and appropriateness of the data collection methods used for the case study. The section also presents reasons for the methods and strategies used to gather and record data.

The Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoCQ)

The SoCQ is a questionnaire developed in 1973 (AIR, 2016) as a way to understand the concerns people report when they are expected to participate in an organizational change. For the purposes of the present study, SoCQ was used to identify teachers' concerns when they were expected to implement a new curriculum; the SoCQ was also used to triangulate interview data. The use of alpha coefficients tests the internal reliability and consistency of the SoCQ. According to Creswell (2014) and George, Hall, and Stiegelbauer (2013), the alpha supplies a coefficient used for the estimation of score consistency in the SoCQ. Table 3 displays the alpha coefficients for the SoCQ, as reported by George et al. (2013).

Table 3

Alpha Coefficients of Internal Reliability for the SoCQ

Stage	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
Alpha	.64	.78	.83	.75	.76	.82	.71

Note: this table is from *Measuring Implementation in Schools: The Stages of Concern Questionnaire* (George et al., 2013, pp. 20-21). The chart is based on 35 items, n = 830, from the original reliability test, fall 1974.

Justification and appropriateness. The justification for using SoCQ aligns with the framework chosen for the study. The CBAM (AIR, 2016) focuses on the necessity of understanding the concerns of those who are expected to implement a new innovation. Specifically, the SoCQ serves as the initial step in identifying their concerns to help alleviate the transition process. Using the questionnaire supported the search for the reasons behind why teachers choose not to implement a curriculum with fidelity and provided insight into specific barriers. The appropriateness of the SoCQ, according to Hall (2015), is that it provides the first round of data to substantiate the interview data participants provide in order to highlight any patterns in their responses. The purpose of this research was to understand the concerns and barriers that prevent teachers from fully and faithfully implementing a curriculum, and the SoCQ has provided data in support of the purpose and RQs for the study.

Source of instrumentation. The Southeast Educational Development Laboratory, or SEDL (AIR, 2016), publishes the SoCQ. The authors of the SoCQ include George et al. (2013). The instrument was developed in the early 1970s, with revisions continuing until the third edition, published in 2014.

Sufficiency of the data collection instrument. The SoCQ is a sufficient data collection instrument because the questionnaire provided data for the first two of four RQs for this study, as follows:

RQ1: What concerns, successes, and barriers have teachers reported during the implementation of the newly purchased phonics curriculum?

RQ2: What resources do teachers believe are necessary to achieve a more successful implementation of the new phonics curriculum?

The SoCQ has also proven to be sufficient as an additional means for triangulation (Creswell, 2014).

Collecting and recording data. Data collection for the SoCQ occurred following IRB approval and was distributed among eight of the 10 participants (the teachers). Data were recorded through the participants' responses to the questionnaire. After completion of the questionnaire, participants placed their questionnaires in an envelope to maintain anonymity. The researcher then collected all of the questionnaires.

Generating and gathering data. After collection of the questionnaires, the researcher analyzed the data to determine any similarities or differences in the participants' responses. This was done with the help of the computer program SPSS, which is designed to highlight commonalities in data.

System for tracking data. The system for tracking these data was accomplished through the use of a research log to record data collection methods and by comparing the initial analysis to the proposed RQs. The research log contains any printouts used from the computer program used to analyze the questionnaire data.

Interviews

Yin (2014) recommends using six different sources of evidence when conducting a case study, and interviews should be among those six. Conducting interviews allowed for an in-depth view into the perceptions and experiences of the participants. The use of interview data specifically target case study topics and in this study allowed for an insightful look into attitudes, values, and perceived obstacles (Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2014). The design of the interview questions (see Appendices B and C) was derived directly from the RQs of the case study.

Justification and appropriateness. Creswell (2014) and Yin (2014) both recommend interviews as a helpful and appropriate method to gain insight into perceptions for case studies. The reasons include the opportunities interviews provide for probing and obtaining a detailed and rich view into participants' experiences and perceptions, which is the primary purpose of this study: to understand the concerns and barriers teachers experience when teaching a new curriculum.

Source of instrumentation. The interview questions were researcher-designed, with the intention of addressing the RQs for the proposed case study. The interview questions targeted any concerns, barriers, and practices that teachers report that are directly connected to the implementation of the new phonics curriculum.

Sufficiency of data collection. The use of interviews served as a sufficient data collection method for this case study because data from the participants addressed the study's primary objectives. The design of the interview questions took into account the RQs and the purpose of the study. Creswell (2014) and Yin (2014) both find interviews to be a vital source of data for case studies and find that interviews are commonly used for sufficient and rich data collection.

Collecting and recording data. Before data collection can occur, obtaining written permission from the school's headmaster was the first step. Next, after receiving IRB approval, the researcher scheduled interviews with the participants and discussed informed consent and participant rights. The study's purpose and the procedures involved in the interviews were then explained. The procedures involved audiotaped 60-minute, five-question, semistructured interviews. Confidentiality and privacy were discussed at this time to reassure the participants that their privacy would be protected.

Generating and gathering data. An interview protocol was developed to promote standardization of the interview process. According to Creswell (2014), the use

of an interview protocol provides further credibility to research. The interview questions (see Appendices A and B) were developed from the proposed RQs and from the specific needs related to curriculum implementation, fidelity, and alignment (Wiles & Bondi, 2014). Participants received interview questions before their scheduled interview times to support their comfort level (Yin, 2014). An iPhone recording app was used to record interviews. The interviews were transcribed using an app that allows the uploading of audio files.

System for tracking data. The system for tracking data for the interviews included a reflective journal, which contains the interview transcripts. The reflective journal has notes on responses, coding for common responses, and the generation of categories connected to the RQs.

Classroom Observations

The third method for data collection included classroom observations. An observation protocol (see Appendix D) directed areas for observation, which aligned with the purpose and RQs connected to the proposed study. The areas targeted for observation encompass how teachers use the curriculum and the extent to which implementation occurs with fidelity. Eight of the 10 participants (specifically, teachers) took part in classroom observations.

Justification and appropriateness. Yin (2014) recommends the use of direct or participant observations to provide a snapshot of the workings and structures of classroom practices. Conducting observations of the classroom and the teachers offers immediate coverage of actions in real time; and, as Yin (2014) points out, observations occur within the natural context of events. Observations were an appropriate choice for this study, because the data can potentially offer insights into the participants' behavior and motives (Yin, 2014). Observations also provided an additional method of triangulation for answering the RQs.

Source of instrumentation. The observation protocol (see Appendix D) was researcher designed and was aligned with the RQs and the purpose of the study, which sought to identify the perceptions, practices, and barriers that prevent faithful implementation of the phonics curriculum. Observations lasted at least 30–35 minutes for two different sessions per teacher, for a total of 60 minutes total (Creswell, 2014); the protocol contained a checklist and space for field notes.

Sufficiency of data collection. Yin (2014) has found that observations are a sufficient method for answering RQs. Observations will call attention to the practices teachers use when implementing the phonics curriculum. Observations may also provide data about which parts teachers choose to implement and which areas they omit. This connection will then help to show which concerns or specific barriers prevent fidelity

during the implementation process. Conducting two 30-minute observations of each of the eight participants over two months provided the data necessary to address the RQs (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2014).

Collecting and recording data. Written permission from the headmaster was requested before data collection and recording. After IRB permission was granted, a scheduled time for participant observations took place. Based on when the participants taught phonics, the participants were able to choose which timeframe would best accommodate their schedules. Data was recorded using an observation protocol and field notes.

Generating and gathering data. The observation protocol highlighted specific areas within the curriculum to determine the level at which teachers implemented with fidelity. The protocol checklist included how and when the teachers implemented; which prescribed resources, if any, the participants used; and whether or not teachers followed the script and recommended instructional practices. Next to the checklist, field notes on details related to the checklist points provided additional information on specific occurrences. Creswell (2014) and Yin (2014) both emphasize the importance of using detailed field notes and the benefits of using observational checklists.

System for tracking data. The system for tracking observation data included taking field notes and using a researcher-designed table for noting key points of the

observations. The observation protocol included the date, the curriculum observed, the observation duration and setting, and a participant-identifier code (Creswell, 2014). Consistency in data collection methods must be a top priority to ensure credibility and to support validity (Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Gaining Access

Before the data was collected, the researcher requested a written letter of agreement from the SPS headmaster. The request included access to participants in order to administer the SoCQ and permission to conduct the interviews and observations. Walden University's IRB confirmed approval prior to participant contact. Upon IRB approval (approval #11-30-17-0475784), the headmaster received a letter of cooperation (see Appendix G). The researcher met with the headmaster and explained the goals and procedures connected to the study. She granted full permission and access to the site and to the participants. After IRB approval was received, the researcher attended the weekly institute meetings and presented the plan and goals of the study. Voluntary participation was requested during this meeting.

Once the participants were identified, each person received an informed consent form after being given a more in-depth explanation of the procedures connected to the case study. The informed consent letter explained the steps and procedures for participation, provided warnings about any potential dangers/discomforts, and

emphasized the voluntary nature of the study and the option to withdraw at any time. Finally, the researcher scheduled interviews and observations and set a deadline for the SoCQ in order to identify concerns, practices, and barriers connected to the implementation of the phonics and grammar curriculum. The storage of data included a locked, portable tote, which will be kept in the researcher's home for a period of five years. The steps for gaining access have been substantiated by Creswell (2014), Merriam and Tisdell (2016), and Yin (2014).

Role of the Researcher

I currently serve as a teacher and team lead in the subject school. I have been a faculty member for three years in the capacity of an elementary teacher and curriculum liaison. As curriculum liaison, I provide support for the purchase of new curricula and provide training when directed by the administration. I do not serve as a teacher evaluator and have no responsibility in the overseeing or managing of teachers. I participate regularly in monthly institute and staff meetings. My role for this study has been to administer the SoCQ, conduct 45–60-minute semi-structured interviews for all ten participants, and complete classroom observations for the eight teacher participants. I have analyzed and interpreted the data after data collection took place. An additional role has included clearly explaining the purpose, objectives, and goals of the study while

addressing participant rights, informed consent, and any protocols connected to data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Relationships with participants include collaborating with team members, common planning, and participation in staff events. I have limited interaction with the teachers in grade levels other than my own. Roles and relationships may influence data collection, but on a limited basis. In order to reduce any sense of obligation, members from my teaching team have not participated in the study. Furthermore, participants are able to opt out at any time during the study.

Biases that have potentially influenced data collection include poorly written or skewed interview questions and reflexivity, where participants respond according to what they believe the researcher wants to hear (Yin, 2014). An additional potential bias may be researcher-related, as I am familiar with the curriculum and have had to remain cognizant of personal bias. Member checks (discussed below under "Accuracy and Credibility") and peer debriefing have helped to mitigate this potential bias. One limitation is that participants may choose not to respond accurately during data collection procedures. To reduce the potential of reflexive or biased responses, I have reiterated that participant responses will remain confidential and that participants' privacy will be protected.

Personal experiences or biases related to the topic connect to my current work with the curriculum. Because I have had teacher-training responsibilities in the past for new curricula, maintaining a bias-free view has been important in determining concerns and barriers without consideration of personal experience. To reduce the potential for bias, interview transcripts were reviewed by participants and a colleague unconnected to the study. Additionally, as recommended by Yin (2014), I have used reflective practices when analyzing the data to ensure objectivity and reporting of the data only, free of any researcher opinion or bias.

Data Analysis

Creswell (2014) provides six steps for analyzing and interpreting qualitative data: (a) collecting data, (b) preparation of data for analysis, (c) proofreading data to get a general sense, (d) coding and labeling data into segments, (e) coding text for descriptions in research reports, and (f) coding text for themes to be used in research reports. In line with Creswell (2014), the prescribed steps were followed for the current study. Data analysis requires organization, time, reflection, and the ability to reduce bias (Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2014). The following areas address procedures for coding and organization as well as methods for ensuring accuracy and credibility. Strategies for dealing with discrepant cases have also received consideration. Before coding began, the data was organized by type: the SoCQ, interviews, and observations.

For each data source, a table was created with the time, date, and participant identifiers. The table includes room for notes and records of initial thoughts on the data. Data sources have been kept in a file in a secure location to ensure participant privacy. Analysis of participant data has occurred one at a time and then was revisited once themes, similarities, and differences appeared.

Coding Data

According to Creswell (2014), the purpose of coding is to make sense of the data using various strategies designed to glean meaning from participant responses. Creswell and Yin (2014) recommend an inductive process designed to narrow data into specific themes. This study's data analysis includes various steps broken down by each data collection tool, as discussed below.

SoCQ. In general, analysis of the SoCQ highlights the concerns participants report related to the implementation of a new innovation. George et al. (2013) suggest hand-scoring the SoCQ for a small sample size, which has fit for this case study. A chart provided by George et al. (2013) was used to hand-score the 35-item questionnaire for participants ($n = 8$). Analysis included highlighting the frequency of each stage-connected level of concern. Raw scores were used, as George et al. (2013) recommend, because the use of percentiles for this questionnaire would likely be highly influential on

the score distribution. Displaying SoCQ data in table format directs attention to the frequency of levels of concern, as flagged by the teachers.

Interviews. Hand-analysis of interview data encompasses reading the data, marking it by hand, dividing it into parts representing initial themes, and color-coding based on themes (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2014). The coding strategies chosen have allowed for making sense of the data by segmenting and labeling any overlapping responses and differences so that the data could be organized into broad themes (Creswell, 2014). The procedures have allowed the researcher close, hands-on access made possible by the smaller sample size. After transcription and coding occurred, a table was created to highlight any frequently occurring themes, as connected to specific stages of concern. The ways in which the analysis answered the RQs have also been addressed.

Observations. Observation protocols were used for recording notes about the participants' behavior. The protocol contained a checklist for focusing on specific traits such as content, process, and time spent, as connected to the new phonics program. Checklist analysis was derived from field notes taken in conjunction with observed behaviors; these notes have highlighted any commonalities and differences between participants. The analysis has also focused on identifying the specific practices participants use while implementing the curriculum. The identification of themes connected to practices has addressed the purpose and RQs as well as allowing for data

triangulation from the SoCQ and from the semi-structured interviews. Observation data has been presented in a table that displays the themes from the field notes that identified common or different practices among participants who had implemented the phonics curriculum.

Accuracy and Credibility

Researcher reflexivity occurs when a researcher's perspective unintentionally influences the responses of the participants, which could alter the direction of inquiry (Yin, 2014). To reduce such biases, various triangulation methods were included to support accuracy and credibility (Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2014). Triangulation types include the use of multiple methods, data sources, investigators, or theories. Three primary sources of data were used for this research, including the SoCQ, interviews, and observations. Each of the data sources addressed the RQs and targeted the purpose of the study, which was to identify the concerns, practices, and barriers teachers experience during the implementation of a new phonics curriculum. Ideally, a comparison of responses between each source would substantiate the data.

The use of member checks, according to Creswell (2014), allows participants/members to check their responses for accuracy. Using member checks helps to clarify and assure accuracy by giving participants an opportunity to verify their responses, thus lending credibility to the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The process

for conducting member checks began with a meeting with the participants to (a) check for accuracy, (b) inquire whether participants' descriptions were complete and realistic, (c) inquire if the themes presented in the study were accurate, and (d) whether or not the interpretations were fair and representative responses (Creswell, 2014). Pending any discrepancies, the researcher then asked for clarification and changed responses accordingly, while making note of any changes.

The use of peer debriefing also addresses accuracy and credibility. Peer debriefing was utilized to reduce bias and to ensure that the data reflected participant responses without regard to researcher opinion. Peer debriefing uses an external person, separate from the study, to provide feedback on descriptions, analyses, and interpretations of the data. Selection criteria for the peer debriefer included a background in mathematics and no direct affiliation with the site. Instruction for computations on the questionnaire took place before the peer debriefer rechecked the score sheets. The process for peer debriefing includes an evaluation of the study to provide feedback on whether or not the findings are grounded in data, whether the inferences and themes appear logical, the degree of researcher bias, and recommendations for increasing credibility (Creswell, 2014). Researcher and peer debriefer computations aligned, supporting accuracy of the data. A meeting was held with each participant to go over the

synopsis and to implement the data according to recommendations from the literature; this data was included in the final report.

As Creswell (2014) recommends, the researcher implemented inter-rater reliability for substantiation of the observation data and to reduce potential bias. The second rater was trained on the observation protocol. Once each observation was completed, the data was discussed and compared for accuracy and consistency; any changes and inconsistencies were then noted.

Discrepant Cases

Procedures for dealing with discrepant cases generally include the accurate reporting of any inconsistencies or discrepancies in the data to reduce bias and support credibility (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2014). The accurate reporting of discrepancies was verified through peer debriefing and participant member checks (Yin, 2014) for interviews, observations, and the SoCQ. During peer debriefing, the researcher and external sources met and noted all discrepancies that did not support the patterns and themes derived from data analysis of the interviews and observations. Member checks provided the same opportunity with the interviews: participants and the researcher met to discuss responses and any discrepant data. The researcher sought clarification and worked to identify any discrepancies, which were then reported. Discrepancies were identified based on inter-rater responses for observations; the researcher and rater

discussed data, flagged discrepancies, and conducted additional observations if necessary. The purpose of reporting discrepant cases in general is to establish credibility and to provide data that will support reliability for similar case studies (Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Limitations

The potential limitations or weaknesses identified for this study include a small sample size, which reduces generalizability, and limited time spent in the field (Creswell, 2014). Within the study's data collection techniques, possible limitations include participants' potentially inaccurate responses to the questionnaire and interviews as well as potential reflexivity in seeking to provide responses that would be acceptable to the interviewer (Yin, 2014). Finally, geographical location was a limitation, since one specific area was examined for the study.

Limitations associated with qualitative research in general include areas such as researcher experience and training. Qualitative research quality relies on the expertise, skills, and experience of the researcher. Creswell (2014) states that qualitative research may be more easily influenced by researcher bias than quantitative research. Participant responses can control the data in terms of honesty, recollection, or the desire to produce a response that will be pleasing to the researcher. Qualitative research may become time

consuming and expensive for the researcher, which may also become a limitation (Creswell, 2014).

Data Analysis Results

As recommended by Creswell (2014) and Yin (2014) for conducting case studies, more than one type of data was collected to triangulate the data and to improve credibility. Credibility refers to the accuracy and trustworthiness of data collection and analysis. Trustworthiness establishes the results of a study as believable, based on the methods used to support credibility (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2014). Credibility measures used in this study included member checks, peer debriefing, and the use of more than one tool for triangulation. Member checks in general can prove especially important because participants substantiate and legitimize responses, further supporting trustworthiness. Data collection tools used for this study included the SoCQ questionnaire, one 60-minute interview, and two 30-minute observations. Each tool addressed the need for prolonged exposure in the field and aligned with the RQs. In addition, as directed by the conceptual framework chosen for this study, the data collection tools aligned with the CBAM and the problem identified for the study.

Data analysis occurred following completion of the data collection process, which took a total of four weeks. The process for each data collection tool is explained below. Analysis of the SoCQ, interviews, and observations occurred separately during the first

stage, then together for comparison and identification of any patterns of responses for each tool. Responses among participants in the same data collection tool category received similar analyses to identify any trends and patterns apparent in the data. The process by which data generation, gathering, and recording occurred is outlined below.

SoCQ

Data Collection Process

After sharing the problem and plan for the study during a staff meeting, participants approached the researcher regarding participation. After distribution and signing of informed consent forms, the participants individually received the survey, including directions for completion. Participants received the survey and a two-week timeline for completion. Participants returned their completed surveys within one week to the researcher, who then placed the documents in a locked briefcase. The survey was then transported to the researcher's home and transferred to a locked filing cabinet until the data could be analyzed.

The recording of SoCQ data began with a data tally sheet provided by the survey developers. The survey authors recommend hand-scoring of the SoCQ for small samples sizes, as was the case with the present study (George et al., 2013). This document provided directions for acquiring the raw scores and percentiles of each of the participants in their responses to each stage of concern in the survey. A peer debriefer

verified the mathematical computations for accuracy for each of the ten participants. Qualifications for the peer debriefer include having a mathematical background in statistics as well as having computation skills. The debriefer works at a separate institution and signed the appropriate confidentiality forms. The steps for hand-scoring included documenting the responses for each question into categories for the different stages of concern. After each column was added, the sum was correlated with a percentage used to determine the highest level of concern for each participant. The transferal of this information into graph form provided a visual look into the level of concern for each specific stage. The graph mapped out what would be considered the top priorities and concerns the participants associated with the innovation, which in this study included the onboarding of a new phonics curriculum.

Study Findings

The problem of this study included a lack of fidelity in implementing a new phonics program and a distinctive lack of understanding of why the problem occurred among the teachers. The SoCQ provided data connected to why the problem may have been occurring. The findings from this study have revealed the levels of concern for each stage, as described by the CBAM and the SoCQ. The stages include: (0) No concern, (1) Information, (2) Personal, (3) Management, (4) Consequence, (5) Collaboration, and (6) Refocusing. Stage 0 means the participant currently experiences no concerns about the

new curriculum because no other commitments or issues take precedence. Participants at stage 1 require more information about the curriculum to increase their understanding of their expectations. Stage 2 flags personal concerns for participants; stage 2 also shows that participants harbor concerns about the personal time and commitments that will arise from the onboarding of the new curriculum. Stage 3 is related to management, who in this case expressed concerns about the time requirement for implementing the new approach. Stage 4 participants worry about the effect on students, while those at stage 5 require collaboration opportunities for idea sharing. Stage 6, the Refocusing stage, highlights a need for participants to improve the process related to the new approach.

For this study, the top two stages with the highest percentages of concern for each participant were examined, as recommended by George et al. (2013). Table 4 displays the primary stage of concern, while Table 5 provides the second-highest concern. For the primary stage shown in Table 4, the ten participants fell within stages 0 through 2. One-fifth (20%) of participants felt no concern about this curriculum change (stage 0), while 50% were at stage 1, the Information stage, where participants require more information about different areas of the new curriculum. Another 30% of participants were found to be in stage 2, the Personal stage, which indicates any personal concerns people might have about the effects of the curriculum change.

Table 4

Frequency of Highest Concern Stage

Stage	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*Total*
# of Participants	2	5	3	0	0	0	0	10
% of Participants	20%	50%	30%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%

As shown in Table 5 (below), the second-highest stages of concern showed a slight variation in concerns. None of the participants reported stage 0 (No concern) as their second-highest concern, while 40% of the participants identified stage 1 (Information) as the second highest, and another 40% identified stage 2 (Personal) as the second highest. The other 20% identified stage 3 (Management) as a concern. The Management stage reflects concerns about time management and commitments related to the change in comparison to one's current duties.

Table 5

Frequency of Second-Highest Concern Stage

Stage	*0*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*Total*
# of Participants	0	4	4	2	0	0	0	10
% of Participants	0%	40%	40%	20%	0%	0%	0%	100%

These findings support the problem through the data, which shows that the participants required further information on the curriculum and felt a need for more of an

explanation. The findings in response to the RQs found that data rendered from the SoCQ addressed RQ1: What concerns, successes, and barriers have teachers reported during the implementation of the newly purchased phonics curriculum? The barriers and concerns the participants reported fell within the same three stages of concern: participants were at stages 0, 1, or 2 for primary concerns and stages 1, 2, and 3 for secondary concerns.

Patterns, Relationships, and Themes

The pattern most evident in the data shows that participants were in the initial stages of concern. Fifty percent of participants were in stage 1, the Information stage, with concerns ranging from not receiving enough information to wondering about timelines, expectations, and the objectives connected to the new curriculum. These results closely aligned with those of the 30% of participants who worried about how the change would potentially affect them personally (Stage 2). Stages 2 and 3 are loosely connected in terms of participants' concerns in not fully understanding the expectations and requirements of the new curriculum. The 20% of participants who scored at stage 0 (No concern) indicated that their concerns currently focused on other areas that required more attention. Notably, for the second-highest scores, no participants fell within stage 0, which indicates that each participant felt some degree of concern (from the first four stages) connected to the curriculum.

In summary, the data revealed percentage scores for each participant within the SoCQ. Each of the ten participants scored between stages 0 and 2 for primary concerns and between stages 1 and 3 for secondary concerns. The highest concern between both primary and secondary concerns was stage 1 (Information), at 50% and 40%, respectively. Considering this data, the primary concern for participants was in the Information stage (Stage 1); these data demonstrate that the primary concern about and barrier to implementing the new curriculum includes a lack of adequate information for moving forward with the curriculum. This data addresses RQ1: What concerns, successes, and barriers have teachers reported during the implementation of the newly purchased phonics curriculum? The participants require additional information to make decisions and form opinions about the new curriculum and the expectations for onboarding procedures.

Interview Data

Data Collection Process

The data collection processes for generating, gathering, and recording interview data include the following. After the participants signed the informed consent form, participants informed the researcher of the optimal times for conducting the 60-minute interview. For each interview, participants received a reminder of the voluntary nature of the research and of their ability to withdraw at any time; the interviews were then audio-

recorded on the researcher's iPhone and later transcribed. Participants answered five questions (see Appendixes B and C), in addition to added questions used for clarification of a specific question if necessary for them to answer in further detail. After the recording and conclusion of the interviews, the interviews were transcribed at the researcher's home. The completed transcripts were typed into Microsoft Word documents and returned to each participant for a member check that lasted approximately 30 minutes. The interviewees received an opportunity to read through the transcripts, offer any clarifications, and make changes or corrections as needed.

Interviews

Interviews were held in a predetermined area, away from distractions or possible interruptions. Teachers chose the location for interviews, which included their classrooms or offices during either conference times or before and after school. Before interviews took place, participants signed a letter of consent. In-depth interviews lasted approximately 50–60 minutes, with six open-ended questions per interview protocol. Follow-up questions were asked if participants required further explanation or clarification. Participants received an opportunity to review the transcripts upon completion and transcription of the interviews.

The interview process provided insight when learning about the perceptions and decisions teachers made when unseen during observations. The role of the researcher

during this process included taking reflective notes to support later coding and analysis procedures. Critical and active listening played a part in remaining proactive as the primary instrument for collecting data during interviews (Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

How and When Data Was Analyzed

The transcription of audio-recorded interviews took place simultaneously through a transcribing app on the researcher's phone while audio-taping with a small recorder. After completion of each interview and initial transcription, the file was uploaded and emailed to the researcher in a Word document. Then, using the audio-recorder, the researcher went back and checked the transcriptions for accuracy. The participants were given time to review their transcripts to confirm their accuracy. Initial analysis took place next through careful reading of the transcriptions and highlighting any findings applicable to the problem of the study and its RQs (see Appendices E and F).

The next steps in data analysis required various actions to ensure quality and credibility while supporting accuracy through participant member checks. The first reading of the transcripts provided initial themes connected to the RQs. The second reading drew comparisons for similarities and differences in participant responses, and the third reading of the data was done to solidify the primary themes found throughout the data (Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2014). The coding phase took

approximately 5–6 weeks for completion, which included making comparisons between the SoCQ and the observation themes. The same processes of coding and analysis took place for each data collection tool and for each individual participant (see Appendices E and F).

Patterns, Relationships, and Themes

Each of the 10 participants took part in a 50–60-minute interview. The study sample included two administrators and eight teachers. Table 4 displays a summary of the themes found in the study. The interview data from the teachers showed differences in their perspectives on the phonics curriculum for fidelity, personal preference, and the perceived barriers to faithful implementation.

Table 6

Summary of Themes

Theme	*Description*
1	Concerns about requiring more information about the change
2	Concerns about the curriculum change's demands on personal time
3	Requires PD/training on the curriculum
4	Requires time for collaboration with teams/peers

Teacher responses. Eight of the 10 participants were teachers. The teacher interview questions (see Appendix B) addressed RQs 1–4. The following questions and responses addressed participant interviews.

Teacher Question 1 (TQ1) asked: "Do you implement the Saxon phonics curriculum as directed? If not, what specific areas, if any, do you use? If so, what are your thoughts, concerns, or perspectives on the program?"

Only three of the eight participants responded positively to this question. Five participants used a different phonics curriculum entirely, with only one of those five using Saxon as a supplement. The breakdown occurred when the adoption of Saxon took place; these participants determined that they would use the previous phonics curriculum that was already in place. One reason that four of the participants cited was that the previous curriculum better met the needs of the students. One participant stated:

> Saxon is strictly a phonics program and didn't have a reading program to go along with it. As an educator, I feel like if you're going to teach a phonics lesson, you need the reading lesson to correlate with the phonics skill.

The three participants who used Saxon stated they all used components of the program, but not always as directed. One pattern that arose between these participants indicated a dislike of the phonics readers. They found that this resource lacked purpose and rigor. One participant stated, "The readers are not my favorite. I don't know why—I

think it's just personal preference. [They're] not my favorite, I think because they're not leveled, you know? It's just on-level, below, or above." Apart from the phonics readers, one participant mentioned concerns with the coding requirements in the Saxon program: "The coding seems a little complicated just for the children to remember, so even if the child can spell, the coding messes them up sometimes, so they just get confused."

TQ2 asked, "Were you included in the curriculum selection process for Saxon phonics? If so, what were your opinions about the adoption? If not, what reasons contributed to your exclusion?"

Only one of eight participants answered positively to this question. Four participants stated that they had been excluded because they were hired after the curriculum adoption took place. One participant had a preference for Saxon but said, "The team lead preferred Bob Jones. I would have liked to know more about [Saxon]." The one participant included in the process declined Saxon for the teacher's grade level because of a general dislike of the program itself, including its lack of a parallel reading program.

TQ3 asked, "When asked to implement a new curriculum, what are your initial thoughts, concerns, and actions connected to this change?"

The participants' responses to this question proved similar to the first two questions. The eight participants expressed a need to know their expectations before their

actual expectation of use. The participants would have preferred to have had the opportunity to view the curriculum in advance and to know what the administration required and expected. As one participant expressed, "The first thing I wonder is, how much work is this going to be?" Another participant mentioned that "Of course there's some apprehension, because there's more time involved in learning something new." Three participants expressed a desire to have time to pilot the curriculum first to see if it adequately met the needs of the students.

TQ4 asked, "When teaching Saxon phonics, what value do you place on teaching the curriculum with fidelity, as prescribed by the authors?"

The responses between participants aligned on this question: they all responded negatively (i.e., they did not value teaching with fidelity), but they did so for various reasons. Somewhat ironically, however, the eight participants indicated that they did follow the sequence of skills for the phonics program. Some of the areas the participants omitted ranged from the recommended script to the suggested instructional techniques. Three participants found little value in the use of the phonics readers, the review, and the history components of Saxons, with one participant stating, "What I usually omit is the introduction, where they talk about where the words originated in the different continents. I don't feel like it's too relevant." Another participant responded to this question with, "I don't. Some of it's too easy, or they've already learned it." Five participants admitted to

adjusting and supplementing the curriculum to support student learning. One participant from this group stated, "I don't, because they need additional information so that when they're assessed, they can be successful."

TQ5 asked, "If offered professional development and training for this program, would you choose to participate? Why or why not?"

This question was rephrased to include whatever phonics program the teachers implemented. The responses for this question varied. Eight of the participants responded positively. Training or professional development (PD) for phonics that involved collaboration with their peers served as the primary reason for their willingness to participate. One response included, "I'm new, so there's always more to learn, especially ways to help the kids to learn the differences in patterns better." Another participant indicated that "I would, because it's the first time I've ever done it, so I'm very open to any recommendations on how to better teach specific areas." One interviewee implied a willingness to participate only so that the interviewee would have opportunities to collaborate with others: "I'm always open to learning new ways to do different things, but I'd prefer to do that collaboratively with my team." Another participant offered a different perspective on PD: "It's important for us to do [PD] to maintain our certifications."

TQ6 asked, “What administrative actions, if any, do you think would support the onboarding of a new curriculum?”

The responses to this question produced a pattern in which people showed a need for administrative actions about relevant PD, involvement in the training, and the provision of the resources necessary for implementation. One participant said:

> I want them to come in and see the program and see how it functions. I would like them to back up purchasing things that are needed for the program if things are left out and we find we need them later.

Another participant stated that, “I’d like them to ask my input and what we think about the curriculum and take it into consideration before they pick a new curriculum.” Another participant said, “A lot of times we’re given the program with no training, so I’d like them to offer training if it’s needed.” In support of the previous statement, a different participant said, “Just allow us time, and they should get the materials to us soon as possible, like early in the summer and not during the school year.” Echoing previous responses, one participant stated, “Definitely training and the necessary materials. Having someone come in and explain how to do it is definitely big.” Training proved important to the participants. One said, “Any training would be great, whether that’s bringing someone in like we did for Shurley Grammar [referring to a system of instructional materials]—that was really helpful for me.”

In summary, the data showed discrepancies between who actually implemented Saxon and who implemented different phonics programs. Only one of eight teachers was included in the selection process, although the hiring of four of the participants occurred after curriculum selection had taken place. The participants admitted to a lack of fidelity when implementing their specific programs but generally adhered to the sequence and primary skills of the curriculum. Training, collaboration, and necessary resources resulted in a primary pattern in response to necessary administrative actions. The participants expressed a need for relevant PD and the ancillary materials or resources required for a successful implementation.

Administrator responses. Two of the ten participants of this study were administrators. The participants responded to the following interview questions, which sought to answer RQs 1–4. The questions and participant responses follow.

Administrator Question 1 (AQ1) asked, "Were you included in the curriculum selection process for Saxon phonics? If so, what were your opinions about the adoption? If not, what reasons contributed to your exclusion?" As first-year, first-time administrators, both participants responded negatively to this question. Participant A mentioned having little experience with the curriculum, but the administrator had heard positive remarks from teachers about the Saxon program. Participant B echoed this statement (although Participant B was unaware of Participant A's response) by agreeing

that the program had generated some positive feedback, although the participant had heard a few parent concerns in connection to the program's rigor and grade-level expectations. The reasons for both participants' exclusion from the selection included being hired after the curriculum had been formally adopted.

AQ2 asked, "As an administrator, what procedures do you use, if any, to help teachers through the introduction and implementation of a new curriculum?" Because Participants A and B were first-year administrators, both spoke to what they thought should be available versus what currently existed in place. Participant A suggested directing teachers toward online resources, which usually provide free printables or resources used to supplement the curriculum. Participant A had not experienced any teachers asking for support for the curriculum. Participant B suggested the need to ensure that the process for curriculum selection would involve teachers and would encompass a slow-paced process to allow adjustment time for the teachers. Participant B expressed the need for adequate time for the teachers to learn and practice the new curriculum. The provision of such time would ideally serve as a procedure for support; at the time, however, concrete procedures for support remained in the planning stages for future implementations of the new curriculum.

AQ3 asked, "When asked to implement a new curriculum, what resources are available to support teachers through this change?" Participants A and B answered this

question by sharing proposed resources, because neither had yet experienced the official onboarding of a new curriculum. Participant A stated that teachers "should be provided with the necessary materials" connected to the curriculum—in other words, making sure that all components necessary for a complete implementation would be purchased. Participant A recommended having training by curriculum representatives. Participant A stated, "I think it's really valuable for teachers to see how [the curriculum] works and in which ways it can be used." This statement aligned with the response of Participant B, who stated, "It would depend on the curriculum, but often there are online classes you can take [with a representative], so that can help the teachers." Participant B mentioned the possibility of having a "go-to" person for each grade level to offer support with the curriculum.

AQ4 asked, "As an administrator, how do you monitor the curricular fidelity of teachers for a new curriculum?" At the time, both participants stated that up until the current semester, no observations or methods for monitoring curricular fidelity had been done, although in the third marking period, the department heads conducted observations for this purpose. According to Participant B, the use of a checklist/protocol would help to direct observations.

AQ5 asked, "If offered professional development and training for the Saxon phonics program, would you choose to participate? Why or why not?" Participant A

expressed interest and a desire to participate, stating that "I need a basic understanding of how it works so that when parents call me, I'll know what their kids are doing, and it will make sense to me so that I [can] have some kind of input if things come up." Participant B also expressed interest but said, "Yeah, I think it is good to know, but I don't think you could as an administrator—all of [the PD], all the time—because of limited time." Both participants preferred to know more about the curriculum to support teachers and to gain a different perspective on the curriculum.

AQ6 asked, "What administrative actions, if any, do you think would support the onboarding of a new curriculum?" Participant A responded, "I think one of the things is making resources available to [the teachers], whether it be to a conference or workshop. I think personally I find those to be probably the most helpful, and also directing someone, possibly someone on staff, you know, who's used the material maybe before, or even connecting with somebody in the district locally that maybe [has used] it that can be a resource. I think making a variety of things available [would be helpful]. I don't like it if you're starting some work with a number of teachers but only send one person as a representative [to a training]. It's important that if everybody's going to be using it, then you let everybody go and hear the same thing so that you can have time to talk about it and see how it's going to work."

Participant B stressed that onboarding must begin slowly, with carefully thought-out stages, and be systematic, saying that "I think it needs to be done slowly [and] carefully, so not fast. I think because change in and of itself stresses people, but when it's very fast, even a good change can be difficult." Participant B also expressed the need for collaboration opportunities before, during, and after implementation take place. The key, according to Participant B, "is being careful not to increase the load of the teachers."

In summary, Participants A and B had aligned perspectives in the areas of collaboration and in providing teachers with adequate resources connected to the curriculum. Evidence of this pattern was visible in their responses in which they outlined the need for additional time and training to best support the teachers through a new change. One notable difference between them included their views on participating in professional development. Whereas both recognized the importance of PD, Participant B expressed concerns connected to time and availability for participating. Participants A and B, both in their first year serving as administrators, appeared to agree in terms of their priorities, based on their interview responses for learning and supporting curriculum changes.

Observations

Data Collection Process

During an observation protocol, each of the eight teacher-participants consented to two 30-minute observations. The first round of observations occurred before the holiday break in mid-December 2017; the second round took place in mid-January 2018. The protocol that the researcher and inter-rater used displayed teacher action, components of the curriculum, and student engagement (see Appendix D). Each column had a place for recording field notes, which detailed what the rater observed in relation to the phonics curriculum/lesson taught for that session. The inter-rater and researcher then compared notes for the observations and discussed possible discrepancies, similarities, and differences seen during the observation. The observation protocols for each participant then remained in a secured file cabinet at the researcher's residence until further analysis took place.

Findings Connected to the Problem Statement and Research Questions

The observation data addressed RQ4: What components of the phonics curriculum do teachers include or omit in their instructional practices? For this section, participants received alphabetic labels for organization purposes. The participants agreed to two observations, at least one month apart. Each analysis included a combination of the two observations and inter-rater agreement. During Participant A's observations, the presence of the primary skills, review, and sequence were noted during both lessons. Participant A used a curriculum other than Saxon but adhered closely to the format of the

lesson during both observations. The curriculum resource materials used during the lesson included the phonics teacher edition, charts with songs/chants, CD player/CD, phonics cards, dry erase board, and word/letter cards.

Participant B also used a program other than Saxon but adhered to few aspects of the chosen program. Whereas most phonics lessons ranged from 25–30 minutes, the observed lesson lasted approximately 15 minutes. A brief review, the repetition of sound patterns, and the singing of songs/chants made up the majority of both lessons. Participant B omitted the use of phonics cards, worksheets, and support materials but supplemented the lesson with a game for matching the skill-words students learned.

Participant C followed the sequence of the phonics curriculum, though this participant also used a program other than Saxon. This participant implemented this other curriculum with high fidelity, following the order and recommended strategies. Participant C used the phonics teacher edition, phonics cards, charts with chants/songs, dry erase boards, a phonics worksheet, and individual phonics readers for both observations.

Participant D followed the program very closely but supplemented it in areas where the students required clarification. Fidelity in sequence, resource materials, and questioning script proved consistent. Supplementation occurred during both observations by the participant providing additional strategies for identifying letter patterns. Resource

materials included the teacher edition, phonics word cards, and phonics worksheets. No omissions occurred—only supplementation.

Participant E taught each component of the lesson but chose to integrate different parts of the lesson into grammar and reading to support student understanding. Supplementation with different materials from outside the prescribed curriculum occurred during both observations. Participant E used the phonics worksheets but did not use phonics cards or charts for chants. Instead, the participant handwrote the components on the Smart Board. The students clearly recited the chants and participated readily in reading or spelling the phonics patterns presented in the lesson.

Participant F spent additional time reviewing previously taught concepts, separate from the prescribed lesson setup. Fidelity for both lessons (outside of extended review) was noted, following the sequence of new increments, guided practice, and independent practice. Students responded to questions, but active participation for coding (as directed by the lesson) did not occur. Students worked from their desks and followed the lesson, copying off the board. Resources included the Saxon teacher edition and phonics worksheets.

Participant G implemented Saxon with fidelity. Each component was represented, was implemented in sequence, and addressed the review, new increments, guided practice, and independent practice. The students actively participated in coding of

the new increment and review words. Resources included the Saxon teacher edition, worksheets, and phonics word/letter cards for both observations. The students appeared familiar with the routine and structure of the lesson, which allowed for smooth transitions and few disruptions.

Participant H focused on the new skill for the lesson but taught the lesson differently than prescribed. Supplemental materials included a thesaurus and handwritten words/sentences on the Smart Board. Participant H thoroughly reviewed the previous patterns for both lessons and spent the majority of the lessons having students code the phonics patterns. The goal for both observations appeared to include student understanding and mastery of the spelling patterns, but omission of all but one component of the Saxon lesson occurred.

In summary, with the exception of Participant G, Participants A–H either omitted or supplemented parts of the curriculum based on personal preference and the perceived needs of the students. The first and second observations aligned between the researcher and the inter-rater, thus substantiating the data's accuracy. The participants' common omissions included information on words' historical derivations, the use of leveled readers, and review patterns, all of which supported the interview data.

Patterns, Relationships, and Themes Between Data Sources

Yin (2014) recommends analyzing patterns between data sources. Data used for deriving themes included participant scores from the SoCQ, responses from interviews, and field notes attained from observations of the phonics curriculum. Prominent reoccurring themes for the SoCQ showed the same two stages of concern among the ten participants: Information (stage 1) and Personal (stage 2). The significance of this pattern shows that the participants identified a need for further information about the curriculum in order to successfully implement it. In addition, the participants expressed concern about the expectations on their personal time. The Personal stage identifies expectations on a person's time and resources. The participants' expression of concern in this area aligns with those who sought additional information, because both stages, according to George et al. (2013), are closely connected. During the analysis of participant responses, a pattern was noted in which participants worried about their unpreparedness because of a lack of information and expectations of the personal time that would be required.

Patterns between the SoCQ, interviews, and observations showed similarities in responses among participants. Patterns between the interviews and the SoCQ data showed common responses from all ten participants about needing/desiring additional information about a curriculum before implementation. Similarly, eight of the ten participants expressed a desire for additional PD and training when implementing a new curriculum. The top two concerns for the SoCQ—the Information and Personal stages—

aligned with the interview responses for TQs 5 and 6 and AQs 5 and 6, which addressed training and administrative actions.

Patterns evident between interviews and observation appeared in connection to TQ4 and AQ4, where fidelity of the curriculum comes into question. TQ4 and AQ4 addressed RQ4: What components of the phonics curriculum do teachers include or omit in their instructional practices? The observation data aligned closely with the interview responses for what teachers included and omitted when teaching the phonics lesson. The teachers stated that they omitted components to support student learning, as did those who supplemented the lessons. The results firmly point to the need for the administration to provide quality and relevant PD for teachers as well as to offer opportunities for decision-making when teachers are asked to implement a new curriculum. The data also revealed that the participants felt concerns about not knowing their expectations or because they lacked information or details in order to successfully implement the new curriculum.

Salient Data and Discrepant Cases

The salient, or most noticeable, patterns in the data resulted from the common desire among the participants for clarification of their expectations and for detailed information about the implementation of a new curriculum. Eight of the ten participants expressed concern about not knowing details and expectations related to such a change

and expressed the desire to have decision-making roles as the process begins. The other two participants responded similarly, but because of differences in their roles, decision-making presented less of a concern for the data. During data collection and analysis, no discrepancies in the data were found between the results from the SOCQ, interviews, or observations. Concurrently, no discrepancies between the researcher, the inter-rater, or the peer debriefer occurred. This lack of discrepancies substantiated the data and related analysis.

Study Procedures for Accuracy

As recommended by Creswell (2014) and Yin (2014), specific procedures that were undertaken to support accuracy included three strategies: the use of peer debriefing, member checks, and an inter-rater for observations. The peer debriefer checked the mathematical computations on the SoCQ score sheet. The debriefer also read the data analysis results compared to the observational field notes and interview transcriptions to ensure accuracy. The participants were given the opportunity to review their transcripts for accuracy and the correct representation of their responses. An inter-rater participated in observations of the phonics lessons. The inter-rater's qualifications included teaching and monitoring phonics programs but was not employed at the site. The field notes were compared and discussed to support analysis and accuracy. The transcription notes and

scanned copies of the score sheet for the SoCQ (see Appendix G) also helped to ensure accuracy.

Summary of Outcomes

The outcomes connected to the analysis of all three data sources rendered information in support of the study's problem and RQs. The development of the RQs stemmed from the problem of a lack of curricular fidelity when implementing the phonics curriculum. The RQs are reiterated below.

RQ1: What concerns, successes, and barriers have teachers reported during the implementation of the newly purchased phonics curriculum?

The interview responses and the SoCQ addressed this RQ. Data from the SoCQ revealed that the participants fell within stages 1 and 2 (Information and Personal) for their highest levels of concern, which were reported as barriers. The interview responses ranged from the need for additional information and the corroboration of SoCQ results as well as concerns about product appropriateness.

RQ2: What resources do teachers believe are necessary to achieve a more successful implementation of the new phonics curriculum?

The interview responses helped to address this question and showed a range of needs, as described by the participants. The patterns in the data the teacher-participants revealed suggested that they desired PD/training about the curriculum and to gain access

to all the resources that had not been purchased with the existing curriculum. The interview responses from the administrators showed that they acknowledged the teachers' need for PD and for necessary curricular resources.

RQ3: What types of staff support have administrators reported being included before and during implementation of the new phonics curriculum?

The interview questions provided data for this RQ from both administrator and teacher participants. The teacher-participants reported having no support beyond the supplying of the materials. The administrator participants, both of whom were new to their roles, proposed that they would remedy this concern.

RQ4: What components of the phonics curriculum do teachers include or omit in their instructional practices?

Data from the observations provided a response to RQ4. The teacher-participants adhered to the sequence closely, but only one participant followed the curriculum with fidelity. Common omissions included the use of phonics readers, phonics word/sound cards, and suggested instructional strategies for review. It must be noted that only three of the eight participants used the Saxon curriculum, as discovered through this research.

The findings connected to the conceptual framework (the CBAM) align with the findings discussed in the literature on this topic. The concerns the participants reported through the SoCQ provided the data necessary to support curriculum implementation

initiatives. The identification of concerns through the SoCQ and interviews showed a pattern among the participants, which highlighted a need for additional information about the initiatives and the participants' expectations. The CBAM emphasizes the goal of remediating concerns before a change begins in order to reduce expectations-related stress and anxiety. Through the CBAM (specifically the SoCQ), participant concerns were indeed identified, which then provided the necessary data for supporting teachers through a curriculum change.

Conclusion

The project developed as an outcome of the results from the SoCQ, interviews, and observations. The data among the three sources showed a pattern between participant responses, which highlighted a desire for access to training and curricular resources. Some of the barriers to effective curriculum implementation included unaddressed concerns, limited time for collaboration, and a lack of PD opportunities and curriculum resources. Another finding showed that the participants wished to have more information about the curriculum and the expectations required of them personally.

Considering these results, the project was then designed to include a five-day training session on the phonics curriculum, with one day of training for specific concerns outlined in the SoCQ responses. The first day focuses on identifying and remediating teachers' concerns when they are asked to implement a new curriculum; the other four

days of the training include curriculum modeling, peer collaboration, instructional strategies, and assessment procedures. Section 3 of this project study provides details on the project rationale, timeline, and goals.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

Based on the data and the current literature, the choice of the project aligned with the needs of Southwest Private School (SPS), as connected to the problem of the study. The genre of the project falls under the category of professional development (PD) and training curricula and materials. The components of this project include: (a) purpose, goals, and learning outcomes; (b) outlines and timelines; (c) implementation and evaluation plans; and (d) hour-by-hour details of the training. The artifact contains a format template for training, a sample agenda, and document resources designed for identifying concerns through the Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoCQ). One of the key results of the training showcases a lesson taught in a peer group, and the project training contains a lesson plan format as an additional artifact. The choices of the project, training, and deliverables were derived directly from the data analysis results, which highlighted a need for more information, additional training on the phonics curriculum, and increased time for peer collaboration. The four-day training consists of one day to identify and address concerns, one day to explore and model the curriculum resources/lessons, one day working with peers to develop a lesson and a checklist for phonics, and a final day of peer-lesson demonstrations and strategies for self-assessment and reflection.

The proposed project (see Appendix A) includes administering the SoCQ to each grade level or department and a four-day professional development session on the new curriculum, including collaborative and reflective time. The project was developed after data analysis had been conducted, which directed the choices in how best to address the needs of the school and its teachers. Section 3 provides details on the rationale as well as a review of studies from the literature in support of the project. The literature review focused on format for training, content-specific PD, and recommended deliverables for optimal learning outcomes. Section 3 also includes a project description with goals, an evaluation plan, and project implications.

Rationale

The rationale for the choice in project stems from the current literature in support of PD on new curricula and in identifying the concerns of staff before a change in curriculum occurs (George et al., 2013). The problem of the study, which included teachers not implementing the phonics curriculum with fidelity, received primary consideration as the basis of this project. The barriers included unaddressed concerns, lack of PD opportunities, lack of curriculum resources, and limited time for collaboration. As the results from the data collection and analysis have shown, the participants expressed concerns about needing more information about the curriculum, more time for collaboration, and more training to learn the curriculum.

Two primary themes became apparent from conducting the data analysis. The participants identified their concerns about not receiving enough information before expected curriculum implementation; the teacher-participants expressed concerns about a lack of PD and other resources required for effective curriculum implementation. Several themes became apparent after analysis of the three data sources (the SoCQ, 60-minute interviews, and two 30-minute observations). Field notes from the observations supported these themes in showing the lack of necessary resources, while the interview data responses showed common responses in requested PD and information about expectations. The interview and observation data were substantiated through SoCQ data about concerns.

The design of the project, which includes aspects directly connected to adult learning, addresses six characteristics, described in Jordan's work (2016). Jordan listed the following factors as being necessary to support adult learning: (a) the need to know; (b) the existence of self-concept (i.e., being in charge of one's own learning); (c) real-context experience; (d) preparedness to learn; (e) exposure to learning; and (f) internal motivation. Each aspect has been considered in the project by addressing learners personally and by seeking to meet the identified needs of teachers through their expressed stages of concern.

The findings from this research have provided a framework for the four-day PD to support teachers in learning a new curriculum; the framework also addressed concerns related to the implementation process. Teachers may gain skills for implementing the curriculum with fidelity from having a better understanding of the curricular objectives, suggested instructional practices, and assessment tools; the training also offers opportunities for peer collaboration and feedback. In the future, administrators will also be invited to attend in order to gain insights into the curriculum and to support collaborative opportunities. Finally, the design of this project includes the identification of the concerns teachers experience when implementing a new curriculum as well as providing remediation strategies to improve their experience.

Literature Review

A literature review was conducted to identify key points and to substantiate the project content and format. The following categories were selected from the data results and analysis connected to the problem of the study. After analysis of the SoCQ, interviews, and observations, these categories were found to best represent the project: (a) content-specific training, (b) training based on concerns and needs, (c) training formats, and (d) deliverables and outcomes. Each category provides support for the format and goals of the project, as aligned with the objectives of the study. Various sources from the literature have provided an outline for the direction of the project within the choice of

each deliverable and activity. The databases used for researching literature from the Walden Library include EBSCOhost, Education Source, and ProQuest. Search terms connected to the literature included *CBAM*, *professional development*, *in-service*, *training deliverables*, *lesson plans*, *training formats*, *content-specific*, *peer collaboration*, and *professional learning communities*. The literature review included evidence in support of the four-day PD training as the framework for this project. The design of the conceptual framework uses the concerns-based adoption model (CBAM), which aligns with the PD by identifying and addressing any teacher concerns before the expected implementation of a new curriculum.

Content-Specific Training

Content-specific training refers to training on one type of curriculum versus a general PD session on administrative issues. When PD addresses one specific type of curriculum, teachers typically direct their instruction toward sequences, objectives, instruction, and assessment as these items are connected to the goals of the curriculum. The design of a content-specific training allows for an in-depth look into the curriculum while providing directions on how to approach, instruct, and assess materials. Through this approach, teachers experience sample lessons, pay attention to sequence, and learn the rationale behind the design, all of which support fidelity when teaching (Bautista, Yau, & Wong, 2017; Fenton, 2017).

According to Bautista et al. (2017), the main goals for PD include the benefits connected to student learning. The purpose and benefits of PD in general include professional growth and increased knowledge about a given topic. According to Bautista et al. (2017), PD for teachers has a positive effect on student learning through informed instruction and content knowledge. Content-specific PD is beneficial to student learning by allowing practitioners to home in on features and objectives for improving student achievement. Based on Bautista et al.'s (2017) study, PD requires specific features necessary for effective teacher learning. These features include duration, group participation, content-focused learning, active/collaborative learning opportunities, and coherence (i.e., the consistency of curricular parts).

Districts and states spend substantial amounts of money on PD forums such as talks, conferences, and lectures. Bautista et al. (2017) find such forms to be inadequate because of the disconnection and missing relevancy to specific contents, structures, or considerations of actual teacher needs. The features of high-quality PD require a focus on content—specifically, what teachers must cover in order to meet their students' objectives. Effective PD should ideally provide a deeper understanding of the content knowledge in itself, instructional strategies for developing skills, and a direct link to student learning patterns (Bautista et al., 2017; Mendoza, 2018). If we bear this information in mind, PD for this site will require a focus on phonics specifically. The

benefits of content-specific PD address the problem and the purpose of this study by providing support for the proposed project.

Similar to Bautista et al.'s (2017) findings, Fenton (2017) found that content-specific PD on technology integration resulted in profound improvements in teacher knowledge and student achievement. Fenton (2017) conducted a study with 191 teachers within 10 districts regarding PD for technology integration using iPads. The study's results indicated high rates of success for PD when teachers had time to collaborate with their peers and to mutually learn strategies for implementation. Collaboration with their peers as well as having application time both proved crucial to the participants of Fenton's study (2017) versus one-on-one coaching or large-venue PD, such as lectures. Hurney, Nash, Hartman, and Brantmeier (2015) suggested further support by giving peer-content experts the opportunity to share strategies with their peers, presented in a way that would foster collaboration and the sharing of best practices. As proposed by the present project, collaborative opportunities during content-specific PD provide educators with time for application, brainstorming, and problem-solving, all of which allow for effective learning experiences for teachers (Bautista et al., 2017; Fenton, 2017; Hurney et al., 2015; Mendoza, 2018).

Teachers who participate in content-specific PD for extended periods of time often improve their content-based knowledge, thus benefitting students (Davis, Palincsar,

Smith, Arias, & Kademian, 2017; Longhurst et al., 2016). In Longhurst et al.'s (2016) study on science PD, the study's findings indicated that teachers who participated in science-specific PD for two years developed increased knowledge about science and technology and that the PD supported improvements in instructional practices and student achievement. Longhurst et al. (2016) found that teacher practices and student achievement both improved significantly compared to those who had participated for only one year or not at all.

In summary, investment in content-specific PD increases teacher competency with the curriculum and improves student learning and performance (Bautista et al., 2017; Davis et al., 2017; Longhurst et al., 2016). In the design of the proposed project, homing in on one specific area addresses relevancy and the achievement of mastery of a given content area. Collaborative opportunities and peer support focus applicable experiences in sharing instructional strategies and problem-solving when learning and mastering curriculum objectives (Fenton, 2017; Hurney et al., 2015; Jordan, 2016).

Training Based on Concerns and Needs

The concerns and needs of teachers must be considered before the onset of an expected implementation (Al-Shabatat, 2014; George et al., 2013; Hall & Hord, 2015). This subsection provides support for the CBAM and the use of the SoCQ for determining concerns before the onset of a change. The proposed project goes a step further in using

SoCQ data to directly address concerns and then adapt PD accordingly. Knowing teachers' concerns up front can illuminate any potential barriers to the implementation process. McCarthey and Woodard (2018) and Gaard, Blades, and Wright (2017) agree in their respective studies that barriers reported by participants affect the way teachers interpret, teach, and assess curricula. Some of the factors that influence barriers include school context, access to PD, and personal aspects such as time expectations.

Identifying needs and concerns before the onset of a curriculum change supports PD efforts when relevancy must be addressed (Min, 2017). The proposed project allows time for understanding teachers' primary concerns before the actual training on the curriculum begins. Dividing teachers into groups based on their concerns allows for the PD instructor to tailor the PD in a way that will remediate any concerns and provide optimal training on the specific curriculum (McCarthey & Woodard, 2018; Min, 2017). Min (2017) conducted a study to identify the concerns of teachers when implementing e-book integration into the curriculum. While discovering teacher concerns, administrators received data that highlighted which areas teachers struggled with, and why, which then directed a path for training.

Everhart (2017) used the CBAM and the SoCQ to determine the concerns of librarian educators who were expected to participate in training to improve test scores. The participants primarily rated themselves within the first three stages of concern, which

showed (respectively) that they (a) had a desire for more information and (b) had questions about personal expectations; some showed (c) no concern and that other areas had priority. Considering the results, having PD that would provide more information and address their concerns was the primary request of the participants (Everhart, 2017). The participants reported enthusiasm for possible PD and training, which potentially reduced their concerns and anxieties when going into curriculum changes (Min, 2017).

Identifying concerns during PD proved beneficial in another study, conducted by Wyatt, de Sousa, and Mendenhall (2017), who identified barriers to effective implementation of a program and worked on coaching educators through these barriers to improve curriculum success. Barriers such as strict adherence to another curriculum, fear and apprehension from teachers, and time limitations skewed the participants' perceptions of the new curriculum. Coaching teachers through the barriers supported more positive onboarding and changed any negative perceptions. A third-party group conducted the PD, which deviated from most recommendations for in-house, peer-involved PD (Everhart, 2017; McCarthey et al., 2017). The PD instructor did engage participants, however, by discovering barriers and then remediating their concerns throughout the process. This strategy reduced tension and improved motivation while building confidence. Wyatt et al. (2017) sought a format designed to work in parallel

with the expected change and existing model for optimizing teacher comfort, which resulted in successful implementation of the program.

Training Formats and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

Understanding the needs of participants helps when choosing an effective format (George et al., 2013; Hall & Hord, 2015). The training format chosen for this project includes collaborative peer interaction and peer instruction/modeling. Collaborative PD provides a forum for problem-solving and for open discussions of concerns, strengths, weaknesses, and sharing of best practices (Gutierez & Kim, 2017). As noted earlier, PD that is presented in general lectures, large workshops, and conferences tends to minimize teacher experiences and needs, which can then make the PD lack relevancy (Bautista et al., 2017). In creating smaller, more intimate PD sessions on content-specific training, teachers can then learn from one another in a safe environment.

The training format/model that aligned with the proposed project was similar in structure to a professional learning community (PLC). Dufour, Dufour, and Eaker (2008) describe a PLC as a group of teachers working together to problem-solve, develop lesson plans, reflect on instructional/assessment strategies, and discuss student progress. Through PLCs, teachers receive opportunities for collaboration, peer feedback, and self-reflective practices (Vanblaere & Devos, 2018). The benefits of using this model include professional growth and improved student experiences (Jones & Thessin, 2017; Willis &

Templeton, 2017). Turner, Christensen, Kackar-Cam, Fulmer, and Trucano (2018) found that the collaborative aspect of PLCs improved relationships and communication between team members and peers. Based on this information, the proposed project uses PLCs as a guide for the structure and format of the PD.

Vanblaere and Devos (2018) evaluated the role of department heads in PLCs and found the necessity for strong leadership and administrative involvement in the success of a PLC. The proposed project includes administrators because of the value that administrators add to PD. Willis and Templeton (2017) corroborated the benefits of PLCs but called attention to the need for teacher buy-in for PLCs to be successful. The benefits of collaboration during PLC time include an increase in communication among team members and team leads (Turner et al., 2018). Open communication fosters collaboration, which allows for effective problem-solving among teams. PLCs consistently sustain the professional growth of teachers and improve students' curriculum-related experiences. Collaboration and peer support have been found to be among the top benefits for PLCs (Jones & Thessin, 2017). These findings support the format of the proposed project.

Gutierez and Kim's (2017) research provides evidence of the benefits and general results of collaborative PD. The teachers in their study proved resistant to classroom-based research, primarily because of barriers connected to the unknown. The authors

sought to challenge their negative perceptions by supporting teachers through collaborative PD designed to inform and empower teachers. The results showed that, through collaboration, maintenance, steadfastness, and trust, teachers experienced various advantages connected to classroom-based research. Three major themes arose from that study, including increased understanding of classroom environments, shared responsibility/ownership, and the use of self-reflective practices for overcoming misconceptions. Considering these results, the proposed project has integrated collaboration, with a goal of remediating concerns and barriers through peer support. Training formats that foster trust and mutual respect create environments conducive to learning (Everhart, 2017; Gutierez & Kim, 2017).

El-Bilawi and Nasser (2017) and Shagrir (2017) support Gutierez and Kim's (2017) findings through separate studies in support of collaborative PD settings and the necessity of self-reflection during PD. When considering training formats, the quality and duration of PD were found to directly affect teacher learning and receptivity (El-Bilawi & Nasser, 2017). El-Bilawi and Nasser studied the challenges teachers experience when undergoing training for the implementation of a new state-mandated initiative. Some of the emerging themes included general dissatisfaction with the training (derived from a lack of support and follow-up) as well as complaints about limited opportunities for peer collaboration. One prominent finding showed that short-duration PD yielded

little or no change to the methods and strategies implemented in the classroom. The teachers relied on intuition instead of the specific knowledge presented during the PD.

El-Bilawi and Nasser (2017) and Shagrir (2017) both discuss the traits of high-quality PD and describe a training format that is conducive to collaboration and reinforcement. Some of the traits include (a) the use of initial sessions with examples of instructional components and the materials necessary to address the target concept; (b) guided practice that allows time with peers to generate lesson plans and activities; and (c) PD that is formatted with ongoing, small-group sessions that include reflection for long-term planning. El-Bilawi and Nasser (2017) and Shagrir (2017) agree that teaching involves recognizing and treating people as individuals and that self-reflection serves as a catalyst for professional change and growth.

Shagrir (2017) examined perceptions connected to PD and found that faculty members greatly value collaboration during trainings. Co-teaching, peer teaching, common learning, and participating in joint research all supported educators in developing confidence and in feeling that they were part of a group; these factors also prevented competitiveness by fostering a common purpose. Collaborative learning with peers contributes to changes in curriculum perceptions, instructional practices, and relationships with colleagues (El-Bilawi & Nasser, 2017; Shagrir, 2017).

The model for the proposed project exhibits similar characteristics to those recommended by Carson and Dawson (2016) and Hendricks, Taylor, Walker, and Welch (2016). Three components of PD include training, curriculum resources, and classroom support, each of which highlights specific areas for improving teacher knowledge with the purpose of supporting student learning. Several goals associated with the format encompass (a) an increase in content-area knowledge through an expert, (b) informing teachers about various student conceptions, (c) the introduction and modeling of instructional strategies, and (d) having the time for the application of resources (Carson & Dawson, 2016). The recommended timeframe for the model is four days, which is the same as that used in the proposed project.

Hendricks et al. (2016) presented a similar model, with a focus on the knowledge necessary for practice, skills, application, attitude, and the formation of professional identities. Each model outlined in this section of the project study reinforces the need to identify barriers, build knowledge, provide modeling, gain access to materials, and have time for collaboration and application. Each component fosters team building, with the purpose of building confidence and content knowledge. With improved student learning and experiences set as the primary goal, these models serve as a forum for continued improvement through peer collaboration and guided practice from the trainer (Carson & Dawson, 2016; Hendricks et al., 2016). The proposed design for this project accounts for

the recommended models and formats in order to achieve the effective and relevant experiences that teachers and students alike require.

Deliverables and Outcomes

The identification of outcomes and goals for PD provides participants with purpose and direction for completion. According to Carson and Dawson (2016) and Hendricks et al. (2016), participants require clearly stated and applicable outcomes for optimal engagement. Depending on the goal of the training, the training outcomes and deliverables will require relevancy and application in order to achieve effective impact on participants. Examples of deliverables include portfolios, self-assessments, lesson plans, and thematic units, while outcomes encompass goals and plans for improvement or implementation. Chandran, Gusic, Lane, and Baldwin (2017) assert that deliverables require the input of all participants when designing products for practical use. Teng (2016) recommends a culminating project with relevant application, such as lesson plans or a lesson demonstration. Urban, Navarro, and Borron (2017) agree with Chandran et al. (2017), in that the quality of deliverables will depend on the level of collaboration among the participants that has occurred. For the proposed project, three deliverables accompany the goals for the training: (a) self-assessment based on identified concerns, (b) a checklist for self-monitoring phonics lessons, and (c) a practice lesson with peers. Each is discussed below.

Self-assessments. Self-assessment focuses on the reflective process of learning. The identification of concerns, strengths, and weaknesses supports teachers in developing skills and practices for improvement (Carbone et al., 2017; Okpe & Onjewu, 2017). The justification for the use of self-assessment is drawn from studies by Carbone et al. (2017) and Okpe and Onjewu (2017). Carbone et al. (2017) studied the concept of distributed leadership. In their model, three main elements stand out: collaborative action, openness of boundaries, and distribution of expertise. *Collaborative action* emerges when teachers work together, thereby gathering collective initiative and content expertise; the use of self-assessment allows teachers to identify any strengths and weaknesses for this element. Having *open boundaries* breaks down walls between managerial hierarchies; this creates an equal playing field, which in turn supports empowerment. Such empowerment increases confidence and perceptions of value. The breakdown of boundaries promotes an outcome that is greater than the sum of individual efforts (Carbone et al., 2017). The third element highlights the *distribution of expertise*, which requires self-assessment. Identifying the expertise of staff outlines areas where teachers might successfully share and model practices and strategies. The distribution of a self-assessment during PD offers teachers the chance to engage in critical thinking about their abilities, with the purpose of positively contributing to the group.

Okpe and Onjewu (2017) offer support for self-assessment through a model for professional self-development (PSD). PSD focuses on areas such as self-awareness, self-monitoring, peer teaching, action research, and troubleshooting (Okpe & Onejewu, 2017). Products that support self-assessment include reflective journals, portfolios, and participation in teacher-support groups. Like Carbone et al. (2017), Okpe and Onjewu (2017) found that PD that involves different types of self-reflection/assessment strengthens language development and skills for mutual counseling; other strengths include increased confidence, boldness, and reflection as well as improved social skills. One key goal with self-assessments is the recognition of personal feelings and biases associated with one's feelings toward PD, the curriculum, and one's own professional identity as a teacher.

Checklists/lesson plans. The use of checklists and lesson plans supports organization and sequencing when completing tasks. For curriculum objectives, checklists remind teachers of specific objectives or lesson components necessary for lesson completion. Checklists can prove especially beneficial when learning a new curriculum. Lesson plans provide more details than checklists. The primary benefit of lesson plans for PD training is the time and collaboration used to develop the setup of the lesson. Cavanagh and McMaster (2017), Chandran et al. (2017), and Longhurst et al.

(2016) all recommend developing lesson plans and checklists collaboratively in order to increase effectiveness and to achieve necessary research objectives.

Hills (2017) and Yuan and Zhang (2016) agree that collaborative lesson planning provides strength through coherent versus separate planning, the latter of which can become disjointed from having varying viewpoints. By focusing on coherence, peers and administrators can work toward a common goal. Hills (2017) recommends developing lesson plans with peers but ensuring that monitoring does occur for accountability and evaluation purposes. A lack of collaboration and engagement during the lesson-planning process dissuades critical peer feedback and support, which can result in isolation and potential burnout (Yuan & Zhang, 2016). Curcelli (2015) suggests that teachers should collaboratively create lesson plans using the curriculum as a guide. This strategy supports the improved meeting of student needs, because the teachers have then designed lessons with specific classes in mind.

Peer-to-peer teaching. This outcome is derived from a collaborative lesson that is developed and taught by peers. This team exercise fosters ownership and accountability while working toward a common purpose, which supports teachers' professional growth (Cavanagh & McMaster, 2017; Drew et al., 2017; Miquel & Duran, 2017). Drew et al. (2017) found that peer learning improved interaction among staff members and promoted long-term professional growth; their study highlighted the

benefits of peer observations in particular. This type of peer learning helps the observer by offering opportunities to view different methods and practices for teaching. The observed teacher then receives constructive feedback, is able to ask questions, and has the chance to share best practices.

Miquel and Duran (2017) describe peer learning as the construction of knowledge and skills through collaboration between peers who share similar priorities, goals, and characteristics. In this model, teachers and learners exist at the same level, meaning that neither manages the other. Peer learning in PD focuses on sharing ideas, problem-solving, and analyzing experiences with teaching methods or practices. Cavanagh and McMaster (2017) and Miquel and Duran (2017) found that peer learning improved confidence and increased ownership, which in turn supported student learning through peer support. Specifically, student learning improved based on peer support for problem-solving and instructional methods. One of Cavanagh and McMaster's (2017) recommendations is for a concrete deliverable (such as a lesson plan or assessment tool) accompanied by a monitoring and evaluation plan. Because a lack of follow-up after PD presents a reoccurring problem, the use of monitoring strategies and processes provides accountability for teachers and administrators alike (Bautista et al., 2017; Longhurst et al., 2016). Peer-to-peer learning allows teachers to view experiences through the varying

lenses of their peers, which benefits teachers' knowledge, skills, and confidence when they are learning a new curriculum (Cavanagh & McMaster, 2017).

Literature Review Summary

In summary, the relevant literature has provided substantiation for the training format and deliverables of this project. Research from the literature supports the use of content-specific PD that is specifically relevant to teachers and the needs of their students. A consultation of the literature made the benefits of collaboration and peer interaction apparent as key methods to support professional growth and to foster positive interactions among team members. Collaboration with peers also allows for opportunities to problem-solve and to develop strategies for improvement (Carson & Dawson, 2016; Gutierez & Kim, 2017). Previous studies have supported the use of PD to enhance peer-group time as well as the development of self-reflective strategies, as is the case with the proposed project (El-Bilawi & Nasser, 2017; Shagrir, 2017). Finally, the existing literature has provided support for creating relevant and useful deliverables, such as lesson plans and journals, in order to provide teachers with concrete outcomes for use in the classroom (Chandra et al., 2017; Urban et al., 2017). The proposed project will produce relevant deliverables designed to address the curriculum directly.

The training format consists first of determining teacher concerns and collaborating as a group to minimize any concerns. Second, the training provides

content-specific training on the phonics program; specifically, the training begins with an in-depth review of the resources as well as a modeled lesson. Teachers then work with their peers to develop a lesson plan using these materials and resources. Finally, the teachers present and teach the lesson plan to their peers and share best practices and ideas for becoming more comfortable with the curriculum (Chandran et al., 2017; Teng, 2016). This last factor, as supported by the literature, includes self-assessment and self-reflection, both of which serve to promote critical thinking about the lesson and the chosen instructional practices (Carbone et al., 2017; Okpe & Onjewu, 2017).

Project Description

Implementation

The project consists of a four, half-day training, which includes administering the SoCQ and conducting a three-day training on the phonics curriculum; each session is approximately four hours long. The first day of training starts with a review of research results and administration of the SoCQ to each grade level participating in the training. Each participant scores and analyzes the results with the help of the instructor. The purpose of having participants hand-score their questionnaires is to validate the data and to provide immediate results for any concerns (George et al., 2013). After this activity is done, participants will join peer groups composed of people with similar concerns. Next, based on their concerns, collaborative groups will discuss the results and develop ideas to

remediate any concerns (Plešec Gasparič & Pečar, 2016; Tollefson-Hall, 2016). The groups share ideas and determine which steps seem feasible to support the onboarding of a new curriculum. At the end of day one, the instructor will review the primary concerns and ideas for remediation and provide an outline for the next day.

The training for day two explores the phonics curriculum and related resources. Taking into consideration the concerns and ideas from the first day, the training addresses teachers' concerns when introducing the materials. The first part of the day includes an introduction to the materials, the scope/sequence, and lesson objectives. The instructor will teach a model lesson and allow time for questions. Next, participants will gather in the same collaborative groups from the first day and develop a lesson plan for one phonics lesson. Participants must practice integrating the scope/sequence and suggested materials.

On day three, participants present lessons to their peers. The beginning of day three begins with participants gathering in groups for lesson-plan presentations. Each group will receive 30 minutes for preparation and any last-minute changes. During this time, groups will present their lessons; those who are not presenting will take notes on any perceived strengths of the lessons and on any questions they may have. Each presenting group will have time to respond to any questions. After completion of the

modeled lessons, the groups will provide feedback on the lessons. The instructor will then provide overall feedback to the participants.

The final day of training introduces ideas for self-assessment and reflection. Reflection provides benefits for learners and requires time for critical self-analysis (Carbone et al., 2017; Okpe & Onjewu, 2017). During this session, groups will discuss the lesson-planning process, the formats to be used, and the modeled lessons. Each participant will complete a reflective journal on his or her experience during the training. The participants will have one final opportunity for questions before they complete a brief survey about the training. Participants will receive contact information for any further questions they may have; if approved by the administration, a follow-up training will then be scheduled for the second semester.

The resources necessary for the plan include a Smart Board, a PD survey, and a reflective journal template; Saxon phonics materials for five groups, including teacher editions, student materials, and resource posters/cards; and notebook paper, markers, highlighters, and pencils. Training must be added to the master schedule, and a conference room must be reserved. The school will provide Saxon resources and technology equipment, while the instructors will supply the remainder of the materials.

Potential Barriers and Solutions

Two of the potential barriers to the project are (a) scheduling time for the training and (b) resource availability. Because a lack of materials such as student workbooks, phonics readers, and online access is a concern, acquiring sufficient curricular materials for each participant may present a challenge. If this occurs, one possible solution would be to divide materials between groups. The reduction of potential scheduling conflicts requires setting the date in advance and placing sessions on the master schedule. Reserving technology equipment ahead of time will also secure necessary materials for the training.

Other potential barriers include teacher buy-in and administrative prioritization of the training. Both teacher and administrator participants have expressed the need for additional training and support. Should buy-in present a problem, then the results and the data from the project will be presented again. Budgetary constraints and administrators' lack of valuing of the training often prevent training from taking place. While this decision rests solely with the administrators, the data from the study serves as the best evidence and support for implementing the training. Administrative support seems likely, considering the problem of the study and the results from both sets of participants.

Finally, one potential barrier to implementing a four-day workshop is the time teachers will lose in preparing their classrooms for the start of the school year. Because this training is factored into school-wide PD, the time will be drawn from teacher service

the week before school starts. Teachers might be resistant to attending because of their current experience with the curriculum; they may feel a lack of relevance for their personal growth. Resistance to the training could also result from personal feelings about the curriculum and their views about the value of teaching the curriculum with fidelity. Potential solutions include giving teachers the afternoon after the training to work in classrooms and meet with teams or to provide more sessions and let the teachers choose the best timeframe for their own schedules.

Project Timetable for Proposed Implementation

The proposed timetable for implementation will take place August 7–10, 2018. The time scheduled for each session is between 8:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. Each session begins with an introduction, followed by modeled activities, peer collaborative/group time, and reflective journaling. The proposed timeline aligns with the first required week for returning teachers to begin the new school year. Having an August starting time will ideally provide relevant training necessary for implementing the phonics curriculum and for troubleshooting any teacher concerns and problems before the start of the school year. George et al. (2013) recommend identifying any concerns and providing training before the onset of the expected implementation.

Roles and Responsibilities

The researcher. The roles and responsibilities as the researcher encompass three areas: (a) sharing results, (b) presenting results, and (c) supporting the implementation of the project (if necessary). First, upon completion and acceptance of this study through the university, a copy of the research will be shared with all stakeholders. The results from conducting the data analysis will be shared to address the problem of the study. The project results, if requested by the administration, will be presented to the stakeholders, including staff, faculty, and the board of directors. In the event that the proposed project should be requested for implementation, the researcher will offer support and guidance in any capacity necessary to support the staff and faculty at the site. The researcher will continue to serve and support those who are affected by the study and its related results, including the responsibilities connected to the proposed project.

Project facilitator. My primary role is that of facilitator. As facilitator, I will guarantee that the resources and materials are acquired prior to the start of the training. I will request approval for the budget and location and will present timelines and agendas for administrative approval. My goal includes the creation of a collaborative and supportive environment while increasing content knowledge of the phonics curriculum. This role will involve encouraging peer collaboration and self-reflective practices through the careful scaffolding of adult learning. I will offer examples of lessons and will follow up with teachers after the training to monitor their growth.

Students. While students will not be directly involved in the training, they could benefit from improved phonics instruction based on the experiences of their teachers. Students may experience the suggested instructional practices, which have been designed to improve understanding and outcomes connected to the curriculum. One potential benefit to students may be an improvement in alignment between grade levels for phonics instruction and expectations.

Teachers. Teachers will need to complete the SoCQ to identify any concerns they may have and will be asked to work in groups to remediate any identified concerns. Teachers' roles include designing a quality, peer-developed lesson plan for the phonics curriculum. They will present a group-modeled lesson based on the lesson plan and will be asked to work in groups with grade-level teams during these activities. Teachers will be asked to complete a self-reflective journal to gauge their professional growth during training, and to complete a training survey.

Administrators. Administrators will have multiple roles in connection to the training. First, they will need to provide approval for the time, location, and budget; they will also need to approve the time within the existing in-service schedule. Second, administrators will be encouraged to attend each session so that they will understand the phonics curriculum, monitor teacher growth and participation, and demonstrate the value of the PD through active engagement in the training. Finally, administrators play a key

role in encouraging a positive climate through collaboration and in providing PD opportunities to support teachers (Turner et al., 2018; Willis & Templeton, 2017).

Project Evaluation Plan

The project deliverables proposed for the training include (a) the development of collaborative lesson plans, (b) the creation of self-assessment/reflection tools, and (c) the identification of any concerns, along with ideas for remediation. These deliverables have been justified by recommendations from the literature for collaboration during PD, lesson development, and a need for self-assessment for professional growth (Davis et al., 2017; Fenton, 2017; Hurney et al., 2015; Longhurst et al., 2016; Mendoza, 2018). Two types of evaluation include formative and summative assessments. Based on the expected project deliverables and outcomes, formative assessment will be the best fit for an evaluative strategy (Trumbull & Lash, 2013).

Summative evaluations or assessments focus on the evaluation of student learning at the end of a unit, program, or other instructional period. Examples of summative assessments include standardized tests, culminating essays/presentations, or reports, as well as instructor-developed exams, such as multiple-choice assessments (Trumbull & Lash, 2013; Wiles & Bondi, 2014). Because of the collaborative and self-reflective format of the training, summative evaluation will negate the goals and outcomes of

measuring personal and professional growth based on teachers' concerns and needs (Bautista et al., 2017; Fenton, 2017; Mendoza, 2018).

Trumbull and Lash (2013) describe formative assessment as being ongoing and relevant to the currently taught skills. The various types of formative evaluations available—such as group or one-on-one discussion, group/collaborative work, portfolios, reflection writing, and projects—all assess learning differently. Formative assessments identify learner misconceptions, gaps in content/concepts, or areas that require further instructional support. The main benefits of formative evaluations are the opportunities they afford for remediating any misconceptions and for re-teaching based on the immediate needs of the learner (Trumbull & Lash, 2013). For the implementation of formative assessments, Trumbull and Lash (2013) recommend self-reflection, actionable feedback, open dialogue, having clear criteria, and the collection of useful information necessary for critical feedback. The proposed training outcomes align with formative measures by promoting active learning, encouraging collaborative problem-solving, and developing self-reflective practices. Specific types of formative evaluation include group-developed (a) lesson plans, (b) practice lessons, and (c) self-assessments.

Performance Outcomes and Evaluation Goals

The outcomes measured for the project include the quality of the peer-developed lesson plan, self-assessment responses, a practice lesson, and an evaluation of the

training. An evaluation of the modeled lesson presented by the collaborative groups and of the self-assessment will provide data for determining the level of growth (Gonczi, Chiu, Maeng, & Bell, 2016; Plešec Gasparič & Pečar, 2016). Peers will then offer feedback on each others lesson plans in order to provide constructive feedback. Participants will have time to ask questions and to troubleshoot any concerns they may have. Each group will receive a copy of the notes to support self-assessment on areas of growth. The goal is to support teacher learning and professional growth through peer collaboration and feedback that is designed with the common objectives of improving student learning and self-reflective practices (Courtade, Shipman, & Williams, 2017; Plešec Gasparič & Pečar, 2016; Tollefson-Hall, 2015).

Goals connected to the self-assessment consist of recognizing strengths, weaknesses, and concerns for implementing the phonics curriculum. Because teachers will have completed the SoCQ to identify any concerns, they will be able to utilize the self-assessment to brainstorm strategies designed to remediate any concerns. In peer groups, teachers can safely discuss possible improvements and share successful practices.

One of the final outcomes includes the completion of a training evaluation. Participants will complete a survey addressed to the effectiveness and relevancy of the training. This participant feedback will support instructor growth and self-reflective practices. The data derived from the end-of-training evaluation will direct future choices

and modifications connected to the design of the training. The goal is to use critical feedback to improve training for prospective participants (Gee & Whaley, 2016).

The overall objectives of the evaluation are to improve student learning through the training and reflective process of their teachers. Using data from the evaluation will inform decision-making and problem-solving when considering the effectiveness of the training and whether the implementation of strategies has occurred after the event. Evaluation will help to determine how PD has supported teachers in the classroom. Collaboration and peer-designed lessons guide teachers as they make decisions for the modification of instructional and assessment practices. Monitoring these procedures will support teachers in growing professionally through reflection and guidance from their peers (Courtade et al., 2017; Plešec Gasparič & Pečar, 2016; Tollefson-Hall, 2015).

Key Stakeholders

They key stakeholders include teachers, administrators, board members, and parents. Teachers will benefit from the training because of the skills, collaboration, and application components designed to improve content knowledge, remediate concerns, and strengthen student learning experiences with the curriculum. Administrators monitor teachers as well as student learning; monitoring and follow-up of the training will provide data related to training effectiveness. Board members and parents will receive confirmation that teachers have participated in the training and that the school has

actively provided PD for teachers, with the purpose of supporting student learning experiences. Stakeholders will receive access to the study and its data and results to better understand the choices made in the project as well as the training format, outcomes, and evaluative results.

Project Implications

Social Change for the Local Site

The PD training evaluation and outcomes resulting from the research will provide an action plan to address teacher concerns, relevant training, and curriculum fidelity, as described in the problem of the study. Possible social-change implications of the project will address the needs of the teachers and administrators, as identified by the SoCQ, interviews, and observations. Specifically, the project will allow time for peer collaboration, group lesson planning, and application through the practice lessons of the phonics curriculum. The project will also identify any teacher concerns and will provide collaborative time for problem-solving. Self-reflective practices focus on strengths and weaknesses for professional growth (Carbone et al., 2017; Okpe & Onjewu, 2017). At the local level, the project will provide the tools and resources necessary to resolve the problem of identifying any teacher concerns or disconnect from the curriculum fidelity of the phonics program.

Larger-Scale Social Change

Larger-scale social change for the PD training will include a format and various outcomes supported by research to address teacher concerns and to promote curriculum fidelity. The project will present strategies and suggestions that are designed to help educators become familiar with the curriculum while also troubleshooting and remediating any concerns for the reduction of barriers to full curriculum implementation. The results from the study will show a need for the project and will offer substantiation to a larger population experiencing similar problems with curriculum fidelity and unidentified teacher concerns. In the larger context, the benefits of this project will extend to supporting the usefulness of the SoCQ in identifying teacher concerns, with the purpose of addressing issues before the onset of a change.

Conclusion

The identified problem of the study has included a lack of curriculum fidelity for the phonics curriculum and a lack of understanding of teachers' concerns, both of which then prevent full curriculum implementation. The barriers to full implementation, as identified through the data results, have determined the format and outcomes to be implemented in the project. Barriers include unaddressed concerns, lack of PD opportunities and curriculum resources, and limited time for collaboration. Section 2 of this project study has provided details on the tools and methodology that were chosen for data collection; the project then developed through the triangulation of those results.

Section 3 has described the training project designed to address the problem of the study, which was substantiated through a review of the relevant literature. Previous research supports the format, design, and outcomes of the project. This section has highlighted the evaluation plan, the goals connected to the outcomes, the key stakeholders, and the implications for social change. The project is designed to support the local community; in larger contexts, the project will provide data and a training artifact to address barriers to full curriculum implementation.

The fourth and final section of this project study will conclude with reflections on the experience and will provide data on seven areas, including (a) project strengths and limitations; (b) recommendations for alternative approaches; (c) scholarship project development; (d) leadership and change; (e) reflections on the importance of the work; (f) implications, applications, and directions for future research; and (g) impacts on social change. Each subsection will provide reflections on the research process, the data analysis, and the project design. Section 4 ends with a description of the researcher's growth as a scholar-practitioner.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

Section 4 of this study features the strengths and limitations of the project and provides recommendations for the remediation of any shortcomings. This section includes researcher reflections on lessons learned for leadership, change, and scholarship when assessing project development and research. These reflections on social change and implications will provide insight into finding a path for supporting other sites that suffer from similar problems or concerns. Section 4 includes reflections on the importance of the study and provides directions for future research on the barriers to curriculum implementation. The subsections include: (a) project strengths and limitations, (b) recommendations for alternative approaches; (c) scholarship project development, (d) leadership and change; (e) reflections on the importance of the work; (f) implications, applications, and directions for future research; and (g) impacts on social change.

Project Strengths and Limitations

Project Strengths

A leading strength of the project is that it addresses the problem of the study by identifying the barriers to effective curriculum implementation, as determined during data analysis. The project took shape through a thorough literature review and the

triangulation of various data sources. Through this process, the choice of project format (as well as its outcomes) was substantiated as a positive fit for responding to the problem identified for the study.

Another strength of the project lies in the concerns the participants expressed in the Stages of Concern Questionnaire, or SoCQ (Al-Shabatat; 2014; AIR, 2016; George et al., 2013). The training format within the project provides time to identify and remediate any primary concerns about anything that could prevent full curriculum implementation. Participants in the training will have time to collaboratively problem-solve and to develop strategies designed to reduce their concerns. In connection to the project's strengths for supporting peer collaboration, the development of peer-generated lesson plans and modeled lessons will pinpoint participants' primary concerns about the lack of training, collaboration, time, and resources.

A third strength is connected to the evaluative portion of the training project. The project develops concrete deliverables and activities designed for direct application in the classroom. The relevancy of the training and outcomes will lead to opportunities for professional growth and familiarization with the curriculum (Jordan, 2016). The project's self-assessment strategies will further develop critical reflection regarding the barriers to successful implementation of the phonics curriculum (Bautista et al., 2017; Hurney et al., 2015). The training in the project will allow for the time necessary to

support teachers when learning the curriculum as well as desired peer collaboration and feedback.

Project Limitations

One of the main limitations of this project is lack of time. Because of previously scheduled in-service teaching, budgetary constraints, and administrative concerns, the allotment of time for this project may prove to be a challenge for this site. As a private school, the budget only allows for necessities when considering training. The final decision regarding the project will depend on the needs of the site as a whole.

A second limitation is teacher buy-in. Whereas the study participants have identified concerns and demonstrated their willingness to obtain support, the remainder of the faculty may show resistance based on their priorities and perceived relevancy (Jordan, 2016).

A third limitation (related to teacher buy-in) includes the small sample size of ten participants, which will affect the generalizability of the study for the remainder of the faculty who did not participate in the study. To support teacher buy-in, increase generalizability, and remediate this limitation, the SoCQ could be administered to all faculty members for future use when designing relevant and necessary PD/training. This strategy would ideally increase the validity and generalizability of the data results (Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

A fourth limitation is related to the competency and experience of the researcher. Other than the researcher's conducting of action research, this experience has served as the researcher's first experience in collecting, disaggregating, and analyzing data. Some of the strategies to remedy this limitation have included triangulation methods for the data, member checks, peer debriefing, and the employment of an inter-rater for substantiation analysis and recommendations for the project (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2014). Gaining experience with research and data-collection strategies has further reduced these limitations.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

Some of the different ways to address the problem of the study could include conducting further research to determine how best to solve the site's problem of not knowing the teachers' concerns and fidelity issues related to the phonics program. A program evaluation could be another effective way to determine the effectiveness of the curriculum as well as teacher preparedness (Hall & Hord, 2015). Whereas professional development (PD) supports teachers' growth and learning, a program evaluation might determine if the program itself has effectively addressed objectives. Program evaluations require the collection of data on the program to identify the strengths, weaknesses, and overall effectiveness of a program.

A different approach to addressing the problem would include the full implementation of the concerns-based adoption model, or CBAM, which has served as the framework for this project. The CBAM directly addresses concerns and provides outlines to address various stages of concern to support teachers through changes and major innovations (Hall & Hord, 2015; George et al., 2013). The CBAM provides evaluation tools as well as systems to monitor growth and to support ownership of the change. Because the present study only utilized the SoCQ, using the remainder of the components in the framework would allow for delving more deeply into concerns and would provide a plan for the successful onboarding of a new initiative (Al-Shabatat; 2014; AIR, 2016; George et al., 2013; Hall & Hord, 2015).

An alternative definition of the problem that is possibly missing from the present study would include teacher buy-in of the chosen curriculum, which could influence curriculum fidelity (Buxton et al., 2015). Teacher concerns were identified, but assessing whether or not the teachers had opted for or explored the curriculum prior to its adoption remains unclear. Perhaps part of the problem included choosing a curriculum without conducting proper research before the actual adoption. With this in mind, a possible solution would be to allow time to pilot a curriculum before actual implementation occurs. This strategy would support teacher buy-in and would allow teachers to collaborate with their peers on what they experience while piloting the program. Using a

proactive approach could influence curriculum fidelity while offering opportunities for collaboration and the remediation of concerns (Loflin, 2016).

Scholarship Project Development

During the process of developing the project, several different areas served as guiding forces behind the project's objectives and goals. After the first round of data was collected through the SoCQ, a pattern immediately emerged regarding concerns about the teachers' expectations for implementation and personal time requirements. With this in mind, a literature review was conducted in which staff concerns were researched. Through the literature review, it became apparent that teachers needed a way to express their concerns when asked to implement a new curriculum (Miquel et al., 2017). When interviews and observations were held, similar themes among the teachers' responses substantiated the initial patterns that had emerged from the SoCQ. The data results and a review of the existing literature determined that the best way to address concerns and barriers to full curricular implementation would include PD/training.

With a chosen project genre in mind, research was again conducted to determine the best format and outcomes based on the problem and data results of the study. The training had to address concerns as well as provide the necessary training on the phonics curriculum. Considering the resounding theme of the data—that teachers wished to have collaborative time with their peers—this aspect had to be included in the training because

of the recommendations of previous researchers about the benefits of peer learning (Park & Ham, 2016). Slowly, through the pattern of the themes that formed, the design of the project took shape. Each component of the project was derived from a careful review of the literature, based directly on the themes and patterns present after data analysis.

Leadership and Change

This experience as a scholar, practitioner, and project developer has provided personal and professional growth and has proven to be a challenging and rewarding experience. Through these three roles, I learned to see how each component relied on the previous components in order to affect social change on a larger scale outside of the site and the personal influence I have on my peers and students. From the viewpoint of a scholar, I achieved a different level of maturity from the critical feedback I received, the setbacks the project occasionally suffered, the numerous drafts I wrote, and the unwavering support I received from the doctoral team and my family members. This project was a safe place to fail, grow, and succeed while accepting critical feedback. In my acquisition of knowledge and skills through the process of achieving an EdD, my personal outlook on life and education changed, which has given me new opportunities to view situations through various lenses and has broadened my worldview. The scholarship I have achieved through this experience has further solidified my desire to remain a lifelong learner and to continue to contribute to my field.

As a practitioner, my personal growth as a teacher and leader grew substantially from applying learning to an applicable setting. These experiences have influenced how I respond to and assess my students, which has cast a new light on my responsibilities for their learning. When I was conducting the study and collecting data, learning about the variety of perspectives, concerns, and priorities connected to the problem of the study was an eye-opening experience that taught me the value of recognizing biases early on through critical reflection. This realization helped me to maintain my professionalism and focus on the problem at hand. My experience as a practitioner has been made stronger and has made my position as a leader more distinct, based on the feedback I have received from the administration.

I slowly grew as a project developer during the process of data collection and analysis. Analyzing the data to ensure that the project had proper substantiation and support took patience and precision. During the project development stages, careful consideration went into the audience and the overall goal that would best support the teachers. I recognized the need for the second literature review, because I now have a greater appreciation for having credible and valid work. The format that has been designed for this project should ideally be helpful to other sites that are confronting similar problems.

Reflection on the Importance of the Work

In reflecting on the importance of the work overall, I have found that the study and the project have sought to provide a solution to a serious problem in education. In meeting the objectives of the study, the project has directly referenced the needs and concerns identified by the participants during the data collection process. The importance of the work for the specific site lies in the fact that the project is designed to remediate problems associated with barriers to full curriculum implementation and fidelity. Miquel and Duran (2017) and Park and Ham (2016) assert that training and a greater understanding of teachers' concerns will both promote professional growth and problem-solving between peers. The study and project have both provided data and a road map for remediating the problem and supporting staff through curriculum changes and expectations.

The lessons learned throughout this process include the necessity of being thorough, organized, and accurate. When a site depends on the researcher for accurate assessment and solutions, the seriousness of that responsibility is tied closely to ethical considerations. Maintaining a strong ethics code, with strategies for minimizing bias, demonstrates a form of credibility (Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2014). Learning this lesson about the moral responsibility of conducting valid and credible research, as well as developing a relevant project for the teachers, both proved to be challenging yet rewarding tasks. My primary goal for the study and project include the

promotion of social change through engaging and supporting teachers during curriculum changes by identifying their concerns and offering support.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

Specific recommendations for future research include broadening the curriculum scope of the current study and determining any concerns for the remainder of the staff through the SoCQ. Knowing concerns proactively can provide school leaders with vital information when choosing, onboarding, and implementing training for new curricula. To achieve this goal, a quantitative study would be helpful in gaining additional information that has not been attained through this qualitative study. Finding concrete patterns and determining central tendencies could be helpful in identifying common priorities and concerns (Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). A survey designed to address satisfaction with new curriculum procedures would be a helpful tool within the quantitative model. With a quantitative study, the methods and data collection tools differ from those used in a qualitative study and provide a stronger form of triangulation, which ideally would substantiate any assertions arising from the data analysis of the current study. Another path could include the development of professional learning communities (PLCs), with the purpose of addressing the need for collaboration between grades and teams to support curriculum alignment.

Conducting action research or mixed-methods research could help to determine the effectiveness of team collaboration and the potential effects of curriculum fidelity and might reduce teacher concerns. Creswell (2014) and Yin (2014) recommend trying different methods to substantiate current or existing research. Another possibility would be program evaluation. Based on the data results for concerns and fidelity, the curriculum itself may present the problem. Conducting a program evaluation could help to supply additional information on the effectiveness of the phonics curriculum and how it is taught.

The implications for recommended future research fall within the boundaries of this study while exploring teacher concerns and curriculum fidelity on a deeper level and seeking to provide further strength through quantitative evidence. As with any form of credible research, the more data identifying barriers to full curriculum implementation, the more the decisions leaders make about curriculum innovation will become informed (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2014). These recommendations for future research seek to further existing research by providing the data necessary to support teachers' professional growth and understanding of the curriculum, with the overall purpose of improving learning experiences for students (McNeill et al., 2016; Tweedie & Kim, 2015).

Impact on Social Change

The study and project both promote social change because of the critical effect that curriculum fidelity has on student preparedness and learning, as detailed in section 1 of this project study. Identifying the barriers to full curricular implementation that exist and the concerns that teachers report can provide administrators with the information they need to reduce students' knowledge gaps, which often result from the inconsistent implementation of curricula (Lochner et al., 2015; McShane & Eden, 2015). This goal of this study is to effect social change by identifying the concerns and barriers that teachers face as well as by developing a project designed to help solve the problem.

The potential impact on social change at the local level is the highlight of the project, which focuses on meeting the needs of teachers, as identified through the data analysis. Specifically, through providing the necessary training to address teacher concerns, curriculum training, and peer collaboration, the project promotes self-assessment and reflection through activities designed to improve teaching and learning experiences. The administrators and teachers at this site will have the results from the data as well as possessing the format for the project. If the project is chosen for implementation, then teachers will receive vital training in improving curriculum fidelity; the project will also take into account their personal concerns and professional growth through self-assessment. The intended goal of the project includes the improvement of

students' learning experiences through teachers' professional growth (Jordan, 2016; Okpe & Onjewu, 2017).

The far-reaching impacts on social change extend to the contributions from the literature. Previous scholars have discussed in detail the benefits that identifying teacher concerns before the onset of a curriculum change can have as well as the barriers to full curriculum implementation. The present study addresses gaps in the literature by connecting teacher concerns when implementing a curriculum with fidelity. Ideally, this study will inform and influence administrators and teachers about the benefits of understanding the concerns related to a change in curriculum (or the onboarding of a new curriculum) and will find the study project to be an ideal method for addressing this problem.

Conclusion

The final section of this study on the barriers to full curriculum implementation has addressed project strengths and limitations based on the existing literature and a data analysis. One strength is the study's data, which has identified the barriers to full curriculum implementation and the concerns that teachers have when implementing a phonics curriculum. Another strength is that this project was designed specifically to help teachers by using the results from the data. The limitations include the small sample size and the limited experience of the researcher. Because of these limitations, the

researcher used various triangulation methods during the course of the research in order to increase the study's credibility.

The personal reflections on leadership and curriculum change in this project study have outlined the learning experiences I have gained as well as underlining my growth as a scholar-practitioner. The project study has explained the various processes specific to the research and the development of the project, as well as the reasons for the choice of format and project deliverables. This project study has provided several recommendations for alternative approaches to addressing the problem of lack of curriculum fidelity.

This project study has also provided reflections on the project's potential influence on local and more widespread social change and has recommended various directions for future research. The goals of the study and of the project remain unchanged: to improve teachers' experiences with new curricula through a project that is both relevant and applicable to the needs of students, teachers, and administrators. The data results, and the project that was designed to address the problem, will both provide potentially helpful information to teachers and administrators in order to improve their experiences with the onboarding of a new curriculum.

While the focus of this project has specifically been on barriers to the proper implementation of a new phonics curriculum in the United States, many of the

conclusions and findings from the study could have potential application throughout the world. The problem of teachers taking matters into their own hands for a variety of reasons when teaching a new and unfamiliar curriculum is certainly not limited to the United States.

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Appendix A: Project Description

Professional Development/Training

Based on the findings from the study, the design of the following project seeks to support teachers when implementing a new curriculum. The two primary objectives include identifying the concerns of teachers proactively and developing collaborative plans for addressing and remediating concerns. The second objective highlights exploration and modeling of the phonics curriculum through peer collaboration and self-assessment/reflection. The immediate applicability to the setting and problem speaks directly through identifying and remediating concerns, while also providing the training needed for improving fidelity with the phonics curriculum.

Purpose	• Identify the concerns of the teachers • Provide remediation of any concerns • Provide instruction and modeling on the phonics curriculum • Provide collaborative opportunities • Support teachers in faithful implementation of the curriculum • Provide self-assessment/reflection strategies
Goals	• Increase familiarity with the phonics curriculum • Increase competency and fidelity when teaching the curriculum • Develop learning teams for promoting collaboration • Create viable lesson plans connected to the curriculum developed by peers • Teachers will be able to model a lesson to their peers • Teachers will begin a self-reflective journal for self-assessment
Learning Outcomes	• Increased proficiency in teaching the content of the phonics curriculum for increased fidelity • Practical application in peer-developed lesson plans for use in the classroom

	• Awareness of teaching through self-assessment/reflection
Target Audience	• K–3 teachers • Lower school administrator
Timeline	The proposed time line is a four-day training held August 7–10, 2018. Each session will run from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. A follow-up session will be scheduled for later in the year, based on budget approval.

Proposed Activities

The professional development/training consists of activities designed to address the barriers to full curriculum implementation of the phonics curriculum. Each set of activities is described by day. The set of activities for the first day of training includes administering the Stages of Concern Questionnaire (SoCQ), analysis of the results with instructor guidance, and peer collaboration to remediate any concerns based on the results. The instructor will walk through each step of the SoCQ and will explain the significance of the results with each group. The analysis of the results will require various steps of adding each category of the SoCQ and using a chart to identify percentiles. The percentiles will correlate to a "stage of concern" described through the concerns-based adoption model (CBAM). After the identification of primary and secondary concerns, the teachers will join groups based on their concerns and will problem-solve for strategies to reduce their concerns. Groups will then present their

ideas to the other teachers in the training. The administrator(s) present will be asked to participate in remediating the concerns of staff.

On day two of the training, the instructor will provide time to explore the curriculum and related resources. Teachers will view a modeled lesson and participate in a question-and-answer session regarding the scope and sequence, instructional strategies, and assessment pieces of the phonics curriculum. In groups, the teachers will discuss the modeled lesson and will identify any concerns they have connected to the curriculum and how the strategies developed during the first day of training may support learning and growth.

During the third day of training, teachers will work with the curriculum in groups to develop a viable lesson plan to promote fidelity with the sequence and objectives. The instructor will move between the groups and support the development of the lesson plans. Each group will be required to use the curriculum resources for meeting the objective of the lesson. The purpose of this activity includes familiarization with the phonics curriculum and collaboration with peers regarding the development and effectiveness of the lesson.

On the final day of training, teachers will present lesson plans through a modeled lesson to their peers, who will write brief notes about their thoughts, questions, and ideas and will provide feedback. The peer participants will then turn their notes in to the

different groups for reflection. After each group presents lessons and receives feedback, the teachers will complete a self-assessment/reflective journal. The purpose of the feedback and lesson presentations is to support critical reflection on how to use the curriculum with fidelity and effectiveness in order to improve consistency between teams and grade levels. The final activity includes an evaluation for future improvements and suggestions for the training.

Module Format/Hour-by-Hour Layout

Session	Activities	Timeline	Resource Materials
Day 1	—Distribution and completion of the SoCQ —Analysis/scoring of the SoCQ —Developing suggestions for reducing concerns in peer groups.	**8–9 a.m.**: Completion of the questionnaire **9–10 a.m.**: Completion of the score sheets **10–11 a.m.**: Identifying/reporting the top two concerns of each group **11 a.m.–12 p.m.**: Developing strategies in groups for remediating concerns	Smart Board SoCQ SoCQ score sheets
Day 2	—Instructor-modeled lesson of a complete phonics lesson —Exploration of the curriculum and resource materials in groups —Introduction of the lesson plan template	**8–9 a.m.**: Review of the previous session; instructor models a complete lesson for Saxon phonics **9–10 a.m.**: Peer collaboration, group exploration of the curriculum and resource materials **10–11 a.m.**: Group discussion of the materials and resources **11 a.m.–12 p.m.**: Introduction of the lesson plan template and the components needed for completion	Saxon phonics curriculum and materials Smart Board Chart/notebook paper Lesson plan template
Day 3	—Teachers work in groups to develop lesson plans using the curriculum —Teachers plan a modeled lesson of the phonics curriculum —Teachers share lesson plans with other groups	**8–10 a.m.**: Teachers work in groups to develop lesson plans and a modeled lesson for peers **10–11a.m.**:Groups plan to teach 20-minute lessons from the phonics curriculum **11 a.m.–12 p.m.**: Teachers share lesson plans and discuss implications of the activity	Lesson plan template Peer lesson notes template Smart Board
Day 4	—Teachers present modeled lessons —Peers complete notes template for critical feedback —Groups receive peer feedback and complete the self-assessment/reflection journal template —Final group discussion on lessons learned —Teachers complete training evaluation	**8–10 a.m.**: Teachers model 20-minute lessons to peer groups, while teachers complete notes for feedback **10–10:30 a.m.**: Groups share feedback and discuss implications **10:30–11:30 a.m.**: Groups complete self-assessment/reflection journal and share lessons learned with peers **11:30 a.m.–12 p.m.**: Teachers complete training evaluation	Reflective journal template Training evaluations

Project Deliver-ables	Peer-designed lesson plan	Peer feedback notes	Self-assessment reflective journal

Training Agenda

Session	Agenda
Day 1: Introduction/concerns through the SoCQ	**8 a.m.:** Introduction to the training and an overview of the training. Introduction to the SoCQ and completion of the questionnaire. **9 a.m.:** Analyzing concerns through guided practice **10 a.m.:** Identifying top two concerns—how concerns influence our teaching **11 a.m.:** Learning to remediate concerns proactively **12 p.m.:** Dismissal
Day 2: Modeled lesson and resource exploration	**8 a.m.:** Review of previous day's training; teaching Saxon phonics; modeled lesson **9 a.m.:** Exploration of resources and materials **10 a.m.:** Group discussion of materials/resources/format/scope and sequence **11 a.m.:** Development of applicable lesson plans **12 p.m.:** Dismissal
Day 3: Peer collaborative lesson planning, development of practice lessons	**8 a.m.:** Recap of Day 2, instructions for developing lesson plans with Saxon materials **9 a.m.:** Break into grade-level peer groups, begin formatting lesson plans **10 a.m.:** Peer-groups plan a 20-minute practice lesson **11 a.m.:** Share lesson plan ideas and discuss implications **12 p.m.:** Dismissal

Day 4: Critical feedback and self-reflection	**8 a.m.–10 a.m.:** Groups present 20-minute lessons **10 a.m.:** Peer-provided feedback **11 a.m.:** Complete reflective journals and discuss lessons learned; training evaluation **12 p.m.:** Dismissal

Lesson Plan Template

Group:

Grade Level:

Saxon Phonics Lesson #:

Required Materials:

Objectives	Skill	Sequence	Assessment

Follow-up:

Peer-Lesson Notes Template

Group:

Saxon Phonics Lesson #:

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Questions:

Suggestion

Reflective Journal Template (Self-Assessment)

What have I learned?

What worked well?

What can I improve on?

Was the lesson received well by students?

Were my assessment tools meaningful?

Were my instructional practices aligned with the lesson?

Training Evaluation

Name of Instructor: _____Date: _____

Training Title: "Identifying Concerns and Improving Phonics Curriculum Implementation". Please indicate your responses below.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The training met my expectations.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
2. I will be able to apply the knowledge to my classroom.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
3. The training objectives for each topic were clear and were presented well.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
4. The content was well organized.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
5. The materials distributed were relevant and useful.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
6. The trainer was knowledgeable and professional.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
7. The quality of the instruction was good.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
8. The trainer met the training objectives.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
9. Class participation and collaboration were encouraged.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
10. Adequate time was provided for questions and discussion.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

11. How would you rate the overall training?

Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor
❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Form modified from template provided by alumni.virginia.edu/uvafund/files/2012/06/LE-Program-Eval.do

Appendix B: Teacher Interview Protocol

Researcher: Erica Nevenglosky, MEd 60-Minute Semi-Structured Interviews

Time: Date:

Participant Code:	Years of Experience:
Grade Level:	Teaching Saxon Phonics: Yes/No

TQ1: Do you implement the Saxon phonics curriculum as directed? If not, what specific areas, if any, do you use? If so, what are your thoughts, concerns, or perspectives on the program?

TQ2: Were you included in the curriculum selection process for Saxon phonics? If so, what were your opinions about the adoption? If not, what reasons contributed to your exclusion?

TQ3: When asked to implement a new curriculum, what are your initial thoughts, concerns, and actions connected to this change?

TQ4: When teaching Saxon phonics, what value do you place on teaching the curriculum with fidelity, as prescribed by the authors?

TQ5: If offered professional development and training for this program, would you choose to participate? Why or why not?

TQ6: What administrative actions, if any, do you think would support the onboarding of a new curriculum?

Appendix C: Administrator Interview Protocol

Administrator Interviews

Researcher: Erica Nevenglosky, MEd 60-Minute Semi-Structured Interviews

Time: Date:

Participant Code:	Years of Experience:
Grade Level:	Teaching Saxon Phonics: Yes/No

AQ1: Were you included in the curriculum selection process for Saxon phonics? If so, what were your opinions about the adoption? If not, what reasons contributed to your exclusion?

AQ2: As an administrator, what procedures do you use, if any, to help teachers through the introduction and implementation of a new curriculum?

AQ3: When asked to implement a new curriculum, what resources are available to support teachers through this change?

AQ4: As an administrator, how do you monitor the curricular fidelity of teachers for a new curriculum?

AQ5: If offered professional development and training for the Saxon phonics program, would you choose to participate? Why or why not?

AQ6: What administrative actions, if any, do you think would support the onboarding of a new curriculum?

Appendix D: Classroom Observation Protocol

Part 1: Background Information

Observer:	Observation Date:
Length of Observation:	Observation: Start: End:
Participant Code:	Subject:

Part 2: Observation Notes

1. Describe the lesson: What is the teacher doing?

What do I see?	What do I think?

2. Describe the lesson: What are the students doing?

What do I see?	What do I think?

3. Describe the lesson: What parts of the Saxon phonics program are present or missing in the lesson? Components of the lesson: Review, introduction of new patterns, letter cards, modeled coding practice, independent work, checking student work.

What do I see?	What do I think?
Review: Introduction of new patterns: Letter card usage:	

Modeled coding practice: Independent work: Checking student work:	

Appendix E: Teacher Interviews Patterns/Themes

Interview Question (IQ) 1: Do you implement the Saxon phonics curriculum as expected? If not, what specific areas, if any, do you use? If so, what are your thoughts, concerns, or perspectives on the program?

Participant	IQ1 Primary Points
A	• Does not use Saxon • Feels current program aligns better than Saxon
B	• Does not use Saxon • Feels current program has some gaps
C	• Does not use Saxon • The rest of the team was using a different program; didn't have a strong preference
D	• Does not use Saxon, but would like to • Current program does not meet student needs but team lead made final decision on the choice of curriculum
E	• Does not use Saxon • Likes the current program, finds Saxon lacking in skills
F	• Uses the Saxon program • No concerns, but would like more time to learn it better
G	• Uses the Saxon program • Concerns include coding procedures and expectations. Feels it is too challenging for the students
H	• Uses the Saxon program • Concerns include feeling that the content is too easy for students

IQ2: Were you included in the curriculum selection process for Saxon phonics? If so, what were your opinions about the adoption? If not, what reasons contributed to your exclusion?

Participant	IQ2 Primary Points
A	• Yes • Saxon phonics was only phonics and did not have a reading program; the current program has both, which supports consistency in reinforcing skills
B	• No • The current curriculum was in place when hired; went with the team lead's recommendations
C	• Yes • Comfortable with the current program
D	• No • Was interested, but team lead selected other program
E	• No • No opinion; was fine doing what was in place
F	• No • No opinion; was hired after the selection
G	• No • Was hired after the selection, but would like to have been involved or to be involved in the future
H	• No • Was hired after the selection

IQ3: When asked to implement a new curriculum, what are your initial thoughts, concerns, and actions connected to this change?

Participant	IQ3 Primary Points
A	• Will I have an opportunity to review it first? • Will I be given time to learn it?
B	• How is it going to affect benchmarks and assessments? • How is it going to help us achieve our goals?
C	• I would like more information before the start • I would like time to try it out first
D	• Will professional development (PD) be offered? • Will we have time for training?
E	• Will training be provided? • Will all the necessary resources and materials be ordered?
F	• Apprehension about the time spent to learn it • Time and training expectations
G	• Will training be offered? • Wants a resource person to contact if questions arise
H	• Willing to try it but reserves the right to change his/her mind • Would want PD/training

IQ4: When teaching Saxon phonics, what value do you place on teaching the curriculum with fidelity, as prescribed by the authors?

Participant	IQ4 Primary Points
A	• Does not teach Saxon, but follows the sequence and main skills • Supplements based on student needs; places highest value on skills
B	• Does not always follow; supplements based on student needs • Sometimes adds more or less, based on assessment scores
C	• Uses the parts that best fit the needs of the students • Follows sequence and main skills
D	• Values fidelity but feels current curriculum must be modified to fill skill gaps; supplements based on student needs

	• Current program (not Saxon) is confusing; worries about alignment between grade levels
E	• Does not value it; does what he/she thinks is best for the students • Allows students to dictate pacing and sequence
F	• Values sequence and objectives • Omits parts, based on personal preference
G	• Follows the curriculum with fidelity • Meeting objectives is highly important
H	• Does not value following with fidelity • Feels content is too easy; supplements for student needs

IQ5: If offered professional development and training for this program, would you choose to participate? Why or why not?

Participant	**IQ5 Primary Points**
A	• Always open to PD • Would like new ways to do things differently; prefers in-house training
B	• Not opposed but feels fairly familiar with the curriculum • Feels new teachers need PD more
C	• Yes • Would enjoy PD and collaboration with peers for ideas
D	• Yes • Wants time to learn curriculum well and have a modeled lesson
E	• Yes • Wants different techniques and ideas from peers or instructors
F	• Yes • New to the curriculum; wants to become more proficient and confident
G	• Yes • Reports needing more direction and training
H	• Yes

	• Wants time for application and supplementation suggestions

IQ6: What administrative actions, if any, do you think would support the onboarding of a new curriculum?

Participant	IQ6 Primary Points
A	• Asking for teacher input; taking our feelings and views into perspective • Attain teacher agreement before selection or implementation
B	• Direction with alignment • Helping us to meet benchmarks (involvement in curriculum)
C	• Time to learn before expected implementation • More information on a curriculum before it is selected
D	• Time to learn a new curriculum • Time for professional development and training
E	• Making sure all necessary materials are available and purchased when needed • Administrators need to become familiar with the curriculum to know what the teachers are doing
F	• Training with actual representatives from the curriculum company • PD with peers
G	• Time for peer collaboration • Teachers teaching one another (peer training)
H	• Proper training • All necessary resources

Appendix F: Administrator Interviews

Interview Question (IQ) 1: Were you included in the curriculum selection process for Saxon phonics? If so, what were your opinions about the adoption? If not, what reasons contributed to your exclusion?

Participant	IQ1 Primary Points
I	• No, no current experience with this curriculum other than teacher feedback • New to the position
J	• No, was hired after this selection • No current experience other than teacher/parent feedback

IQ2: As an administrator, what procedures do you use, if any, to help teachers through the introduction and implementation of a new curriculum?

Participant	IQ2 Primary Points
I	• Providing the resources and online resources • Nothing currently school directed
J	• Making sure change processes are slow and well thought out • None currently in place, but plans for the future

IQ3: When asked to implement a new curriculum, what resources are available to support teachers through this change?

Participant	IQ3 Primary Points
I	• Whatever comes with the curriculum that is purchased • Many come with online access
J	• Plenty of time to try and study the new curriculum • Time for application and trial

IQ4: As an administrator, how do you monitor the curricular fidelity of teachers for a new curriculum?

Participant	IQ4 Primary Points
I	• We do not currently observe teachers • During next semester, department heads will observe teams and monitor the curriculum
J	• None currently • Plans for general observations next semester

IQ5: If offered professional development and training for the Saxon phonics program, would you choose to participate? Why or why not?

Participant	IQ5 Primary Points
I	• Yes, it would be good to know what the teachers are doing • Would like a base knowledge of the curriculum
J	• Would be interested, but time constraints may interfere • Thinks it would be beneficial

IQ6: What administrative actions, if any, do you think would support the onboarding of a new curriculum?

Participant	IQ6 Primary Points
I	• Making resources available to teachers • Time to collaborate and provide on/off-site training
J	• Making sure the change is slow and occurs in stages • Would provide knowledgeable people to provide and implement PD

Appendix G: Letter of Cooperation

[redacted]

[redacted]

10/24/2017

Dear Erica Nevenglosky,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled Barriers to Effective Curriculum Implementation within [redacted]. As part of this study, I authorize you to administer a questionnaire, conduct 60-minute interviews, and conduct two 30-minute observations for each participant as a data collection method. I also authorize you to share study results with participants and authorized stakeholders that I will disclose at study completion. I understand participation will be voluntary for participants and at their own discretion. I authorize you, as the researcher, to recruit participants at this site.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include: access to the site and participants, member checking, and a space for conducting interviews. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change. Site personal will not be supervising this researcher but will be available to any form of crisis resolution.

I understand that the student will not be naming our organization in the doctoral project report that is published in ProQuest.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the organization's policies.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,

Authorization Official:
Contact Information: